

NCMS OUTREACH MARINE PROGRAMME 2010 : CALAUIT, PALAWAN
02-06 November 2010

“Enhancing the Development of Calauit Island Through the Marine Sciences”

Introduction:

As the focal point and coordinating body of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the National Committee on Marine Sciences (NCMS) of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines is mandated to promote Marine Sciences in the country. Serious concern translated into coordinated efforts on the part of NCMS have been the driving force in the attainment of this goal. In order to advance and share marine scientific information and innovations with coastal vicinities and local governments in the country, the Outreach Marine Programme (OMP) was initiated in 1993 and has been adopted by the Committee as its main vehicle to popularize marine science and reach out and provide a scientific base in their efforts to understand, conserve and sustainably utilize their coastal and marine resources in the face of current environmental uncertainties.

Yearly since 1993, the NCMS – OMP has been undertaken in 18 different coastal towns in the archipelago, from Basco Batanes in the far north to Mati in Davao Oriental and Zamboanga City in the south. On 20-26 July 2010, the NCMS conducted the programme in Baler, Aurora where NCMS shared with the local academe, business enterprises, decision-makers and communities knowledge and expertise essential in developing a Marine Science Curriculum for Aurora State College of Technology (ASCOT).

In support of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO and in partnership with the UNESCO-MAB Philippines, the programme will be conducted in Palawan, one of the two Biosphere Reserves in the Philippines, with particular attention to its Calauit Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary also known as “Calauit Safari Park”, on **02-06 November 2010 with the theme “Enhancing the Development of Calauit Island Through the Marine Sciences”**.

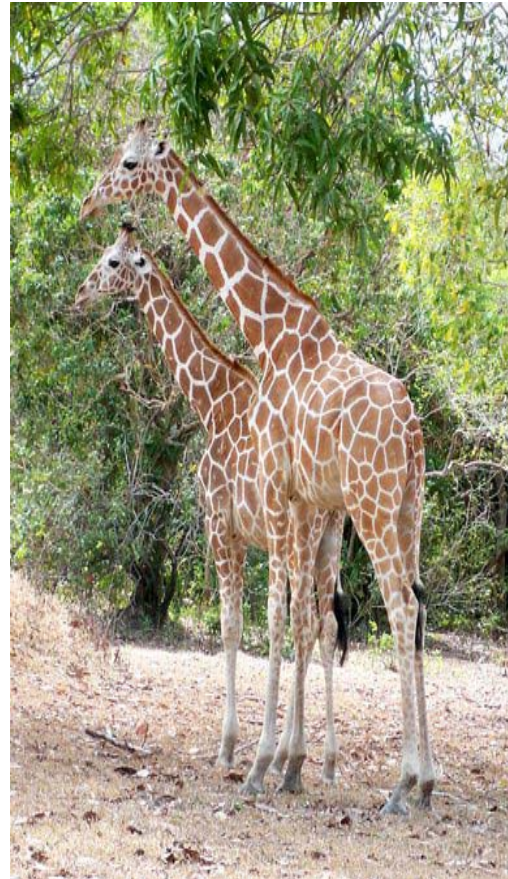


Palawan is a narrow archipelago of 1,700 islands on the western border of the Philippines. Its geographical location makes it seem remote from the rest of the country, and in fact, some of its southern islands are closer to Malaysia than to other provinces. The waters of the South China Sea lap the western shores of Palawan, while the Sulu Sea hugs its eastern coast. With a land area of more than 1.7 million hectares, Palawan is the country's largest province. Its irregular coastline stretches almost 2000 kilometers long, indented by numerous coves and

bays. Highlands and rolling terrain covered with lush forests create a cool and scenic landscape. Except for the northern towns, which are occasionally visited by storms, Palawan is generally typhoon- free. Warm weather prevails from March to May , while the coolest months are from December to February. Heavy rainfall is usually experienced in July and August, often accompanied by the southwest monsoon.

The Calauit Island which lies in the Northwestern coast of Palawan was declared a game preserve and wildlife sanctuary in 1977 as the Philippines responded to an appeal by the IUCN or the International Union of Conservation of Nature to save endangered animals in Africa.

The Calauit Safari Park is a success story for every Filipino. This island is home to African animals living harmoniously in co-existence with Palawan's indigenous species. It caters for scientific, educational, tourism and recreational activities by providing enjoyment of the wilderness and opportunities for greater awareness on the importance and appreciation of conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of this beautiful area.



This Island is indeed the Philippine's showcase for wildlife conservation. It is an ideal sanctuary because of its relative isolation. The forests, grasslands and mangrove swamps are also the habitat of some of the country's rarest and most endangered species.

Background / Rationale:

The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), launched in 1970, proposes an interdisciplinary research agenda and capacity building aiming to improve the relationship of people with their environment globally. The programme aims to strike a balance between between the conflicting goals of conserving biodiversity (nature), promoting economic and social development (society) and at the same time maintaining cultural values (people).

The biosphere reserve concept was developed initially in 1974 and was substantially revised in 1995 with the adoption by the UNESCO General Conference of the Seville Strategy and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR). Today, with 564 sites in over 109 countries, the WNBR provides context-specific opportunities to combine scientific knowledge and governance modalities to: Reduce biodiversity loss; Improve livelihoods; and Enhance social, economic and cultural conditions for environmental sustainability.

What is a biosphere reserve?

Biosphere Reserves (BRs) are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Biosphere reserves serve in some ways as 'living laboratories' for testing out and demonstrating integrated management of land, water and biodiversity. Collectively, biosphere reserves form a world network: the *World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)*. Within this network, exchanges of information, experience and personnel are facilitated.

At present, there are two Biosphere Reserves (BRs) in the Philippines: Puerto Galera designated in 1977 and Palawan designated in 1990. This OMP which focuses on the Calauit Safari Park, Palawan would be one of NCMS' contributions to support the MAB Programme in the country in partnership with the UNESCO-MAB Philippines, the Provincial Government of Palawan and the Tagbanuas.

Objectives of the Project:

- 1) To promote the Marine Sciences to the local stakeholders in Calauit Island and vicinity and introduce the National Committee on Marine Sciences (NCMS) of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines;
- 2) To conduct a dialogue / workshop with the local stakeholders on the necessity to protect the area in the context of the Biosphere Reserve concept; and
- 3) To make an initial assessment of the marine resources of the Calauit Safari Park as one of the priority sites of the UNESCO-MAB Philippines.

Methodology:

The NCMS plans to conduct a 3-day seminar / workshop with multi-sectoral participants as the audience (e.g. persons representing the different sectors of the place especially the indigenous people, local government units, park managers, the academe, owners of tourism establishments, fisherman's associations, operators of the fishing industry).

- The first day (03 November 2010) will be devoted to an initial assessment of the marine resources of the Calauit Safari Park being one of the priority sites of the UNESCO-MAB Philippines.

- The second day (04 November 2010) will be focused on site visits by the NCMS Experts with some local residents to other known existing marine ecosystems. Local and NCMS experts may assess, evaluate and come up with decisions that would help address the issues identified during the site visits.
- The third day (05 November 2010) will be the conduct of the workshop proper. Focused orientation lectures by local and guest experts will be presented. After which, would be the workshop with the local stakeholders where gaps on various marine sciences concerns (e.g. marine environment, coastal resources, marine protected areas and other relevant fields) will be identified and where the Committee could extend assistance, along the Members' respective expertise. During the dialogue / workshop, 35 to 40 participants composed of representatives from LGUs, NGOs, fisherfolks, business operators, academe, youth and other concerned parties will be invited as participants. They will be divided into groups, each group to address specific concerns. The output of each group will be presented in a plenary session and will be subjected to reactions, comments and suggestions by the other participants. The workshop organizers will then synthesize and summarize the result of the workshop and form conclusions and recommendations.

PREPARED BY:



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