



National Parks in Luzon

You will find here information on all National Parks in Luzon.

Mt. Arayat National Park

An extinct volcano measuring 3,715 ha was declared as a National Park in 1933 intended for eco-tourism with overriding concern on conservation and preservation of the natural resources. The park is located at the municipality of Arayat in the province of Pampanga. The lush vegetation of the area nurtures wide variety of wild animals. On the foot the mountain is a picnic ground surrounded by lush foliage, waterfalls, fish ponds, swimming pools and other recreational facilities.

The Mt. Arayat National Park is one of the best places to trek. It has two trails going to the peak: peak 1 can be accessed from the municipality of Arayat, while the peak 2 can be access from the municipality of Magalang. There are two trails going to the peak of the mountain. It will take 3-4 hours hiking before reaching the peak 1. This peak has a spectacular panoramic view of Central Luzon: on the west is the view of the Pampanga River and the mountains of Zambales and Bataan while on the east is a magnificent view of the mountains of Sierra Madre range.

Aurora Memorial National Park

This quiet 5,676 ha forest park of Aurora Memorial National Park was established in 1937. The Aurora Memorial National Park is within the Sierra Madre, an elongated chain of mountains extending down the east coast of north and central Luzon Island. The park is surrounded by rainforest, mossy forest, river and springs. It has a rich vegetation and home of wide diversity of flora and fauna. Serves as a home to 19 amphibians, 30 reptiles (lizards, snakes and turtle) it also serves as a home to the endangered Philippine eagle and Luzon water redstart, vultures, falcons and hawks. Before entering the park a guide and permit is needed to proceed to the mountain peak.

In order to protect the natural resources and preserve the area, the park was subjected to various activities that will initiate rehabilitation and restoration of the area such as organizing and training five forest guard per community, establishment of communal nursery, agro-forestry area, translation of biodiversity data to layman's term, establishment of erosion bunds on the damaged sites of the forest, development of eco-tourism trails and site.

Balbalasang Balbalan National Park

In 1973, the Balbalasang Balbalan National Park was created. About 25 km west of Tabuk, the provincial capital of Kalinga Apayao and 50 km north of Bontoc is a peripheral forest encompassing 1,338 ha.

Balbalasang is a Banao dialect which means woodland dominated by a cluster of trees called Balasang, a kind of terrestrial tree with heights ranging from 6 to 15 m.

Elders of Balbalasang serve as protector of the forest. They set strict guidelines and regulation on the use of the forest with corresponding punishments for those who will not obey the regulation sets.

The forest park has a rich biodiversity. The mossy and pine forest as well as the hardwood were protected against destructive mining and deforestation that damaged the Cordillera region. Some of the habitats of the area are the 83 species of birds, in which 34 are endemic to the Philippines and the other 2 which can only be found in Luzon: the Isabela oriole and flame breasted fruit dove. Aside from birds there are other mammals that dwell in the area such as bats, civets, deer, macaques, rodents and warty pigs. The Luzon pygmy fruit bat and the Luzon bushy-tailed cloud rat are two of the endangered mammal species. In 2003, some new species where discovered in the area, a species of broad-handed tree rat known as *Carpomys melanurus*, and species of genus *Platymantis* frogs as well as the unknown blind snake.

The forest park is an unexplored ecotourism. Some of the attractions of the area are the mountain peaks, that will bring mountaineers glorious feeling; rock of ages, a long pine tree grows on the top of huge boulders on a very steep mountain ranges; Saltan River that runs through the heart of the village; the Spanish trail, that winds around the mountain and crosses all the way to Abra. It was used by the Spaniards during the colonial era; and the massive amount of waterfalls.

Bulusan Volcano National Park

Situated in the province of Sorsogon is a volcano with 3,673 ha of mountain range and an elevation of 5,077 ft. This stratovolcano has 3 craters on the southeast edge; two of those are crater lakes. It is one of the four most active volcanoes in the country; the other three are Mt. Mayon in Naga, Mt. Taal in Talisay and Mt. Kanlaon in Negros Island.

On 2 August 2007, the volcano erupted, showering ash 5 km away on the villages. It was recorded that the volcano erupted 18 times since 1892.

Mt. Bulusan was declared as a national park by the national government in 1935 to protect and preserve its ecosystem. The park is covered by mossy forests and rain forest, natural springs, rivers and the mystical Bulusan lake that has an elevation of 2,084 ft. Mt. Bulusan serves as home to some of amazing rare species of flora and fauna.

Mt. Banahaw National Park

The 3,539 ha Mt. Banahaw was proclaimed as a national park in 1941. Located 100 kilometers southeast of Manila and bounded on the north of Laguna Lake, the southeast of Bicol Peninsula and the end tip of Sierra Madre Mountains in the east. The mountain of Banahaw has a towering peak of 2,158 m above sea level. The mountain is considered to be an inactive volcano in which the last recorded eruption was in 1721. This sacred mountain is believed to be a storehouse of psychic energy. The geographical position of Mt. Banahaw is on the point wherein lines of the earth intersect, thus it create fields which allow higher rate of frequencies physiological or psychological.

The park has lush vegetation and houses a wide variety of animals. Some of the habitats in the park are wild pigs, deer, monkeys, and species of birds such as brown doves, hornbills, jungle fowls, tailor birds, orioles, and parakeets. Also found in the area are species of snakes and ground lizards. Varied flora can be seen in the area such as ferns, mosses, aerial plants and species of tree including red lauan, tanguile and mayapis. In 2004 a group of Filipino and American biologist discovers an unusual animal in the area. A small bright orange mammal (unusual to the other rodents found in the country), looks like a mouse and has a length of 8 cm and a 10 cm tail with a weight of 15 g, large head and heavily muscled jaws. One amazing characteristics of the mammal is the power of its small teeth that can open some very hard nuts of trees and the ability to eat the seeds of nut. This remarkable discovery is just a proof of how rich is the biodiversity in the area.

The park features unique stone formation, mystical cave and medical springs. Some of the well known caves in the area are Cave of Suffering, Cave of the Holy Mother with holy Water, Cave of the Virgin of Peace, Cave of the Nazarene, Cave of St. Paul, Cave of St. Peter, Cave of the Holy Child and Cave of St. Anges. Another attraction of the area is the series of waterfall.

Bataan National Park

Bordering Manila Bay in the east and South China Sea on the southwest is 23,668 ha island known as Bataan Peninsula. This island is surrounded by jungle and traversed by steep mountains from north to south. It consists of 12 municipalities: Balanga (provincial capital); Abucay; Bagac; Dinalupihan; Hermosa; Limay; Mariveles; Morong; Orani; Orion; Pilar; and Samal. In 1945 the entire peninsula was declared as a National Park.

Bataan covered by luxuriant vegetation is a home of a large number of cagey wild monkeys and other variety of insects and birds and species of fish. Mt. Natib has an elevation of 4,224 ft above sea level is the highest peak in the peninsula. Various varieties of flowers including ground orchids are present in the area. Along the valley of Mt. Natib is the Pasukulan Falls, a magnificent waterfalls surrounded by lush green.

Some of the attraction in the area are the Roosevelt National Park, the forest reserved area serves as a picnic ground and camp site to the visitors; the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Holy

Rosary; The Sibul spring, a recreation area with natural spring and sulfuric swimming pool; the Pasukulan and Dunsulan Falls, enchanting attractions at the heart of the forests; the export processing zone; the Talaga beach; Balon Anito hot spring; First Abucay Catholic Church, the site of the fierce battle of Dutch and Natives; and the Marker of the first strong line of defense at Dinalupihan, an area that commemorates the event of the World War II. Some of the things that will caught one's attention are the bomb-twisted Lorch Dock, Malinta Tunnel complex that serves as a headquarter during the war, Mile-long Barracks, the pre-war headquarter of the American garrison and Pacific War Memorial Museum.

Mt. Calavite National Park

Mt. Calavite National Park was created in 1920 to serve as a bird sanctuary and game refuge. The total land area is 17,000 ha. Located on the province of Mindoro Occidental, the area has large tracts of cogonal grassland and low land forest confined by ditches and steep slopes. The Mt. Calavite National Park also serves as home of the endangered endemic tamaraws, Mindoro tarctic, Mindoro bleeding-heart or punalada and spotted imperial-pigeon.

Mt. Data National Park

Mt. Data National Park is a 5,512 ha of land that is 50 km north of Baguio City along the Halsema Highways. This national park was created in 1936; it has an elevation of 2,310 m above sea level and stand astride the boundaries of Benguet, Mt. Province and Ifugao Province.

The area is sheltered by a few mossy and pine forest, and few scattered areas of manioc, most of the area has been developed into a commercial vegetable farms. There are interesting flowers that grow on shrubs, trees, vines and even on thick layer of leaf litter. The humus gives the ground a soft and rich feeling. During 1947 the mountain was considered as a very important site for the studies of Mammal taxonomy in the Philippines and it was also one of the ecosystems in the country who has a rich biodiversity. Through the year a lot of changes occurs and at present the long luxuriant vegetation is about to become a memory of the past. There are only few species of small mammal remains in the forest. The watershed forest is almost cleared and so extinction of endemic animals is emerging. The streams in the park are already chemically polluted and wasted due to the formation of headwaters of the largest rivers on Luzon, the Abra, Agno and Chico. A strike of massive erosion would surely damage the park which would cause a major human disaster. At present the status of the forest and the national park is being reviewed.

Hundred Islands National Park

Hundred Islands National Park is situated in Alaminos City in Pangasinan. It is 250 km from Manila. Declared as a national park in 1979, these small islands scattered like emeralds in the deep blue water of Pangasinan, is one of the country's treasured national park. The pristine beauty of the unexplored coves and islets would surely take your breath away. The Hundred Island National Park covers a land area of 1,884 ha with 123 islands during high tide and 124 islands at low tide. There are only three developed islands for tourists: The Governor Island has an area of 74,408 sq m, here you can find a wide view of the Park from its view deck. There is also a fully furnished 2 bedroom guesthouse with complete amenities which is ideal for family use; Quezon Island has an area of 13,667 sq m servers as a picnic ground and camp site; with an area of 24,053 sq m, Children's Island offers a panoramic view of the park. There is also a bahay kubos (wooden cottages) for budget travelers who wish to have an overnight stay in the island.

There are caves abound the park, about ten of these caves are open for public exploration. Each cave offers interesting limestone formations such as stalagmites, stalactites, columns and draperies. The caves serve as a dwelling place for bats. The deep sea serves as home to wide varieties of coral reefs which is a home for many species of fish. This also serves as a great site for kayaking, swimming and snorkeling. Visiting the park is one way of just being with nature and admiring the wonders of it.

Mt. Iglit-Baco National Park

The Mt. Iglit-Baco National Park is a 75,445 ha of mountain range in Occidental Mindoro. In 1970 it was declared as a national park, covers at least eight major river systems and rough terrain consisting of slopes, river gorges and plateaus. Here can find some rare faunas that are indigenous to the area which are hardly find in other parts of the country such as Almaciga, Kamagong, Kalantas and Tindalo.

The park serves as a dwelling place for endemic tamaraws or dwarf water buffaloes, which is seriously endangered. Aside from tamaraws there are also numbers of animal species and birds that found in the area. There are Philippine deer, wild pigs as well as Mindoro cloud rat. Some of the endemic birds in the area are heart pigeon, Mindoro imperial pigeon, Mindoro scops owl and scarlet collared flowerpecker.

Due to destructive farming and deforestation only about 3% of the area were preserved. Only a small part of lowland rain, mountains and cloud forest serves as home for threatened endemic animal and indigenous Mangyan tribe of Mindoro. In 1900 there were 10,000 tamaraws, as of 2007 there are only about 300 tamaraws seen in the area.

Mt. Isarog National Park

Mt. Isarog in Camarines Sur is 20 km east of the municipality of Naga and 420 km south of Manila. In 1938, it was proclaimed as a national park under the protection of Department of Environment and Natural Resources with partnership with the European Union for the Conservation of Nature. It has a total area of 10,112 ha. The park serves as refuge to endemic flora and fauna, waterfalls and to the indigenous Agta tribes.

Among the waterfalls found in the area, the 13 m Malabsay Falls is the most popular, with its magnificent waterfall and enchanting lagoon. Within the slope of gorge are beautiful rare floras and neon colored dragonflies fluttering around the lagoon.

The elevation of the mountain reaches at 1,976 meters above sea level. It serves as a haven to 1,300 species of floras including fascinating orchids, medicinal and flowering plants, hardwood trees, mosses, and ferns. There are also wild boars, deer, squirrels, monkeys and untamed rodents. A number of endemic animals also dwell here such as Mt. Isarog shrew mouse, Mt. Isarog Shrew rat, Isarog Shrew rat and the isolated forest frogs. Also seen in the park is a wide diversity of birds; there are about 143 kinds of birds in which 15 of those are endemic. The park is considered to be the last Rainforest Mountain in Southern Luzon. Here lies a number of the breath taking waterfalls both known unknown.

Mayon Volcano National Park

Established as a National Park in 1938, Mt. Mayon the volcano with most perfect cone and majestic height is known for its frequent eruptions. This 5,459 ha area is 553 km from Manila and 10 km from the gulf of Albay. Its summit measures 2,421 m above sea level. The cities surrounding Mayon Volcano are Legaspi City, Ligao City and Tabaco City.

Mayon Volcano is the most active volcano in the Philippines. Records show that there were 47 eruptions in the history prior to the 2006 eruption. The 1814 eruption was the most destructive that buried the town of Cagsawa, the bell tower of the town's church remains above the new surface.

The forest park fostered a wide diversity of floras and faunas. The mossy forest shelters large range of rare flora such as pitcher plant and tree ferns. There are also 156 species of plants belonging to dipterocarp species. Dwells here are 57 species of birds such as fruit doves and some endemic birds in the Philippines such as: the Philippine scops owl, Philippine horned owl, Philippine Hanging Parakeet and Philippine red jungle fowl. Other species in the area are herpetofauna and mammalian. The park is a good sight for mountain climbing, bird watching and photography.

Naujan Lake National Park

Situated on the northeast coast of Mindoro is a lake borders by four municipalities: Naujan, Pola, Socorro and Victoria in the province of Mindoro Oriental. The Naujan Lake has a total area of 10,875 ha. Proclaimed as a National Park in 1956, this large freshwater lake extends 14 km from north to south and 7 km from east to west. It has a very steep eastern shore with several hot springs while the west land rises gradually and has large area of swallow water rich in aquatic plant.

The lake serves as a crocodile sanctuary. The endangered endemic species of Philippine crocodile and estuarine crocodile still occurs in restricted area of the park. There is also diversity of marine life included species of ray finned fish, bigeye trevally and mangrove jack, there are also Indian milk fish, snakeheads, barracudas, tilapias and groupers.

A large number of duck and other waterfowl can be seen in the area. Some of the resident

species are common moonhen little grebe, purple heron, wandering whistling duck, Philippine duck, purple swamphen, little bittern, green-backed herons, white-browed crane, ruddy-breasted crane, white browed crane, watercock, white breasted waterhen, and little tern. There are also winter waterfowl such as tufted duck, purple swamphen and yellow bittern. The raptors white-bellied sea-eagle, brahmyn kite and collared kingfisher also occur at the lake. There is also luxuriant vegetation that provides peculiar enchantment. About 2,000 ha of the lake are dominated by marsh grass and floating mats. The surrounding areas are characterized as a mixture of forest, grassland with some orchard, scrub and coconut plantation.

Mt. Pulag National Park

Mt. Pulag National Park is known as a trekking destination of mountaineers. It is the second highest peak in the country with 11,550 ha of land mass and an elevation of 2,922 m above sea level. This area was proclaimed as a national park in 1987 to preserve its natural features. Positioned on the mountain range of Cordillera, within the region of Cordillera Administrative Region and Cagayan Valley, the mountain is characterized by steep to very steep slopes and rolling zones at the mountain peak.

This mossy forest serves as a natural habitat for endemic species of wild plants such as dwarf bamboo and benguet pineas; there are also different species of ferns and orchids as well as wild species of birds, Philippine deer, giant bushy tailed cloud rats and long haired fruit bats.

The park does not only serve as a habitat for large numbers of fauna but also serves as an important source of water for domestic to industrial use, irrigation and hydroelectric power production and aquaculture of the province.

Quezon National Park

The Quezon National Forest Park is situated within the three towns of Quezon namely Atimonan, Padre Burgos and Pagbilao with 983 ha and 366 m above sea level. It is just 180 km southeast of Manila and covers the western end of the isthmus of Luzon. The "Old Zigzag Road" or "Tourism Highway" passes through the middle of the forest park. Big vehicles are not allowed to use this way because of its steep grades. In 1934 the forest was declared as a National Park. Some of the interesting features of the park are the intricate system of caves, gorges, luxuriant greens, springs as well as waterfalls. Here you can find diversity of animals such as wide varieties of butterflies, monkeys, deer, wild pigs, monitor lizards, snakes and nocturnal animals. The park considered as bird sanctuary, abode of wild species of groul fowl resembling rooster known as Labuyo, parrots, tarctic, calaos, doves and pigeons.

The Park and Game Warden offers information and assistance to those wish to hike. The trek going to the peak of the park is trilling than exhilarating since the trail was well-defined and maintained. It takes two hours to reach the peak and observe the flourishing fauna and the interesting endemic creatures in the area. With a clear sky is a panoramic view of China Sea and Pacific Ocean.

Taal Volcano National Park

The Taal Volcano National Park is situated in the province of Batangas within the 12 municipalities: Agoncillo, Alitagtag, Balete, Cuenca, Laurel, Lipa, Malvar, Mataas na Kahoy, San Nicolas, Sta. Teresita, Tanuan and Talisay. From Talisay boats can be hired to take trekkers to the island and there are guides and information available for the trekkers.

4,537 ha of land, this crater within the island within in the lake was considered as a National Park in 1967. It has an elevation of 600 m above sea level. The volcano is a multifaceted cinder cones formed inside a large caldera. Its volcanic crater is more than 3m above sea level. The average depth of the lake is ranging from 15-20 m and it drops off to 172 m; swimming within the area is possible however the water is diluted from sulfuric acid with high concentration of boron, magnesium, aluminum and sodium.

The Taal Volcano National Park houses many species of flora and fauna. Some of the endemic species here are: the sea snake known as *Hydrophis sempero* or Duhol, despite of being an inhabitant of fresh water the Duhol has a salt glands that eliminate excess salt; the small saltwater fishlike tawilis (a species of *Sardinella*), the only fresh water sardine; and maliputo. Other species found in the area are algae, diatom, ostracod, reptiles and some varieties of marine life such as sponges, corals and fishes.

The Taal Volcano is one of the active volcanoes of the country. There are signs of strong

seismic activity, ground fracture and geyser formation.

Tirad Pass National Park

The peak of the park was created as a national shrine in 1938 in honour of the heroes led by Gregorio del Pilar who fought bravely against the American soldiers during the Fil-American War. The 6,320 ha land area of Mt. Tirad in the province of Ilocos Sur was the stand of Filipino Revolutionary Forces against American in 1899.

The shrine curves upward to the peak of Mt. Tirad. It was the site of battle record by international correspondents at the turn of the century. The apex of the Pass that Gregorio del Pilar and his men made a gallant stand against the American troops enable for President Emilio Aguinaldo to escape towards north. The young general, Gregorio del Pillar died during the bloody battle of Tirad Pass.