## Sibuyan Island, Romblon



Address: Romblon

Description: Sibuyan is one of the remaining bastions of biodiversity in the country. Dubbed the "Galapagos of Asia", it has high number of endemic species recorded, with approximately 77% of the species found in the area. The island's famous landmark, Mt. Guiting-Guiting, was proclaimed a natural park in 1996. Despite its protected status, there are serious threats to the biodiversity of Mt. Guiting-Guiting and other areas of the island. Though its dense forests cover 81% of the island, Sibuyan still faces threats from mining, charcoal-making, and unregulated harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products. The indigenous peoples in Sibuyan Island are the Sibuyan Mangyan Tagabukid. (Photo: FFI)

Status: Closed

### Site Profile Summary

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| **Ecosystem Types** | Forest, Coastal and Marine |
| **Protection Status** | - There arefour (4) defined protection instruments in the area, from terrestrial to aquatic ecosystems:<br>1. **Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park** under the DENR – BMB which was declared through a Presidential Proclamation (PP) No. 746 in 1996, with a reserve area of 15,260.48 has.<br>2. **Mangrove Swamp Forest Reserve** under the DENR – BMB through PP 2152<br>3. **Ancestral Domains (Small and Big CADT) of the Sibuyan Mangyan Tagabukid** under NCIP covering 8,408 has of the island.<br>4. **Marine Protected Area** under BFAR with a total area of 348.96 has |
| **Biogeographic Features** | - The island is dubbed as the “Galapagos of Asia” as it is home to a wealth of endemic flora and fauna.<br>- The highest peak in the island is Mt. Guiting-Guiting, with an elevation of 2,058 meters above sea level, and a recognized key biodiversity area. The island is also known for the Catingas River as one of the cleanest river in the world.<br>-<br>- Most forested areas are lowland forests, but the habitat types range from mangrove forest, to caves, to peat swamp forests, beach forests, freshwater, and marine. Despite its protected status, Mt. Guiting Guiting and other natural areas on the island remain under serious threat.[1] |

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| **Flora** | - Sibuyan is home to 700 vascular plant species, and 144 recorded species of trees, ten of which are in the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) Red List. Thirty-three are Philippine endemic tree species, while two are island endemic (*Elaeocarpus argenteus var. gitingensis* and *Astronia gitingensis*)[2]. Fifty-four plant species are endemic to the island. |
| **Fauna** | There are at least 83 recorded Philippine endemics in Sibuyan, with four of them island endemics.[3] Eighteen of them are in the IUCN Red List of Threatened species.<br>A total of 130 bird species were recorded in Sibuyan, including the Rufuous-lored Kingfisher (*Halcyon winchelli nesydrionetes)*, and the Philippine Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus philippensis).* Sibuyan is home to 9 native terrestrial mammal species (four of which are endemic rodents), 9 bat species (including the endemic Sibuyan Pygmy Fruit Bat (*Haplonycteris sp. A)*, 16 Philippine endemic reptiles, among others. |
| **Livelihood Resources** | - Farming, fishing, hunting-gathering (traditional use of forest resources) |
| **Other significant matters:** | - The indigenous dwellers of Sibuyan are the Sibuyan Mangyan Tagabukid (SMT). Two Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) were issued to SMT covering 8408 has across Cajidiocan and San Fernando. The Romblon Electric Company, which supplies power to the province, has been operating in Sibuyan without a Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) from the tribe for the utilization of the Cantingas River.[4]<br>- A large portion of the SMT ancestral domain (3,322 has) is included in the declared protected areas of the island (under the National Integrated Protected Areas Act of 1992, or Republic Act 7856), which is managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, when this is contrary to the mandate granted by the IPRA (Indigenous Peoples Rights Act or Republic Act 8671) law. [5] |

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[Sibuyan Island Biodiversity and Socioeconomic Assessment Report. Fauna & Flora International.

[2] *Sibuyan Island Rapid Biodiversity Baseline Assessment.* Fauna & Flora International and the Foundation for the Philippine Environment. 2013.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Sibuyan Mangyan Tagabukid Factsheet.* Mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples Participation in Environmental Governance, Fundacion Desarrollo Sostenido and the Foundation for the Philippine Environment.

[5] Ibid.

## Sociocultural Situation