

JOIN OUR TEAM

Marine Turtle Nesting Beach Monitoring and Conservation

Project:

An Overview

Project Goal:	The project aims to protect marine turtle nesting beaches and engage communities located in identified priority sites to promote local stewardship through enhancing community-based monitoring and management practices.
Project Position:	San Vicente, Palawan
Minimum Commitment:	3 months
Project Dates:	November 7, 2023 - April 7, 2024
Arrival of Volunteers:	Batch 1 - November 6, 2023 Batch 2 - February 6, 2024
Employment Dates:	October 15, 2023 - May 15, 2024

About Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines (LAMAVE)

Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines (LAMAVE) is a Filipino non-stock, non-profit, non-government organization dedicated to the conservation of marine megafauna and their habitats in the country. LAMAVE strives to ensure a secure and prosperous ocean for marine life and people by applying science-based solutions to conservation challenges, investing in the transfer of skills for long-term impact at the grassroots level, and advancing the knowledge to enable people and governments to protect their natural resources.

About the Project

The west coast of Palawan is home to some of the largest remaining nesting beaches for Olive Ridley turtles in Asia, where hundreds of nests are laid each season. Over the past five years, there has been a significant increase in community efforts to conserve these beaches. However, the practices used in the area vary greatly in their success and impact on the turtle population, both in the short and long term. Challenges such as beach development, coastal erosion, sea level rise, climate change, poaching of turtle eggs, and nest destruction by stray dogs are posing a serious threat to the survival of these nesting populations. The Project will focus on the municipalities in the northwest of Palawan, with its main base in San Vicente. This picturesque town is surrounded by 284 km of white beaches and small coves. Each year, from mid-November to March, olive ridley turtles lay hundreds of nests along these beaches during the night. Building on a successful season, LAMAVE will continue to closely monitor the area in collaboration with local stakeholders for the ongoing conservation and management of these endangered species, starting on the 7th of November this year.



Image 1 & 2. San Vicente Beach

As a volunteer, you will have the incredible opportunity to work with a core team consisting of two project leaders, two research assistants, and four to five volunteers. You will also interact with the larger LAMAVE team of researchers and experts. The team will support the work of local communities in several villages along the coastline. During the night, the team will assist the local community in beach patrols, relocate nests if they are laid in unsuitable areas, and manage and maintain hatcheries. During the day, the team will engage in educational activities in local schools, support the training of local patrollers and tourism stakeholders, and implement an awareness program targeted at residents and tourists alike. Data collection, compilation, and analysis will also be part of the daily tasks, based on scheduled patrols and other activities. Whenever possible, workshops and focus group discussions will be organized with the local communities to gain a better understanding of the threats and opportunities for the conservation of these species, with a particular focus on illegal wildlife trade and consumption. Throughout the season, the team will also have the opportunity to observe and support in other activities like satellite tagging of the olive ridley turtles, collect genetic material, and conduct surveys both in the water and on the beach to assess the habitat and identify threats and priority areas.

The team will be based in a shared project house located in San Vicente, specifically in Barangay Sto. Nino and Barangay New Canipo. The house will have a kitchen, working area, shared bedrooms and bathrooms. House chores will be divided among the team members based on their daily schedules and night patrol shifts. The two teams will be located in different villages to allow larger area covered and impact. Electricity availability and mobile phone signal quality varies across the villages and weather conditions, with large gaps with no services available.

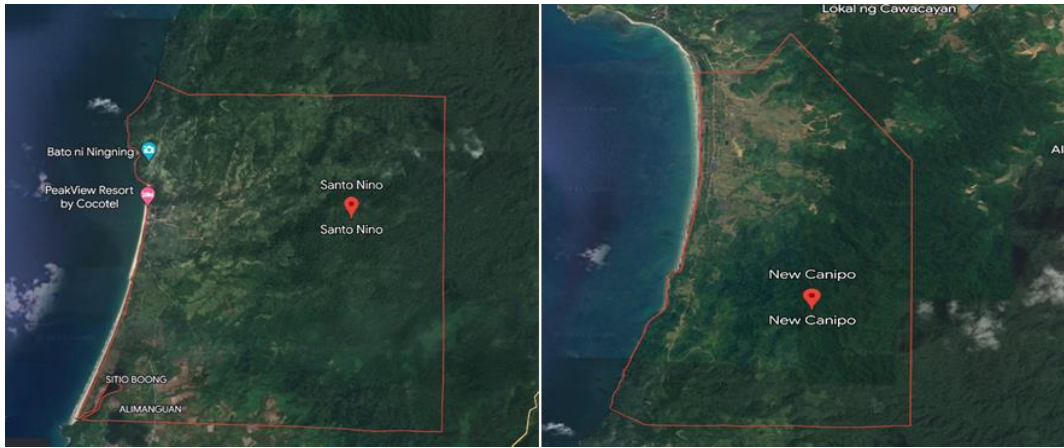


Image 3 & 4. Maps of Brgy. Sto. Niño and Brgy. New Canipo in San Vicente, Palawan



Image 5 & 6. San Vicente Project House

Depending on the daily activities, the field work will include night beach patrols, done in 4-hour shift, morning patrols and daytime activities, including maintenance of the hatcheries, data encoding, nest excavation, hatchling release, sample collection, and community awareness and education campaigns. The team will be divided into smaller group to cover in rotation in all the different aspect and task of the project.

Time	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
00:00 - 05:00	Beach Patrol	Rest	Rest
05:00 - 10:00	Rest	Beach Patrol	Rest
10:00 - 15:00	Rest	Data	Hatchery

15:00 - 20:00	Hatchery	Rest	Data
20:00 -24:00	Rest	Rest	Beach Patrol

The work will change based on the week of the year and the progression of the nesting season, with more beach patrol and nest relocation early in the season and more hatchery work in the second part of the season.

We also work with various communities, with different level of expertise and our intervention and support depends on their different needs and could vary from replacing the local community for patrolling, helping developing an interpretation program for the hatchling release, encode nesting data on digital format, write grant proposals to support community activities to build new hatcheries or give lectures in local schools.



Image 7. Patrollers measuring the curved carapace length and width of the turtle.



Image 8. Releasing turtle hatchlings



Image 9 & 10. Nesting Beach Management training with the local communities of San Vicente, Palawan



Image 11 & 12. Relocating turtle eggs and collecting samples

Activities for days off

The ideal period to experience San Vicente's beauty is during its dry season, which spans from December to April or mid-May. These months coincide with our project's duration, making it the perfect opportunity for you to explore the town. In your spare time, you can go island hopping, the most popular activity among tourists visiting in Palawan. Many of these islands are easily accessible from Poblacion and Port Barton. Some of the stunning islands and snorkeling spots you'll encounter on these tours include:

Starfish Island or Sandbar - As the name suggests, this is a sandbar known for the starfishes that you'll see scattered around it. It usually appears only during low tide and is excellent for swimming or sunbathing by the sand.



Exotic Island and Maxima Island - This island-hopping destination is composed of two islands with shallow water in between them. Perfect for swimming and having lunch by the beach. Because of its unique landscape, this island is one of the favorites among travelers.



Inaladelan Island or German Island - It is a privately-owned island with crystal clear waters, a white-sand beach, and an excellent snorkeling site for enthusiasts. It's usually the stop for lunch where you can lounge by the beach in their nipa hut-like umbrellas or go for an afternoon nap in the hammocks.



Twin Reef - It is a top snorkeling destination in San Vicente, known for its colorful colors and abundant school of fish. You can easily see because of the crystal-clear waters.



Aside from island hopping, you can also soak in several stunning waterfalls in the town or go surfing in Alimanguan, one of the best surfing beaches in Palawan.



If you're yearning for a day of pure relaxation and the chance to just bask in the breathtaking beauty of the town, you can visit the iconic rock “Bato ni Ningning” perched majestically atop a hill in Sto Nino. This iconic site has earned its reputation as the go-to spot for capturing the most awe-inspiring Long Beach vistas, thanks to its high elevation. Here, you'll find a big rock that you can climb and view the stretch of Long Beach starting from Irawan Beach. It's best to go here during the early morning or just before sunset.



You can find more information on San Vicente and other sites that you can explore during your free time see one of these not affiliated links below:

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