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THE CORAL TRIANGLE

nursery of the seas

Born out of the collision of tropical light, warm sea temperatures and oceanic currents, the Coral Triangle is defined by marine areas with at least 500 species of reef-building corals — *more than anywhere else on Earth.*

This triangular-shaped region covers all or part of the seas of six countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste.

Here, the diversity of coral, fish and other species is higher than anywhere else on Earth, including:

- ▶ 75 percent of all coral species known to science
- ▶ More than 3,000 species of reef fish and commercially-valuable open ocean species including yellowfin tuna, skipjack tuna, bigeye tuna, bumphead parrotfish, and Napoleon wrasse
- ▶ Six of the world's seven species of marine turtles including green, hawksbill, olive ridley, leatherback, loggerhead, and flatback
- ▶ Migrating whale sharks and manta rays which are attracted to the region by abundant plankton
- ▶ At least 27 species of marine mammals including dolphin, porpoise, whale and the endangered dugong



The Coral Triangle is the world's centre of marine life – a vast, majestic and colourful coral nursery sheltering and sustaining thousands of whales, tuna, reef fish, sharks and turtles.

From fishers hauling in their catch to tourists discovering coral-studded reefs, the Coral Triangle provides benefits to millions of people every day.

- ▶ Coral reefs, mangroves and associated natural habitats are a source of livelihoods, income, and food security, particularly for coastal communities. The total value of these is estimated at more than US\$2.3 billion per year
- ▶ Tuna spawning and nursery grounds support a multi-million dollar tuna industry and supply millions of consumers worldwide
- ▶ Healthy marine resources contribute to a growing nature-based tourism industry, valued at over US\$12 billion annually
- ▶ Healthy reef systems and mangroves protect coastal communities from storms and tsunamis, reducing immediate damage and future reconstruction costs
- ▶ Coastal resources are the foundation for traditional cultures and sustain social fabric in many of the region's islands

120
M i l l i o n

**people sustained by the
Coral Triangle's resources**

The undoing of the Coral Triangle?

- ▶ Marine resources are being depleted at an unsustainable rate to supply growing seafood markets within the Asia-Pacific region and beyond
- ▶ Overfishing and destructive fishing methods, including the use of cyanide and dynamite, have destroyed large sections of coral reefs and depleted fish populations. This trend is made worse by the practice of targeting juveniles and fish spawning aggregations
- ▶ The unintentional harvesting of non-target species in fisheries – or “bycatch” – is seriously endangering marine species such as sea turtles
- ▶ More than 75 percent of the world's resource-intensive aquaculture industry is centred in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in the Philippines and Indonesia, and increasingly, Malaysia
- ▶ Climate change affects marine biodiversity and the lives of those who depend on the reefs for food and income. In particular, coral bleaching poses a major threat to coral reefs

Why are these problems happening?

Poor management of marine resources in the Coral Triangle is driven by limited knowledge of the value of sustainable resource use, high levels of poverty, and poor collaboration among key stakeholders (including the private sector and communities).

To maintain the health and productivity of the Coral Triangle, the region must be managed as a single, large-scale system—biological, social and economic.





WWF and the Coral Triangle

Regional governments have committed to a *Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security*. Our vision is to ensure that the oceans and coasts of the Coral Triangle, the nursery of the seas, remain vibrant and healthy—providing food and livelihoods for generations to come.

WWF has been pioneering conservation in the Coral Triangle for more than twenty years, collaborating with partners in the private sector, governmental agencies and civil society. By providing technical expertise and funding, and promoting innovative public-private partnerships, WWF is committed to support regional governments and play its part in ensuring that the *Coral Triangle Initiative catalyzes* measurable changes.

Through the WWF Coral Triangle Programme, we are working to safeguard the health of the region's natural treasures and secure the millions of livelihoods that depend upon them by:

- ▶ **Building a sustainable live reef fish trade.** One of the most lucrative and distinctive of the region's reef-based fisheries is the live reef fish trade. WWF aims to replace destructive fishing practices with sustainable ones, reduce over-fishing of wild stocks, promote the adoption of best management practices and sustainable full-cycle mariculture, and promote sustainably-sourced fish in restaurants in Asian cities.
- ▶ **Promoting sustainable tuna fisheries.** The Coral Triangle contains spawning and nursery grounds and migratory routes for commercially-valuable tuna species such as bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack and albacore (more than 20 percent of the total global catch). Now, we are exploring solutions to channel some of the financial benefits of tuna trade in global markets back into the region. Our goal is that these efforts will support improved national-level tuna management and deliver more equitable benefits to island communities. In addition, WWF is introducing incentives for sustainable fishing practices, while helping inform and engage civil society on the importance of international fish resources and the need for global cooperation to manage them.
- ▶ **Reducing wasteful bycatch in fisheries.** Solutions exist to significantly reduce the level of unintentional and wasteful bycatch of endangered species such as sea turtles, as well as juveniles of valuable tuna species in fisheries. To reduce wasteful bycatch, we are securing industry commitments and policies to increase the use of more selective fishing gear such as Circle Hooks in tuna longline fisheries and Turtle Excluder Devices in shrimp trawl fisheries.
- ▶ **Financing marine protected areas.** Well-designed and appropriately-managed networks of marine protected areas and locally managed marine areas are essential to enhance resilience against climate change, and prevent further loss of biodiversity, including fisheries collapse. Through new sustainable finance mechanisms and investments in climate adaptation, WWF is supporting networks of marine sanctuaries and locally managed conservation areas across the Coral Triangle.
- ▶ **Protecting marine turtles in the Indo-Pacific.** The Coral Triangle is home to six of the seven species of marine turtle, most of which are under major threat. In recognition of the crucial ecological role turtles play in providing healthy habitats for fish and maintaining productivity of marine food chains, WWF seeks to protect turtles in critical nesting, foraging, and migratory habitats.
- ▶ **Reducing the impacts of climate change.** Climate change is arguably the single biggest threat to the Coral Triangle's marine productivity. WWF is working to secure commitments from the region's governments and the private sector to actively support emissions reduction and investment in climate adaptation measures to reduce the impact of climate change on the region's coral reefs.



Make a Natural Investment in the Coral Triangle

Safeguarding the Coral Triangle's magnificence and abundant productivity calls for a regional, large-scale collaboration. Your role in this effort is crucial to make it successful.

By working closely with governments, the private sector, non-government organizations and civil society, WWF is helping to shape lasting solutions for the Coral Triangle.

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Contact us to find out how you can join us and make a natural investment in the Coral Triangle.

panda.org/coraltriangle

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