

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 State of problems

In recent, the utilization patterns on coral reefs especially tourist activities on Koh Tao in Suratthani province have dramatically been popular day-by-day. As regards the marine resource management, the strategies on coral reef management have not been established in order to wisely utilized achievement with appropriate local ecosystem. However, there is only the declared raw associated with regulation of fish catching in 1996, which acts as the protective measurement from fishery activities on coral reefs (OMCRC, 2006). According to tourist developed strategies, the successfully promoting plans can recently result in the sharply numerous numbers of tourists visiting the spectacular marine ecosystem particular coral reefs (TISTR, 1998). Subsequently, plenty of travel services and facilities have intensively operated by private investors. From mentioned circumstances, the plan management on area utilization should urgently be addressed. Otherwise, coral resources could be degraded due to the negative effect of extremely tourist activities.

Statistically, the numbers of travelers, visiting Koh Tao have dramatically faced an upward trend. It started at 30,462 people in 1993, and was a quadruple increase at 122,862 people in 2010 (Department of Tourism, 2012) Obviously, the results from questionably researching in 2005 illustrated that massive 61.5% of tourists preferably intended on snorkeling activities (Angkasirisap, 2000) Currently, the trend of coral deterioration of Koh Tao mainly cause from diving activities, especially snorkeling. Likewise, snorkeling dive on shallow reefs. (1-3 meters in depth) at Koh Chang commonly create the terrible destroying on reefs due to steps or touching on coral structures (Suriyawong, 2005). In addition, lack of regulation on dropping and removing the anchors of taxi-boat around coral reefs, reflecting on unclear in local management especially coral reef zoning and limitation about suitable activities in each area.

What is more, the coastal resource management can be done using several tools depending on objectives. In fact that, zoning is nowadays the most effective method in coral resource management, and this implemented in Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, and the successful in coral reef protection together with generating the income from tourism is achieved (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 2007). Correspondingly, marine National Park in Thailand is also operated for tourist activity supporting, and the outcomes could definitely and in coral reef protection for creating the sustainable utilization in the future.

1.2 Objectives of the study

1.2.1 To assessment on coral reef condition on the areas where have been utilized widely around Koh Toa.

1.2.2 To coral reef zoning and analysis on critical problems causing from marine tourist activities of Koh Tao.

1.3 Scope of study

In this study, coral reef survey was carried out on several islands, namely, Koh Tao, Koh Hang Tao, Koh Nang Yuan and Koh Sai Deang or Shark Island. In term of the entire observed location, the field observation around Koh Tao was conducted from the north side (N1119300) downward to the south side (N1111600) with total distance of 7.5 kilometers, and from the west side (E0589100) to the east side (E0594200) with total distance of 3.2 kilometers.

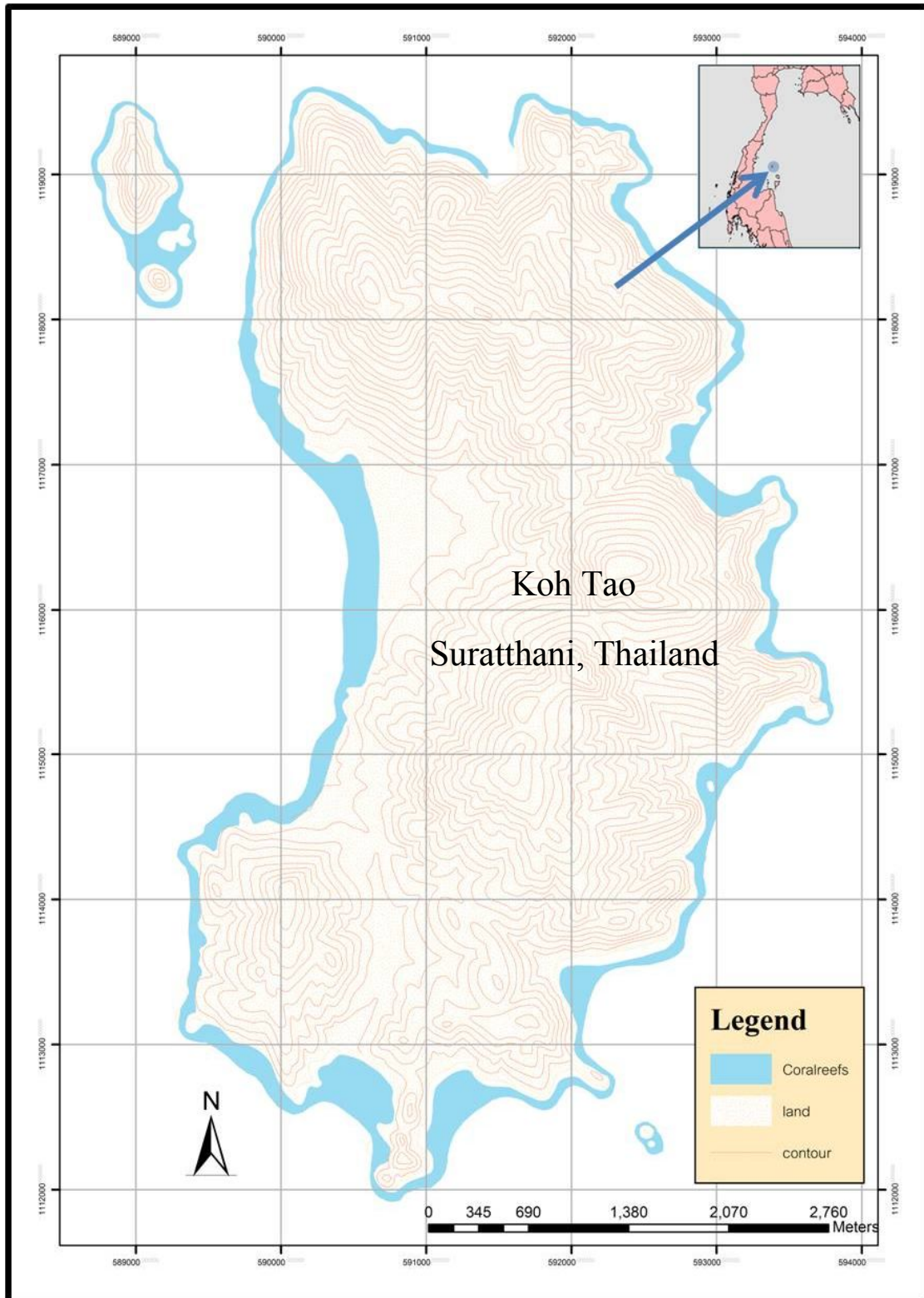


Figure 1-1 Map showing the study sites on Koh Tao and the adjacent islands

Source: Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (2003)

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Basically, coral reef management or concept in zoning management are absolutely required the initial information on coral reef condition as well as study of tourist activity patterns on coral communities in order to regulation of area management and also analysis of critical problems through participating process of people involved in Consequently, the comprehensive outcomes on stimulate concept to develop on coral reef zoning, which supports on optimal tourist activities in each area. (Figure 1-2)

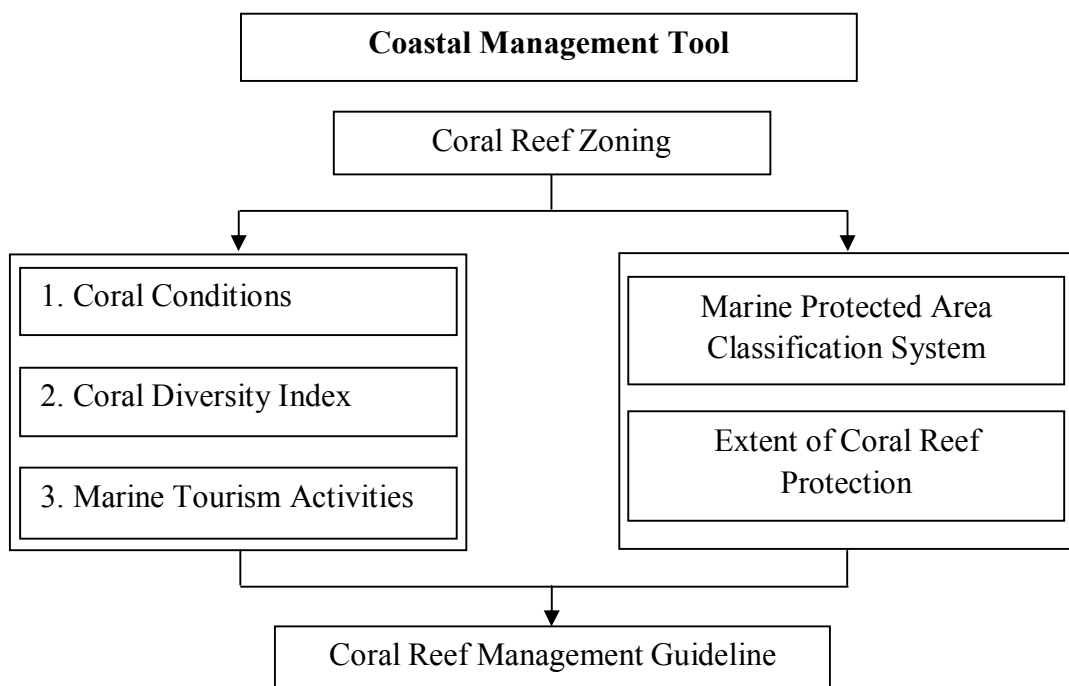


Figure 1-2 Conceptual frameworks in this study

1.5 Research definitions

1.5.1 Coral reef zoning is defined as zoning of coral resources following are division in suitable utilization of coral condition and feasible implementation in actual area. Moreover, the area management plan integrating with participant perspectives could result in selecting of target coral reef in each study site.

1.5.2 Marine tourism is defined as individually personal dainty which effects on coral reef ecosystem. Obviously, the major patterns of activities in coral usage are entertainment or researching.

1.5.3 Koh Tao location is identified as coral reef realm, where is found in the vicinity islands around Koh Tao, Koh Hang Tao and Koh Nang Yuan, and the field exploration is investigated from intertidal zone toward offshore in total distance of 1 kilometer.

1.6 Expected outcome

1.6.1 Using as model pattern in protection of negative effects from tourist activities on coral reef communities as well as diminishing the conflict associated with area utilization.

1.6.2 Serving as research topic, which could be further studied especially process in natural resource management for sustainable utilization in the future.