



Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park

PRIMER

7th edition

2021



Tommy Schultz

Because the ocean is still us

COVERD-19 may have changed the world beyond comprehension in the last year, but the work to protect one of the Philippines' greatest national and natural treasures has continued.

Despite drastic drops in the tourism and revenue that are the lifeblood of the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) in the Sulu Sea, Philippines, the park remains safeguarded and ranked among the world's most well-managed and successful marine protected areas (MPAs). Although the global health crisis has put day-to-day life on hold for the human race, management of this prized wonder continues along with the unceasing cycles of nature, and in recognition of constant threats to Tubbataha's integrity from human activity and pollution as well as natural processes and climate change.

*T*his primer is meant to share information on the Park, from its origins to its biological, aesthetic, and economic values to Filipinos and the rest of the region, who benefit from its largesse. This volume shares with you what makes Tubbataha unique, where it stands today, and what must be done to preserve it — a responsibility that must be passed on from today's guardians to the environmental stewards of tomorrow. It reveals how caring for Tubbataha necessitates a concerted effort, and how much more involvement and vision are required to secure its future and the future of the lives it serves.

This edition was made possible through a grant from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB). The ACB has supported Tubbataha in the past in research, capacity building, and education, and in other incalculable ways that have helped keep Tubbataha the jewel that it is.

We hope that reading this primer will help you know Tubbataha more, and come to a true understanding of its immeasurable value. Throughout the pandemic, the ocean has remained steadfast and inextricably linked to all of us. May our understanding then lead to conviction on the critical role each person can play in ensuring her legacy. And may this conviction lead to decisive action to help secure Tubbataha's future for always.





David Choy

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Tommy Schultz

*A*n underwater world of astounding color and beauty, where marine life is rich and the water intensely clear. A favorite destination for scuba-divers from all over the world, making it a significant contributor to country's tourism industry. A rich, abundant fisheries source that feeds and provides livelihood to a multitude of people in the region and beyond. A valuable laboratory where scientists have the opportunity to study animal behavior and natural ecosystem processes. A natural wonder recognized worldwide, and a consistent source of joy and pride for the Philippines and its people. Indeed, Tubbataha can be many different things to different people, all of them uplifting.





60 km

Palawan

PUERTO PRINCESA

10 to 17 hours'
boat ride from
Puerto Princesa
City, the capital of
Palawan

JESSIE BE
REEF

TUBBATAHA REEFS NATURAL PARK & WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Particularly Sensitive Sea
Area (PSSA) includes Core
and Buffer Zones

Last of the few
remaining intact
seabird rookeries
in Southeast Asia

Lighthouse first
built in the 1970s





Tubbataha lies near the apex of the Coral Triangle, the global center of marine biodiversity

Sulu Sea

CAGAYANCILLO

Contributes to the Philippine economy through tourism

Contains 67% of all coral genera in the world

Located in the middle of the Sulu Sea in Cagayancillo, Palawan

Total area: 970.3 km²

Protected under Republic Act No. 10067

EAZLEY

SOUTH ATOLL

NORTH ATOLL

The ranger station serves as center of field operations.

Important pathway and refuge for migratory species

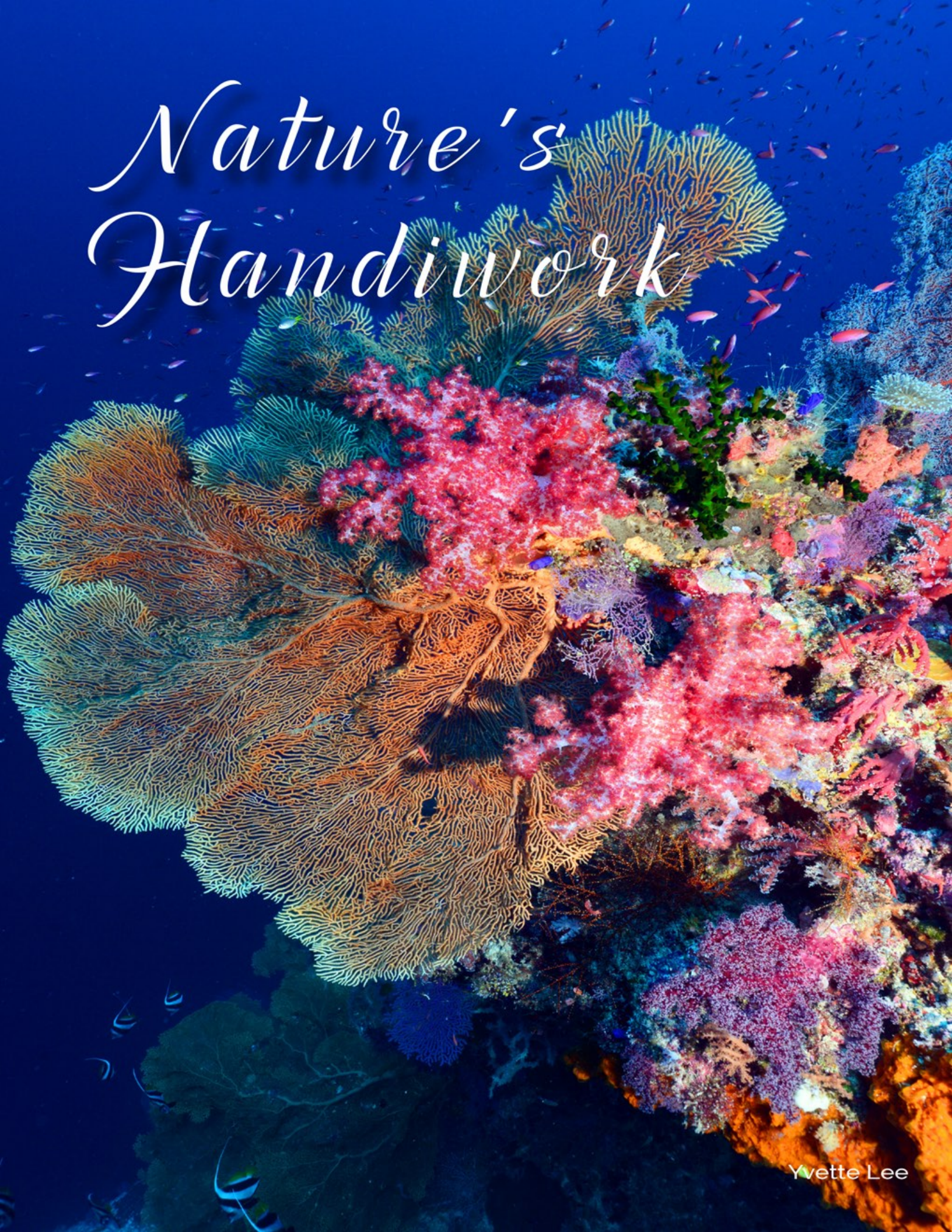
An underwater photograph featuring a sea turtle swimming over a coral reef. The sun is visible through the water's surface, creating a bright, starburst effect. The text "National and Natural Treasure" is overlaid in a white, cursive font.

*National
and Natural
Treasure*

Tet Lara

The Tubbataha Reefs are the centerpiece of the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP), a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the heart of the Sulu Sea. It sits at the apex of the Coral Triangle, a marine area in the tropical waters around Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste, renowned for having the highest recorded coral diversity on the planet. It is the only purely marine ASEAN Heritage Park. The Park is 93.2 miles (150 kilometers) southeast of Puerto Princesa City, the capital of the province of Palawan, and is part of the islands that make up the Municipality of Cagayancillo.

The TRNP is composed of the North Atoll, the smaller South Atoll, and the Jessie Beazley Reef, for a total area of 97,030 hectares (970.3 square kilometers), where absolutely no fishing or resource extraction is allowed. The South Atoll is marked by a lighthouse which was reconstructed by the Philippine Coast Guard in 2019. On the North Atoll, the tiny Bird Islet, which measures 1.3 hectares (13,000 square meters), is an important seabird roosting area. Jessie Beazley Reef is located 12.4 miles (20 kilometers) from the North Atoll. The only visible feature above water in this 45-hectare reef is a small sand cay made of coral rubble.



Nature's Handiwork

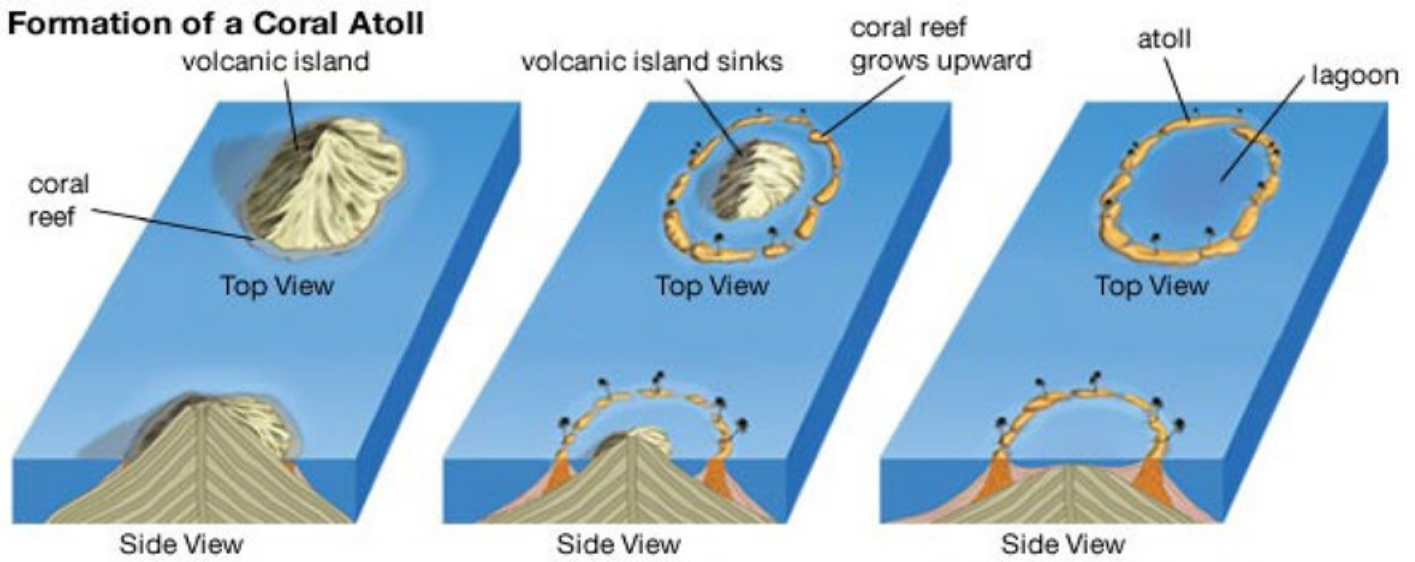
Yvette Lee

How did Tubbataha come to be?

*T*he Samal, a seafaring tribe of the Southern Philippines that makes its home in open seas, gave Tubbataha its name, which means "a long reef exposed at low tide" — a suggestion that centuries ago, the atolls (or ring-shaped reefs) were visible from the surface. In fact, studies have shown that Tubbataha is part of a chain of reefs running from Cagayancillo's Sultana Shoal to Tawi-Tawi's San Miguel Islands, a geographical feature known as the Cagayan Ridge.



Formation of a Coral Atoll



© 2006 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

From a geological perspective, the atolls may have formed on the sides of volcanoes which used to be found above the waves. Eventually, over millions of years, the volcanoes and surrounding land may have disappeared entirely underwater, while the fringing reefs continued to grow, eventually forming a lagoon.



The Cagayanons, inhabitants of the nearest settlements on the islands of Cagayancillo, have visited the thriving gusong (their name for "reef") during the calm summer months for generations, riding their native sailboats, the pangko, to fish for sustenance. One of the earliest mentions of the reefs in western accounts was in an 1878 navigation directory by Alexander George Finley, who described "Tub Bataha" of the "Cagayanes Islands" as "dangerous" reefs, perhaps due to unpredictable currents, as well as a place "teeming with sea birds."



Tommy Schultz

A full-page underwater photograph serves as the background. In the upper left, a scuba diver in a black wetsuit and mask is visible, looking towards a large school of fish. The fish, which have a distinctive green dorsal side and a pinkish-red ventral side, are swimming in a loose formation over a diverse coral reef. The water is a clear, deep blue, and the scene is brightly lit, likely by natural sunlight filtering down.

Living Laboratory

David Choy

Why is Tubbataha biologically important?

It's all about biological diversity or biodiversity, the variety of life forms existing in one area, and it can be seen in Tubbataha on a massive scale, being one of the most pristine marine protected areas (MPAs) in the Philippines. The reefs are in good condition, with 80 of the 119 coral genera found in the planet's waters, including some 150 threatened species, found here. It is home to 14 species of dolphins and whales, 23 species of sharks, skates, and rays, and about 700 species of fishes and counting.

Commonly seen pelagic species — species that live in the open ocean — include jacks, tuna, barracuda, manta rays, and sharks. Tubbataha is also home to one of the biggest populations of white tip reef sharks (*Triaenodon obesus*) known in the world. Such biodiversity makes Tubbataha a stable marine environment — that is, it remains resilient in the face of pressures that could damage weaker ecosystems.





Retch Pagliawan-Alak

*T*he Park is a refuge for 181 endangered species that would be more vulnerable in less isolated or protected areas. Among these are the charismatic whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), the gentle giant that is the world's largest fish; two species of sea turtles, the Endangered green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and the Critically Endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), which use the area as a developmental habitat; and the beautiful Endangered Napoleon wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*).





Above water, however, such biodiversity persists, as American naturalist Dean Worcester witnessed when he first saw "several large breeding groups" of seabirds in the area in 1911. Tubbataha remains one of the last few known seabird habitats and breeding grounds in Southeast Asia. Six species of seabirds breed and nest on the undisturbed space of Bird Islet in the North Atoll. This ideal setting has even encouraged the return of creatures considered long gone; after last being seen in 1995, a Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) reappeared in 2016, after 21 years. By 2019, it had found a mate, making them the only breeding pair on record in the Philippines.

ba



Yvette Lee



Precisely because it is such a rich, swirling soup of life, the Park serves as a control site and provides an ideal setting for the study of marine organisms and ocean processes. Scientists make the voyage regularly to study sharks, turtles, and other charismatic species, as well as currents and the effects of climate change and human pressure on the marine environment.



Tommy Schultz

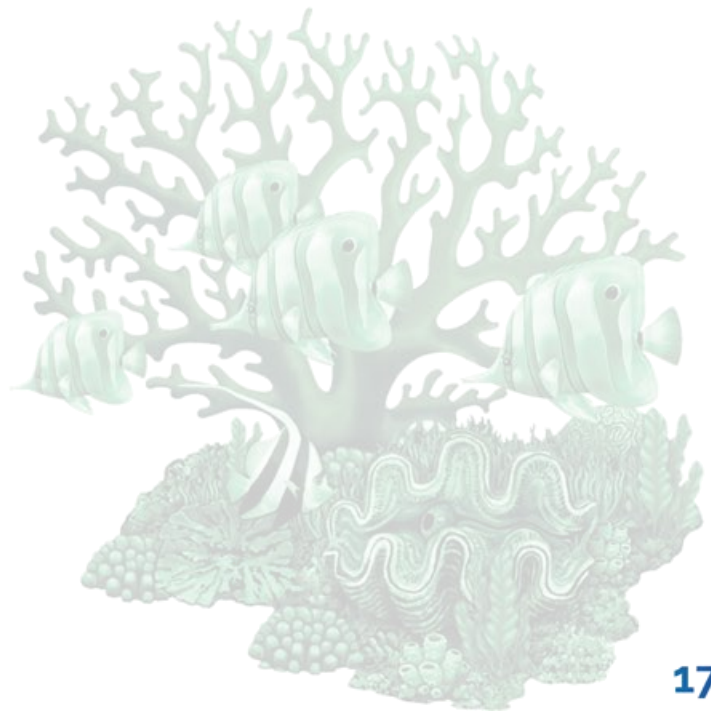
A large school of silver fish, possibly mackerels, swims in a tight formation from the top left towards the center. The water is clear blue. In the bottom right, a scuba diver in black gear and a yellow mask is visible. The bottom of the frame shows a diverse coral reef with various species of coral in shades of brown, orange, and green.

Depths of Abundance

David Choy

Does Tubbataha have economic value?

In an archipelago where fishing remains a main livelihood for people, Tubbataha is a valuable food source, from where currents carry fish and coral larvae, and their rich nutrient sources to fishing areas beyond the Sulu Sea, providing food to many communities. Not factoring in the places to which this natural bounty has dispersed beyond the Park's borders, studies have conservatively estimated Tubbataha's annual hypothetical fish yield at 3,968 tons (3.6 million kilograms), fish which disperse hundreds of millions of eggs to fishing grounds around the area — enough to meet the requirements of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos.





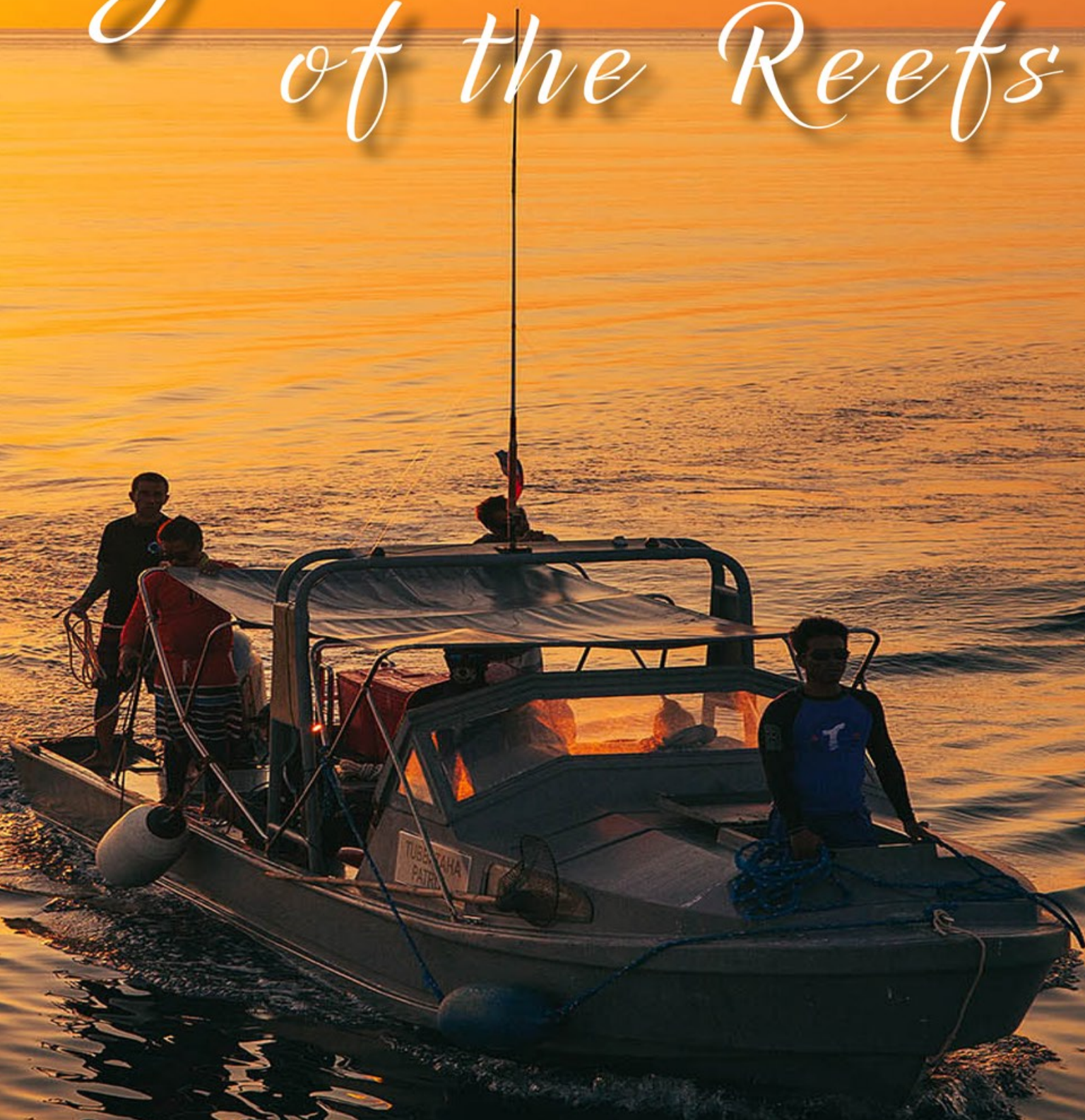
Tubbataha is a no-take zone, and its main source of revenue is tourism. Since the first tourist boat visited Tubbataha in 1978, divers have come from all over the world to take advantage of the short dive season from March to June. The remoteness of the reefs, and their exposure to monsoon winds and the consequent rough seas, make travel beyond the dive season near impossible for tourists, although management and scientific work continue.

During the summer months, however, divers are treated to lush underwater landscapes, dramatic drop-offs, and varying currents that bring in huge schools of fish and large animals like sharks, rays, and tuna. The same currents feed the corals, resulting in colorful gardens of soft and hard growth that make every dive truly spectacular.



Yvette Lee

Guardians of the Reefs

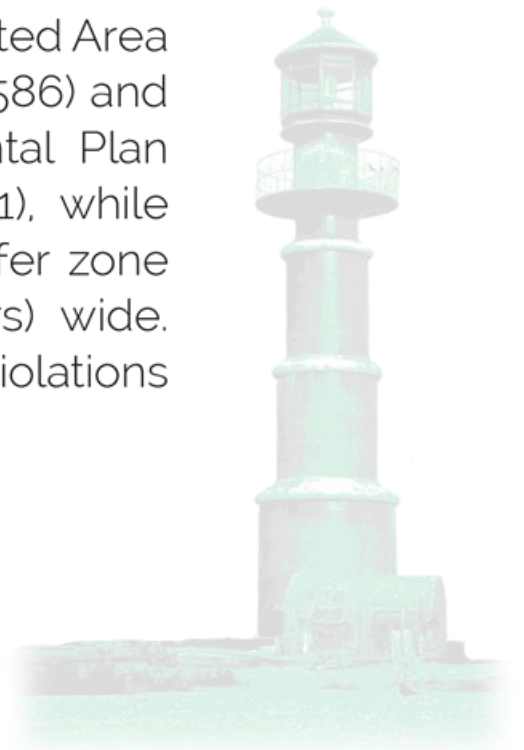


Tommy Schultz

Who takes care of Tubbataha?

It was President Corazon Aquino who first established the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park (TRNMP) on 11 August 1988 through Presidential Proclamation (PP) No. 306. This was amended on 23 August 2006 through PP No. 1126, which changed the name to the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) and expanded it to almost thrice its original size, with the inclusion of Jessie Beazley Reef.

On 6 April 2010, Republic Act No. 10067, the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) Act of 2009, was enacted to guide the management of the Park. It established a no-take zone of 97,030 hectares (970.3 square kilometers) under the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) Act (RA 7586) and the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan Act (RA 7611), while adding a surrounding buffer zone 11.5 miles (18.5 kilometers) wide. Heavier penalties for violations were also put in place.



The Mission and Vision are the responsibility of the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board (TPAMB), created to manage the Park and first convened in 1999. The Tubbataha Management Office (TMO) was created in 2001 to implement the policies of the TPAMB.

The TPAMB's first chairperson was former Palawan Governor Salvador P. Socrates. The Board meets quarterly. Co-chairs are the Chairperson of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and the Regional Director, Region IV-B of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Representatives of national and local governments, non-government organizations, the academe, and the private sector make up the other 19 members. Nine TPAMB members form the Executive Committee, which meets monthly to discuss more immediate concerns.

The TMO was established by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Philippines, with funds from the United Nations Development Program-Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF). WWF helped develop the TMO's capacity and capability for operations management before the office began its work in earnest as the TPAMB's operations arm. The TMO is headed by a Protected Area Superintendent, and has three objectives:

- to protect all life and maintain ecological balance within the Tubbataha Reefs;
- to provide benefits to diverse communities; and
- to inspire stakeholder representation, stewardship, and support.

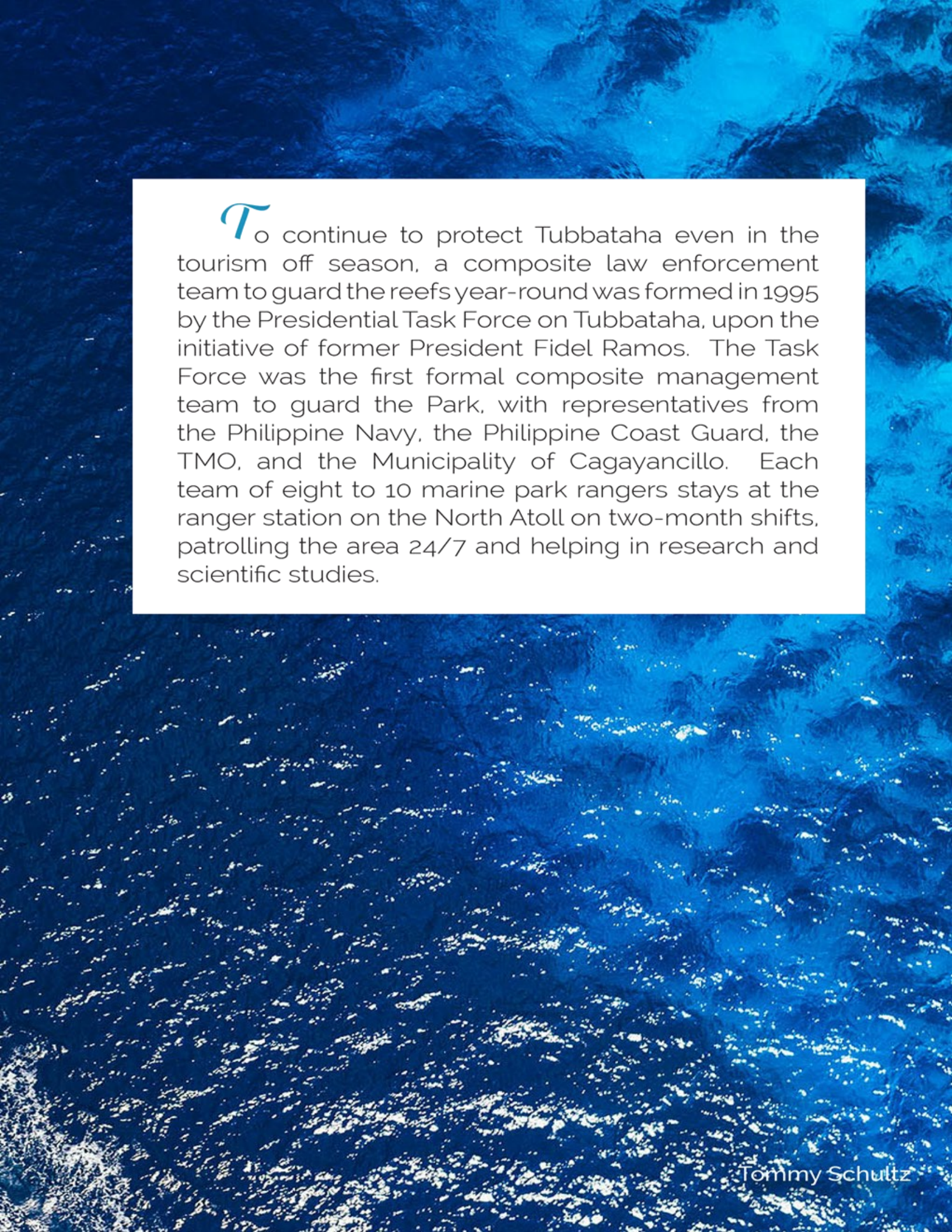


TMO File Photo

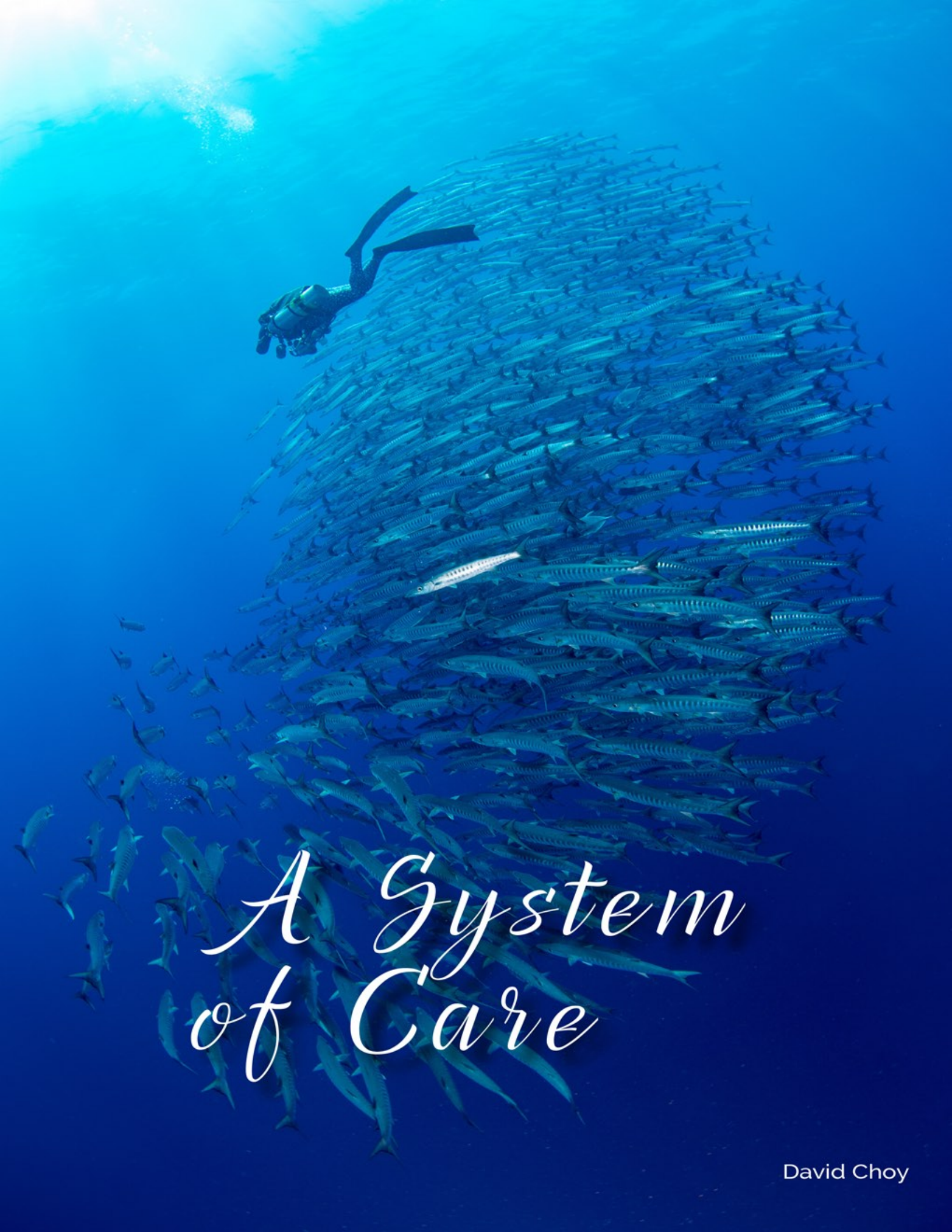
The TPAMB Vision is to maintain ecological integrity, contribute to equitable distribution of benefits, and sustain socio-economic development throughout the generations.

Its Mission is to conserve the outstanding universal value of Tubbataha through: responsible stewardship and genuine partnerships.





To continue to protect Tubbataha even in the tourism off season, a composite law enforcement team to guard the reefs year-round was formed in 1995 by the Presidential Task Force on Tubbataha, upon the initiative of former President Fidel Ramos. The Task Force was the first formal composite management team to guard the Park, with representatives from the Philippine Navy, the Philippine Coast Guard, the TMO, and the Municipality of Cagayancillo. Each team of eight to 10 marine park rangers stays at the ranger station on the North Atoll on two-month shifts, patrolling the area 24/7 and helping in research and scientific studies.

A full-page underwater photograph serves as the background. It depicts a diver in the upper left, looking down at a colossal, dense school of fish that fills the center and right portions of the frame. The water is a deep, clear blue, and sunlight filters down from the top left corner, creating a shimmering effect. The fish are small and silvery, moving in a highly coordinated, swirling pattern.

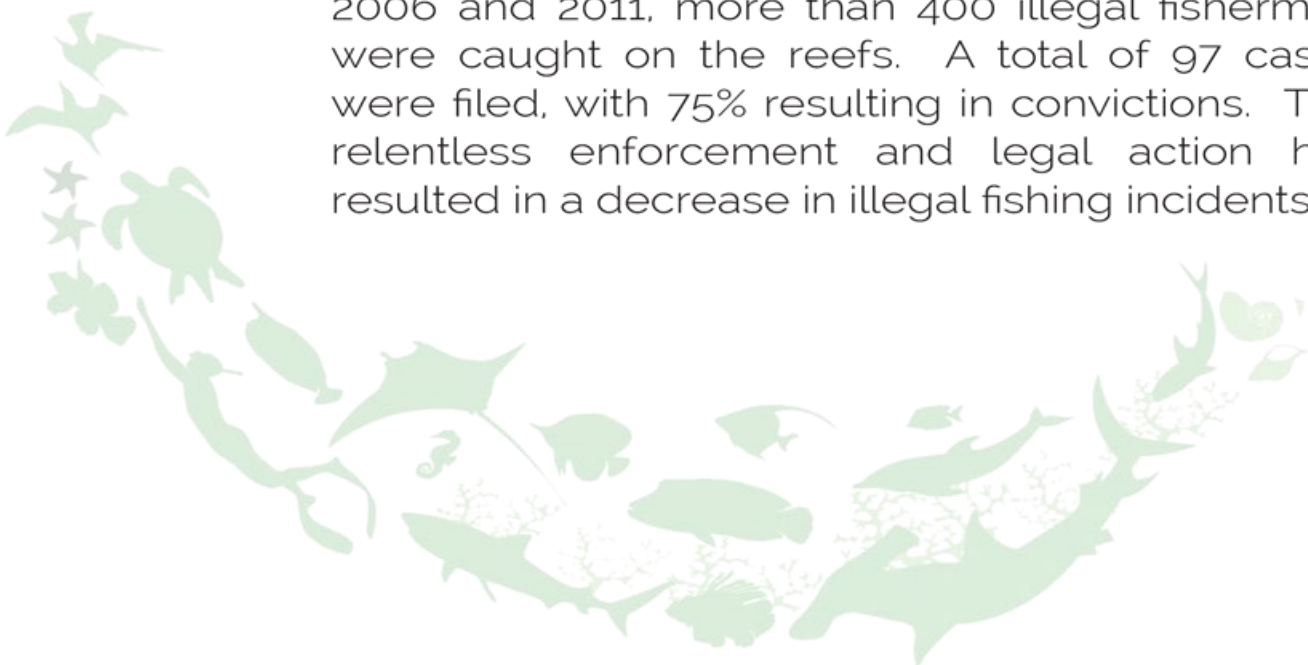
A System of Care

David Choy

How is Tubbataha managed?

Responsible stewardship and genuine partnerships are the main pillars in the Management Plan for Tubbataha, along with an emphasis on collaboration and networking with various institutions and entities, both in the Philippines and internationally.

The Tubbataha Management Plan consists of four major programs. The Conservation Management Program involves capacity development, enforcement, tourism management, and revenue generation. This program supervises the human and institutional infrastructure needed to safeguard Tubbataha, as obeying rules and regulations is critical to its protection. Between 2006 and 2011, more than 400 illegal fishermen were caught on the reefs. A total of 97 cases were filed, with 75% resulting in convictions. The relentless enforcement and legal action has resulted in a decrease in illegal fishing incidents.





webinar

ASEAN Heritage Parks and COVID-19 Pandemic: Impacts, Responses, and Recovery

11 September 2020, 14:30 (GMT+7) / 15:30 (GMT+8)



Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim
Executive Director
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity



Ir. Wiratno, M.Sc.
Director General of Conservation
on Natural Resources and Ecosystem
Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Indonesia



Ms. Indra Exploitasia, DVM
Director of Biodiversity Conservation
Directorate General of Conservation
on Natural Resources and Ecosystem
Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Indonesia



Ms. Angeliqne Songco
Protected Area Superintendent
Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park
Philippines



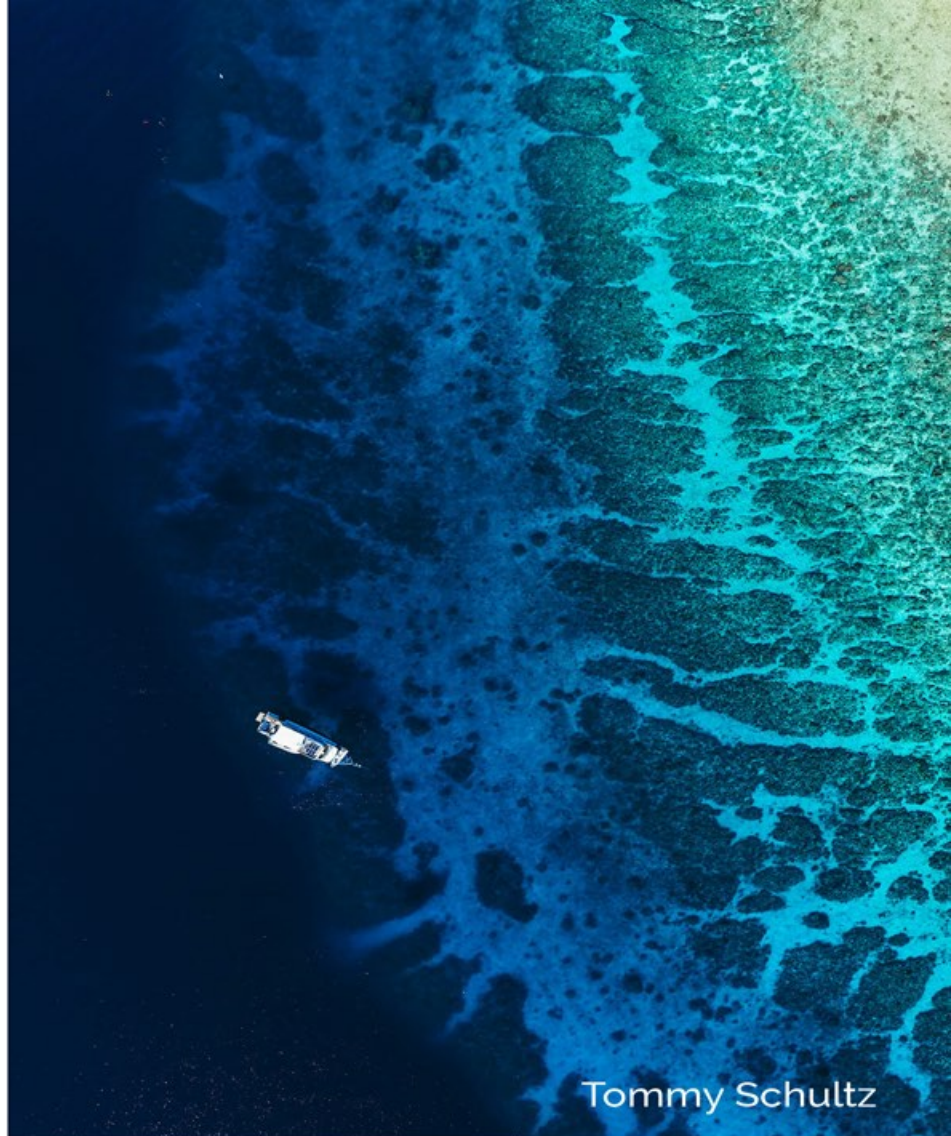
Mr. H. Duong
Deputy
Huong
Viet N



Tubbataha's main source of funds is the conservation fees paid by scuba-divers visiting the reefs. Visitors also lend a hand in data gathering for research, logistical support, and making donations and contributions to Tubbataha's upkeep.

The Conservation Awareness Program aims to develop a sense of stewardship by carrying out communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) efforts to make the Park known, highlight the rules and regulations in the area, and generate interest in and support for conservation and the marine environment in general.

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, briefings and talks on Tubbataha, the TRNP Act, park rules, and the environment were given in local communities, government agencies, and schools, to scuba-divers on board dive boats, and to private companies and groups. The TMO CEPA team, which includes a number of Tubbataha Youth Ambassadors, visited schools and coastal villages throughout Palawan.



Since the pandemic, the TMO has shifted to online means of getting the message across, conducting webinars and giving talks to schools, companies, and organizations on the marine environment and the natural patrimony that is Tubbataha. The TMO continues to develop educational materials (such as workbooks and modules) for school children, instructional videos for students and the public, and information made available online.

The Ecosystem Research and Monitoring Program includes annual surveys of Park conditions, with a census of coral cover and populations of fish, seabirds, and other marine species. The data guide management decisions and appropriate actions that need to be taken. For example, a continuing decrease in the population of Black Noddies on Bird Islet due to loss of habitat has spurred the marine park rangers to build nesting structures on the islet, virtual "condominiums" where the birds can nest in relative peace and safety.





TMO File Photos

Finally, the Sustainable Resource Management Program is focused on Tubbataha's home municipality of Cagayancillo, for which 10% of Tubbataha's tourism revenue is allocated. The funds go to coastal resource management and alternative livelihood activities, as Tubbataha is a no-take zone for Cagayancillo's fishermen.

An underwater photograph featuring a scuba diver in full gear on the right side, swimming towards the left. The diver is wearing a black wetsuit, a mask, and fins. To the left of the diver is a large, intricate coral reef structure. The coral includes a large, flat, fan-like structure at the top, a dense cluster of red, branching coral in the middle, and a large, bushy red coral at the bottom. The water is a deep blue, and the overall scene is illuminated by natural light from above.

Philippine Pride

David Choy

Is Tubbataha known around the world?

Tubbataha has come a long way from being a remote wilderness to one of the most famous dive destinations and preserved ecosystems on the planet. After being declared a marine protected area in 1988, it was inscribed as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 11 December 1993, cited for its outstanding beauty, significant ecological processes, and importance as a natural habitat for the conservation of biological diversity. The listing of World Heritage Sites was the result of the 1972 United Nations Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, focusing on the preservation of cultural sites and the conservation of nature. As of 2019, Tubbataha was one of only 50 marine World Heritage Sites.



On 12 November 1999, the Park was also inscribed on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971.

In May 2014, Tubbataha was named as one of four flagship sites of the Coral Triangle Marine Protected Area System (CTMPAS) for being an outstanding example of environmental and biological science and education, as well as a model for protected area management. These flagship sites are defined as "large, already effectively managed sites that have regional ecological, governance, and socioeconomic importance."



On 31 October 2014, Tubbataha was declared an ASEAN Heritage Park (AHP), the first Philippine marine protected area to be recognized as such. AHPs are selected protected areas in the region known as important conservation areas for their unique biodiversity and ecosystems, chosen after the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves of 1984. A total of 50 AHPs have been established, nine of them in the Philippines. Tubbataha is the only purely marine AHP in the region to date.



In May 2015, Tubbataha was recognized as one of three Flyway Network Sites in the Philippines under the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), launched in 2006 to protect migratory waterbirds and their habitats. This recognition augurs well for the conservation of Tubbataha's seabirds.



In his first maritime expedition to Southeast Asia in April 2016, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco headed for Tubbataha, where he installed satellite tags on turtles. The visit was organized by the Philippines' Honorary Consul to Monaco, Patricia Zobel de Ayala.

The following year, on 27 June 2017, upon the invitation of Prince Albert, a photo exhibit on Tubbataha was held at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, through the efforts of Consul Zobel de Ayala. National Geographic photographers David Doubilet and Jennifer Hayes, and Maria Teresa Lara, whose photographs were featured in the 2016 coffee-table book Tubbataha: A National Treasure, contributed works to the exhibit — the first-ever exhibit on Tubbataha to be held outside the Philippines.

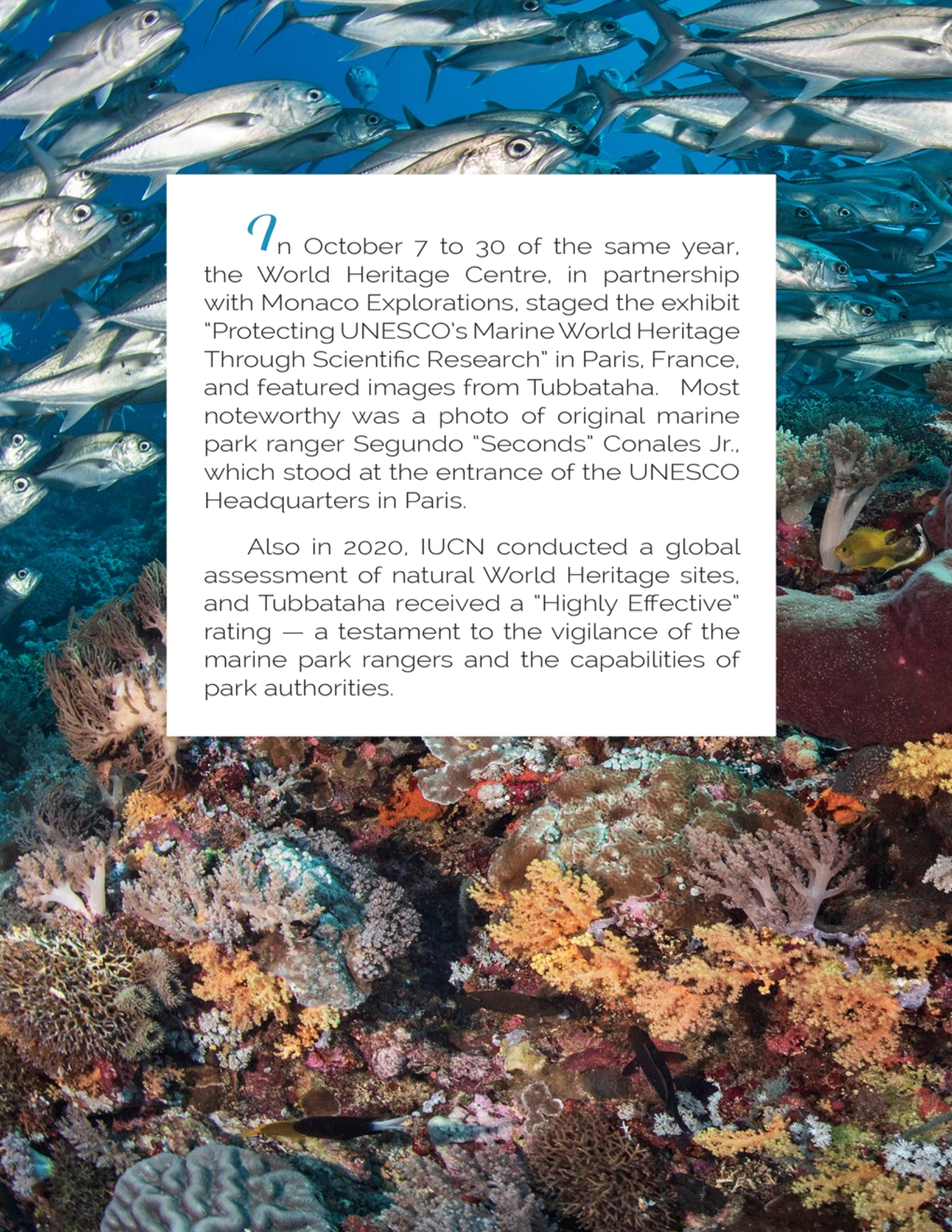
Also in 2017, Tubbataha was declared a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in July, the first in Southeast Asia. This welcome development helps control international maritime activities in the Sulu Sea, and limits the accompanying potential threats such activities bring to marine life.



In a singular honor, TRNP joined the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the United States and the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary in Colombia as the first-ever Platinum Global Ocean Refuge System (now known as the Blue Parks) awardees on 5 September 2017. The three were identified as the most effective large no-take MPAs in the world, chosen by a Scientific Council that will continually review each MPA's continuous adherence to set standards.

In 2020, in further acknowledgement of Tubbataha's reputation as an excellently managed protected area, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Protected Areas Programme invited Tubbataha to be part of its 7th Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), focused on MPAs. Protected Area Superintendent Angelique Songco shared the Tubbataha story in one of the program modules, launched in 2021.





In October 7 to 30 of the same year, the World Heritage Centre, in partnership with Monaco Explorations, staged the exhibit "Protecting UNESCO's Marine World Heritage Through Scientific Research" in Paris, France, and featured images from Tubbataha. Most noteworthy was a photo of original marine park ranger Segundo "Seconds" Conales Jr., which stood at the entrance of the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

Also in 2020, IUCN conducted a global assessment of natural World Heritage sites, and Tubbataha received a "Highly Effective" rating — a testament to the vigilance of the marine park rangers and the capabilities of park authorities.



Trouble in Paradise



Yvette Lee

What troubles Tubbataha?

Because of COVID-19, the most immediate problem facing Tubbataha management has been the **decline in the number of visitors**. Since tourism is the Park's main source of revenue, a 96% drop between 2019 and 2020 is cause for worry.

Controlling **illegal fishing**, specifically fishers entering the park to harvest marine life, remains a challenge because of the size of the TRNP. Such fishers hazard breaking the law because of depleted fishing grounds elsewhere. Although incidents have declined significantly over the years, marine park rangers continue to patrol to keep this constant threat at bay.





Retch Pagliawan-Alaba

The global problem of **marine debris** has not spared Tubbataha, as plastic waste is brought into the Park even from far-off places. The greater danger is that debris is mistaken for food by marine animals, with ingestion causing injury or death. Even the nests of seabirds have been seen to be increasingly made of plastic, proof of the abundance of the material. Part of the marine park rangers' work is collecting such debris from beaches and the water, with non-biodegradable material like plastic taken all the way back to Puerto Princesa for disposal.

In 2013, the American warship USS Guardian and the Chinese fishing boat Min Ping Yu both ran **aground** in Tubbataha, causing significant damage to the reefs and underscoring the negative impacts of **shipping and maritime traffic** on the Park. Although shipping is an economical way to transport goods and people all over the world, the prospect of more groundings, marine debris, oil and chemical spills, and the introduction of alien invasive species all put the ecosystem at risk. In July 2017, the IMO's designation



TMO Elle Photo

of Tubbataha as a PSSA means that no ships above 150 gross tons may pass within the buffer zone of the Park.

Beach erosion has affected the Bird Islet of Tubbataha, the effect of wave and tidal action and other factors. Bird Islet has been reduced in size from 60,000 square meters, as first recorded in 1911, to 19,000 square meters in 2020. Because it is an important seabird roosting area in the country, its continued erosion and possible loss would threaten the very existence of the seabird population.

Finally, the specter of **climate change** looms over Tubbataha, as it does over the entire planet — the single biggest threat to the life on the reefs. Warmer sea temperatures and ocean acidification, among other effects of global warming, can stress marine life, and lead to coral bleaching and death. The reefs recovered well from bleaching episodes in the past, which affected up to 19% of the hard corals, thanks to their resilience. Still, constant safeguarding of Tubbataha from a myriad of man-made threats is critical if it is to continue to thrive.



A Call to Stewardship

Yvette Lee

How can I help?

*D*onations in cash or kind remain the most immediate way to help. Whether big or small, contributions help protect the Tubbataha Reefs. For assistance for specific projects or of a specialized nature, please email the Tubbataha Management Office at tmo@tubbatahareefs.org.

Partnership programs with groups, companies, or organizations are welcome. Options include making Tubbataha a beneficiary of fundraising or corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects, or featuring Tubbataha in institutional materials or merchandise. Visit tubbatahareefs.org/wp/partner_with_us for more information.



*V*olunteers offering time and skills can also do much to help in the conservation of Tubbataha. Find out what and how you can contribute.

In day-to-day life, small steps can go a long way in ultimately ensuring that Tubbataha stays healthy and protected:

- Minimize your consumption.
- Dispose of garbage properly—80% of garbage at sea comes from land!
- Limit use of plastics and opt to recycle.
- Participate in conservation activities.
- Educate yourself about the environment.
- Do not buy endangered species, either for food or souvenirs.
- Encourage family and friends to support conservation.
- Report any illegal activities to authorities.

The future of this priceless treasure that is Tubbataha remains in our hands. We are our oceans, and our oceans are us. Be informed, be involved, and act now.



Yvette Lee

Tubbataha Timeline



1911
Collection of first seabird data by American naturalist Dean Worcester



1970
Cagayancillo first start fishing in Tubbataha lighthouse is built on South Island



1995
Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) is sighted for the last time



1993
Inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List



1991
Black Noddy subspecies (*Anous minutus worcesteri*) first documented



1996
First ranger station is built



Ramsar 1999
TPAMB is established; inscribed in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance



2000
Current ranger station is completed



TMO 2001
Tubbataha Management Office is established



2015
Joins the EAAFP



2014
Declared an ASEAN Heritage Park



2013
USS Guardian runs aground on Tubbataha Atoll; Chinese fishing vessel Yu runs aground on North Island



2016
Masked Booby returns after a 20-year absence



2020
Named one of three take MPAs in the world PSSA by IUCN

fishermen
Tubbataha;
built on
reef



1982
First scientific survey
is conducted in
Tubbataha and
Cagayancillo



1984
Research shows
dramatic decline
in coral cover as a
result of destructive
fishing



1988
Established as a
no-take marine
protected area
(MPA); seaweed
farm in North Atoll
is protested by
Palaweños



1990
Coral cover declines
by 52% due to fishing
pressure



1989
Tubbataha
Foundation, Inc.
manages the Park



2006
Park is expanded to include
Jessie Beazley Reef; Chinese
fishing vessel Hoi Wan is seized
with hundreds of Napoleon
wrasse on board



2008
Topshell (*Tectus
niloticus*) population
declines by 80%
due to illegal
harvesting



2002
Four Chinese fishing
vessels with 95 crew are
arrested for illegal fishing



2012
TRNP Act wins silver in Future
Policy Awards, which recognizes
best ocean policies



2010
Republic Act 10067
(TRNP Act of 2009) is
enacted



2017
Rated "Highly Effective" in the IUCN global
assessment of natural World Heritage;
featured in UNESCO exhibit in Paris, France



2020
Rated "Highly Effective" in the IUCN global
assessment of natural World Heritage;
featured in UNESCO exhibit in Paris, France

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