



National Parks in Visayas

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Bulabog-Putian National Park

Situated in the municipality of Dingle in the island of Panay is the the Bulabog-Putian which was established as a national park in 1961. The Bulabog Mountain has a total of 834,033 ha land mass and under the protection of the Department of Tourism. The development of the area as an ecotourism enfolded with rules and regulation that will protect the ecosystem and preserve the natural beauty of the area.

The park features caves, limestone rock formation, lake, natural springs such as Moroboro and Talinab springs both serve as an auxiliary source of waterworks in the area. The park is known for its forest caves, one of these is the Lungib cave that served as the armory of the Battle Cry of Panay. Phosphate rock deposits are found in the caves of the mountain. As an old growth forest it shelters a wide diversity of flora and fauna.

Kanlaon Volcano National Park

Located on the central highlands of Negros Occidental is stratovolcano. Mt Kanlaon was established as a National Park in 1934 for protection and preservation of the natural resources surrounding the area. It has a total land area of 24,557.6 ha. Mt. Kanlaon is surrounded by several craters and volcanic peak and serves as host to various waterfalls including the Sudlon and Quipot falls. It holds more than 40 km of foot trails leading to the apex of the mountain.

It is one of the remaining wild areas in the country. The park is a home to 197 species of flora, most of them are found in the lowland areas; there are 114 species of montane forest; and 29 species of mossy forest. The forest is surrounded by small to medium trees, gymnosperms, herbaceous species, orchids, vines, epiphytes and mosses as well as 80 species of endemic plants. The park serves as a habitat for numerous species of wild life. Here dwell the endangered endemic birds such as Negros fruit doves, and Negros bleeding heart pigeon. There are also warblers, bulbuls; blue crowned raquet tailed parrot, white-winged cuckoo-shrike, white-troated jungle flycatchers, flame-templed babbler, woodpeckers as well as the Visayan tarictic hornbill. It also houses huge harmless monitor lizards, flying lizards and species of snakes.

Reaching the summit-crater of the mountain is an exciting yet exhilarating activity, physically challenging but worth taking. The tropical wilderness of the Park offers a considerable insight on the work of nature.

Lake Danao National Park

In 1965, the 1,500 ha thickly forested hills of Leyte were declared as a National Park. Lake Danao is a small freshwater on Mount Danao (has an elevation of 1600 m); a paradise fosters lush selections of flora and faunas. The depth of the lake drop off to 182 m and the bottom is covered with sandy and clay sediments The Mountain is characterized as humid tropical forest with Imperata cylindrical. There are rice paddies and fields of sugar cane around the area. The area is popular for boating, swimming and deep sea fishing.

The park serves as a habitat for wide species of fish such as catfish, carp, Indian milk fish, tilapia and giant eels. There are also variety of waterfowl species such as ducks, egrets, grebes and herons. Trekking on the slopes of the surrounding ridges is the best aerial view of the lake.

Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park

The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park also known as St. Paul Subterranean River is located in the Saint Paul Mountain Range on the west coast of Palawan and 81 km northern coast of the Puerto Princesa. Declared as a national park in 1971, the land forms in this 3,901 ha of park are connected by rocky mountains running from north to south. The forest ecosystem has a momentous habitat for biodiversity conservation. Its underground river

serves as a home to other cove dwelling fauna. The forest houses numerous numbers of endangered endemic species such as the Palawan tree shrew, Palawan porcupine, Palawan stink badger, Palawan Pheasant Peacock and Philippine Cockatoo. Numerous monitor lizards and marine turtles are seen in the area. The park has luxuriant mangroves, mossy forest, sea grass beds as well as coral reefs

Its geographical feature is truly amazing. There is a limestone karsts mountain landscape with an 8.2 km with the long navigable underground river known as Cabayugan River, which winds through a 15 km St. Paul Subterranean, there one can have a glimpse of cathedral like caverns and domes before flowing directly into the South China Sea. Through the cave are several large chambers and wonderful formation of stalactites and stalagmites that houses large numbers of swiftlets and bats.

Raja Sikatuna National Park

The Raja Sikatuna National Park is the largest tract of forest in Bohol. It covers about 9,000 ha. The park has a numerous limestone formation and a well maintained trail going to its summit. The forest park serves as a dwelling for civet, tarsier, wild monkeys and monitor lizard as well to some endemic bird species in the Philippines. The park is one of the top birding spot of the country. Some of the birds that can be seen in the area are azure-breasted pitta, black-headed munia, black-napped monarch, black-crowned babbler, black-naped oriole, blue fantail, bicolored flowerpecker, orange-bellied flowerpecker, white-bellied woodpecker, Eurasian tree sparrow, cattle egret, yellow egret, Philippine Trogon, Winchell's kingfisher and white-eared brown dove. It also serves as a haven for wildcats, black lemurs and monkeys.

Sohoton Natural Bridge Natural Park

Sohoton Natural Bridge Natural Park was created in 1935 in order to preserve its geographical features. The park is a karst area with weathered rock and limestone formation, waterfalls, caves and subterranean river, situated in the town of Basey in the province of Samar. Here lies a natural carved structure made of limestone pillars bestriding two mountains.

It takes an hour drive from Tacloban to Basey and an hour boat ride going to the national park. The 840 ha Sohoton Natural Park has a rich ecosystem and heritage. During the Fil-American War the place has been a bastion of Filipino fighters against the American Force.

The cathedral-like caves serves as the three main areas in the park: Panhulugan I and II, the Sohoton and Bugosan. All caves in the area have been used as an entombment sites for the indigenous people in the area. The Sohoton Cave is one of the best attractions of the park; it is a cathedral like dome with spike-shaped crystalline stalactites hanging on the ceiling and stalagmites on the cave's floor. Within the dome is a 15 m foyer of a parabolic arch, a level floor and a 50 m high main chamber.

The Sohoton Natural Bridge is a huge natural arch-shaped rock bridge with a vertical clearance of 23 ft, 8 m width and 40 m length that connects the mountain ridges straddling the Sohoton River.

Ursula Island Game Refuge and Bird Sanctuary

Ursula Island is located at the municipality of Mataraza in the southwest of Sulu Sea and southeast of Rio Tuba of Bataraza a town in the southern part of the province of Palawan. It has a total land mass of 17. 2 hectares and was established as a Bird Sanctuary in 1960 to promote eco-tourism in the area. The southern side of the oval-shaped island is surrounded by a wide coral reef.

There are 150,000 migratory birds that use the island as their refuge during the cold winter months on the mainland China. Due to illegal human activities the numbers of birds dwelling in the area have been declining.

Tubbataha Reefs Marine Park

The Tubbataha Reef Marine Park is 33,200 ha of reef ecosystem was declared a marine sanctuary in 1988 and designated as a World Heritage Site of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1994. Situated in the middle of central Sulu Sea, with 98 nautical miles of southeast Puerto Princesa of Palawan, this marine park is consists of two large shallow reef platforms casing a sandy lagoon and vertical reef walls extending to 50 feet.

It has two atolls, namely the: North reefs, a 4-5 km wide large oblong shaped shallow reef platform completely covers a sandy lagoon; and the South reef a small shallow reef platform casing a sandy lagoon. This marine park is one of the well known tourist destination in the country. It is considered to be the best diving site because of its underwater visibility that can exceed 30 m seascape and its underwater caves teem with marine life. The area comprises of 46 coral genera, and 279 species of fish, 6 species of sharks and 2 species of dolphins. There are also species of algae and sea grasses found in the area.

Tourism plays a major role in keeping the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park. It provides awareness on reef's conservation as well as income need to run the park. A strong implementation of policy will lessen the threat of destruction of the natural resources of the marine sanctuary. bloody battle of Tirad Pass.