Conservation

2011: The New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project (NewCAPP)

More recent efforts utilizing updated and increasingly relevant approaches have also been made in assigning “priority conservation area” status in Philippine territories. These are designed to complement the country’s established protection systems such as the NIPAS Act of 1992 and the strategies set by the 2002 PBCPP, which still stands as the framework legislation for protected areas management in the country.

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An example of these recent initiatives is NewCAPP (New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project), which is a collaboration between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (formerly the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau or PAWB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Started in 2010, NewCAPP focuses on the expansion and diversification of the terrestrial protected area (PA) system in the country in light of the notable limitations of the current PA system’s effectiveness, such as inadequate prioritization or biogeographic representation of existing PAs and weaknesses within the scope of capabilities of DENR-PAWB itself and the more decentralized Protection Management Boards.

Eyeing accelerated expansion and more comprehensive and representative coverage of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) with sustainable adaptive management as the key to successful long-term biodiversity conservation efforts in the country, NewCAPP has identified the following new terrestrial protected areas:

KBA	Location	Biogeographic Location	Potential Governance Type
Balbalan - Balbalasang National Park	Cordillera Administrative Region; Kalinga and Mountain Provinces	Greater Luzon	Ancestral Domain
Zambales Mountain Range	Regions 1 and 3; Zambales and Tarlac	Greater Luzon	Ancestral Domain
Mts. Irid-Angilo and Binuang	Region 4A; Rizal, Bulacan, Quezon	Greater Luzon	LGU and IP Communities in Ancestral Domain
Polillo Islands	Region 4A; Quezon	Greater Luzon	LGU-managed
Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park	Region 4B; Mindoro Oriental and Mindoro Occidental	Mindoro	NIPAS, Ancestral Domain, ASEAN Heritage Site
Nug-as Lantoy	Region 7; Cebu	Greater Negros-Panay	Community-managed
Mt. Nacolod	Region 8; Southern Leyte	Greater Mindanao	LGU/DENR Co-managed

Mt. Hilong-hilong	Region 13; Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur	Greater Mindanao	Mix of governance types, under the Eastern Mindanao Biodiversity Council
Tawi-Tawi Island	ARMM, Tawi-Tawi	Sulu	ARMM, LGU, and Local Communities

To date, a total of 240 protected areas have been identified, including the initial 202 components stipulated under the NIPAS Act of 1992. The range of national parks, game refuge and wildlife sanctuaries, nature reserves, wilderness areas, mangrove reserves, watershed reservations, fish sanctuaries, and protected landscapes and seascapes, among others, covers 5.45 million hectares at present. A more detailed listing of these protected areas per region are available on the DENR-BMB website (see Facts and Figures and Maps).

Initiatives such as NewCAPP are an encouraging move forward for the state of biodiversity conservation in the Philippines. Worthy of note is the evolution from a centralized and government-centric approach to a more diversified, inclusive, and people-oriented strategy that enables local communities to build upon long-standing customary practices and traditional knowledge systems to effect context-specific resource protection measures in the various key biodiversity areas and priority conservation areas that the country possesses.

Beyond Boundaries

On top of local action, also encouraging is the fact that the Philippines continues to be consistently active in international and multisectoral discussions and agreements on biodiversity conservation, as well as other larger-scaled environmental protection efforts (see box story). The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Ramsar and Basel Conventions, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are three key examples, just to name a few. Participation in these efforts have, in turn, earned the Philippines internationally recognized citations and designations, such as those named under UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, ASEAN Heritage Parks, and several others.

The recognition of the value of shared responsibility is seen to go a long way in creating sustainable change in efforts designed to deal with the biodiversity crisis in this critical global hotspot.

International Environmental Discussions and Conventions to Which the Philippines is Participatory

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- International Maritime Organization - International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal
- Global Transboundary Conservation Network.

Internationally Designated Heritage/Protected Areas

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites (2 listed)
- ASEAN Heritage Parks (5 listed)
- Ramsar Sites (6 listed)
- Transboundary Protected Areas (1 listed)
- New7Wonders of Nature (1 listed)

References

- Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project). Undated. About Philippine Biodiversity. Last accessed on November 11, 2013, http://www.newcapp.org/about-philippine-biodiversity.php.
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