



WWF

FACTSHEET

2013

## Icons at risk

# Palawan, The Philippines

A 15 MW coal fired power plant threatens to disrupt the delicate balance of the Palawan island, one of the most biologically diverse areas on Earth.



**50%**  
OF THE WORLD'S  
CORAL SPECIES ARE  
FOUND IN PALAWAN



© WWF

## Birds eye view

**The region:** Palawan is the largest province in the Philippines, with a total land area of 1.4 million hectares, located between the Western Philippine Sea and the Sulu Sea.

**Rich heritage:** In 1990, Palawan was recognized as a UNESCO *Man and Biosphere Reserve*. It also holds within it, two other UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park and Puerto Princesa Underground River, which is also one of the Seven Wonders of Nature.

### Nowhere else on Earth:

The Palawan bear cat, Balabac mouse deer, Calamian deer, Flying Squirrel, Palawan Porcupine, Stink Badger and Palawan Hornbill are found only on these islands.

**Biodiversity:** It is home to more than 23% of species found in the Philippines including 5 species of marine turtles and 75% of the *critically endangered* Philippine Cockatoo population.

## An iconic landscape

**INTERNATIONALLY  
RECOGNIZED AS  
ONE OF THE BEST  
ISLANDS ON EARTH**

The province of Palawan is known as the final ecological frontier of the Philippines, and a haven for wildlife. This 425 km long and 40 km wide island is endowed with beautiful landscapes which are a mix of long coastlines, rolling hills, tropical rainforests, tall mountain ranges and winding rivers. The islands have received international recognition from the tourism industry as one of the best islands on Earth. The famous Tubbataha Reefs at the center of the Sulu Sea host over 600 reef fish and 380 hard coral species. Palawan is sparsely populated with most of its people deriving their livelihood from its natural resources via tourism, agriculture and fisheries.

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**THE COAL PROJECT  
THREATENS THE LAST  
REMAINING BREEDING  
HAVEN FOR THE  
PHILIPPINE COCKATOO**

**Threats**

Palawan is fighting a battle against a proposal to set up a 15 MW coal fired power plant in the heart of the island. Recently, the proposal received the approval from the village council, but is yet to be cleared by the municipality and province. If approved, the project will irreparably damage this pristine ecosystem, affecting all iconic and endangered species of the region as well as its terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

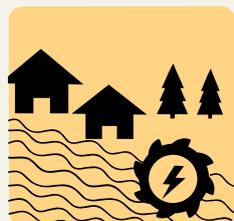
**Impact of the project**

There are currently two proposed sites for the coal plant in Palawan. The first site near the Rasa Wildlife Sanctuary supports the largest nesting and breeding population of the *critically endangered* Philippine Cockatoo. The tall structures and wires will increase risks of collision and electrocution, resulting in a serious decline in the breeding population. The second site in Aborlan, directly across the Malunao fish sanctuary, is a mangrove area where locals live and rely primarily on fishing for livelihood. The polluted thermal waste water would directly be discharged into seas and other water bodies, heavily impacting marine and freshwater ecosystems. Also, transporting the coal to Palawan would expose a much larger marine area to risks such as ship groundings and spills.

The island has potential for wind, solar and biomass projects in the region. Palawan can make the right energy choice today to secure a sustainable future dependant on clean energy, and set an example for the entire country of Philippines, which has more than 4000 MW of coal projects awaiting approval despite being a country that is poor in fossil fuel resources but rich in clean, indigenous renewable energy resources.



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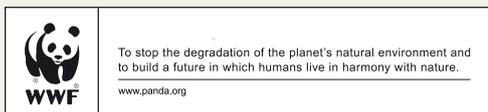
**AN ALTERNATIVE  
MINI-HYDRO PROJECT  
IS BEING PROPOSED IN  
THE PROVINCE THAT  
WOULD PRODUCE  
CLEANER ENERGY AT A  
CHEAPER RATE**

**Protecting Palawan**

The current proposed coal-fired power plant in the province is facing stiff, on-the-ground opposition from local communities, such as members of civil society and the academia. WWF is also engaged with the Department of Energy to conduct a province-wide Energy Development Plan. There is a possibility that Palawan becomes 100% powered by renewable energy in the near future, eliminating requirements for fossil fuel projects and all the economic, social and environmental risks associated with it.

**What you can do**

WWF and other civil society organisations are strongly opposing the construction of this coal fired power plant in Palawan. We need your support in making our voice heard and build a people's movement to save Palawan. Pledge your support to the Seize Your Power campaign to let the government know, you do not want dirty energy at the cost of losing one of the most beautiful islands in the world.



Seize Your Power is WWF's global campaign that calls on governments and financial institutions worldwide to act immediately to invest money in renewable energy projects and phase out investments in fossil fuels.

Sign the pledge: [www.panda.org/syp](http://www.panda.org/syp)