

PHILIPPINES

ABORLAN

Collaboration for conservation

Located 69 kilometres south of Puerto Princesa, the coastal municipality of Aborlan looks just like the thousands of other rugged coastal regions that dot the Philippine coast. But beneath the surface, the abundant wildlife and vibrant communities that live around the famed Seven Line Reef, tell a different story — a tale of collective action and conservation for survival.

CHARACTERISTICS

80,000ha

of municipal waters in Aborlan are officially and legally reserved as a fisheries management zone, referred to by the municipal administration as an Integrated Coastal Resource Management (ICRM) area.

6,600ha

or roughly half of the Seven Line Reef lies within Aborlan's municipal waters.

Only 10%

of the fish catch in Seven Line Reef is caught by local Aborlan fishermen. The rest is caught by transient fishers and outsiders.

Increased tourist arrivals

Tourism in Palawan province, where Aborlan is located, grew ninefold over 14 years to 900,000 in 2014. Currently Aborlan's tourism infrastructure is minimal but this relatively untapped industry offers a potential source of revenue for long-term conservation activities.



NOTABLE WINS & KEY LESSONS



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COMBINING RESOURCES AND AGENDAS IS A WIN-WIN

A multi-stakeholder informed coastal resource management plan brings everyone together to work on the same goals, in the same place, at the same time. This was unlike previous isolated, often technical, initiatives that were difficult to implement in silos. This approach, which WWF helped to facilitate, is especially useful when government funding is limited for developing an ICRM plan. When there is a common objective between parties involved they can pool resources, personnel and activities.

RESEARCH AND DATA HELPS MAKE THE CASE FOR CONSERVATION

Thanks to studies on mangroves, forests and marine resources, conducted by WWF, people began to see the bigger picture. The value of Seven Line is the 'spillover effect' for fisheries. When the reef is healthy it supplies fish to smaller coral reefs outside the protected zone meaning local fishermen do not need to go far. The research provided evidence for the communities to support conservation and no-fishing zones.

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Bounded by the Sulu Sea in the east and the South China Sea in the west, Aborlan forms part of Palawan Island's almost 2,000km coastline.



WWF'S APPROACH IN ABORLAN

- Facilitating community workshops and consultations to identify key conservation areas
- Conducting studies to assess the health of marine life and provide a scientific basis for the protection of reefs and the ocean
- Leading community informed delineation of the ICRM area and gathering GPS points with local fishermen to establish the boundaries of each zoned area
- Holding seminars and trainings on fisheries and the value of coral reefs and conducting several rounds of consultations and environmental education sessions with all stakeholders including school-children, women and the general public during village assemblies

"The ease and speed by which Aborlan protected its waters was due to a three-year initiative by local provincial, municipal and village governments, the Environmental Legal Assistance Centre, Western Philippines University and WWF."

Joel Palma, WWF-Philippines President and CEO