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## Meet the Tubbataha Reefs Rangers Who Were Recently Given the International Ranger Award

"I am so proud because even if we are isolated for most of the year in the middle of the Sulu Sea, we are not unseen and unappreciated."

 By **ESQUIRE PHILIPPINES** | Jul 27, 2023



IMAGE JON ANDREW CABIRES/MARINE CONSERVATION INSTITUTE

constant environmental threats.

A team of Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park rangers has just been recognized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) for their conservation efforts to preserve one of the Philippines' six World Heritage Sites.

## Meet the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Rangers

Tubbataha Reefs IUCN Rangers Award 2023



The four Tubbataha Management Office rangers, namely Segundo Conales Jr., Noel Bundal, Jeffrey David, and Cresencio Caranay Jr., won the IUCN-WCPA International Ranger Award for their role in safeguarding the Tubbataha Reefs region.

They had been tasked with looking after about 181 threatened or endangered species in the 970-km2 no-take marine protected area. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park is home to a thriving coral reef population. It earned a Blue Park Award in 2017 for its conservation effectiveness. These have led to gains like increased fish biomass, higher coral recruitment, and abundant indicator species, among others.

Together with the rest of the other members of the organization, Conales Jr., Bundal, David, and Caranay Jr. form the core group that oversees the management of these resources. They have been leading the Tubbataha Reefs' assigned rangers from the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard, and the local government of Cagayancilloin.

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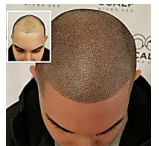
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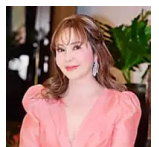
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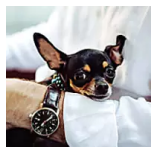
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He added: “I am so proud because even if we are isolated for most of the year in the middle of the Sulu Sea, we are not unseen and unappreciated; the international community recognizes our contributions to nature conservation.”

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The rangers also participated in government restorative justice programs, acted as snorkeling guides, and collected ecological data in the process. All these duties came to inform the educational outreach initiatives carried out in Tubbataha Reefs.

What Is the IUCN-WCPA International Ranger Award?

The IUCN-WCPA International Ranger Award is a distinction that honors the efforts of all kinds of rangers, from Indigenous, community, and volunteer rangers to employees in conserved areas. Individuals are honored based on how they address and assess the issues that these regions face.

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Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park rangers, they will also be provided a cash prize worth \$10,000 to support the organization's conservation efforts.

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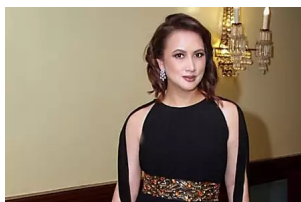
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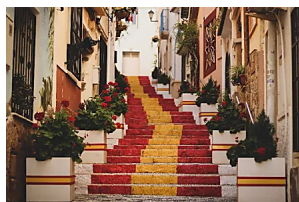
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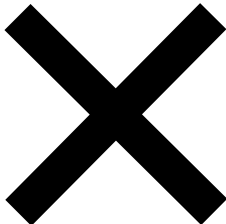
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