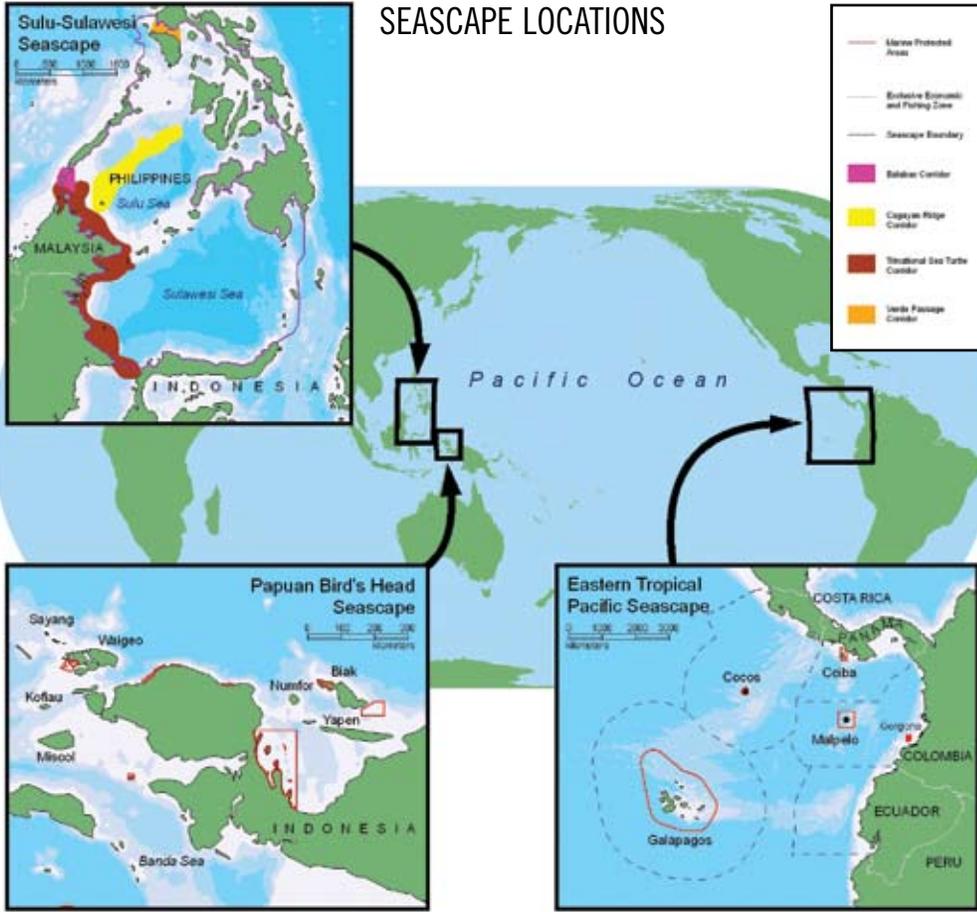


SEASCAPE LOCATIONS



SEASCAPES IN FOCUS

Seascapes are large, multiple-use marine areas, defined scientifically and strategically, in which government authorities, private organizations and other stakeholders cooperate to conserve the diversity and abundance of marine life and to promote human well-being.

If you are interested in learning more or want to support the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape contact:

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CI'S MISSION

Founded in 1987, Conservation International (CI) believes that the Earth's natural heritage must be maintained if future generations are to thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically. Our mission is to conserve the Earth's living heritage, our global diversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature.

A manta ray (*Manta birostris*) swims silently through ocean waters.



Conservation International
 2011 Crystal Drive, Suite 500
 Arlington, VA 22202
<http://marine.conservation.org>

SEASCAPES IN FOCUS



Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) in sea grass.

Philippine President Strengthens Conservation in Heart of Coral Triangle

Philippine President Gloria Arroyo has enacted a new national conservation policy, with an initial focus on the heart of Southeast Asia's Coral Triangle.

The Executive Order, signed by Arroyo on November 8, includes steps to create marine protected areas in the Verde Passage, an area



Philippine President Gloria Arroyo meets with CI's Romeo Trono.

identified in one study as the “center of the center” of the world's most diverse marine region, the Coral Triangle, which includes the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

A 2004 study by researchers at Old Dominion University and the Smithsonian Institution suggests that the Philippines has the world's highest levels of marine species diversity, with the peak concentration located in the Verde Passage in the Philippines.

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A white tipped reef shark (*Triaenodon obesus*) from Cocos Island in the ETPS.

Establishing the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape

The Government of the Philippines has been pleased to join with Malaysia and Indonesia in stewardship of the Sulu Sulawesi Seas, as being implemented through the vision of the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape Program. Millions of people are dependent on the food and livelihoods provided by this shared marine realm, and conservation of its resources is a challenge and responsibility for all our countries.

Our government efforts alone, however, will not be enough to do the job. We also need to engage the private sector, including corporations and businesses, and non-government organizations such as Conservation International and our other partners in the Seascape. The recent expansion of the Tubbataha Reefs National

Marine Park is an outstanding example of the kind of collaboration needed.

President Arroyo's decision to order government agencies and local government units to integrate and mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into their policies, regulations, programs, projects and development planning with particular emphasis on the Verde Passage is a major step forward. This is an area of global significance for marine biological diversity and of great value to the Philippines for its abundance of marine resources. As the Minister for the Environment with lead responsibility from President Arroyo for carrying out her mandate, I would like to acknowledge particularly, First Gen Corporation's pledge of



\$1,000,000 for the management of the Verde Island Passage and Apo Reef. My Department is committed to the conservation of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape and these specific initiatives. With continued support of all of our partners, the prospects of success appear to be very bright.

Mr. Angelo Reyes is the Secretary of the Environment for the Republic of the Philippines.

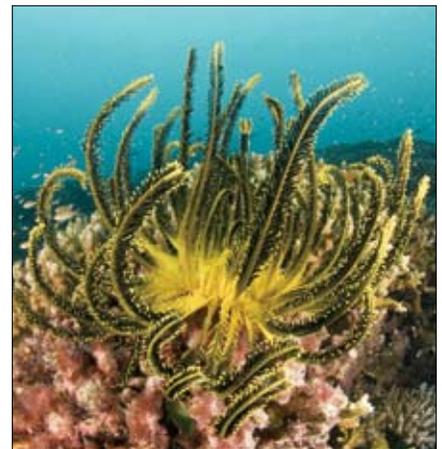
PHILIPPINE FEATURE STORY

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The Verde Passage is part of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape Program, launched by CI in 2005. President Arroyo called the Passage a "critical marine corridor," vital to marine-based tourism, but also transportation and international shipping. She praised the efforts of CI and its partners in the Program, First Philippine Conservation Inc., First Gen Corporation, the Department of Environment

and Natural Resources, and the governments of Batangas and Mindoro.

Peter Seligmann, Chairman and CEO of Conservation International, cited the President's Executive Order as the latest example of a new global awareness of the vital role of nature in economic development. "More and more, progressive leaders are recognizing that a healthy environment is the foundation for stable, productive societies that can develop in a sustainable manner," Seligmann said.



Feather stars (*Comanthina schlegeli*) are common through the Verde Passage.

BIRD'S HEAD SEASCAPE

Raja Ampat MPA Network Declared

In December 2006, Marcus Wanma, the head of Raja Ampat Regency, declared over 40% of the archipelago's reef and man-

grove area as local marine protected areas (MPAs). The six designated areas comprise an MPA network covering over 6,000 square kilometers. These areas are biologically important, with green and hawksbill turtle nesting, spawning aggregations, endemic birds, cetaceans, and amazingly diverse corals and fish.

A traditional ceremony is held before the designation of a marine protected area in Teluk Mayalibit.

The government decision was endorsed by Raja Ampat traditional leaders, who performed a series of cultural ceremonies to bless the MPA sites before the local declaration. In May, the Regency government aims to ratify a new law that will legally establish the MPAs.

CI and partners, including The Nature Conservancy, applaud the government's commitment and are working with policymakers to provide technical assistance to develop effective management of these MPAs.



EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC SEASCAPE

Local Managers Trained in Sustainable Tourism

More than a year of planning came to fruition in November as the members of the ETPS regional marine protected area managers' network received two full weeks of training in sustainable tourism management. Gathered on the Colombian island of Gorgona – an important

MPA rich in corals, primary forest and humpback whales – MPA managers and tourism management staff shared knowledge and became acquainted under the ETPS banner. CI helped coordinate and finance the event and provided core staff to serve as instructors, under the lead of staff from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA). The training taught managers how to evaluate local community benefits as well as potential negative impacts of tourism, and highlighted management tools to address those impacts. Building on the success of this session, CI and partners are organizing a second training on sustainable fisheries management for 2007.

SULU-SULAWESI SEASCAPE

Empowering Local Coastal Communities to be Active Stewards of Their Marine Resources

The growing population of the Philippines depends on the sea for about 60% of its diet, and the globally significant marine biodiversity is the source of needed resources, as well as a tourism attraction. To better protect these resources, the Government of the Philippines has decentralized management of coastal marine

resources and now shares this responsibility with local communities. For this reason, CI and our partners are using a two-pronged approach to strengthen enforcement and compliance in Balabac and Verde Passage: The SSS program supports local law enforcement through training and equipment donations, and we engage local communities in marine resource stewardship by identifying shared management objectives.



Elementary and secondary school students in Balabac at photo exhibit.

Seascapist: Attorney Rodolfo Ferdinand N. Quicho, Jr.

Attorney Rodolfo Ferdinand N. Quicho, Jr. or JunQ, knows that doing work you are passionate about makes the tedium of everyday tasks disappear. As Executive Director of First Philippine Conservation, Inc. (FPCI), he mixes biodiversity conservation, corporate social responsibility and social reform to benefit the environment. For 14 years, JunQ worked as a public interest environmental lawyer.

“The broad scope of the Seascape means I have to engage in diverse work activities. I find this both challenging and exciting.”

RODOLFO FERDINAND N. QUICHO, JR.

Today, JunQ oversees an ambitious program linking biodiversity conservation and human welfare through integrated conservation and development projects. The media attention received by the Verde Island Passage makes it all the more vital for JunQ and FPCI to get local residents and partners involved in conservation efforts. FPCI has helped

gain national recognition for the area and has implemented successful environ-



Under Verde’s spell...JunQ scuba dives in the Verde Passage.

mental education campaigns. The organization has also focused on local capacity building and has secured corporate support for its work.

JunQ’s technical expertise, focus on development, business sector contacts, creative ideas and love of nature, allow him to lead a comprehensive program that directly contribute to preserving his country’s living natural heritage – its biodiversity.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Regional Shark Tagging

As top predators, sharks play a critical ecological role in regulating marine ecosystems. In addition, sharks are also the most important dive tourism attraction in key ETPS sites, such as the Galapagos, Malpelo and Coco Island. Sadly, shark populations are being rapidly depleted in the ETPS and

around the world. In a model of multi-stakeholder cooperation, managers and researchers from the region are collaborating under the ETPS umbrella to learn more about shark distributions and movements within the Seascape. The results of these studies will help fisheries authorities and MPA manag-

A school of hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna lewini*).

ers establish policies to protect sharks. A Malpelo Island study tagged hammerhead sharks with satellite transmitters and found that they can swim a remarkable 2,240 kilometers in as little as 26 days, passing just north of the Galapagos Islands on a westward track while following a warm water front.

SCIENCE UPDATES

BIRD'S HEAD SEASCAPE

Discovery of a "Walking Shark"

A new shark species, discovered during a CI survey in the Bird's Head Seascape last year, is one of the most highly celebrated animals in recent media reports. The new species of epaulette shark, discovered in the FakFak-Kaimana region of Papua, was an instant sensation due to its unique habit of "walking" across the sea floor on its fins in search of its prey – which includes crabs, snails and small fish. "The walking shark" was shown on television stations and websites the world over. CI scientists are currently preparing a scientific description (including a name) for the new shark species.

EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC SEASCAPE

Galapagos Red List Workshop

Lack of knowledge about the status of threats to marine species represents a major challenge to conservation priority setting. To address this problem, marine experts met in the Galapagos in May 2006 to evaluate the threat status of corals and macroalgae, using globally accepted criteria. The event was part of the Global Marine Species Assessment, an initiative by CI, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and partners to systematically evaluate the threat level for marine species and to identify marine hotspots that require urgent conservation actions. The workshop found that many Galapagos macroalgae and regionally distributed corals are threatened, given declines over the past two decades. The results



The newly discovered "walking" shark species (*Hemiscyllium* sp.).

will allow marine protected area managers to better plan activities to ensure the survival and recovery of the most threatened species.

SULU-SULAWESI SEASCAPE

Balabac: In Focus

In the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape (SSS), CI and the Municipality of Balabac in Southern Palawan, the Philippines, have hosted a multi-stakeholder meeting to provide updates on the SSS program's progress in the Balabac Strait Corridor. At the three-day meeting, CI and partners pre-

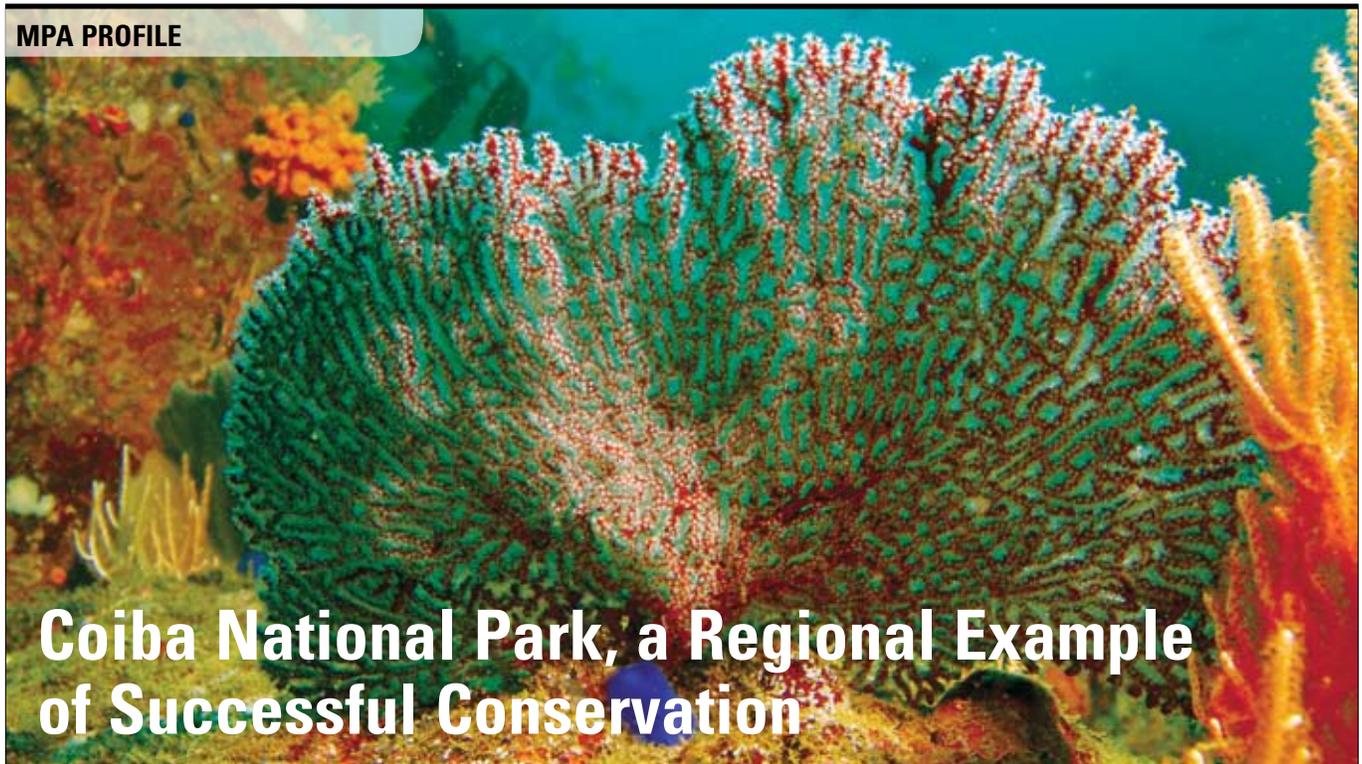
sented field data collected since 2006. Local stakeholders provided feedback on initial project results, and showed great interest in promoting understanding and acceptance of MPAs in the area. Eventually, these efforts will lead to a network of MPAs as part of the region's marine management. Also, in November 2006, the Balabac municipality hosted a CI Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape photo exhibit and concert, entitled NATURE JAM: Nature Sounds and Images. The concert featured a local group of young artists called Pilandokan, Inc. The event created local awareness about the

urgent need for marine conservation.



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CI field staff working in the SSS.



Coiba National Park, a Regional Example of Successful Conservation

Coiba National Park (CNP) in Panama encompasses more than 2,700 square kilometers of coral reefs, mangroves, islands, beaches and forests. The waters of CNP are home to 11 of the 23 known species of reef-building corals in the Eastern Pacific, as well as 45 species of mollusks, 13 species of crustaceans, and 69 species of marine fish, including whale sharks, tiger sharks, scalloped hammerhead sharks and bull sharks. Also, Coiba Island is the largest uninhabited tropical forested island in the Americas, and its pristine forests

are home to more than 147 bird species, including 21 endemic species and subspecies, and 36 species of mammals, including endemic species of howler monkey and agouti.

This extraordinary marine and terrestrial biodiversity prompted the Panamanian government to declare Coiba as a National Park, first by Executive Decree and then through Law in 2004. In 2005, CNP was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The Panamanian government has established a General Board Council, which is a participatory decision-making body that has authority over the Park's administration. CI and a wide group of local partners have come together to support and implement projects ranging from expanding the Park's management plan to supporting enforcement and building capacity of Park staff and local micro-entrepreneurs. Today, while much still remains to be done, Coiba National Park stands as a regional example of successful resource management.

(Above) The corals in Coiba National Park represent some of the unique marine biodiversity found in the Eastern Tropical Pacific. (Right) Coiba National Park offers beauty both above and below water.



Tuna Fishermen and Conservationists Have Common Goals

In the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape (ETPS), the rich waters giving rise to the spectacular diversity and unique species that are the focus of conservation have also produced outstanding fisheries, which are a key source of revenue for national economies and food security for coastal communities. In Ecuador, for instance, industrial fishing for tuna provides several hundred million dollars to the national economy and thousands of jobs in coastal communities where other economic alternatives are scarce.

Although it may seem that conservationists and fishermen would have conflicting goals, they actually agree on two extremely important points: no one wants to contribute to the endanger-

ment or loss of marine species, and no one wants to see fishermen lose their jobs. Conservationists and fishermen can work together to develop and implement “bycatch” reduction measures – especially for sea turtles, sharks and seabirds – and seek ways to improve their efforts to harvest tuna and other species in a sustainable way. Fishermen can also benefit from increasingly “greener” markets that reward producers who demonstrate their commitment to environmental responsibility.

The ETPS initiative provides an ideal framework for conservationists, fishermen, local communities and decision-makers to find common ground and work toward shared goals.

An Ecuadorian fisherman checks his nets.



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