



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office

MIMAROPA Region

Bgy. Sta. Monica, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan

E-mail: penropalawan@denr.gov.ph

Telfax No. (048) 433-5638 / (048) 433-5638

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February 6, 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR : The Regional Executive Director
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1515 DENR By the Bay Bldg., Roxas Boulevard,
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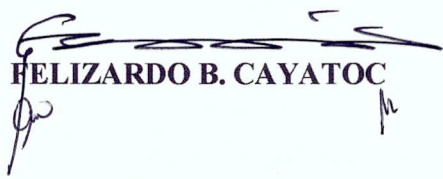
THRU : The OIC, ARD for Technical Services

FROM : The Provincial Environment and
Natural Resources Officer

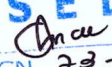
SUBJECT : TRNP 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

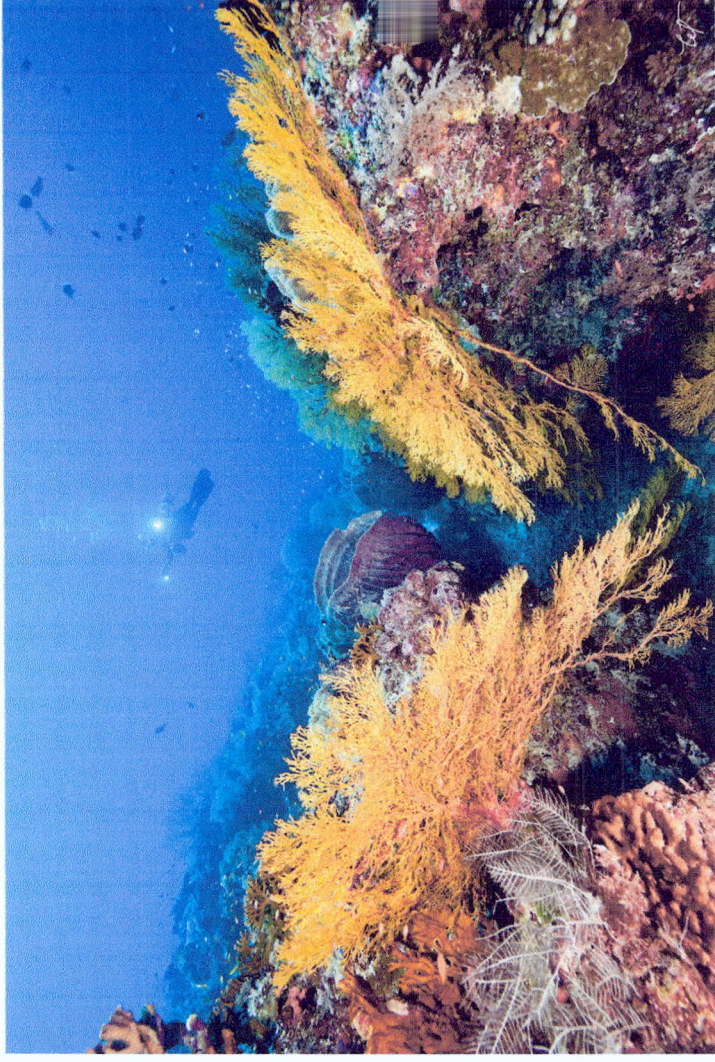
Respectfully forwarded is the 2022 annual report of Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) submitted by the Protected Area Superintendent (PASu).

For information and record.


HELIZARDO B. CAYATOC



**DENR-PALAWAN
PENRO-RECORDS
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By: 
Date: 08 FEB 2023 CN: 23-355



...and that was 2022

TUBBATAHA MANAGEMENT OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT

Tubbataha Management Office

Manalo Extension, Barangay Milagrosa
Puerto Princesa City 5300 Palawan
tmo@tubbatahareefs.org
or visit our website:
www.tubbatahareefs.org



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INTRODUCTION

We were going to begin the report the same way as the last 5 years' but thought you must have wearied of that by now. So, we go straight to the point with a brief review of the management programs we implemented. These four programs, articulated in the Tubbataha Management Plan, have been executed by TMO for the last two decades:

- Conservation Management
- Conservation Awareness
- Ecosystem Research and Monitoring
- Sustainable Resource Management



PERFORMANCE

Conservation Management

Management. Seventy five percent (75%) of all scheduled meetings of the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board (TPAMB) and its Executive Committee were held. A total of 24 resolutions were formulated by both bodies.

We updated the Tubbataha General Management Plan using the DENR outline. The new plan is effective from 2022 to 2031.

With the help of DENR and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) Philippines, we formulated the 10-year financial plan for Tubbataha.



The Tubbataha scientific advisory body, the 'Fellowship of the Reefs' (FoR), was established with eight eminent scientists as members. We look forward to an epic time with the FoR as we step up research in the park with the members' guidance.

Enforcement. We were able to conduct all the six targeted relieving trips for marine park rangers. DENR funded two of the trips, Saguda defrayed the cost of one trip, while the Metro Pacific Investments Foundation, Inc., (MPIF) covered the cost of the other three.

Again, our rangers exceeded the number of required patrols (120) by conducting a total of 152 patrols using our twin- and single-engine boats.

We replaced the engine of our patrol boat this year. The combined contributions of Mr. Antonio Moraza of the Aboitiz Foundation, Inc., World-Wildlife Fund for Nature-Philippines, Inc., and Friends of Tubbataha, Inc., enabled us to purchase two 4-stroke 100 horsepower outboard motors and their accessories.



Marine park rangers on the way to conduct their regular patrol.

Capacity Building

Park personnel, members of the TPAMB, and stakeholders participated in 37 virtual and face-to-face trainings, conferences, workshops, and meetings. TMO organized or helped organize five of these seminars such as the Southeast Asia Seabird Seminar, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership's (EAAFP) Year of the Tern, and the 21st Comprehensive Marine Park Ranger Training.



Participated in the AHP Managers' Meeting and Seventh ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference, 31 October to 3 November 2022, Bogor, Indonesia

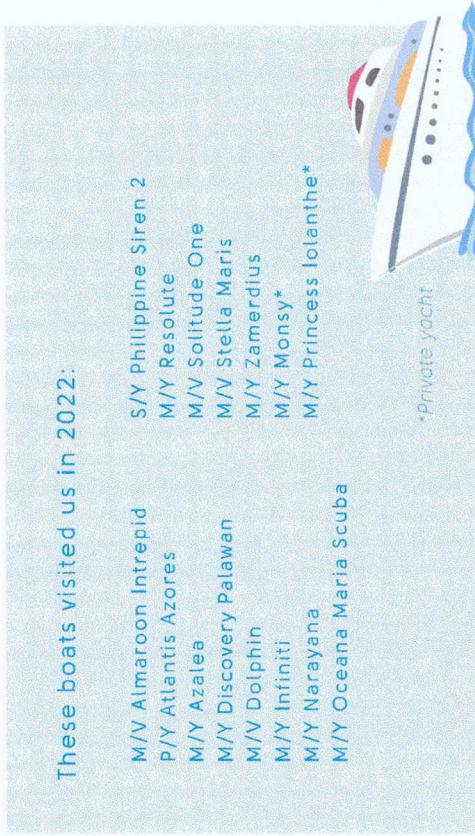


Co-organized the Year of the Terns with the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership.

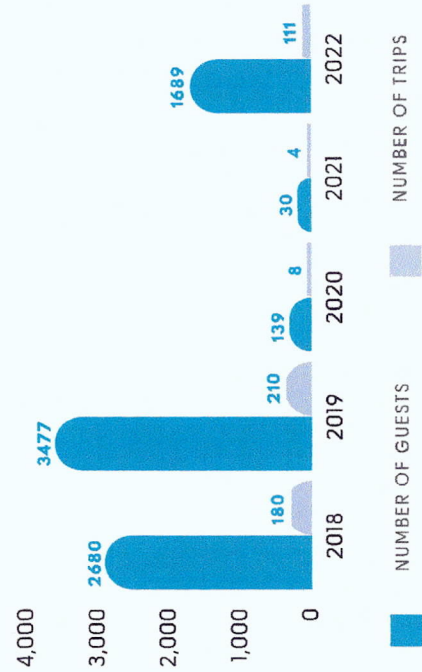


Conducted the 21st Comprehensive Training for Marine Park Rangers on November 17-19, 2022 at Narra, Palawan. In participation were the Philippine Navy, Philippine Coast Guard and new TMO staff. ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc., sponsored the training.

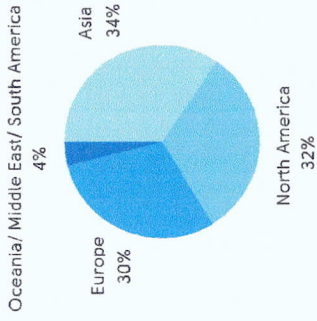
Tourism. Thirteen of the fifteen commercial dive boats operating in Tubтатаha visited in 2022 even as the pandemic situation introduced so much uncertainty due to its waxing and waning.



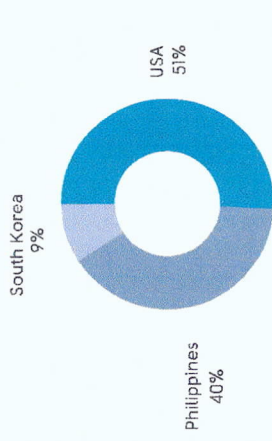
**Number of trips and guests
2018-2022**



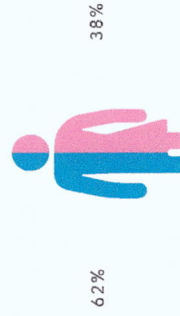
Demographics by region



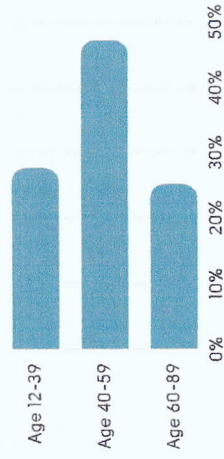
Top 3 nationalities



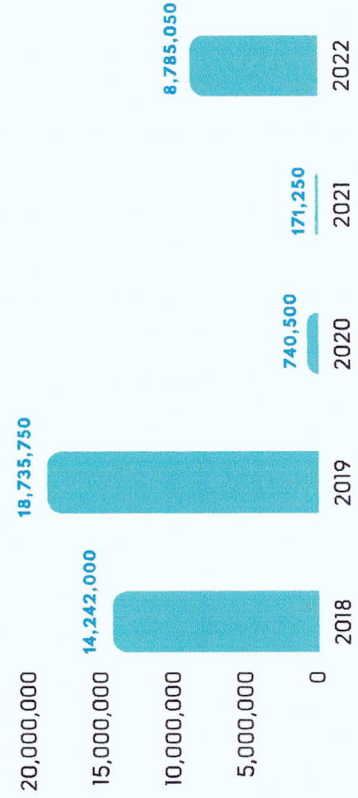
Gender distribution



Age group



Revenues / fees



Spotlight

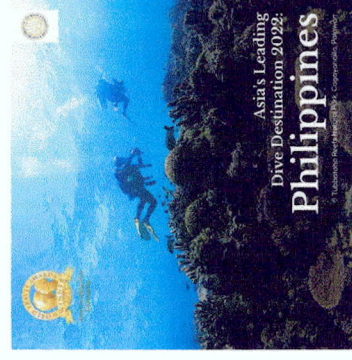
Tubbataha was declared as a Hope Spot by US based-NGO, Mission Blue, on August 11, coinciding with the 34th anniversary of the establishment of Tubbataha as a marine protected area.



NEW HOPE SPOT IN TUBBATAHA
REEFS NATURAL PARK HIGHLIGHTS
NEED FOR INCREASED MPA
SUPPORT IN PHILIPPINES

PASu Angelique Songco received the 1st Philippine Tourism Excellence Awards (Environmental Conservation category) from the Asia Institute of Management-Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism in November for her work in Tubbataha.

World Travel Awards named Tubbataha as one of Asia's leading dive destinations. The Sangguniang Pantlalawigan ng Palawan commended the TPAMB, the TMO, and stakeholders for the award.



Conservation Awareness

We uploaded 192 social media contents this year.



Our page reach surged in December when our ranger station was damaged by waves. So many people expressed concern for our rangers.

Our young staff members won the Youth Think Tank Competition held by the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership and received the prize of US\$3,000 for education and outreach. With the funds we organized the webinar, Seabirds of Tubbataha, for the general public reaching at least 100 students and adults.

Partnerships

The TPAMB entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with Metro Pacific Investments Foundation, Inc., for Shore it Up, Tubbataha!, a four-year partnership in law enforcement, education and information, and research. The project also includes community development support for the Municipality Cagayancillo.

We developed and produced, Planetang Blue, a workbook for elementary school children, through funding from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the support of Saguda Palawan, Inc.

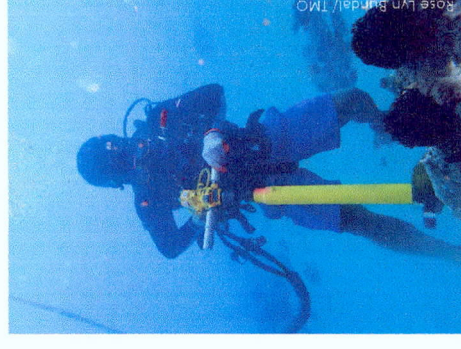


Memorandum of Agreement signing between MPIF, represented by Mr. Manuel Pangilinan and Ms. Melody Del Rosario, and the TPAMB, represented by Palawan Governor Jose Chaves Alvarez and DENR RED Lormelyn Claudio.



The Planetang Blue workbook contains basic environmental concepts with several activities to reinforce the topics.

Our marine park rangers and staff installed nine embedment mooring systems in Bacuit Bay, El Nido, Palawan in collaboration with Saguda Palawan, Inc., and El Nido Foundation, Inc.



Marine park rangers led the installation of mooring buoys in dive sites in El Nido, Palawan.

With funding from the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, we developed and conducted the online forum, Kinaiyahan: A Webinar Series on the Marine Conservation, for Surigao del Norte State University – Mainit Campus (SNSU). Participants were limited to 50 students and faculty members as the December 2022 series was a trial run. Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc. (PSFI), contributed through technical and material support. Prizes from PSFI spiced up the online home tasks, games, and challenges. The roll out of the webinar in the various campuses of SNSU is currently under discussion.



Featured

We also participated in the Philippine International Dive Expo (PHIDEX) 2022 by sharing the conservation story of Tubataha.

We celebrated with the Kinabalu Park World Heritage Site by accepting their invitation to share our experiences and challenges during their 22nd Anniversary Celebration and Community Day last December 2.



SNSU students receive their prizes for winning in game, home tasks and other activities. Prizes donated by Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc.



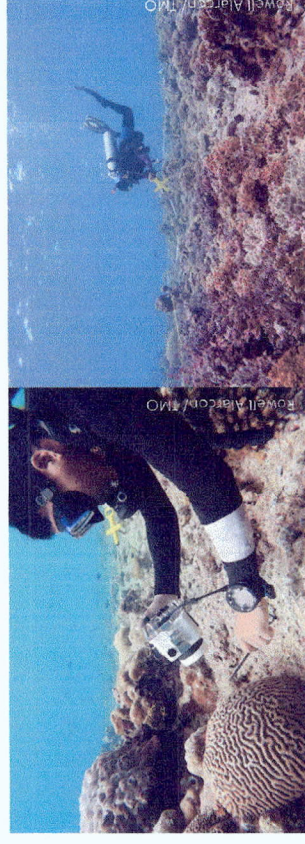
ECOSYSTEMS AND RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Fish biomass, the weight of fish in a given area, is still very high at 118 g/sqm. Forty grams per square meter (40 g/sqm) is recognized by marine scientists as high for healthy reefs. The biomass consists mainly of commercially important species such as parrotfish, triggerfish, unicornfish, and surgeonfish. Species richness, the number of species in an area, is very high and fish density, the number of fish individuals in an area, is high.



Despite the high density, declines in fish biomass in deep areas and in pelagic fish species was observed. Jessie Beazley Reef was hard hit by Typhoon Odette, which caused significant coral damage and decline in fish biomass.

The hard coral cover (HCC) is 27% in shallow and 23% in deep areas. HCC is declining by 0.9% in shallow and 1.3% in deep. The decline was more apparent in the shallow areas of the South Atoll and in the deep areas of the North Atoll. These declines, coupled with increases in algae, sponges, soft corals, and corallimorphs in various sites, pose concern and highlight the need for further studies. Vigilant patrols to safeguard the reefs from illegal fishers and ensuring that divers leave minimal impacts on the reefs will be prioritized to ensure that human impacts do not worsen the current condition.



Tubbataha researchers during the annual research.

Coral recruit density, or the number of baby corals in a given area, is 53 individuals/sqm, lower than in 2021. However, this was higher compared to other tropical countries. An optimistic prospect for recovery is suggested by a high recruit density, which is backed by the ongoing coral reproduction in the natural substrate.



Roxana, the 6-month-old Masked Booby, together with her parents, Amlhan and Alon.

Over 39,000 adult seabirds were recorded this year, a 39% increase from 2021 records. On the downside, a decline in Black Noddy population was observed, potentially due to lack of nesting areas and materials.

Roxana, the baby Masked Booby, was 6 months old at the end of the year. The first masked booby chick died when it was five months old. We are rooting for Roxana!

Restoring the vegetation in the islets continued with the help of the local government unit of Cagayancillo.

Water quality monitoring showed improvements with most parameters falling within national standards. Improvements in water quality during the lockdown due to COVID-19 showed the importance of a 'closed season' to allow water bodies to assimilate and recover from pollutants.



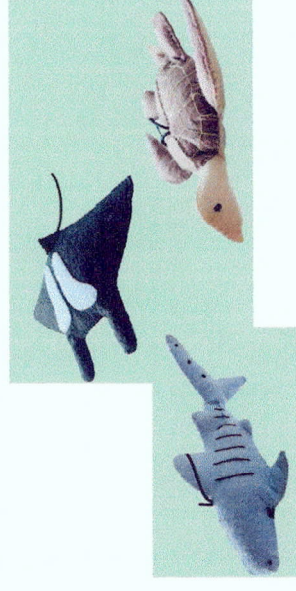
Tubbataha and PCSDS researchers during the annual water quality research in the park.

Sustainable Resource Management

A total of 11 Bantay Dagat personnel from the Municipality of Cagayancillo were assigned to Tubbataha as marine park rangers. We also supported the women's livelihood program by selling their plushies during the dive season and engaging them in nursery development for our beach reforestation project.

According to customary practice, the Municipality of Cagayancillo received 10% of tourism earnings for projects promoting alternate sources of income.

Souvenir items made by the Cagayancillo Women for Tubbataha, a grassroots organization were sold in Tubbataha to augment the womens' income.



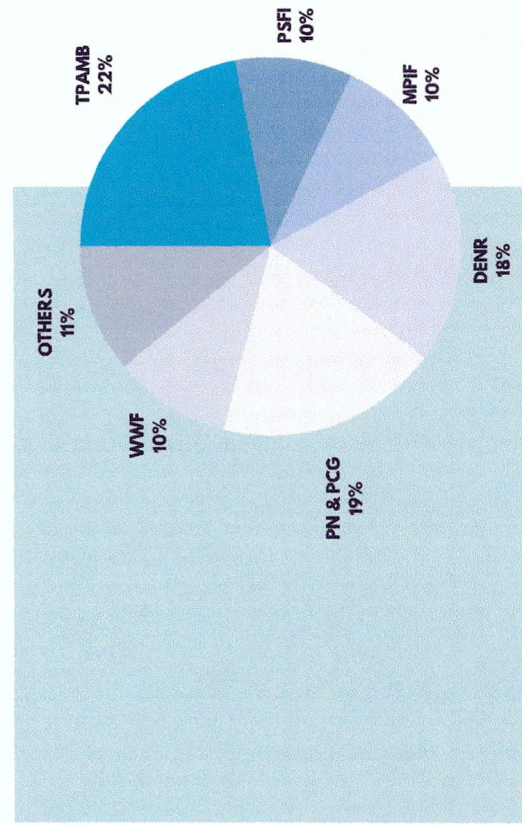
Souvenir items made by the Cagayancillo Women for Tubbataha, a grassroots organization, were sold in Tubbataha to augment the women's income.

FINANCIALS

Where did our funds come from?

We spent a total of Php 20.603M to conserve and protect Tubbataha in 2022. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the expenditures were funded through grants, donations, and in-kind contributions. Twenty-five percent (25%) came from tourism revenues lodged in the Tubbataha Trust Fund.

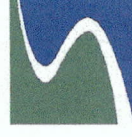
Source of funds



Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc. and Metro Pacific Investment, Inc. each contributed 10%. WWF-Philippines, the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard defrayed a total of 29%, while the DENR provided 18% of the funds for conservation. Contributions from Saguda Palawan, Inc., Stelios Foundation, Inc., Aboitiz Foundation, Inc., covered 11%.



Pilipinas Shell
Foundation, Inc.



Saguda Palawan, Inc.



Where did the funds go?

The funds were used to defray the cost of implementing each of the four programs articulated in the Tubbataha Management Plan. Conservation Management, comprising of general administration, enforcement and field costs, capacity building, tourism, and partnerships, consistently took up the bulk of the funds.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the 2022 budget went to this program.

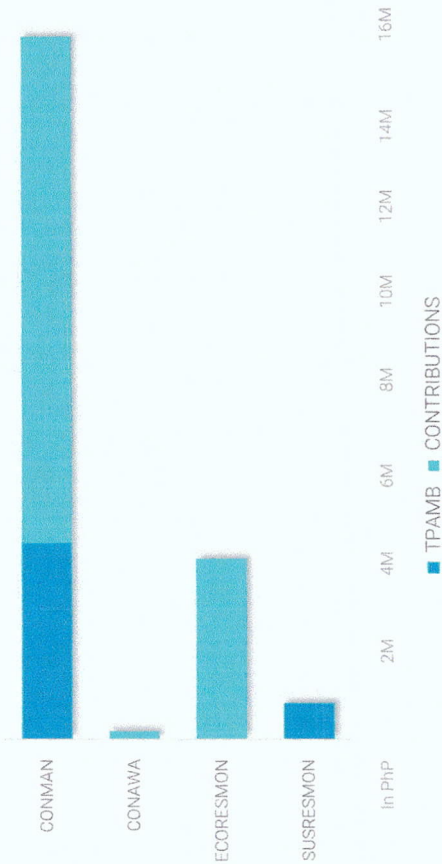


Children of Magsaysay Elementary School in Cagayancillo complete the activities in the workbook, Planetang Blue. The ASEAN Center for Biodiversity funded the development and production of the children's book.

The Conservation Awareness program absorbed 2% of the annual budget with all of the activities being funded by the private sector.

Research used up 19% of the total budget with all of the funds coming from donors and partners.

EXPENDITURE PER PROGRAM



The share of the Municipality of Cagayancillo in tourism revenues falls under the Sustainable Resource Management program.

The Municipality's share of P879,000.00 made up 4% of the annual expenditure.

THE YEAR AHEAD

We will have the best summer ever! We missed two scuba diving seasons because of the pandemic and our 2021 season was too tentative for us to enjoy fully. We look forward to 100% compliance by the dive operators, fantastic visibility, and jaw-dropping wildlife encounters.

Our current ranger station was further damaged in December when extreme high tides and very rough seas battered the aging structure from underneath. With nowhere to go but up, the waves shattered our concrete floors and took off with the veranda. The Provincial Government of Palawan is poised to construct the central structure that will house our rangers in safety.



This is where our porch used to be. Our stairs (center) remain steadfast but now leads nowhere.



Despite having only half a floor, we are still able to go on with our daily lives unhampered.

While this big project is going on, we need to house our rangers in a safe place. We plan to construct a temporary station to house the people who take care of Tubbataha for all of us. Metro Pacific Investments Foundation, Inc., has committed to provide PhPIM for the project.



Perspective for the temporary ranger station

We plan to go back to elementary schools and bring the message of conservation to young minds. We will also conduct more webinars on marine conservation for college students. With the help of the Provincial Government of Palawan, we will print information materials for distribution during these campaigns. We are looking for a partner to fund the printing of a children's activity book that we developed for our school campaigns.

OUR PARTNERS AND DONORS



Our thanks to our individual donors:

- Ms. Patricia Zobel De Ayala • Atty. Edward Lorenzo
- Ms. Marvi Trudeau • Mr. Icon Jen Chua

OUR BOSS

TUBBATAHA PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT BOARD (TPAMB)



Saguda Palawan, Inc.

TMO STAFF CY 2022

Angelique M. Songco	Protected Area Superintendent
Anthea Kristha C. Valenzuela	Executive Assistant
Segundo F. Conales Jr.	Marine Park Ranger/ Researcher
Noel A. Bundal	Marine Park Ranger
Jeffrey M. David	Marine Park Ranger/ Researcher
Cresencio P. Caranay Jr.	Marine Park Ranger
Mary Grace D. Barber	Administrative Officer
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Rose Lyn B. Magbanua	Cashier
Charmaine R. Aguilar	Administrative Assistant
Ecel Joy L. Cabanalan	Administrative Assistant
Limar M. Dusong	Administrative Aide
Ira Patricia Alitagtag	CEPA/Tourism Assistant
Maria Retchie P. Alaba	Research Officer
Rowell C. Alarcon	Ecosystem Management Specialist II
Gerlie T. Gedoria	Ecosystem Management Specialist II
Christa Feliz Michaela C. Sta. Cruz	Research Assistant