

PART 3 PEOPLE, HISTORY AND TRADITIONS

SUMMARY

- The proposed park is home to a mixture of people with different origins and ways of life. The main groups are the sea-faring Bajau (Bajau Laut), settled Bajau and Suluks (Taosug).
- Sea-faring Bajau Laut are nomadic and maintain very traditional lifestyles. They live either in temporary shacks or in their boats (lepa) and respective moorages, and depend on marine resources for their livelihood.
- Settled Bajau were formerly boat dwellers who have become permanent land dwellers. They have a more diversified subsistence economy than the Bajau Laut, and maintain small and simple gardens to provide for basic domestic needs.
- The Suluks (also known as Suk or Taosug) are distinguished from the Bajau and Bajau Laut by language and culture. They settle further inland from the shore than the Bajau and cultivate gardens which may be extensive.
- There are kampongs on Bodgaya, Boheydulang, Maiga, Sebangkat and Selakan, and a large settlement on the reef top to the north of the latter two islands.
- According to a census carried out in November 1999, there are 2061 people living in the proposed park. The main activities are fishing, seaweed cultivation and gardening.



Figure 38. Kg Lok Buahian at the northern end of Boheydulang. The houses are occupied by Suluks and Bajau Laut.



Figure 39. Bajau Laut shack at Kg Penjuru Kanangan on Boheydulang.



Figure 40. Kg Selakan from the hill top.



Figure 41. Bajau kampong on Selakan



Figure 42. Bajau Laut moorage on Maiga.



Figure 43. 'Tuck shop' on Sebangkat.



Figure 44. Prow of lepa-lepa boat being carved at Kg Lok Buahon.



Figure 45. Settlement on the Selakan-Sebangkat reef top, with seaweed drying.

Sabah Museum

Figure 46. Baskets and trays made by women at Kg Boheybual, Bodgaya.



Sabah Museum

3.1. ETHNIC GROUPS

The proposed park is home to a mixture of people with different origins and ways of life that give the area its character and cultural diversity.

Bajaus

All the Bajau people speak dialectic variants of the Sama language. Groups of this Sama-speaking population are scattered along the coasts of Sabah, throughout the southern Philippines and eastern Indonesia (Piper, 1981). Some of the Bajau are sea-faring, others have settled on land. The seafaring Bajau are known as Bajau Laut or Palauuh, but are sometimes referred to as Bajau Samal. The settled Bajau are known as Sama, but they too are sometimes called Bajau Samal (Mansor, 1999). In order to avoid confusion, the names used in this report are Bajau Laut for the sea-faring group and Bajau for those that have settled on land.

There is considered to be no ethnic difference between the sea-faring and settled Bajaus (Piper, 1981), but there is an important difference in their economy and way of life.

Sea-faring Bajau Laut (sea gypsies) are nomadic and maintain very traditional lifestyles, living either in temporary shacks or in their boats (*lepa-lepa*) (Figures 39, 42). They are possibly the only nomadic seafarers left in the world (Sather, 1998) and are mainly transient people, who move between Sabah and the Southern Philippines (e.g. Tawi-Tawi, Sibutu and Sitangkai) depending on the weather (Piper, 1981; Baptist *et al.* 1998). They are the main harvesters and users of the reefs and many trade fish and shells with the Taosug and settled Bajau in exchange for vegetables, fruit and manufactured goods (Baptist *et al.* 1998).

Settled Bajau were formerly boat dwellers who have become permanent land dwellers. They are basically a maritime fishing community, relying on the sea and its products for their livelihood and subsistence. They have a more diversified subsistence economy than the Bajau Laut, and maintain small and simple gardens to provide for basic domestic needs (Baptist *et al.* 1998). The Bajau on Selakan have also successfully embarked on seaweed cultivation. Bajau coexist with Taosug in some of the settlements, and also operate as middlemen for the Bajau Laut, the main harvesters of the sea. Some of the Bajau Laut who settled on the islands have since moved away completely, for example to the mainland or to Kg Labuan Haji on Pulau Bum Bum.

Suluks or Taosug

The Suluks (also known as Suk or Taosug) came originally from Jolo and Siasi Islands in the northern Sulu archipelago (Piper, 1981), and are distinguished from the Bajau and Bajau Laut by language and culture. They settle further from the shore than the Bajau and cultivate gardens which may be extensive (Piper, 1981; Baptist *et al.* 1988). The fruit and vegetables they grow supply domestic needs, and are also sold. The Taosug are established traders and businessmen. They act as middlemen for the Bajau Laut, trading with them and exchanging food and various goods for marine products. The Taosug also do some fishing but the catch is mainly for personal consumption (Baptist *et al.* 1988).

3.2. FACILITIES AND TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES

The settlements are made up of semi-permanent houses, shacks and a few permanent structures. Power is supplied by generators to some homes. There are no organised schemes for disposal of rubbish and sewage.

Rainwater is collected. Water is also obtained from streams on the high islands, from wells (e.g. on Maiga, Mantabuan and Bodgaya) or from the mainland. The wells on the low islands tend to dry up or become brackish. Most of the settlements have access to small 'tuckshops' that sell very basic items.

There are no medical facilities on the islands and the only school is on Pulau Selakan. Students have to go to the mainland for secondary education.

There are small mosques on Sebangkat and Selakan, and these islands also have burial grounds. There is an old burial ground on Tetagan.

The main activities of people living in the park are fishing, seaweed cultivation and gardening. Produce that is not needed for the families themselves is sold in Semporna or amongst the communities on the islands.

Craftwork used to play an important part in the everyday life of people living in the area, but is now much reduced. In 1980 there were people on the islands (especially Selakan) skilled in traditional Bajau crafts such as earthenware pots and cooking places, carved wooden objects, metal crafts and the manufacture of other day-to-day items (Piper, 1981),

Piper (1981) described the future for a number of the crafts as 'precarious', and indeed most have died away either because of lack of demand, or because skills have not been passed on due to lack of interest. Pots are made occasionally, as are baskets and trays (Figure 46), but only mat making remains an active craft (Baptist *et al.* 1998). These are made for personal use or for sale by women from a number of villages, using raw materials obtained either from the islands or from Semporna.

Boats are also constructed, either for personal use or for sale. Traditional lepa-lepa boats are made occasionally (Figure 44) and others types include 'papits' (small pump engine boats), kumpit (shallow open boats) and bogoh-bogoh (dug-out canoes). Small timbers for the frame of papits tend to be obtained locally, while marine plywood and timbers for bigger boats such as kumpit are obtained from Semporna or elsewhere.

3.3. ISLAND NAMES AND LEGENDS

Bodgaya

There are several legends associated with the island, most of which relate to Princess Salamia and her tracking dog who disappeared in the mountain forest of Bodgaya. It is said that a black mark resembling a dog can be seen on the cliff face.

In one of the stories (also see a variation on this legend under Boheydulang) Salamia was a beautiful Sulu princess who was forced to marry Panglima Andulong a notorious head of the Bajau tribe with supernatural powers and a huge sexual appetite. Being frightened, Salamia ran away with her dog into the forest and did not return. At that time, the island was one big mountain. The gods became jealous of Panglima Andulong and delivered a curse, causing a huge volcanic eruption and leaving nothing except Salamia lying dead.

Thus the name – Bud – an island, and gaya – looking like a beautiful woman lying on her side (Guntavid & Galaip, 1998). Another meaning is derived from Bod or bud in the Bajau language meaning mountain and gaya meaning impressive.

Boheydulang

The name of this island may be spelt in a number of ways (e.g. Boheydulong, Bohey Dulang.). It is derived from bohi (bohey) meaning water and dulong or dulang meaning plate-like water vessel. This refers either to the series of pools on the slopes of the island, or to the main saltwater lagoon (Piper, 1981; Guntavid & Galaip, 1998).

Baptist *et al.* (1998) report a legend associated with the island. The informant was Haji Mustaja Mustahar from Kg Selakan. It tells the story of a beautiful princess named Salamia from Bum-Bum Island who was desired by a notorious Sultan from the southern Philippines. He came to the area to seek her, but her parents hid her on Boheydulang. A few days after arriving she vanished and was believed to have been hidden by spirits who occupied the island. During full moon local people believe they can hear Princess Salamia singing at night and her dog barking. Occasionally, they also have a vision of a beautiful woman walking around the island.

Tetagan

There are three possible derivations for the name of the island. One meaning of tetagan in Bajau is interconnecting. This could relate to the fact that the island is lying adjacent to, and connected with, Bodgaya. (Guntavid & Galaip, 1989).

Another meaning in the Bajau language is ‘hospitable site’ which may refer to its suitability as a site for settlement (Sugau *et al.* 1998).

However, according to legend, the word Tetagan comes from the word ‘Tetag’, meaning ‘to slash’. This is based on a story of a fierce man who lived on the island and would slash any stranger who visited (Baptist *et al.* 1998).

Sebangkat

Name derivation unknown, and no legends.

Selakan

Pulau Selakan was given this name by Panglima Selakan who used to visit the island to plant coconuts. He is the ancestor of Panglima Rubbani Bin Imam Isnin who is the present native chief of the village. There are no particular legends associated with the island.

Maiga

The name Maiga comes from the Bajau word for a fruit known in Malay as buah delima. It occurred on the island and apparently was considered by the Bajau as unusual (Baptist *et al.*, 1998).

Sibuan

The name of the island comes from the following story. According to the informant Panglima Taslim, Sibuan was named after his ancestor (Baptist *et al.*, 1998). One day the ancestor went fishing near this island. Suddenly, he felt a strong pull on his fishing line. He thought that it could be a large fish and quickly pulled up his line but to his surprise he found his catch was a bundle similar to human hair. He named the island Sibuan which means hair from the Bajau word Sibun. The bundle of hair is believed to still be kept by the family of Panglima Taslim.

Pulau Sibuan used sometimes to be called Battleship Island because of the two tall banyan trees that gave it a characteristic profile (only one of these now remains).

Mantabuan

This island is also known as Pulau Silingau (derived from the Bajau word for the flies that are abundant on the island). It was apparently given the name Mantabuan during the colonial era (Baptist *et al.* 1998).

Piper (1981) reported two holy places on the island:

- a grave (Keramat) at the southern end of the island (hidden by vegetation) belonging to ancestors of the Bajau at Kg Penjuru Kanangan (Boheydulang).
- A broken fig tree on the west side of the island which is believed by the Bajau Laut to have a spirit.

3.4. CURRENT POPULATION

Several censuses of the island population were made during the Semporna Islands Project, with the most comprehensive one being carried out by Sabah Parks and project staff in November 1999. The total population was 2061 people (Table 1).

There have been a few changes since that time, which are mentioned in the text for each island in section 3.5.

Island	Name of kampong	N ^o people
Bodgaya	Kg Boheybual	107
	Kg Lok Allam	102
	Kg Gelot	37
	Kg Tag Hawaian	85
Boheydulang	Kg Lok Buahian	117
	Kg Dasar/Pasir	30
	Kg Penjuru Kenangan	43
Tetagan	None	0
Sebangkat	Kg Sebangkat	183
Selakan	Kg Selakan	216
Sebangkat/Selakan	Reef top settlement	740
Maiga	No name	355
Sibuan	No name	44
Mantabuan	No name	2
Total population		2061

Table 4. Population in the proposed park [Census 11-99]

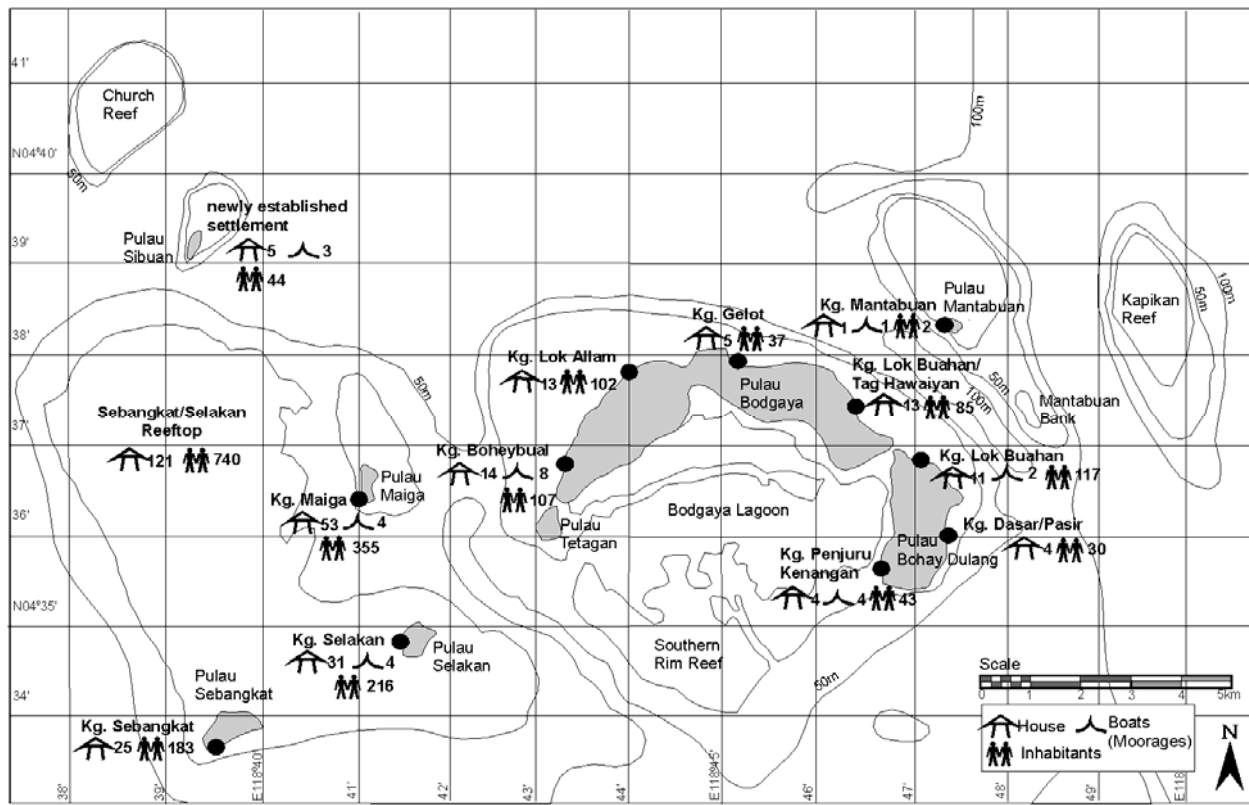


Figure 47. Settlements and moorages in the proposed Semporna Islands Park [Data from census 11/99]

3.5. SETTLEMENTS AND POPULATION CHANGE

The Semporna islands were probably first inhabited in the late 1880s, when there was large scale movement of Bajau people southwards through the Sulu Archipelago (Piper, 1981).

Bodgaya

This island was first settled by Bajaus, who established *Kg Lok Buah* (now referred to as *Tag Hawaiian*) at the eastern end of the island. However, the five houses occupied by the Bajau were abandoned on the arrival of Suluk Taosugs from Jolo in the mid-1970s, who had a fierce reputation (Piper, 1981). There are now 13 Suluk houses at Tag Hawaiian.

The displaced Bajau from Lok Buah established the settlement of *Kg Bohibual* on the western end of the island around 1976. Boheybual, meaning Bohey (water) and bual (chattering) is reported to be named after a spring near the houses which has hot water that bubbles from the ground (Piper, 1981). There is one Suluk house ; the other houses belong to Bajaus (4) and Bajau Laut (9). There is also a Bajau Laut moorage.

Additional settlements have been established on the north coast since 1980. *Lok (Look) Allam* (derived from Lok [place] and allam [nature]) has thirteen Suluk houses. *Gelot* is a small Suluk settlement of 5 houses which is located mid-way along north coast.

The population has increased since 1980, when there were 2 villages, 13 houses and 6 Bajau Laut boats. Now the total is 45 houses, together with 8 Bajau Laut boats.

Village and Ethnic groups	Number of people and dwellings					Citizenship by household	
	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
BOHEYBUAL							
Suluk	4	2	2	1	0	0	1
Bajau	24	16	8	4	0	3	1
Bajau Laut	79	43	36	9	8	0	17
LOK ALLAM							
Suluk	102	52	50	13	0	5	8
GELOT							
Suluk	37	14	23	5	0	0	5
TAG-HAWAIAN							
Suluk	85	45	40	13	0	6	7

Total population (all ethnic groups)	331
Total households	53
Malaysian households	26%
Non-Malaysian households	74%

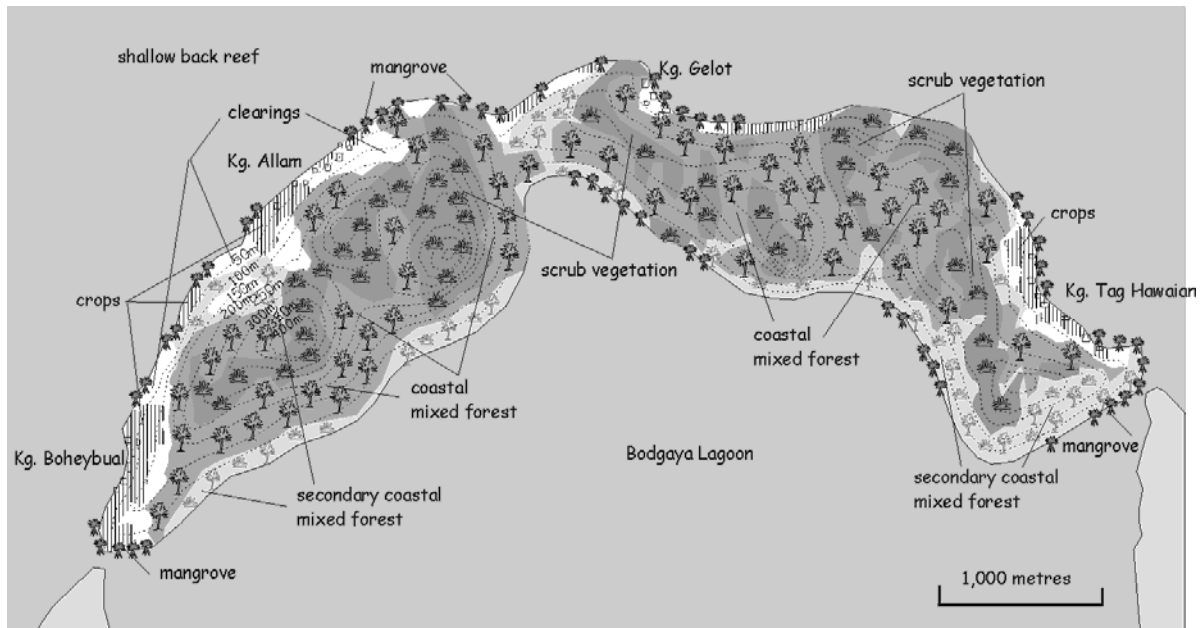


Figure 48. Map of Bodgaya

General economy and livelihoods

The island has been important for cultivation for decades, and there are cultivated areas and clearings associated with each of the four villages on the island. A wide range of vegetables, fruits and are grown. Suluk families have received assistance in the form of seedlings, fertilisers and spray tanks from the Agriculture Department (Baptist *et al.* 1998). Hill paddy (rice) used to be grown in the 1960s and 1970s but is no longer.

Guntavid and Gulaip (1998) and Sugau *et al.* (1998) provide detailed accounts of the use of forest resources. Timber has been extracted from the forest for decades and many other plants have been used (e.g. for food, medicine, ceremonial functions, building and craftwork).

In 1980, the forest on Bodgaya was reported to be a source of sambhar deer, megapodes and their eggs, hornbills and other birds (Piper, 1981). The deer population is now reported to be extinct as a result of hunting with dogs and spears (Baptist *et al.* 1998).

Suluks and Bajau living on the island fish on a small scale. All the communities except the Bajau Laut have become involved in cultivation of seaweed in recent years, which they grow just off the north coast of the island.

The economy and way of life of the Bajau Laut revolves around use of marine resources, and they are not involved in gardening. In 1980 they harvested many species for sale and were also active in the shell trade, trading giant clam, *Strombus* and other shells in Sitangkai (southern Philippines).

Boheydulang

Kg Penjuru Kenangan, on the west coast, was the first village to be established, probably by Bajau from Tawi-Tawi in the Philippines (Piper, 1981). The name of this kampong means corner (Penjuru) in remembrance of the dead (Kenangan).

The kampong grew to a large size and spread round much of the island. However, in the 1950s and 1960s most of the settlers moved to the mainland or to Pu Selakan. In 1980, of the 7 Bajau houses remaining at Penjuru Kenangan, only 2 were occupied (population 7). At this time there were also three shacks occupied by Bajau Laut. By 1999, the remaining Bajau had departed, leaving a small group of Bajau Laut, who live either in boats or in houses built over the water (Figure 39). In late 2000, this group moved to the east side of the island.

Around the mid-1970s, Suluks from Tawi-Tawi moved onto the northern and eastern side of the island. In 1980, there were 8 houses scattered along the shoreline, with a population of about 40 people, and 16 Bajau Laut boats. The population in this area has increased in recent years and there are two distinct kampongs. **Kg Lok Buah** (derived from Lok (place) and buahan (fruit)) in the north is the largest village (Figure 38) consisting of 17 houses occupied by Suluks (58 people; mostly Malaysian) and Bajau Laut (59 people). There were also 4 Bajau Laut boats at the time of the census. **Kg Dasar/Pasir** is on the east side of the island, adjacent to Palm Beach (the name Pasir means sand). It is a small settlement of 4 houses and 30 people all of whom are Malaysian citizens.

The **Kaya Pearl Company** from Japan was established on Boheydulang in 1963. A large jetty was constructed, giving access over the shallow reef top, and a string of buildings erected along the shoreline. The installation was abandoned in 1993, but all the buildings remain. Most of these are in a state of disrepair. **Sabah Parks** and the **Marine Police** each has a small contingent of staff here.

Ethnic group	Number of people and dwellings					Citizenship by household	
	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
LOOK-BUAHAN							
Suluk	58	28	30	11	0	9	2
Bajau Laut	59	25	34	6	4	0	10
DASIR PASIR							
Suluk	30	20	10	4	0	0	4
PENJURU KENANGAN							
Bajau Laut	43	24	19	4	4	0	8

Total population (all ethnic groups)	190
Total households	33
Malaysian households	27%
Non-Malaysian households	73%

General economy and livelihoods

As on Bodgaya, gardening is the main economic activity of the Suluks. Many fruits and vegetables are grown, both for personal consumption and sale. This includes mangoes, bananas, papayas, jackfruit, coconuts, sugar cane, maize and tapioca.

Guntavid and Gulaip (1998) and Sugau *et al* (1998) provide detailed accounts of the use of forest resources. Timber has been extracted from the forest at least since the island was first settled in the late 1880s, and many other plants have been used (e.g. for food, medicine, ceremonial functions, building and craftwork).

The forest is still a source of the ground-living megapode birds and their eggs, but no one appears to hunt larger prey now, probably because animals of value are no longer present. This was also the situation in 1980, when Piper reported that the Bajaus did not hunt because there was nothing left to catch apart from monkeys.

The Suluks also fish, but do this mostly for personal consumption. The kilong (fish trap) belonging to Suluks previously living at Kg Penjuru Kenangan is no longer in use.

The economy and way of life of the Bajau Laut revolves around use of marine resources, and they are not involved in gardening.

There is small-scale cultivation of seaweed off the northern end of the island which is looked after by people of Tag Hawaiian at the eastern end of Bodgaya.

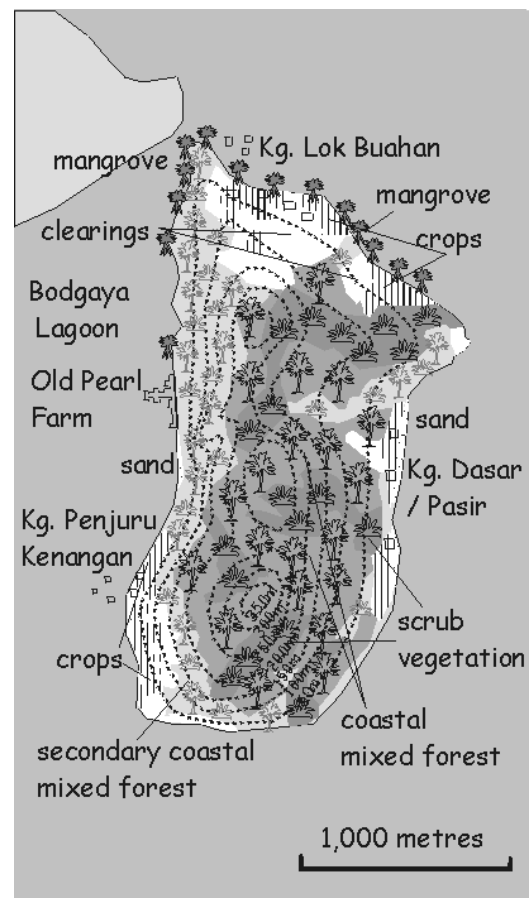


Figure 49.
Map of Boheydulang

Tetagan

There was previously a large Bajau settlement on Tetagan, with around 200-250 people present in 1887 (Piper, 1981). However, most left in the 1950s and 1960s to take advantage of government resettlement schemes and also because of fear of pirates (Piper, 1981). The last family left just before the 1980 survey and all that remains is a burial ground.

Bajau Laut were also associated with the island for many years. In 1980 there was a large Bajau Laut moorage (12 boats) off the northwest coast and a smaller 'non-permanent' one (4 boats) off the northeast tip of the island. These moorages are no longer used.

General economy and livelihoods

This island used to have a flourishing village, the economy of which was probably based around fishing and gardening. A significant amount of cultivation has certainly been carried out in the past but after the village was abandoned, the gardens were no longer maintained. Fruit trees remain, and previous settlers still return to collect fruit.

Extraction of timber trees and use of other vegetation probably began in the late 1880s and continued fairly intensively at least until the 1960s. Current use is probably fairly low because people no longer live on the island.

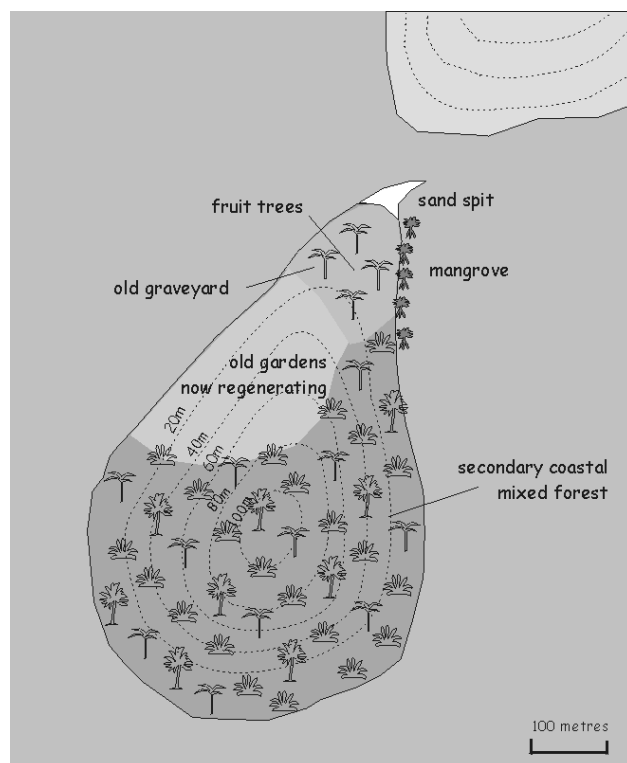


Figure 50.
Map of Tetagan

Sebangkat

Bajaus probably settled here some time in the past, but the present *Kg Sebangkat* dates from around 1977 (Piper, 1981) and was established by Bajau and Suluks from Zamboanga in the southern Philippines.

In 1980 there were 100 houses and the kampong spread half way along the south coast. It now consists of 25 houses in the southwest corner, and there is no trace of the previous dwellings. However, there are a few houses on the north-east side of the island. Probably some of the people from the kampong moved onto the Sebangkat-Selakan reef top when the seaweed cultivation project began. There is a small mosque and cemetery on the island, and a tuckshop (Figure 43). There is no school.

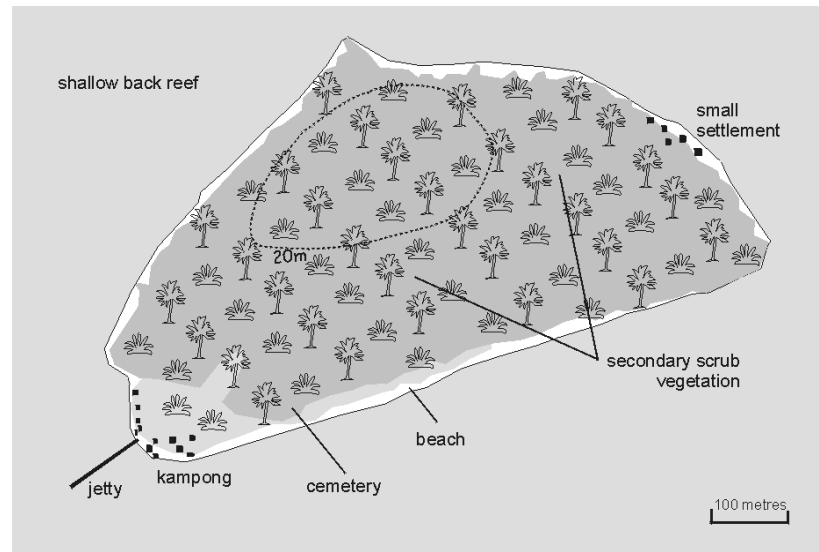


Figure 51. Map of Sebangkat

Number of people and dwellings						Citizenship by household	
Ethnic group	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
Bajau	72	39	33	9	0	2	7
Suluk	111	38	73	16	0	1	15

Total population (all ethnic groups)	183
Malaysian households	12%
Non-Malaysian households	88%

General economy and livelihoods

When the village was first established it contained between 700 - 1,000 people (Piper, 1981). Some had jobs in Semporna, but the main local activity was fishing. The soil on Sebangkat is poor and dry, and in 1980 was reported only to support coconuts (owned by Bajaus living in Semporna) and papayas. Apparently no other crops survive (Piper, 1981). A few ducks, geese and goats were seen in 1980, but little livestock is kept now.

Cultivation of seaweed is now the main economic activity. It is grown in shallow areas to the north of the island, dried in open spaces around the village and then sold in Semporna. Fishing has become a secondary activity, mainly for personal consumption.

Selakan

Kg. Selakan was probably established in the 1880s and 1890s by people from Tawi-Tawi in the southern Philippines (Piper, 1981), but there are no reports of its size until the study by Piper in 1980. At this time the population was reported to be about 300 people.

Pu Selakan has the only Bajau village of any size within the proposed park area (Figures 40, 41). The village is stable and well provided for, with a primary school (90 students), small mosque (surau), cemetery and village hall (balai raya). There is also a small branch of the Fisheries department, three tuckshops and two blocks of government quarters for teachers (Baptist *et al.* 1998). All 133 Bajaus living here are Malaysian citizens.

In addition to the 25 Bajau houses, there are also two houses occupied by Suluk families. Bajau Laut have used this island for many years. In 1980 there were 9 boats, but in the 1999 census only 4 were present, together with 4 Bajau Laut houses.

Number of people and dwellings						Citizenship by household	
Ethnic group	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
Suluk	23	4	19	2	0	0	2
Bajau	133	56	77	25	0	25	0
Bajau Laut	60	22	38	4	4	0	8

Total population (all ethnic groups)	216
Malaysian households	71%
Non-Malaysian households	29%

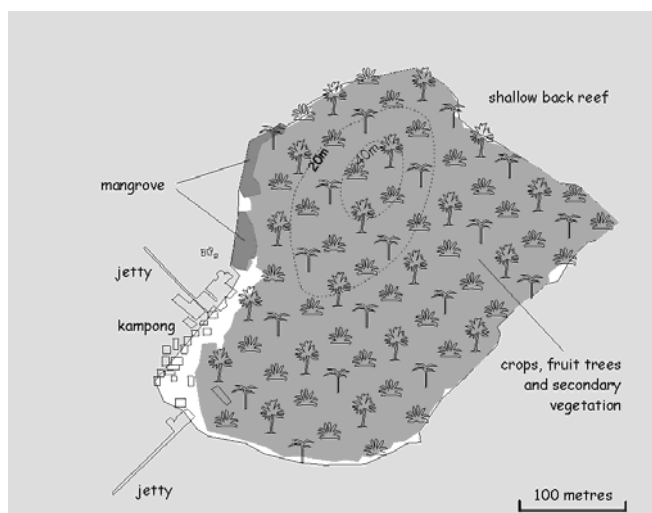


Figure 52.
Map of Selakan

General economy and livelihoods

In 1980, the main occupations of the Bajaus on Selakan were gardening and fishing. Gardening was carried out on the island itself and also on Bodgaya, Tetagan and Boheydulong (Piper, 1981). Selakan was described at that time as being covered in coconuts, fruit trees and bamboo. Pineapple and betel nut were also grown.

Gardening is still an important activity. The island is extensively planted with coconuts, fruit trees, vegetables and bamboo. Many mango trees have been planted, and the island is known for its supplies of quality mango which are sold on the mainland in Semporna (Baptist *et al.* 1998). The soil is reported to be very fertile, but at present apparently only 0.8 ha is under cultivation (Baptist *et al.* 1998).

Although gardening is still important, cultivation of seaweed is now the main economic activity. It is grown in shallow areas adjacent to the island, dried on the island and sold in Semporna to a Chinese businessman for export to Hong Kong (Baptist *et al.* 1998).

Fishing has become a secondary activity for the Bajaus, and is only for personal consumption. Shell collecting (reported by Piper to be very casual in 1980) has now apparently been discontinued (Baptist *et al.*, 1998).

The Bajau Laut living in the moorages off Selakan are still active fishermen, and often the Bajau villagers buy fish from the Bajau Laut rather than go fishing themselves.

Clay has been extracted in the past (and is still occasionally used?), but was always less popular than clay from Bodgaya and Tetagan which is reported to be purer (Piper, 1981).

Sebangkat/Selakan reef top settlement

There is currently a population of 740 Bajau and Suluk people spread over this extensive, area of shallow reef top (Figure 45). Their main livelihood is cultivation of seaweed.

Ethnic group	Number of people and dwellings					Citizenship by household	
	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
Suluk	625	300	325	103	0	4	99
Bajau	115	59	56	18	0	1	17

Total population (all ethnic groups)	740
% Malaysian households	4%
% Non-Malaysian households	96%

Maiga

The first recorded colonists on this island were Bajaus from Tawi-Tawi who arrived in 1972 (Piper, 1981). They were joined by Suluks in 1980. A large moorage (16 boats) of Bajau Laut from Sitangkai in the Sibutu group was also present at this time.

The number of houses has increased from 11 in 1980 to 53 in 1999. However, the number of boats has declined. The largest gathering of houses is along the shoreline at the southern end of the island. There are other houses along the east coast, either on the shore or built on stilts in shallow water. 28 houses are occupied by Bajaus, 16 by Suluks, and 9 by Bajau Laut. The Bajau Laut also have 4 boats in a moorage off the East coast.

There are four small tuckshops operated by Bajaus and Suluks. There is no school.

Number of people and dwellings						Citizenship by household	
Ethnic group	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
Bajau	167	92	75	28	0	4	24
Bajau Laut	94	39	55	9	4	0	13

Total population (all ethnic groups)	355
Malaysian households	7%
Non-Malaysian households	93%

General economy and livelihoods

The economy of this island has traditionally been based around the use of marine resources. The Bajau Laut do most of the fishing, while the Suluks and Bajaus act as middlemen, selling dried and fresh fish to Chinese traders in Semporna and Lahad Datu (Piper, 1981, Baptist *et al.* 1998). In 1980 there was also a well-organised shell trade, but this does not appear to operate now.

Coconuts are important. They are owned by Bajaus living in Semporna and used to be (and still are?) guarded by the Bajau Laut for a wage (Piper, 1981). A few crops are grown on a small scale, but these are not very successful due to the poor, sandy soil (Guntavid & Galaip, 1998).

Small-scale cultivation of seaweed has been carried out in the last few years, but there have been some problems in getting it established.

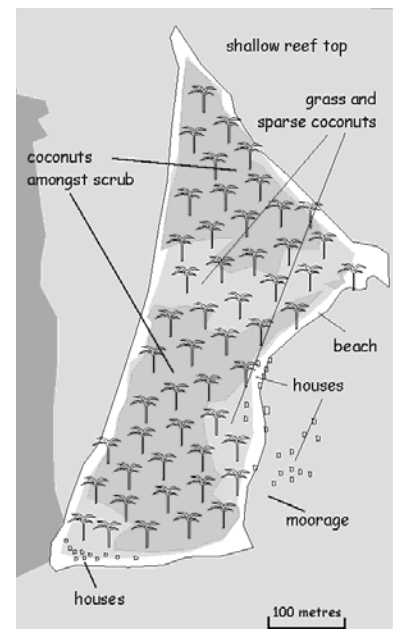


Figure 53. Map of Maiga

Sibuan

The history of Sibuan is unknown, but probably the first settlers were those who started the coconut plantation. Since then, the island has either been uninhabited, or occupied on a temporary basis by fishermen. In 1980, there was a small shelter at the southern end of the island that was used by a group of Bajau fishermen from Kg Terusan Baru on the mainland (Piper, 1981). They would stay and fish for a few days before returning home.

In 1999 there was a cluster of shacks at the northern end of the island, belonging to Suluks and Bajau Laut. There was also usually one or more Bajau Laut boat moored here. The settlement has no facilities and the children did not go to school. The people fished and had some small seaweed cultivation plots. In February 2000, many people had left after a raid, and the houses were falling down.

Number of people and dwellings						Citizenship by household	
Ethnic group	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
						Suluk	11
Bajau	6	2	4	1		0	1
Bajau Laut	27	13	14	2	3	0	5

Total population (all ethnic groups)	44
Malaysian households	0%
Non-Malaysian households	100%

General economy and livelihoods

At one time the economy of the island was based on the coconut plantation – an old copra production shed was seen in 1980. The plantation is no longer actively managed, but there is some harvesting of coconuts judging by the piles of discarded husks. A small plot of maize was seen close to the huts in 1999, but otherwise there is no cultivation. A few chickens were being kept.

The island has also been used for many years as a temporary base for fishing and harvesting of reef organisms from the back reef. In 1998 the settlement became more ‘permanent’. when cultivation of seaweed was started off the northern end of the island. Several families were involved for a while, but this activity has now ceased. The island used to be a popular spot for weekend visitors, but very few visit now.

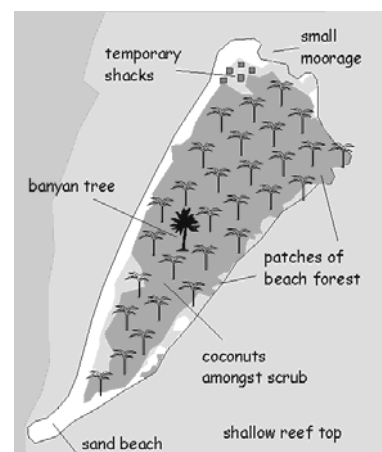


Figure 54. Map of Sibuan

Mantabuan

The Bajau Laut have probably used the sheltered waters around this island for many years, although not in large numbers. In 1980 there were two boats in a moorage on the northeast side of the island, and a Bajau Laut shelter at the back of the beach opposite the moorage. There were many old fireplaces, fishbones and broken *Tridacna* (giant clam) shells on the island. Bajau Laut also used the island for cutting up sharks, and there were vertebrae scattered along the shore.

One or two Bajau Laut boats still visit occasionally, using the same sheltered stretch of shallow water at the northern end of the island.

In 1997, a house was built on the southwest corner of the island and was used by ‘caretakers’ of the land owner, who dealt with security, and kept the island tidy. There is also a small hut on the beach about half way along the west Side.

The caretakers left in late 2000 due to the security situation, and the island is now occupied by security forces.

Number of people and dwellings						Citizenship by household	
Ethnic group	Total	Adults	Children	Houses	Boats	Malaysian	Non-Malaysian
Suluk	2	2	-	1	1	1	0

Total population (all ethnic groups)	2
% Malaysian households	100%
% Non-Malaysian households	0%

General economy and livelihoods

Much of the island has been planted with coconuts at least since 1980 (Piper, 1981). There is no other cultivation.

The island has now been leased by the landowner to a company that wishes to develop it into a tourist resort. All applications for development in the area have been frozen for the time being so the caretaker and his companion simply live in the house, fish, and keep the island tidy.

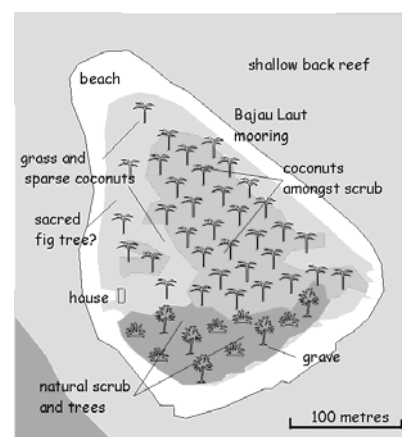


Figure 55. Map of Mantabuan