

IMAGES OF  
**2019**  
TMO ANNUAL REPORT



# Table of Contents

- 
- I Introduction
  - II Overview
  - III 2019 Accomplishments
  - IV Financials
  - V Prospects for 2020

# INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report was prepared to complement the audio-visual version presented by the Tubbataha Management Office to the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board. Also in mind in the production of this report are the many donors, supporters, and partners whose invaluable contributions in various forms made possible the achievement of conservation goals for Tubbataha in 2019.

For TMO, the year that was 2019 may be characterized as a year of learning new ways of doing. As we transition into a bona fide government office, we followed a demanding learning curve in order to comply with government procedures and processes in financial management and administration.

Having operated in the manner of a non-government organization for close to two decades, the transition continues to be a study in perseverance, adaptation, motivation, humility, commitment, and so much more.

In this milieu, we implemented the approved work and financial plan for 2019. Processes and procedures became protracted compared to our previous operations. But, the support of various organizations and institutions - financial and in-kind cushioned the otherwise painful process. Nevertheless, we are getting there; we are learning the ropes.

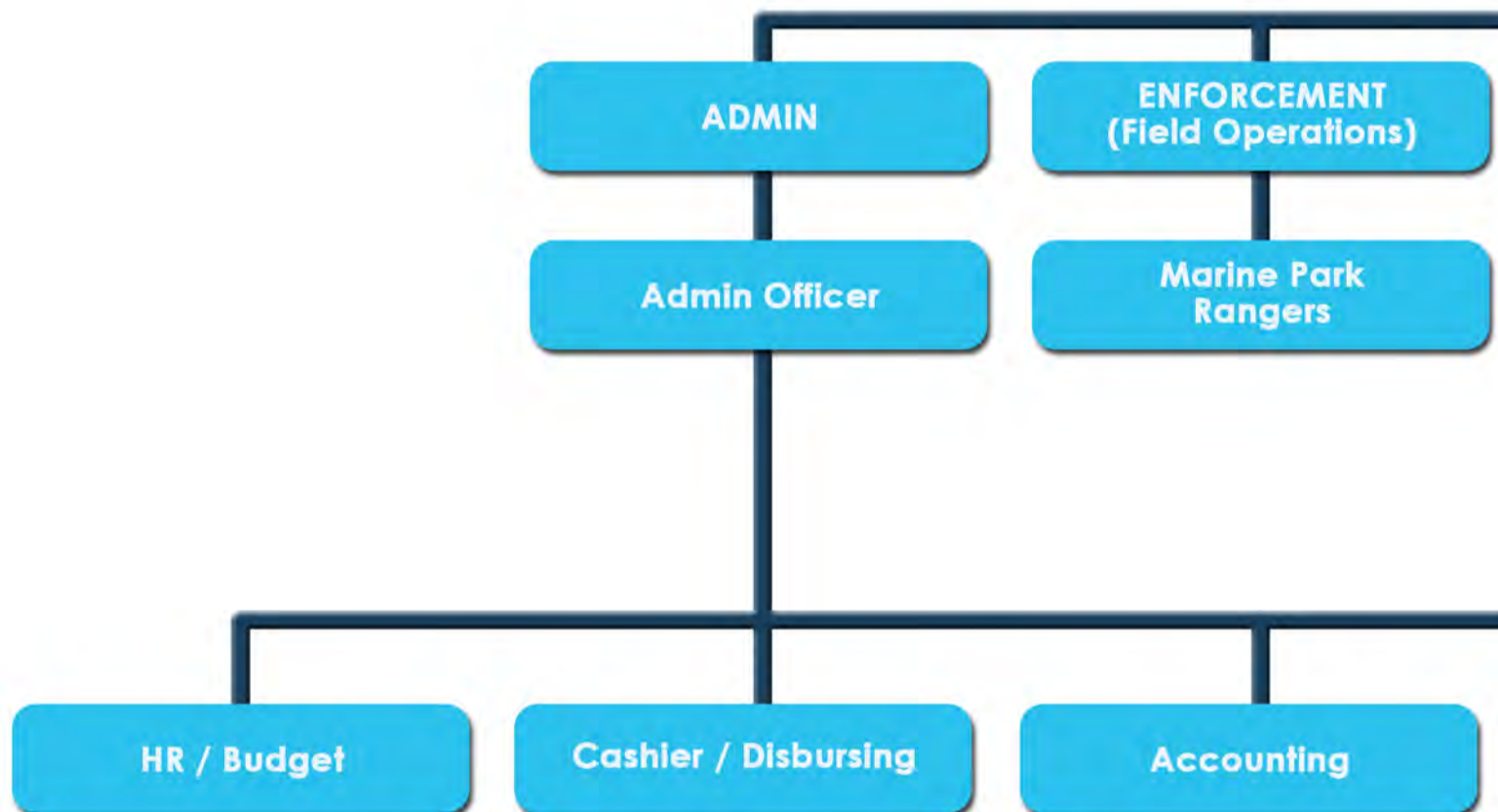
We aim to be brief but endeavor not to overlook the many ways you made 2019 another safe year for the fish, corals, turtles, seabirds, and the many other wildlife that call Tubbataha home.

# OVERVIEW

Republic Act No. 10067, otherwise known as the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) Act of 2009, is the main statutory framework for the management of Tubbataha.

It established TRNP as a 97,030-hectare no-take zone in the middle of the Sulu Sea under both the National Integrated Protected Area System Act (RA 7586) and the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan Act (RA 7611).

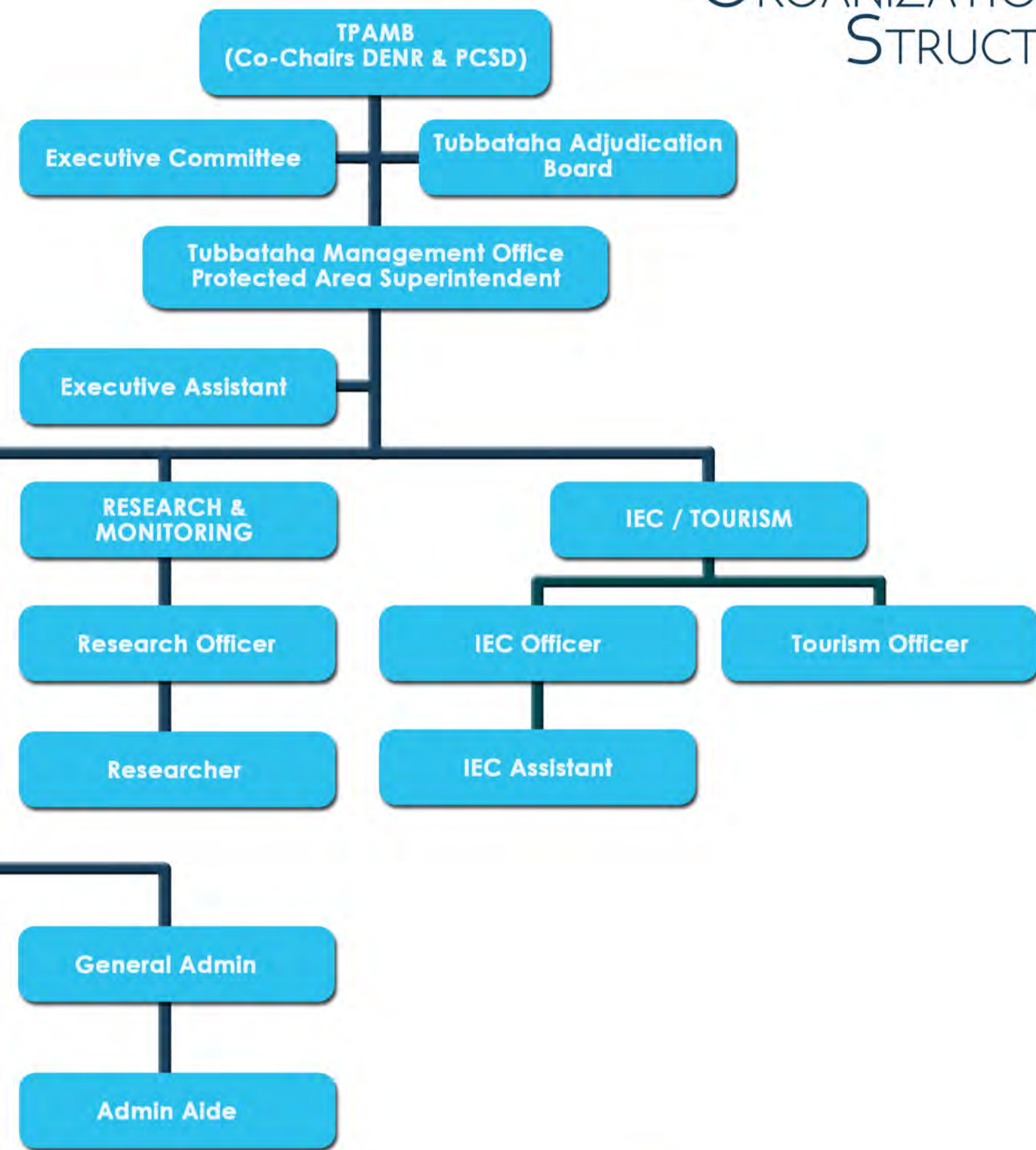
It also created the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board (TPAMB), which is invested with the power to formulate policies for the Park. The 21-member Board is an inter-institutional body created to provide a venue to express and realize the aspirations of the various stakeholders. Its Executive Committee performs functions assigned by the Board.



## VISION

A World Heritage Site that is effectively conserved to maintain ecological integrity contributing to the equitable distribution of benefits and sustained socio-economic development of present and future generations.

# TRNP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



## MISSION

Conserve the outstanding universal value of Tubbataha through responsible stewardship and genuine partnerships.

# OBJECTIVES

To protect all life and maintain ecological balance within the Tubbataha Reefs

To inspire stakeholder representation stewardship and support

To provide benefits to diverse communities

## TRNP Management Plan

Articulates collective aspirations for keeping the Park safe

Serves as a reference in allocating resources

Guides the measurement of outcomes

Provides direction in organizing work

Presents a tool for monitoring progress

### 4 MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS



#### CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The nexus for organizing and coordinating the work of conserving the Tubbataha Reefs, consists of providing the physical, institutional, and human infrastructure to efficiently manage the Park.



#### CONSERVATION AWARENESS

The vehicle through which support, a sense of stewardship, and voluntary compliance is cultivated.



#### SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Focused on supporting the Municipality of Cagayancillo in livelihood and environmental protection.



#### ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH AND MONITORING

How we generate scientific information for decision making and for measuring biophysical indicators of management effectiveness.

# PERFORMANCE



All regular TPAMB meetings were held, while only 42% of the 12 scheduled Executive Committee meetings pushed through for absence of a quorum.



Local dive boat operators, WWF-Philippines, the Marine Environmental Protection Unit of the PCG, PCG Palawan District, and TMO agreed to work together for cleaner seas by implementing Philippine Coast Guard Memorandum Circular 10-14 (Prevention of Pollution from Sewage).

For capacity building, of the nine trainings, conferences, and workshops, planned 29 were attended by TMO staff. TMO organized only four trainings and workshops and participated in those sponsored by other agencies.



TMO staff attended government-sponsored and organized trainings in accounting and procurement management, cash management and internal control, rules and regulations of the Commission on Audit, and on government accounting standards.



One of four in-house trainings organized by TMO in 2019 is the 20th Comprehensive Training for Marine Park Rangers of Tubbataha. Philippine Navy, Coast Guard, Cagayancillo marine enforcers, and TMO staff formed part of the 28 participants who attended.



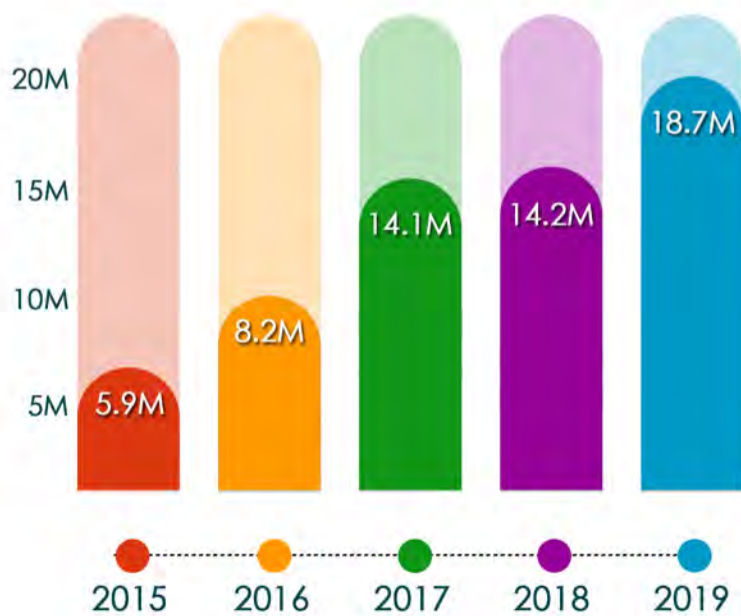
# SEASON IN NUMBERS



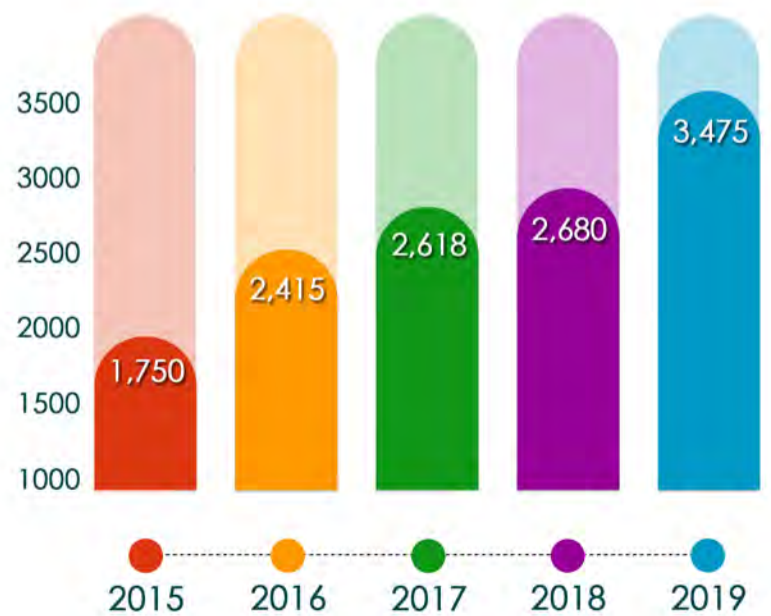
**18** Number of Boats

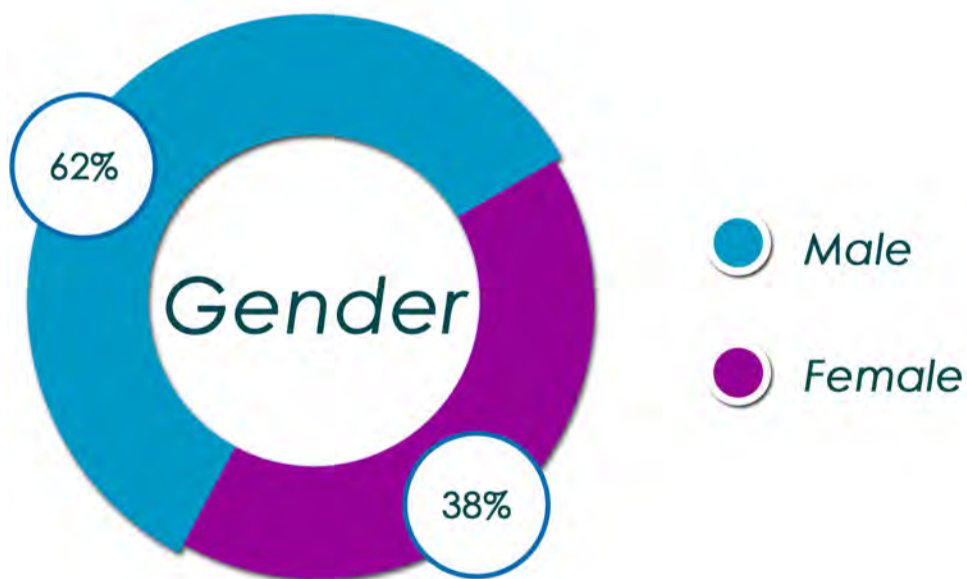
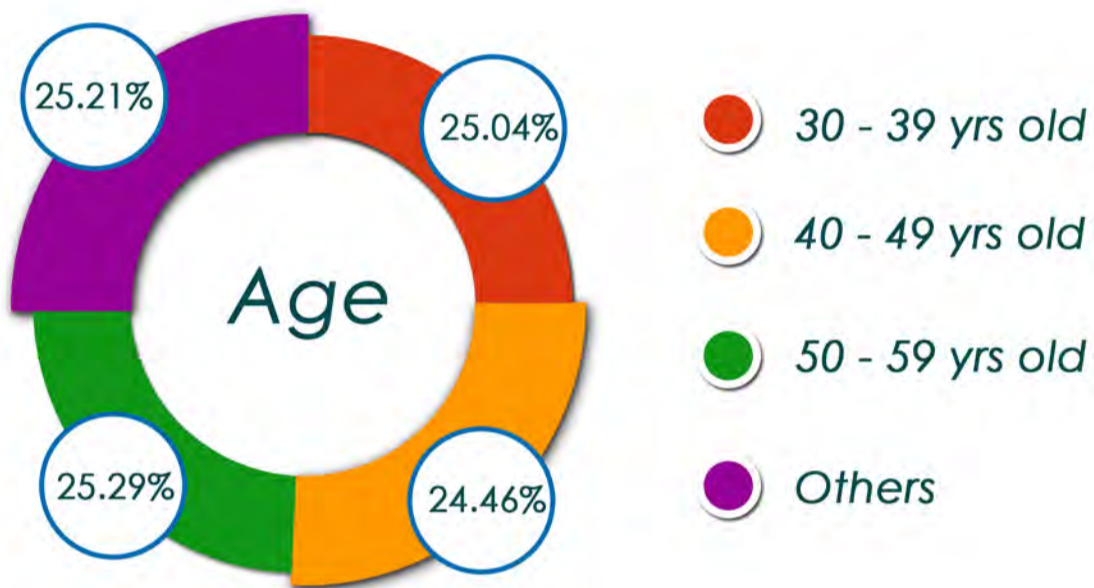
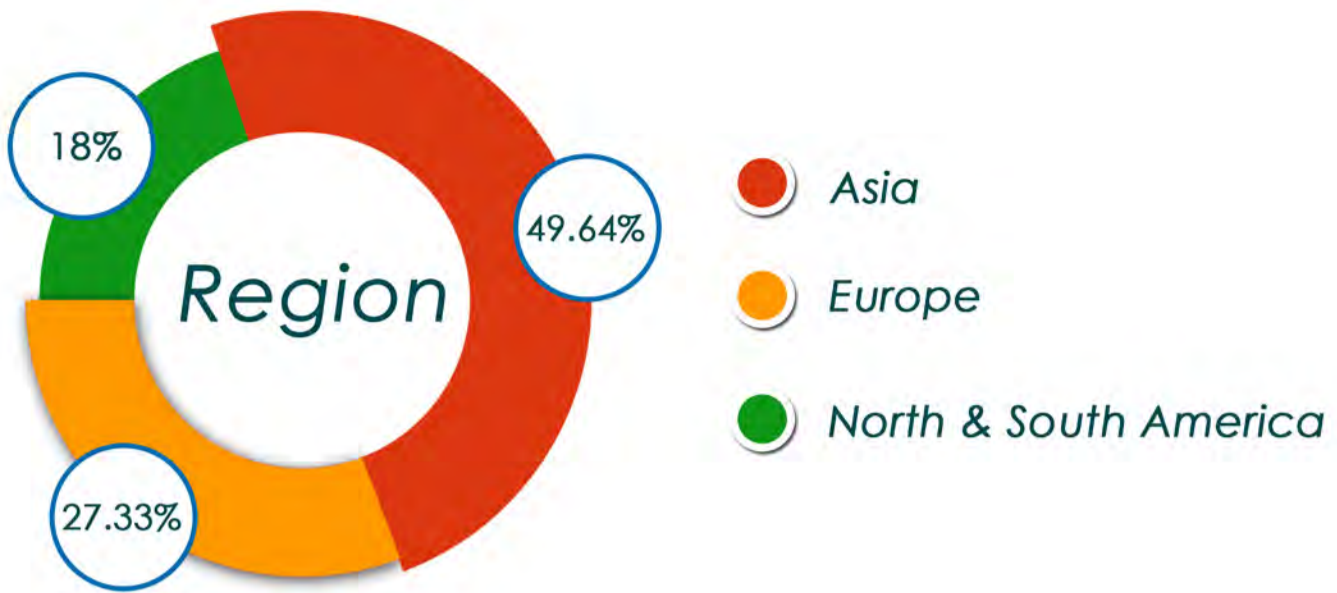
**210** Number of Trips

Revenue



No. of Visitors





# ESTABLISHMENT OF MOORING BUOYS

Moorings (white dot in front of vessel) are provided to anchor dive boats on the reefs.



Moorings are established by drilling holes on hard substrate and cementing pins in the holes.



A single mooring for vessels 100 gross tons or above is comprised of two sets of this assemblage of U-pins connected by a length of chain.





The Philippine Navy, Philippine Coast Guard, Municipality of Cagayancillo, and TMO actively safeguard the Park, even exceeding the number of required patrols. No illegal fishing were detected.



Of 134 cases filed in 2000, 17 remain and are being heard in Court



'I have worked in Tubbataha for a total of 20 years. For five years I was a researcher with WWF-Philippines. I specialized in the fishes of Tubbataha. For the last 15 years, I have been a marine park ranger. I spent half of those years in the Park and half at home with my family. It can be lonely out here, but I love this place and do not begrudge the time I have to spend protecting it.'

**Segundo Conales Jr.**

# CONSERVATION AWARENESS



The Tubbataha Youth Ambassador Program, sponsored by Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc., aims to develop future conservation leaders. Amie Cañal, Clarisse Macola, and Karl Joriel Amurao completed the 9-month program in 2019.

Pre-departure briefings were held on dive boats to foster voluntary compliance. Briefings were done on 75% of the trips.



Public outreach was held in three schools in Puerto Princesa with funds from PSFI.



Six billboards were installed in Terminals 2 and 3 in partnership with Digichive Philippines and PSFI. Shown is a photo by Gutsy Tuazon in the check in hall of Terminal 3.



A total of 2300 information materials were produced with funds from DENR. These were distributed during outreach activities sponsored by Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc. (PSFI)

# ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Fish, corals, and seabird research are organic studies conducted by TMO and augmented by citizen science results annually.



Fish biomass and density increased an average of 19%. Research showed that jacks and surgeon fish are the most dominant group.



Coral cover decreased an average of 13.5%, believed to be due to storms and strong monsoon winds that hit Tubbataha in 2017 and 2018.



The seabird survey of 2019 was funded by the Japan-ASEAN Integrated Fund, the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity. A 17% decrease in seabirds was recorded. The loss of habitat has severely affected the population of the internationally protected Black Noddy.



Coral recruitment studies show that slow-growing corals that are more tolerant to storm damage and bleaching are common in shallow areas, while species that grow faster but are more fragile dominate deep areas.

**Dr. Kent Carpenter** Old Dominion University and **Dr. Jeffrey Williams** of the Smithsonian Institution returned to Tubbataha for the comprehensive census of fish species using the roving diver method. Twenty-six (26) species not previously listed in Tubbataha were identified this year.

Citizen science results helped to determine optimal placement of acoustic equipment within the Park.

**TUBBATAHA REEF  
WATCH**

Your help will inform us on reef health

[www.tubbatahareefs.org](http://www.tubbatahareefs.org)



Marine park rangers measuring a green sea turtle. **The Marine Research Foundation** led by **Dr. Nicholas Pilcher** funded the marine turtle survey this year. The study showed that 55% of turtles were juveniles, 38% were sub-adults and, only 5% were adult turtles. This indicates that Tubbataha is an important development ground for green turtles.





**LAMAVE** conducts shark and ray research in Tubbataha and has embarked on a tagging program. All seven (7) tiger sharks caught since 2016 were sexually mature adult females. In addition, 17 grey reef sharks and four manta rays were tagged. Tagging information guide and enhance future conservation efforts in the Park and in the country at large.

## New Studies



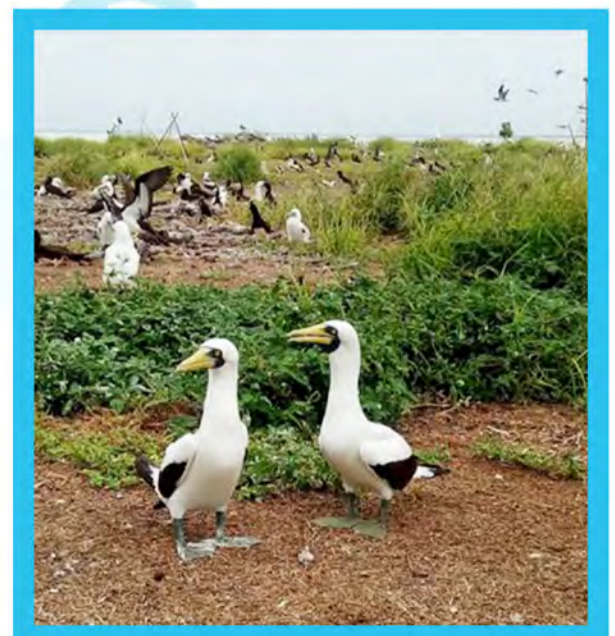
The **UP-Marine Science Institute**

tested the Unmanned Autonomous Surface Vessel in Tubbataha. This single piece of equipment can determine water quality, salinity, current, chlorophyll refined fuels, images, real time data, guided or autonomous navigation.



A **hydrophone** was installed by **UP-Cebu** to record sounds underwater. Sound can reveal the health of the ecosystem. Tubbataha is being used as a control site for acoustics studies in the country.

**Lonely no more!** A second masked booby showed up in October last year.



# OUR PARTNERS IN 2019

**Digichive Philippines, Corp.**, has kept us visible to the public for over 6 years now.

**PSFI** has funded in the project Monitoring Climate Change and Developing a Public Constituency that Supports Adaptation: A Public-Private Partnership since 2015.

The **DENR** defrayed the cost of mooring buoy installation, information and promotional materials, and turtle tags.

The **Philippine Navy** and **Philippine Coast Guard** are still with us, otherwise, we would have failed. They continue to send personnel and patrol the Park.

**WWF-Philippines** implemented community development projects in Cagayancillo in behalf of the TPAMB.

The **ASEAN Center for Biodiversity** funded the 2019 seabird survey.

**AOFF** loaned TMO the hydraulic drill used for the mooring buoy installation this year.

**Patricia Zobel de Ayala** donated another Rainman desalinator for the rangers last year as spare.

**C'Zarles Construction**, contractor of the lighthouse, donated 12 solar lights, one solar inverter, fiberglass storage shed, and a desalinator.

The **Marine Research Foundation** funded the sea turtle survey.

The **Provincial Government of Palawan** contributed information materials.



# OTHERS



Figure 2. A new structure to replace the 40-year old lighthouse in South Atoll was completed in June.

PASu **Angelique Songco** was the 2019 choice for the KfW Stiftung-Bernhard-Grzimek Prize, in Frankfurt, Germany. The award came with a prize of €50,000, which will be used for the conduct of a carrying capacity study for Tubbataha.



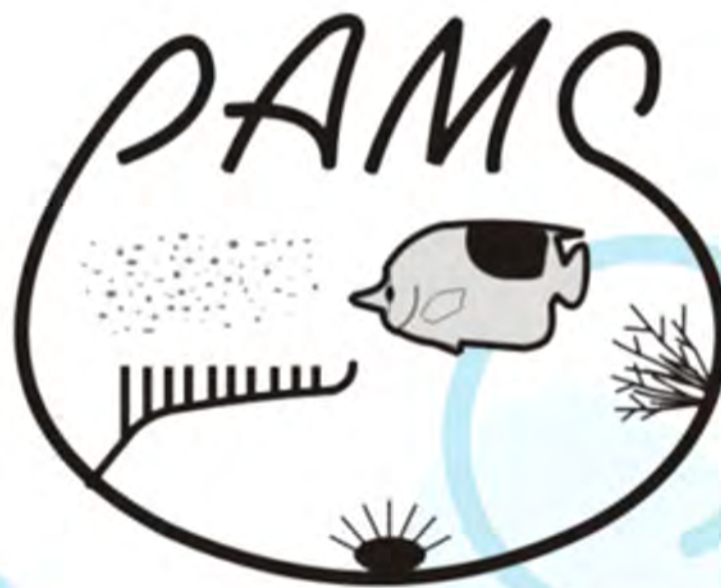
**Gerlie Gedoria**, TMO Researcher, won the Best Poster award during the 2019 International Conference on Biosphere and Sustainability held last July 24-26 for her poster entitled 'Testing Citizen Science for Determining the Presence and Occurrence of Selected Elasmobranch in the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, Cagayancillo, Philippines'.





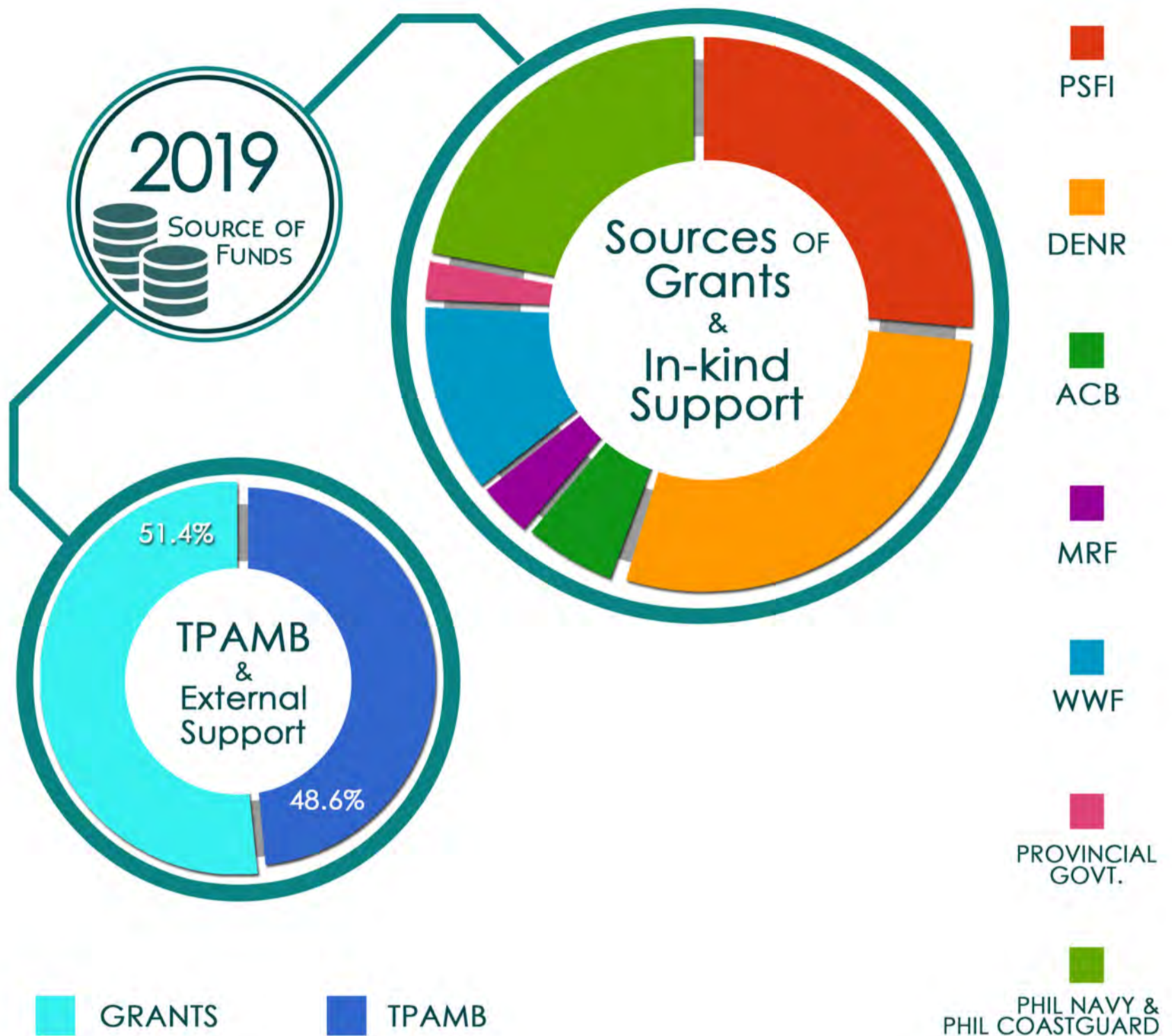
## WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME

The **PASu** was also inducted to **2020 Women Divers Hall of Fame**. The society recognizes women divers who have made outstanding contributions to the exploration, understanding, safety and enjoyment of the underwater world.

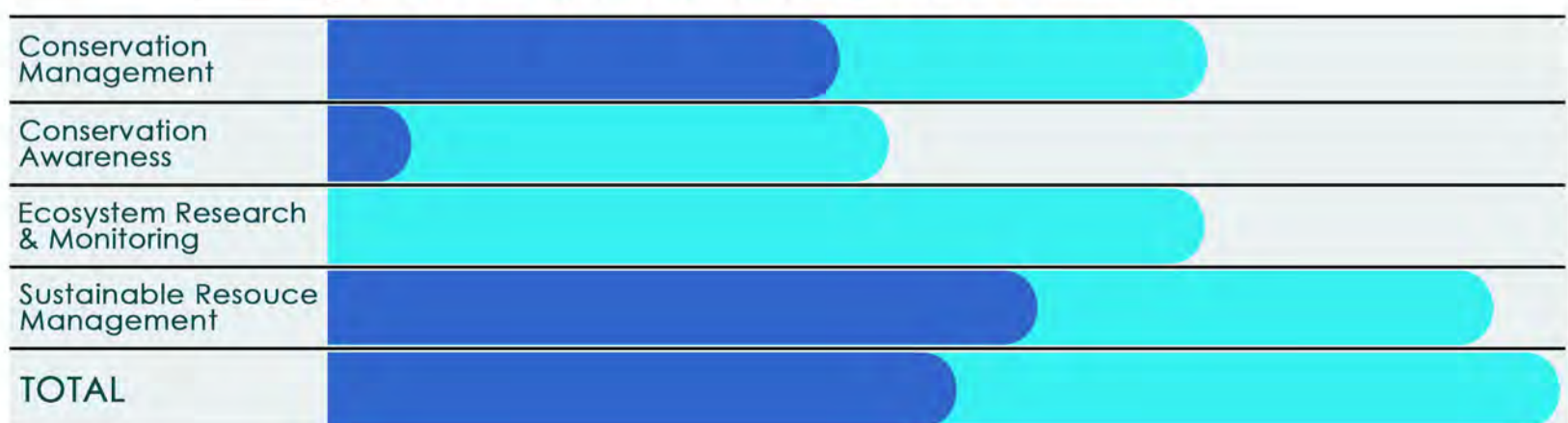


To inspire future and early career marine scientists, the **TPAMB** established the Tubbataha Award at the Philippine Association of Marine Science. The prize for the best oral and best poster presentations consists of a visit to Tubbataha for the winners.

# FINANCIALS



## 2019 EXPENDITURES PER PROGRAM AND SOURCE



## ISSUES:



The continuous battering of the waves and winds in the last 20 years has compromised the integrity of the ranger station. Our law enforcers need a safer place to live.



Bird Islet hosts the largest congregation of seabirds known in the Philippines today. However, the hard substrate that comprise the core of the Islet is now exposed by waves, wind, and the loss of all the trees, putting the seabird population at risk of homelessness.



Marine debris is increasing. The plastic cup caught in the mouth of this Brown Booby prevented it from feeding. This is only one of the many ways marine debris is affecting wildlife in our wild places.



Climate change is a major threat. Higher water temperatures cause coral bleaching. Stronger and more frequent storms and severe wave action cause coral breakage.

# PROSPECTS FOR 2020



The Provincial Government is poised to begin construction of this new ranger station this year.



A nursery of beach forest trees was established in TMO to assist the regeneration of trees in the South and Bird Islets. These trees will be planted at the onset of the rainy season in Bird & South Islets.





Another experiment to keep the tree-breeding seabirds, more nesting structures will be built, and nesting materials brought to Tubbataha from Puerto Princesa.



A carrying capacity study will be done by marine scientists from the University of Guam, De La Salle University, and the University of Florida. The study will be funded through KfW Stiftung-Bernhard-Grzimek Prize.

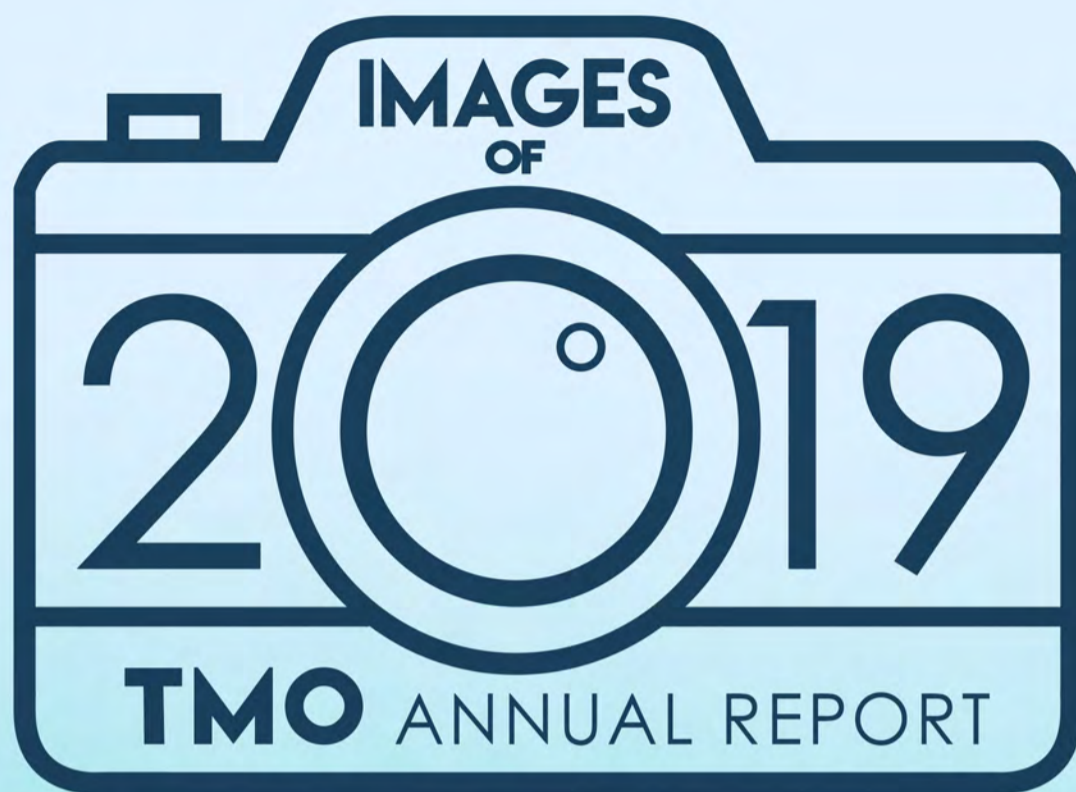


# TUBBATAHA MANAGEMENT OFFICE

## PERSONNEL CY 2019

ANGELIQUE M. SONGCO	Protected Area Superintendent
NOEL A. BUNDAL	Marine Park Ranger
SEGUNDO F. CONALES JR.	Marine Park Ranger/Researcher
JEFFREY M. DAVID	Marine Park Ranger/Researcher
CRESENCIO P. CARANAY JR.	Marine Park Ranger
MARIA RETCHIE C. PAGLIAWAN	Ecosystem Management Specialist II (Research Officer)
ROWELL C. ALARCON	Ecosystem Management Specialist I (Researcher)
GERLIE T. GEDORIA	Ecosystem Management Specialist I (Researcher)
MARY GRACE D. BARBER	Administrative Officer V
EMMALYN N. TURA	Tourism Officer I
VAL ANGELINE G. UNGSON	Public Relation Officer I
ELIZABETH D. ORDAS	Administrative Officer II (Cashier/Disbursing)
LYKA MAE P. IRANG	Administrative Officer II (Finance)
ANATALIA M. LIU	Administrative Officer II (HR/Budget)
ROSE LYN B. MAGBANUA	Administrative Assistant IV





For inquiries, please contact:

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