



Oceanus Conservation Annual Report for 2023

www.oceanusconservation.org
info@oceanusconservation.org
Makati City, Philippines



OCEANUS
CONSERVATION



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WHO ARE WE?

We are a registered non-profit environmental organization based in Makati, Philippines. We were established during the time of the pandemic in March 2020. Yes, we are pretty new! But that also means great ideas can be turned into life pretty fast because we are a small team.

As the pandemic hit worldwide and the lack of focus back for the environment, we decided to come together and create an organization to bring back the **restoration and protection of the Philippine marine habitats** especially the undervalued, and unprotected sites.

The founders have more about 10 years experience in coastal resource conservation, marine protected area management, environmental education, capacity building, remote sensing, and GIS. Each team member of this organization contributes to the decision-making and solving the country's coastal and marine issues.

WE BELIEVE THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION IS A UNION OF HUMANISTIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS.

MISSION

Our mission is to conserve and restore blue carbon habitats and contribute to their conservation, environmental education and community development.

VISION

To be a leading organization in integrating conservation of coastal ecosystems, community needs and technological solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for the benefit of the Filipino people.

2023 *Oceanus Conservation's Impact on Local Communities Across the Philippines*

HIGHLIGHTS

Through our research activities, conservation initiatives, advocacy, and outreach efforts throughout various local communities in the Philippines, together with the local government units, coastal communities, and youth organizations, we have made significant contributions in 2023. These include:

3913

mangroves
planted

3000

mangrove trees
recorded from the
GainForest project

87

community
members trained
for CBEMR

107

community members
trained for mangrove and
seagrass data collection
through citizen science

519

data points gathered
for mangrove and
seagrass monitoring
through citizen science

71

hectares of mangroves
avoided degradation
through monitoring
activities

117

ocean bilingual storybooks
for kids distributed locally
and internationally for
ocean awareness

348

people reached for
advocacy and awareness
through storytelling events
and online webinars

2

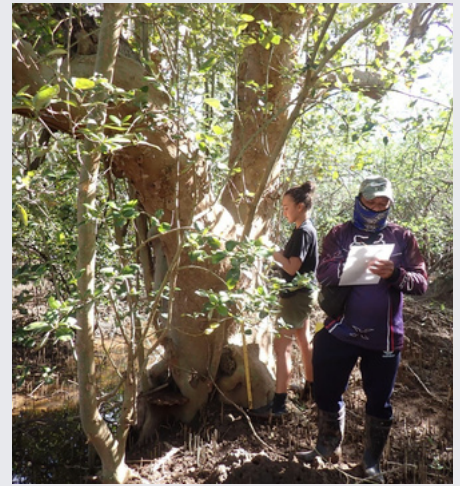
new projects
launched in 2023

DATA COLLECTION OF 3000 TREES

In partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), GainForest, and Thinking Machines Inc.

Measuring Carbon Storage in Mangrove Forests with Advanced Data Analysis

The goal of this project is to determine the carbon storage capacity of mangrove forests, using machine learning and other analytical software. To achieve this, we collected data from **3000 mangrove trees**, including above-ground biomass, tree height, and species identification with the Open Data Kit (ODK) application. We also took approximately **9000 species photos** and trained **17 community members** in the process!



A pilot study of the "Measure-to-Earn" Concept

The "Measure-to-Earn" pilot project engages participants as citizen scientists to collect and verify data for payment through the Valora application by **Celo Foundation**, creating an alternative livelihood source for conservation! The workshop involved **16 members** who learned to collect data on mangrove trees, identify species, and use the Open Data Kit (ODK) and GPS Status App.



CITIZEN SCIENCE WORKSHOPS

Funded by the National Geographic Society



National Geographic Society Funds Citizen Science Project to Validate Mangrove and Seagrass Species Distribution in the Philippines

A citizen science project aimed at validating mangrove and seagrass species distribution using the Philippines Mangrove Vegetation Index (MVI) map has been funded by the National Geographic Society. Our two partner communities, the Barangay Aras-asan Fisherfolks Association (BAFA) and the Barangay Poblacion Fisherfolks Association in Cagwait, Surigao del Sur, participated in the training and produced **311 data points for seagrass** and **203 data points for mangroves** through this monitoring activity!

This project empowered local communities to become citizen scientists, allowing them to monitor mangroves and seagrass in their municipality using the LOCUS GIS application.

Phase 2 Accomplished: Blue Carbon Citizen Science Training

In collaboration with ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan and SEA Institute, Oceanus Conservation achieved a significant milestone in the Phase 2 Citizen Science Training in Lobo, Batangas. A team led by Oceanus Conservation successfully trained **20 participants** from two communities in Lobo to collect data on mangrove and seagrass species using their smartphones and how to visualize it on a map.



71

hectares of mangroves avoided degradation through these citizen science monitoring activities

COMMUNITY-BASED ECOLOGICAL MANGROVE RESTORATION (CBEMR)

Ecological Restoration and Community Empowerment, funded by Synchronicity Earth

Our program is dedicated to promoting Community-based Ecological Mangrove Restoration (CBEMR). Our primary focus is on reverting abandoned fishponds and reestablishing mangrove forests.

We are proud to have partnered with 5 communities: Aringay, La Union; Poblacion, Cagwait, Surigao del Sur; Aras-asan, Cagwait, Surigao del Sur; Bitaugan West, Surigao del Sur; and Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay.

Every day, we're getting one step closer to restoring these abandoned fishponds to thriving mangrove forests and biodiverse wildlife. We are reminded of the power of restoration and the community working together!



3913

mangroves
planted



87

community
members trained



5

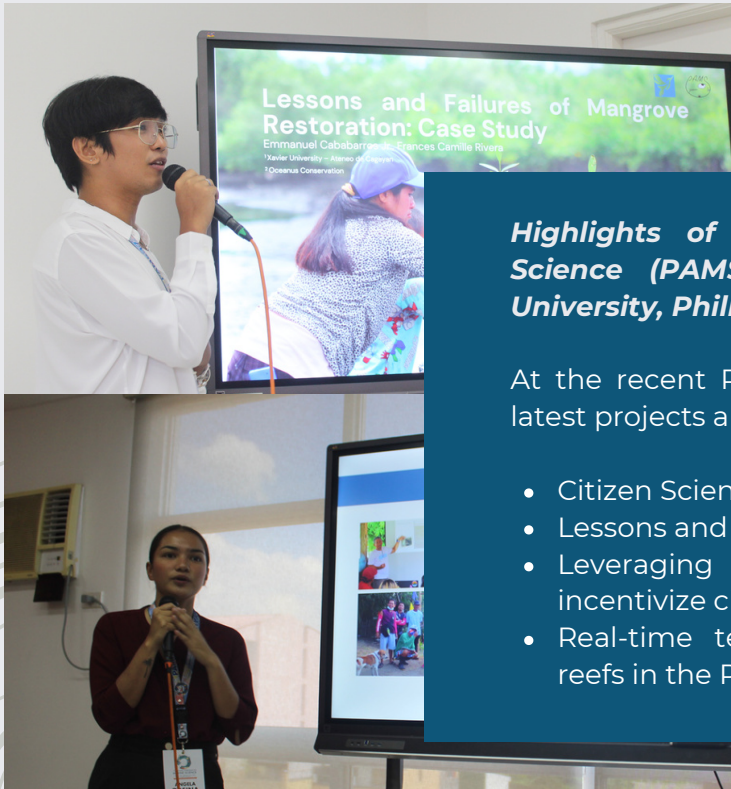
partner
communities



Conducting a KAP Survey for KGMC in Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay

To establish a baseline for implementing our blue carbon program in Zamboanga Sibugay, it is essential to conduct a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) survey. The KGMC, an established people's organization working towards coastal protection and mangrove conservation, had 22 participants surveyed. Despite their involvement in environmental projects, the survey aims to evaluate their comprehension of mangroves and the level of protection they provide.

CONFERENCES



PAMS 17

Highlights of the Philippine Association of Marine Science (PAMS) 17 Symposium at Batangas State University, Philippines

At the recent PAMS national symposium, we shared our latest projects and case studies, including:

- Citizen Science for Mangrove and Seagrass Monitoring
- Lessons and Failures of Mangrove Restoration
- Leveraging technology to monitor mangroves and incentivize citizen science in near real-time
- Real-time temperature monitoring project for coral reefs in the Philippines

UNFCCC COP28, Dubai

World Economic Forum's intergenerational session at COP28, Chief Sustainability Leaders & Youth Breakfast: Catalyzing Inclusive Climate Resilience.

Chatham House organized a roundtable with Chief Sustainability Officers (CSOs) and young people to discuss sustainable development goals. The session aimed to promote intergenerational dialogue, inclusive outcomes, and opportunities for innovation and impact. Together with Camille Rivera from Oceanus, the roundtable included CSOs from various companies and executives from Deloitte, Visa Inc., Amazon, Google Inc., TIME, and more.



CONFERENCES

UNFCCC COP28, Dubai



IUCN: Spotlighting Youth Leadership in IUCN - An Interactive Dialogue

The interactive session aims to showcase young leaders across the IUCN and bring key youth-led initiatives closer to the Union. Camille Rivera spoke about the experience of engaging with IUCN through the young changemakers program and how it is important to create synergy between different generations; together with her in the panel are Mr. Sandeep Sengupta from IUCN Global Policy Lead of Climate Change, Ms. Ayadi Mishra from the YOUNGO, and Ms Diana Garlytska, Youth Engagement and Intergenerational Partnerships Co-Chair & West Europe Regional Vice Chair.

[Stream via YouTube here!](#)



China-ASEAN Mangrove Ecosystem Protection Collaboration

The Beijing Chaoyang District Yongxu Global Environmental Institute organized a roundtable discussion called "China-ASEAN Mangrove Ecosystem Protection Collaboration" to explore ways for stakeholders to participate in mangrove protection and restoration. The focus was on collaboration among ASEAN countries, breaking barriers between sectors, and including communities and NGOs in projects. Camille from Oceanus shared insights on improving regional cooperation and the importance of collaboration.

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

Storytelling events, webinars, and online lectures



Ocean literacy storytelling events

117

ocean bilingual storybooks for kids distributed locally and internationally

220

kids and youth engaged

5

storytelling sessions organized

4

new translations (Ilocano, Sinama, Malay, Bahasa)

Thank you to our partner youth organizations for spreading ocean awareness and co-organizing these storytelling events for kids! **Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) Malaysia, Bohol-Siquijor EcoWave Youth Initiatives, TAYO Youth Organization in Negros Oriental, Advocacy for the Protection of the Environment and Culture (APEC) of Davao del Sur, Project Blue PH of Ilocos Sur.**

Citizen Science Online Lecture

Marine Ecology Methods Workshop for Catanduanes State University

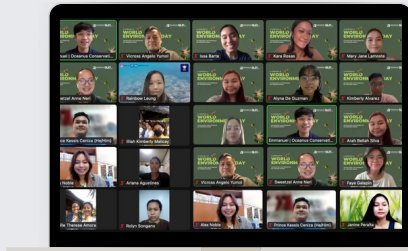
Oceanus joined as a guest speaker for the Marine Ecology Methods Workshop for Catanduanes State University (CatSU). The Oceanus team discussed the citizen science method for monitoring mangroves and seagrass. 44 students participated both online and face-to-face in this lecture, together with the faculty and staff of CatSU.



ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

Storytelling events, webinars, and online lectures

GLFx Webinars



Community-Led Initiatives for Climate Action

In honor of World Environment Day, we hosted a webinar on Community-Led Initiatives for Climate Action. The webinar brought together young leaders from the Philippines: Issa Barte, Mary Jane Lamoste, and Kara Rosas to share their climate action initiatives and perspectives on promoting inclusive transformation within local communities. This webinar gathered 32 attendees!

[Watch the YouTube recap here.](#)



To Plant or Not To Plant?

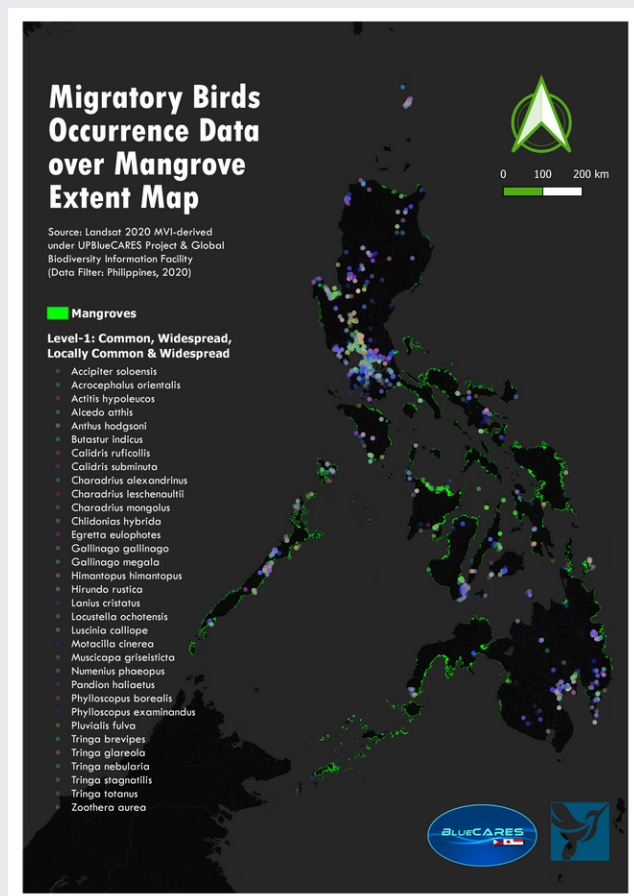
In celebration of International Mangrove Day, we have organized the 'To Plant or Not To Plant?' webinar with esteemed panel speakers: Dr. Rupesh Bhomia from CIFOR-ICRAF, Mr. Roberto "Kadodoy" Ballon of KGMC, and Ms. Agatha Bedi of the Geospatial Database Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). This webinar has gathered 52 participants globally!

[Watch the YouTube recap here.](#)



COMMUNITY-LED MANGROVE AND MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION

Funded by Global Environmental Institute



Milestones in 2023

A study was conducted to map out areas in the Philippines where mangroves and migratory birds overlap. The resulting map showed Negros Oriental and Bais Bay/Talabong Island as potential project sites. A site reconnaissance activity was conducted to confirm the presence of mangroves and migratory birds, and resident and migratory species were identified through documentation in photos.

The Philippines is an important stopover for migratory birds, but they face threats such as habitat loss and poaching. To address this, Oceanus launched this new project **to establish conservation programs in coastal wetlands used by migratory birds**. The project aims to raise awareness through community-based sustainable tourism and create additional livelihood options, while increasing community awareness of environmental conservation.



MAPPING BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS IN MARINE ECOSYSTEMS IN BUSUANGA ISLAND

Funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives

This is one of Oceanus' new projects in 2023 which aims to map out biodiversity hotspots in Busuanga Island and co-develop a conservation plan with the Local Government Unit (LGU), scientists, and other stakeholders in the area. We aim to identify highly biodiverse areas and align with their vulnerability to climate change impacts.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BASELINE BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT:

Corals and Reef Fish

Busuanga's coral reefs are diverse with endangered species sightings. The **average HCC for the ten stations is 37.7%**, higher than the national average. Fish species richness ranged from **26 to 44 species**. The highest numbers of species were recorded at North Malbinchilao, Kaniki, and Malcatep stations, with the highest number of fish individuals at Decoayan and Old Busuanga stations.

Sightings of 2 endangered coral species in Busuanga:



Pectinia maxima



Lobophyllia serrata

Mangroves and Seagrass

21 mangrove species belonging to 12 families and 14 genera were identified and Maglambay exhibited the highest mean basal area. The seagrass survey recorded **8 species**, with Barangay Maglambay having the highest species richness and diversity and Popototan Island having the highest seagrass percent cover of 52.57%.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDERS



Global
Landscapes
Forum



Global
Environmental Institute
北京市朝阳区永续全球环境研究所



Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology



Thinking
Machines
Data Science



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY



THANK YOU!

An annual update on the milestones done by Oceanus Conservation for the conservation and protection of coastal resources. Thank you to all our donors, partner communities, and youth organizations who made all of these projects possible!



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TOGETHER FOR OUR PLANET.

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[@mangrovesforourfuture](https://www.instagram.com/mangrovesforourfuture)