



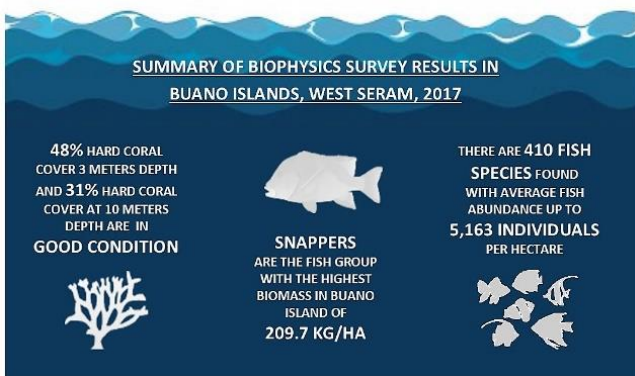
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USAID SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS ADVANCED (USAID SEA) PROJECT: BUANO ISLANDS – WEST SERAM

Located at the corridor that connects the Seram and Banda Seas, Buano Islands play a strategic role in protecting marine biodiversity in Maluku Province, including the large population of marine mammals that use the waters around the islands as their primary migratory route each year.

Based on the Rapid Ecological Assessment (REA) survey results in 2016 and 2017, supported by the USAID Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced (USAID SEA) Project, at least 16 species of marine mammals were observed between Banda and Seram Seas, including endangered Blue Whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*) and Sperm Whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*). These charismatic creatures migrate to east Indonesia from the sub-Antarctic convergence zone in south Australia for feeding and calving.



In May 2017, the USAID SEA Project’s scientific survey, conducted by Coral Triangle Center (CTC), successfully counted 5,163 fish of 410 species, and identified a high concentration of fish larvae and plankton around Buano Islands and Valentine Strait. This indicates that the islands are an active and fertile fisheries spawning ground for more than 11 fish families in Maluku Province supported by its complete and intact coastal ecosystem of mangrove, seagrass and coral reefs.

MARINE RESOURCES POTENTIAL IN BUANO ISLANDS

The Buano Islands cover a total area of 127.55 km² consisting of one major island and six small islands. There are two villages in the main island, namely North Buano and South Buano, as well as six sub-villages, namely Anauni, Kasuari, Naiselan, Huhuwa, Pasir Panjang and Huaroa. In 2017, the total population of the islands was reported to be 15,463 people.

The fishery commodities in Buano Islands include big pelagics such as yellow fin tuna, small pelagics such as skip jack tuna and mackerel, reef fish such as grouper, and demersal fish such as snapper. In 2018, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Indonesia estimated the total average capture fisheries of the island at 124 metric tons per year.



Most fishermen in Buano still use traditional fishing gear (hand lines and nets). There are 1,695 fishermen in Buano Islands with average incomes ranging between IDR 500,000 - IDR 1 million (USD 35 - 70) per month. Buano Islands hosts a rich marine biodiversity with total mangrove coverage of 872 hectares, seagrass bed of 503 hectares, and coral reefs of 1,707 hectares, most of which are in good condition.

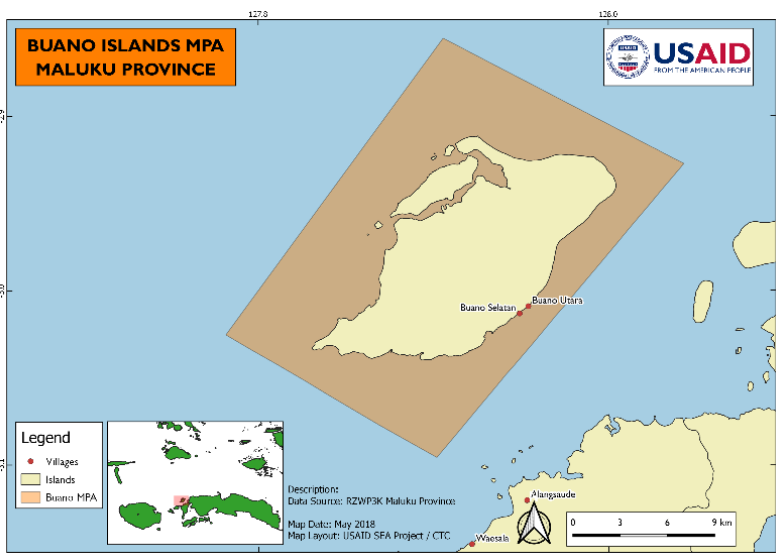
Aside from the cetaceans, the waters around Buano Islands are also home for other charismatic marine animals such as manta rays, green turtles, and reef sharks, which could support the development of future marine eco-tourism.

USAID SEA PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN BUANO ISLANDS

Considering the great potential of marine resources in Buano Islands, USAID SEA Project supports the Government of Maluku Province in establishing an effectively managed marine protected areas (MPA), with policies and active programs that support marine conservation while reducing destructive fishing practices and other pressures on the marine ecosystems.

There is no designated MPA in West Seram District yet, but since 1999 there is a National Marine Recreation Park of Marsegu Island at Kotania Bay with a total area of 11,000 hectares. The provincial government is planning to establish a new multiple-use MPA that covers Buano Islands and Valentine Strait, as well as its surrounding waters.

The total area of these islands is 13,416 hectares with a total coastal line of 88.27 kilometer (see map). The proposed multiple-use MPA will cover 30,454 hectares and will have a zoning system to support sustainable fisheries, conservation of endangered marine species, as well as marine eco-tourism.



The USAID SEA Project, through CTC, supports the MPA establishment by providing scientific input, help in developing the zoning plan, finalizing the MPA management plan, and conducting training and environmental education for the local communities, as well as increasing the capacity of government officers. The project will also incorporate local tenure and regulations in the systematic design of MPA.

Apart from the MPA establishment, USAID SEA Project will also help strengthening targeted community-based sustainable marine conservation and eco-tourism, and advocate communities toward positive behaviour. Through the *Pejuang Laut* (Champions of the Sea) program, the local leaders will contribute their active involvement in promoting peers' and communities' knowledge and attitude in understanding conservation benefits in Buano Islands. By providing a holistic support anchored on effective MPA management and sustainable fisheries methods, the USAID SEA Project aims to enhance the quality of people's lives in the islands by ensuring a sustainable economic future that depends heavily on its rich coastal and marine resources.

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