MT. MALINDANG NATURAL PARK

By ROLANDO DINGAL and JOJI Balcita

General Information

Mt. Malindang Natural Park lies within the Malindang mountain range in Mindanao, straddling the provinces of Misamis Occidental, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur. It covers over 34,000 hectares. Its highest peak is at 2,402 meters above sea level.

The Park’s allure comes from its waterfalls, crater lake and dense virgin forests which host diverse and rare species of flora and fauna. A variety of trees - large, straight-trunked evergreens, ige, and almaciga grow in the lower parts of its forests while dwarf and crooked stem trees crowd the mossy forest found in the mountain’s upper parts. The rare and endangered Philippine Eagle, Flying Lemur, Deer, Tarsier, and Hornbills live in the Park. Other significant species found there include mammals such as the Philippine Deer, Wild Pig, Long-tailed Macaque, Palm Civet and Civet Cat. Moreover, the Park is known to be home of six amphibians, three reptiles, 67 birds and 25 mammals which are endemic to the place.

Sixteen major rivers trace their sources from the Park. Over one million people living in the three provinces depend on these waters for domestic and industrial purposes, as well as for farming of coconut, rice, root crops, vegetables, legumes, cacao and coffee.

The indigenous people known as Subanen are believed to have occupied the mountain since time immemorial. Today, they live within and around the Park, practice slash-and-burn farming and have retained their distinct customs and traditions.

Reaching Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental

Depending on the sites to be visited, visitors can enter the Park through different routes.

They, however, need to report first at the Protected Area Office located close to the Provincial Capitol compound, in Oroquieta City.

Traveling by air and land

From Metro Manila, take a Philippine Airlines [02.8150054] flight to Dipolog City (plane leaves daily), then a 3 1/2 hours travel by land to Oroquieta City. A round trip airfare costs P 5,891. One-way land fare costs P70 - P100.

An alternative route is via Cagayan de Oro. Take Philippines Airlines or Cebu Pacific [02.6364938] flight to Cagayan de Oro City (plane leaves daily), then another 4 hours travel by land to Oroquieta City. Round trip airfares cost around PhP 6,100 and PhP 5,350, respectively. One-way bus fare costs around P100.00

Traveling by air and sea

From Manila, take a Philippine Airlines flight to Cebu City. From the airport take a taxi to the Cebu port where a ferry leaves for Ozamiz City for an overnight trip. Then take a bus which goes to Oroquieta City. A roundtrip air fare costs about PhP 5,000. The taxi ride costs about PhP 60. Ferry fare is around PhP 310 for economy, PhP 650 to PhP 700 per person for cabins, PhP 1,620 for a suite and PhP 507 for tourist class. For the bus fare, it is PhP 20 per person for the regular trip and PhP 30 per person in an air-conditioned van.

Traveling by sea

Boat travel takes two days from Metro Manila to Ozamiz City, then about 45 minutes to Oroquieta City. W G & A Superferry [02.8943211] has boats that leave every Thursdays and Sundays. Fares range from PhP 1,340 per person (economy) to PhP 1,950 per person (first class).

Protected Area Office

The Protected Area Office [Tel.: 088-5312184; Fax: 088-5312150; E-mail: mmnp@ozamiz.com] is located at Oroquieta City at the back of the Provincial Capitol. It is
responsible for implementing the management policy of the Park. The following guidelines are set for visitors:

- Secure a mountaineering permit from the PA Office before entering the Park. Provide information on the number of climbers, site to be visited, purpose and duration of visit.
- Pass only through existing foot trails.
- Provide or hire competent guides.
- Avoid picking or gathering plants and catching of animals.
- Avoid throwing garbage or wrappers in the vicinity. Bring your own garbage with you when you leave the Park.
- Respect the natives, their culture and traditions.
- Camp only in designated areas.

Local Eco-tourism Destinations and Cultural Activities

Lake Duminagat. It is named after the crater lake and its clear waters. It is nested within a dense forest hosting wildlife such as deer, monkeys and wild boars. The place is two to three hours hike from the Nueva Vista, Don Victoriano road. Visitors can camp in the barangay proper.

Lake Duminagat is the home of the Subanen. Visitors can learn of their traditions and beliefs provided one is willing to stay long enough with them.

From here, one can go down to Oroquieta City passing through the hot sulfur spring at Barangay Sebucal, then proceed to Barangay Tolyok through a foot trail that crosses the Oroquieta River several times at different points. Hikers can also exit to Honggo, Tudela, Misamis Oriental passing through Barangay Liborion and crossing the mountain range.

Hoyohoy. Located at Tanugb City, the area is accessible by a 30-minute ride from the City proper. From here, one can have a grand view of the urban centers of Ozamiz and Tanugb, the Pangui Bay and part of Lanao del Norte.

Mt. Kalub kawa. Here, one can enjoy a cool and refreshing atmosphere under a forest canopy, or observe Serpent Eagles and Hornbills.

Regina natural pool. A natural swimming pool ema-

rating from the cool springs of Calusaran, Barrio Bagakay, Ozamiz City, 3 km away from the city proper.

Barangay Penel (Lopez Jaena). The area is known for its panoramic view.

Bulawis Spring. Located in Barangay Bunawan, Calamba. With several mini-waterfalls and numerous springs, this spot has been developed into a swimming area.

Imeldainita Falls. Located in Barangay Tabina in the municipality of SapangDalaga. The falls are 60 feet high and are surrounded by trees and boulders.

Sibucal Hot Spring. A natural hot spring located at Barangay Sibucal, Oroquieta City. It is about 30 km away from the City proper.

Old Spanish Catholic Church. Located in Barangay Taraka, Poblacion Jimenez, this church has the grandeur of most early Spanish churches.

Pipe Organ from Germany. Housed at the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Cathedral in Ozamiz City, it is the biggest of its kind in Mindanao and second largest in the Philippines. The giant pipe organ is equipped with 1,936 pipes, a console with three keyboards, 30 stops and an electric bell.

Fort Santiago (Fort of Señora de la Concepcion of del Triunfo de Pangasi). An old Spanish Fort built in 1707 to protect this region from pirates, it is a few meters away from the wharf. It has been declared a historical landmark.

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