

TOURISM REPORT 2021



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Preface

This tourism report is intended to provide the TPAMB, stakeholders, and partners with information on demographics, issues, and recommendations from the private sector.

International tourist arrivals were down 83% in the first quarter of 2021 as widespread travel restrictions remained in place. However, the UNWTO Confidence Index showed signs of a low uptick in confidence. Between January and March 2021 destinations around the world welcomed 180 million fewer international arrivals compared to the first quarter of last year. Asia and the Pacific continued to suffer the lowest levels of activity with a 94% drop in international arrivals over the three-month period. Europe recorded the second-largest decline with -83%, followed by Africa (-81%), the Middle- East (-78%) and the Americas (-71%). This all follows on from the 73% fall in worldwide international tourist arrivals recorded in 2020, making it the worst year on record for the sector. (Barometer, UNWTO).

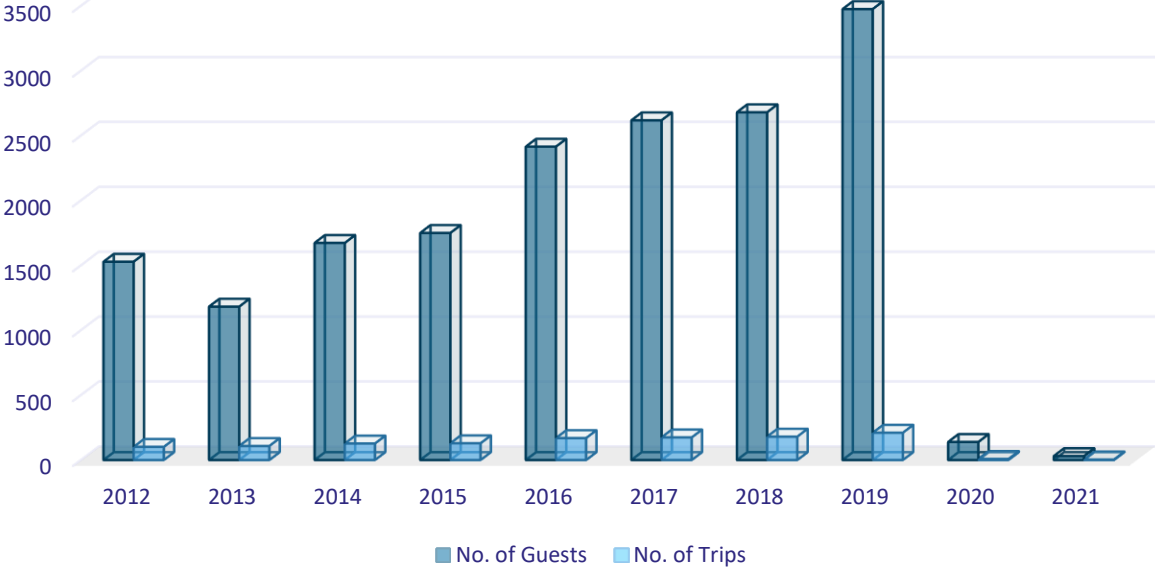
In 2021, the Tubbataha Management Office and the fifteen (15) regular commercial dive operators were greatly affected by the pandemic due to mandatory lockdowns imposed by the Philippine Government to prevent the continuous spread of COVID -19. In the second year of the pandemic, most of the dive operators opted not to operate due to travel restrictions on foreign tourists from outside the country and the mandatory 50% passenger's capacity of vessels imposed by MARINA in accordance with IATF resolutions.

Dive Trips and Demographics

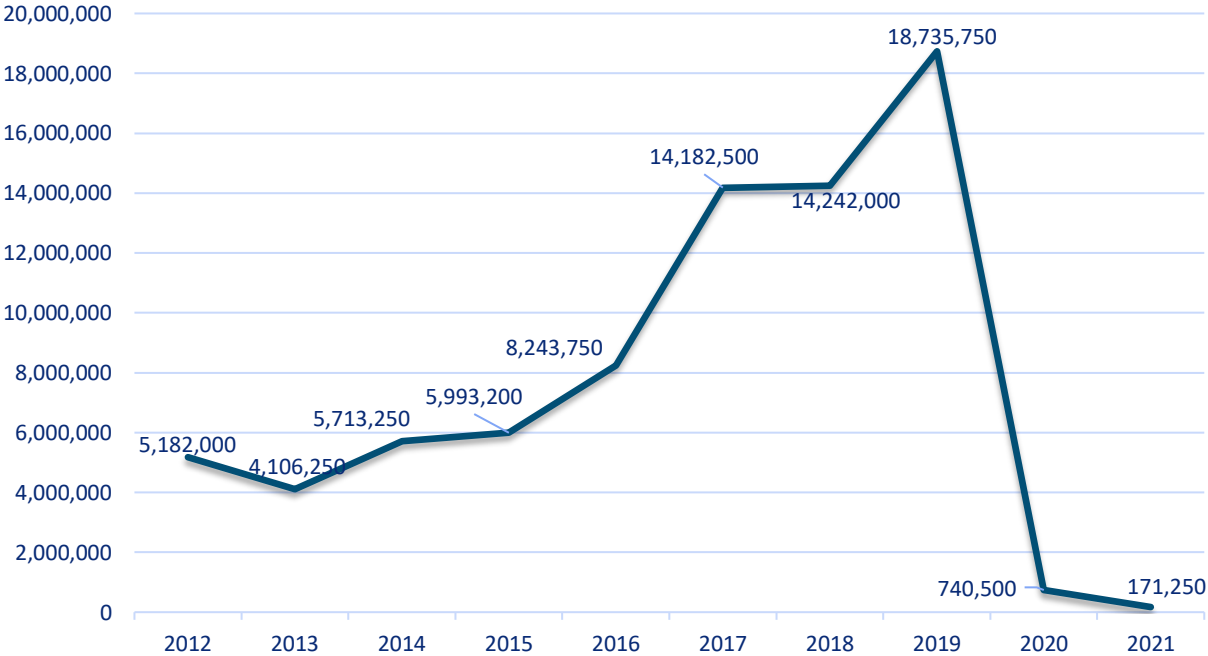
The 2021 diving season started with the entry of a private boat, M/Y Monsy from Cebu, the Philippines on 06 April. It ended on 20 June with the only trip conducted by M/V Dolphin from Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro. Only three (3) out of 15 dive boats operated this season due to the pandemic.

As of June 2021, only four (4) trips were conducted, fifty (50%) less compared to the number of trips in 2020. Therefore, a seventy-eight (78%) decrease in the number of visitors was recorded. From 139 in 2020 the number of visitors dropped to only 30 this year. The decrease was attributed to the travel restrictions and fewer visitors due to COVID -19 outbreak worldwide. The revenue this season was P171,250. This represents a decrease of 77% compared to last year's collections. This is the lowest recorded collection and visitors in the park in two decades of tourism operations.

Number of Trips and Guests 2012-2021



Revenues/fees



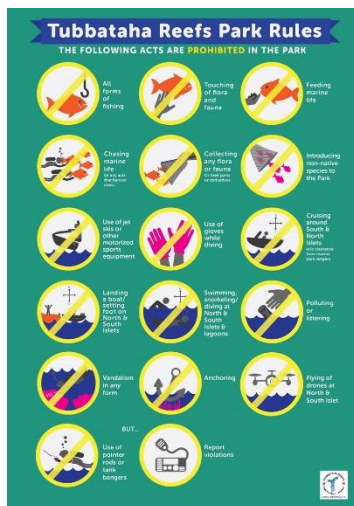
Pre-departure Briefings

Each dive season, Tubbataha Management Office (TMO) conducts briefings for visitors preceding their departure for Tubbataha to lessen the possible negative impacts of tourism activities to the Park. On-board briefings aim to:

- Increase visitor appreciation of the values of the Tubbataha Reefs.
- Increase visitors' understanding of the regulations and the rationale for their formulation.
- Provide a channel for visitors, diving professionals, and boat operators to present comments and suggestions to improve park management.

This year, the conduct of face-to-face pre-departure briefings was not possible due to COVID -19 outbreak. Additionally, due to travel restrictions in Puerto Princesa City, two (2) dive boats, M/Y Dolphin and M/Y Oceana Maria, and one (1) private yacht who were able to arrange a trip to Tubbataha set their route and itinerary from their point of origin to the park and vice versa. A local dive operator, M/Y Narayana, sailed from Puerto Princesa to the Tubbataha Reefs.

Despite the current situation, TMO staff provided briefing materials through email like infographics and videos of Park Rules and Regulations that the dive masters and boat managers played during their safety briefings prior to departure.

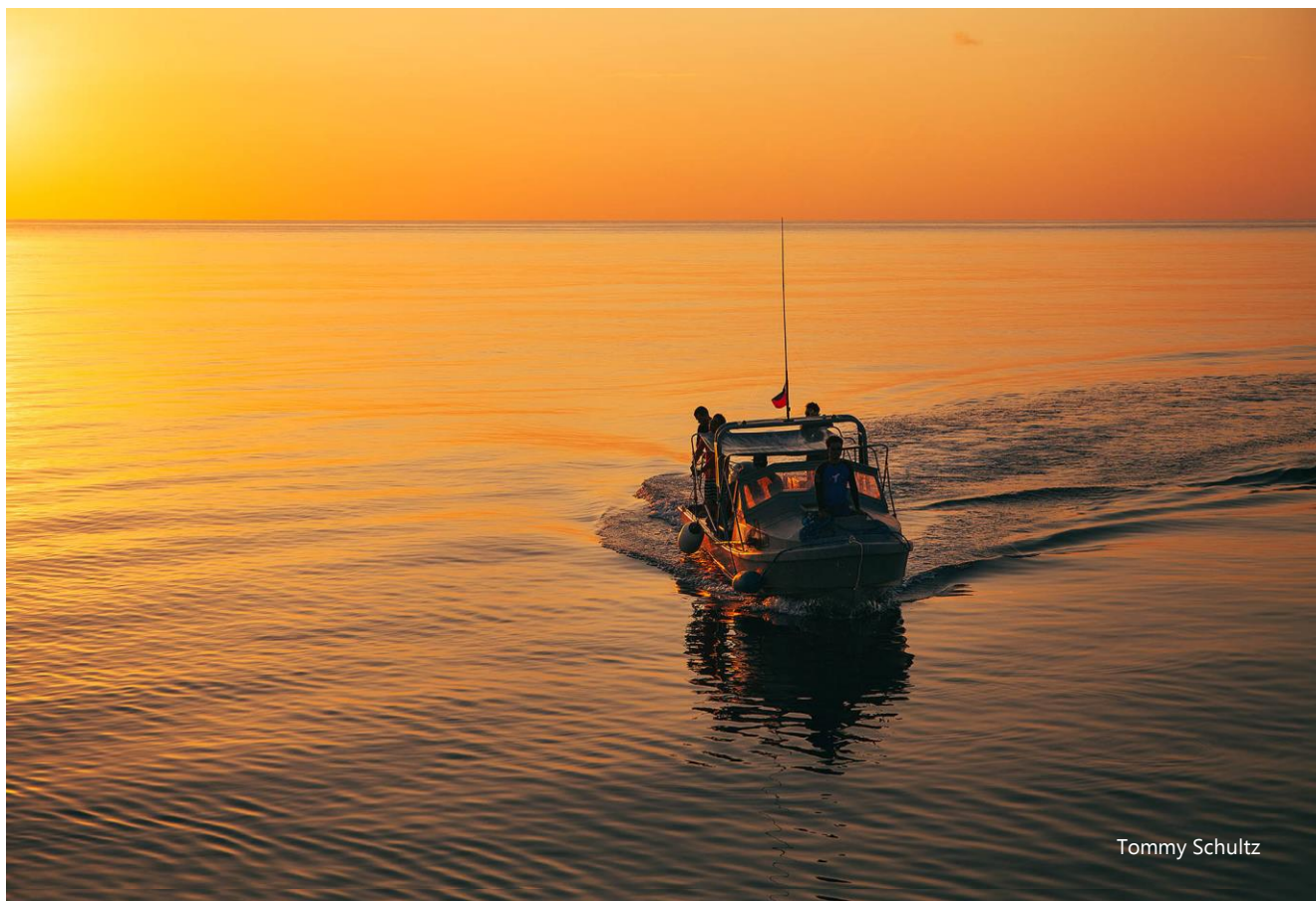


Infographic on Rules and Regulations



Video on Tubbataha Rules and Regulations

Compliance



There was a violation of the permitting system by M/Y Narayana. Boat owners Lydia, and Frank Kessner, were on board the M/Y Narayana during its voyage to Tubbataha from 28 April to 4 May 2021. Their names were not declared in the permit to enter the Park. Pursuing the trip to Tubbataha with crew members who were close contacts of Covid-positive individuals, the owners endangered the crew and passengers by exposing them to threats to public health.

On 04 May upon arrival in Puerto Princesa, boat crew, divemasters, guests, and Marine Park Rangers (MPRs) onboard M/Y Narayana underwent antigen and saliva tests. While waiting for the results of the saliva test of MPRs, they were quarantined separately in a hotel and PCG facility. All test results for Covid-19 were negative.

Last 15 June, during the Execom Meeting, upon discussion based on the letter of the response of Lydia Kessner, owner of M/Y Narayana, it was decided by the Committee that the operators be given a stern warning for their violation.

Research and Management Trips



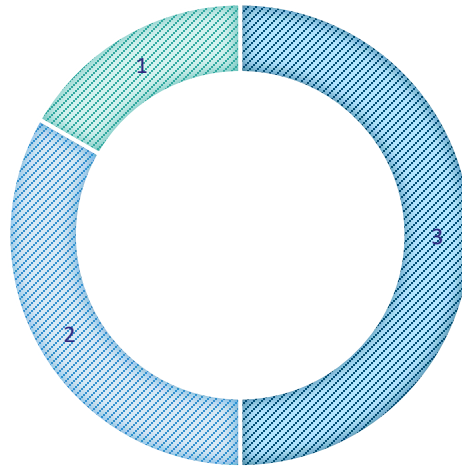
In 2021, four (4) entry permits were issued for trips related to tourism while a total of six (6) entry permits were issued for other trips such as research and management activities as of July.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) chartered M/Y Navorca, a research vessel, for the conduct of research and management trips, namely: fish and benthos survey, seabird survey, shark survey, water quality sampling, mooring buoy inspection, and relieving trip of Marine Park Rangers.

This year other vessels that entered the Park were M/Y Panata a research vessel of UP-MSI and M/BCA Mk- Lash, a boat engaged by the Municipality of Cagayancillo to transfer the beach forest tree saplings, Abok- Abok, and Anoling from Cagayancillo to Tubbataha. Lastly, PC381 of the Philippine Coast Guard and Bantay Dagat vessel of Cagayancillo to transport marine park rangers, supplies, and materials during the relieving trip last February and April.

NO. OF ENTRY PERMITS ISSUED

■ Research ■ Relieving ■ Sapling transfers



Drone Permits

Six (6) drone permits were issued for non-commercial purposes, two (2) from the guests who visited Tubbataha this season. Four (4) from researchers of UP-MSI with the purpose on deploying unmanned research vessels to advance marine and Environmental Health Monitoring and data collection in the Philippines – Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park last 21 May to June 02.

Issues

Below are the issues detailed by dive operators, diving professionals, and marine park rangers:

- Marine debris.
- Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 outbreak.