

MALAMPAYA SOUND

PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE

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General

Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape is located in northwestern Palawan. It is a watershed with a productive fishing ground called the Sound, an elongated body of water with diverse ecosystems such as the mangroves, sea-grasses and corals. It is divided into the Inner and the Outer Sound. The Inner Sound has brackish water and is the only place in the Philippines where one can see Irrawaddy dolphins. The Outer Sound is home to sea-grass, coral ecosystems and bottle-nose dolphins.

Malampaya, in the local dialect means, "rich in fish". It is a word by the Tagbanua people, the first inhabitants of the place who have given much of their land to other Filipinos who came to the area seeking a better life.

The protected area is rich in biodiversity and home to several species endemic to Palawan. These include the Tabon Bird, Palawan Peacock Pheasant, Green Imperial Pigeon, Palawan Racket-tailed Parrot, Palawan Malcoha, Palawan Hornbill, Talking Myna, Northern Palawan Lesser Tree Squirrel, Palawan Porcupine and Palawan Bearcat. Also found here are faunal species of national importance: the Philippine Mallard, Philippine Cockatoo, Hawksbill Turtle, Philippine Macaque, Irrawaddy Dolphins, Palm Civet, and flora such as Almaciga, Apitong, Narra, Molave, and Ipil.

The protected landscape and seascape lies within the municipalities of Taytay and San Vicente. For the residents, the main sources of income are fishing and farming. The tourism potential of the area is quite unexploited. This contributes to its charm. You won't find any handicrafts or other items for sale but the best of fresh or dried squid at very good prices.

Malampaya Sound is one in a series of protected environments along northwest Palawan. Traveling far-

ther north, you can reach El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area or farther south the Port Barton Marine Reserve and the Saint Paul Subterranean Water National Park in Puerto Princesa City.

Reaching Malampaya Sound

Malampaya Sound can be reached by sea and land, or by air and land.

Traveling by sea and land

Inter-island vessels ply the Manila-Puerto Princesa route twice a week. Negros Navigation [02. 2450601] leaves South Harbor, Manila every Thursday and the WG&A Lines [02.8943211] every Saturday. Fares range from PHP 700 to PHP 2,500. From Puerto Princesa City, take the Royale Bus or jeeps (PHP 200/person) at Malvar Street for a five-hour travel to Taytay. From here, another jeepney, the Marie Ann, will take you to Barangay New Guinlo where the Protected Area Office of Malampaya Sound is temporarily located. Marie Ann leaves at about 4pm and arrives late in the evening; it only goes on alternate days so you need to check the terminal. An alternative is hiring a van for PHP 6,000 from Puerto Princesa City to Malampaya Sound.

The west coast can be accessed directly by taking the Ramos bus from Puerto Princesa City to Alemanguan. You arrive early in the morning and then take a regular boat for PHP 100-150 to Caoban or Binga.

Traveling by air and land

Philippine Airlines [02.8150054] at the Centennial Terminal and Air Philippines [02.8437770] at the Old Domestic airport in Pasay City leave Manila for Puerto Princesa in the mornings everyday. One-way airfare is about PHP 5,000. From Puerto Princesa City, follow the



land transportation instruction above.

You can also go straight to Malampaya Sound through Sea Air [02.8918708], which leaves the Old Domestic Airport in Pasay City at 7:30 AM everyday and reaches the Sandoval Airport, Taytay in one hour and half. One-way fare is about PHP 5,000. If your flight arrives early enough, you can wait for a jeepney that will bring you to the Sound. There are motorbikes that can be hired for PHP 300 - 400.

From Sandoval Airport, you can ride the free transport services of Club Noah Isabelle (one of the most beautiful and high-end resorts in Northern Palawan) going to Poblacion Taytay. Then hire a boat from the island to Taytay. The fare ranges from PHP 500 to PHP 1,800 depending on the available boat. At the Poblacion, you can take a jeepney going to Malampaya Sound.

Protected Area Office

The Protected Area Office in Barangay New Guinlo provides information for visitors who want to tour the Sound. They are advised to register at the Office and inform the staff of their itinerary, purpose of visit, activities and duration of stay.

The following guidelines are for visitors:

- Observe proper waste disposal.
- Hire guides, boat operators and dive masters who are recommended by Barangay Captains and establishments.
- Stay in well-marked trails and established paths and campsites.
- Respect the indigenous peoples and residents' culture and traditions.
- Do not take any plant, plant materials, animals and animal materials.
- Get endorsement from the Protected Area Management Board before starting any activity, research and/or studies.

Local Eco-tourism Destinations and Cultural Activities

Hiking and Mountain Climbing

Mt. Capoaas. Rising 1, 030 m a.s.l., Mt. Capoaas is both a cultural icon and an enchanted mountain. Tropical forests are abundant, with dipterocarp forests thriving on the lower slopes and the mossy near the peak. Wildlife abounds. The mountain can be approached from three areas, Banbanen, sitio Caoban, and Minapla. From New Guinlo, you can hire a boat for about PHP 450 – PHP 600 depending on the size, to take you across the Inner Sound to Barangay Banbanen. The Barangay Captain will assign you a community guide who charges PHP 200/day. It is recommended that not more than four people travel together to make the best of the trip. The Banbanen route is recommended for those who want to take day trips. It goes up along the riverbed onto the low slopes and then across two small waterfalls. If these areas are approached slowly in the evening or early morning, you may see monkeys feeding on the flat rocks. Climbers are advised to go up to as high as 450 meters only to avoid dangerous falling rocks. The peak is a core zone and is prohibited to climbers.

If you want to go camping and take a longer walk in the forest, then go to Sitio Caoban which is on the

other side of the mountain. You can swim in its clean clear waters and then proceed to the lowland forests of Capaas. Do not enter any cave as these are sacred to the Tagbanua.

If you want a more challenging hike, take a three- or four-day trip to Barangay Minapla on the opposite side of Sitio Caoban on the West Coast. You can hire a boat at Caoban (for PHP 650-PHP 800) which takes you round the headland to Minapla. At Minapla the Barangay Captain will direct you to where you can camp. In the morning you can hire a guide from Minapla to take you up the trails through the forest in Capaas. Do not go up to the peak; it is dangerous and is reserved for research and tribal ceremonies.

You can walk over the hills back to Sitio Dapay where you have a previously arranged boat waiting for you and will bring you back to New Guinlo. If you want to explore the hills or take a boat trip along the headlands north, make arrangements with the Barangay Captain of Minapla. The boat fare ranges from PHP 500-PHP 800 depending on the distance to be traveled.

Island Hopping

Resorts offer island hopping services. There are 13 islands in the sound and you can visit several of them to enjoy the white sand beaches.

Diving and snorkeling

Diving and snorkeling sites are found in the coastal waters of Sitio Binaluan, Barangay Liminangcong. You may ask about the designated dive and snorkeling sites from the officer-in-charge of the Residential Guardhouse in Binaluan.

Caving

There are several caves in the Outer Sound at Tumbod, Liminangcong and at White Conical. Most of these have not been explored. Several are formed through tidal action and can be dangerous. If you wish to explore caves in the area, please inform the Protected Area Office and the local Barangay Captains of Island Tumbod, Liminangcong, and Minapla. This activity is recommended only for experienced cavers.

Dolphin Watching

There are two species of Dolphin that live in the Sound, both best seen in the early morning and evening. The Irrawaddy dolphins are found in the Inner Sound, while the Bottle Nose dolphin, in the Outer Sound. You can arrange for boat hires with the PAO. The boat fare depends on the amount of time you want to spend looking for the Dolphins, but will range from PHP 500-PHP 1500.

Mangrove Visit

The mangroves are quite extensive. To explore them, hire a paddleboat because it makes less noise and thus allows you to see many birds, especially King Fishers. If you want to take a larger boat to explore Abongan River this can be arranged, but going there at the right time depends on the tides. Make arrangements at the PAO. The boat fare depends on the size of the boat and the amount of time you spend. The best time to visit is early morning and late evening.

River trips and Waterfalls.

Trips to the Cataban River, camping, waterfalls expedition are offered by Caver's Hotel and Restaurant located at Barangay Liminangcong, Taytay, Palawan. There are also waterfalls at Barangay Abongan. Inquire at the Barangay Captain's house to hire a motorbike and guide.

Cultural Diversity

Apart from the Tagbanua who are the original settlers, several migrant communities live in the sound including people from Masbate, Samar, Bicol, and the Cuyonin. They have different methods of fishing. You are welcome to talk to the people; if you are lucky they may invite you to have lunch with them and you can learn to eat as they do—with bare hands. Learn to respect the culture of the people.

Lake Danao and Taytay Fort

Very close to Malampaya Sound is another much smaller protected area, Lake Danao, the largest freshwater lake in Palawan. Its small watershed has extensive forest cover and it is worth the trip if you're staying in Taytay. You can hire a motorbike for about PHP 200-300 round trip to take you into the watershed. If you want to go to the lake and the communities living near it (sitios), you may have to get out and wade through its waters; heavy rains cause the lake to expand and overflow. You can make arrangements with the local leaders to hire a boat that will go around the lake. You can even try your hand at fishing!

On returning to Taytay, take time to visit the Spanish fort which is one of the finest in the Philippines. It was built out of coral blocks in the late 1500's to protect Taytay, the provincial capital of Palawan then, from marauding Moro pirates.

Snorkeling at Flower Island

Taytay Bay boasts some of the finest corals in Northern Palawan. You can make arrangements at Casa Rosa to go snorkeling at Flower Island. You will get to see rare giant clams.

Fees for entering the protected area

Proposed entrance fees

- PHP 50 per person (Palawan residents)
- PHP 100 per person (non-Palawan residents)
- PHP 200 per person (local and foreign mountaineers)

Best Time to Visit

The best time to visit is during the months of May to July. But you can observe the sea turtles lay their eggs during the months of January to March. Be very quiet during this time otherwise they will not come up the beach to lay their eggs.

Food and Accommodation

Caver's Hotel and Restaurant located in Brgy. Liminangcong has good rooms for local and foreign tourists. Room rates are PHP 300 per day. It has an in-house restaurant and the management can cook a wide range of local and foreign dishes upon request. Local meals cost from PHP 100 to PHP 200.

Pems Lodging House & Restaurant is located in Taytay Poblacion. The following are the rates per person: suites

PHP 550; air-conditioned room PHP 750; cottage PHP 250, ordinary room PHP 150 to 175. Pump boats for island hopping are rented for PHP 1,200 to 1,800 per day per group. Bookings for Sandoval are confirmed here with the Club Noah staff.

Casa Rosa Restaurant is located at the top of the hill behind the municipal hall. It offers only a few rooms, at PHP 250 per night per person. The cook prepares the most delicious pizza in Palawan. If arrangements are made earlier in the day, fish of your choice is offered in their restaurant. Arrangements for staying at Flower Island also are made here.

Publico's International Guest House, located in Taytay Poblacion offers rooms for PHP 150 to 300 per person per night. Food is available anytime.

Club Noah Isabelle [0918.9095598], located on Apalit Island is a resort of international standards with amenities, bars and a restaurant. Bookings can be done via the Manila Office located at the 2nd Floor, Basic Petroleum Bldg. Legaspi Village, Makati City [02.810-7291-93]. Individual packages are offered for PHP 7,000 inclusive of accommodation, meals, sport activities like snorkeling, island hopping, picnic lunch, kayaking, and fish feeding.


Flower Island is located in Barangay Butas, Taytay, in a well-preserved environment. It hosts a family-style resort with six bungalows providing full amenities. Daily room rate including three meals (international cooking) ranges from PHP 1,500 to PHP 2,500 per person, depending on the season. Arrangement (accommodation, plane and boat transfer) is made with Rosa (Casa Rosa in Taytay, 0918-9205456) or with the Office in Manila (02-8529813), or by e-mail: flowerisland2000@yahoo.com. A boat for hire costs PHP 800-PHP 1,000. Guests can be picked up in Taytay or Sandoval airport at a reasonable price. Diving can be arranged with a qualified diving instructor, three dives a day for \$50. Dive courses are also offered.

Caver's Inn in Liminangcong, charges overnight stay at PHP 300/day per person. It has a restaurant and bar. A small pumpboat accommodating four passengers is rented on a daily basis for PHP 1,200 including packed lunch. Special trips to El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area are available.

Rainbow Lodging Inn located in Taytay Poblacion rents rooms (triple accommodation) for PHP 250 per day. Food is available anytime

Dilis Resort, Biton Island, Taytay, offers accommodation at PHP 800 to PHP 1200 per person including three meals.

Camping at Caoban, Binga, Minapla and Pangaya-ayan. Services are minimal. Pay PHP 50-100 a night depending on arrangements made with the Barangay Captains. This allows you to pitch your tent and use the services of the Barangays. You must bring your own provisions as fish is available depending on the season.

Capari Dive Camp, Sitio Panindigan, Poblacion, San Vicente, PHP 700 per person/day. Diving can be arranged at PHP 1,200 for a 45-minute dive. 

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