

ENIPAS ACT DECLARATION AS A PROTECTED SEASCAPE ENTAILS:

- Assignment of a full-time Park Superintendent (PASu), head the Protected Area Management Office, who shall supervise management, protection, and administration of the protected area.
- Adoption of 10-year Management Plan within one (1) year from the establishment of the protected area as basic long-term framework plan for the management and guide in the preparation of its annual operations plan and budget.
- Clear delineation and zoning for strict protection zone and multiple use zone.
- Protected Area Management Body (PAMB) to ensure strong and collaborative protection efforts of local government units, including all municipal mayors and barangay captains, provincial government, district representatives, senator, other national government agencies, and led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- Environmental Impact Assessment before the DENR issues an Environmental Compliance Certificate to government or private sector proposing projects with impact on coastal and marine environment.
- An Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF) is established for financing projects and sustaining its operation. Income generated shall accrue to the IPAF. The local PAMB will receive 75% of all revenues raised while the remaining 25% shall be deposited in the National Treasure.
- Designation of Special Prosecutor for violations of environmental laws and regulations.
- Imposition of stiffer penalties for prohibited acts, such as, illegal fishing activities, implementation of coastal projects, poaching and killing of any wildlife, etc.

MANDATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUS) UNDER ENIPAS

- Continue crafting ordinances that are aligned with the management plan of the protected seascape to better manage their waters.
- Align and integrate their Comprehensive Land Use Plans, local development plans, disaster risk reduction management plans and other required plans according to the objectives specified herein and in the protected area management plans.
- Participate in the crafting of policies for the protected seascape as members of the PAMB.
- Continue to impose fees, such as business permits and rentals of LGU facilities and additional fees as imposed by the PAMB but will not impose property tax on properties owned by the government nor issue any tax declarations for areas covered by the protected area.

CALL TO ACTION

Let us join and support the movement to include Panaon Island seascape under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS).

We appeal to both Houses of Congress to pass the legislative proposals calling for the protection of Panaon Island under the ENIPAS Act. Listen to the people of Panaon and every Filipino who take pride in the rich marine biodiversity of Panaon Island and looking forward to its enhanced protection and sustainable management.

We urge President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to issue a proclamation declaring Panaon Island as a Marine Protected Area under the ENIPAS Act.

Sign the petition here:



May Panaon Ako
May Panaon Tayo!

PARTNERS



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Panahon ng Panaon

PROTECT PANAON ISLAND, ITS MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PEOPLE





Coral reef and fish experts in the Oceana expedition observed the abundance of small fishes despite the healthy coral reefs, a possible indication of overfishing. This was emphasized by San Ricardo fisherfolk, Joel Chin.



"Kaunti na lang yung aking huling isda dahil sa mga illegal na pangisdaan dito katulad ng buso (compressor) na nakakakuha ng marami dahil ginagamit kung flashlight na nag aattract sa mga isda. Walang pipilli kahit yung mga mallilit na isda ay hinuhuli. 'Di kami nakakakuha ng sapat para makapagtinda at makasuporta sa aming pamilya. Palaging kulang ang aming huli."

Tagged as part of the 50 priority reefs in the world, Panaon Island takes pride in its coral reefs that will highly likely survive the devastating impacts of climate change. It has at least 18 locally established and managed marine protected areas.

Healthy coral reefs, seagrass, and mangroves for food and livelihood security.

- Overall mean hard coral cover of Panaon Island was estimated at 39.71%, much higher than the published national (22.8%) and regional averages (22.2%).
- 427 species of fish including 249 ecologically important, 155 commercially important, and 23 reef indicator species
- 62 hard coral genera
- 19 mangroves species including 2 species that are listed as threatened species in the IUCN Red List
- 23 mangrove-associated species, including the endemic *Dischidia platyphilla*
- 2 beach forest species that are listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List
- Antipolo or kolo (*Artocarpus blancoi*) is also endemic
- Endemic Philippine ducks (*Anas luzonica*) are also present in the mangrove areas
- 18 important species of flora and fauna found in the waters of Panaon Island are in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's list of threatened, endangered and critically endangered species. These include whale sharks, blue whales, hawksbill turtle, green sea turtle

For the residents of the island, the rich marine biodiversity and the fisheries helped them survive the challenges, from the lockdown due to COVID19, to the devastation they suffered after super typhoon Odette in 2021.

Results of Socio-Economic Survey among Panaon Island Residents
By University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College and Oceana, 2020

89% Respondents that believe MPAs are important in promoting biodiversity.

79% Fisherfolk respondents that believe marine sanctuaries have a positive impact to their livelihood.

76% Respondents that believe healthy mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs are important for fish catch to be plentiful.

NATURAL AND HUMAN-INDUCED THREATS

All is not rosy for this paradise in Southern Leyte. Coral reef and fish experts in the Oceana expedition observed low abundance of targeted food fish despite the healthy coral reefs, a possible indication of overfishing. Touted to help the people and the island survive the impact of climate change, Panaon Island's coral reefs are not spared from threats and challenges.



Typhoons



Flooding



Landslide



Earthquakes



Storm surges



Sea-level rise



Crown-of-thorns outbreak



Infrastructure and coastal projects



Waste Disposal



Illegal cutting of mangrove trees



Fishing within marine sanctuaries



Commercial fishing in municipal waters



Destructive fishing (compressor diving)

POLICY INTERVENTION

The ENIPAS law requires the conduct of the Protected Area Suitability Assessment (PASA) of Panaon Island by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with the local government units and other stakeholders. Panaon was rated a score of 96%, suitable to be declared as a protected seascape. This PASA report was presented in a series of public consultations in all four municipalities of the island.

In separate resolutions filed in June 2022, the local chief executives of Liloan, Pintuyan, San Francisco, and San Ricardo pledged their support for the efforts to provide national protection to the island. They supported the declaration of Panaon Island as a Protected Seascape under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Act or RA 11038.

To seal the national protection, Rep. Luz Mercado (1st District, Southern Leyte) filed House Bill 3743 and Rep. Christopherson Yap (2nd District, Southern Leyte) filed House Bills 4095 and 6677 during the 19th Congress. In the Senate, Senator Cynthia Villar who chairs the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources filed a counterpart bill, Senate Bill 1690. These bills seek to declare Panaon Island as a protected seascape under the ENIPAS Act and outline its coverage in the four municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco, Pintuyan and San Ricardo.

WHAT IS A PROTECTED AREA?

A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2008)

WHAT IS A PROTECTED SEASCAPE?

Seascape, a marine protected area category, is an area of national significance which is characterized by the harmonious interaction of man and land while providing opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within the normal lifestyle and economic activity of the area. (ENIPAS Act, RA 11038)

OBJECTIVES OF AN EFFECTIVE MARINE PROTECTED AREA

- Safeguarding biodiversity
- Maintaining ecosystem balance
- Preserving important habitats
- Building resilience to climate change
- Providing global food security
- Maintaining water quality
- Conserving natural resources
- Driving economic success