

**RESTORATION OF THE SILVER-LIPPED PEARL OYSTER *Pinctada maxima*
(Jameson, 1901) IN PHU QUOC MARINE PROTECTED AREA, VIETNAM**

Vo Si Tuan* and Hua Thai Tuyen

*Institute of Oceanography, Viet Nam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST), Nha Trang
Khanh Hoa 650000, Vietnam*

**Corresponding author: vosituan@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: The silver-lipped pearl oyster has been exploited by fishermen in Vietnam for a long time, mainly serving as a material for encrusting with mother of pearl in traditional lacquer painting. Recently, the increased demands of the oyster shells for production of fine arts make this species more vulnerable and becoming locally extinct in many areas, including in Phu Quoc islands where the species was abundant in the past. The restoration was conducted at Hon Vang islet, southern Phu Quoc islands, using spats produced in the hatchery in Con Dao islands. Around 45 million spats were released in 2017 and 2019. Monitoring the growth indicated that the restored pearl oysters reached the size of $80,08 \pm 10,02$ mm after 2 years and $124,12 \pm 17,74$ mm at 3 years old. The restored population in December 2019 included different size groups ranging from 11–20 mm to 161–170 mm at which size some oysters would be mature, according to past studies on pearl oysters' reproduction. In terms of management, the participation of private sector in oyster restoration exhibited a useful policy of MPA authorities in engaging local stakeholders in management of marine resources. In addition, expansion of restoring areas to include deeper waters is needed and use of “pearl oyster gardens” for tourist purpose is encouraged.

Keywords: silver-lipped pearl oyster, restoration, growth monitoring, Phu Quoc MPA, private sector
