

When The Cradle Falls: A Case of Management Failure in a Community Marine Reserve In Southern Philippines

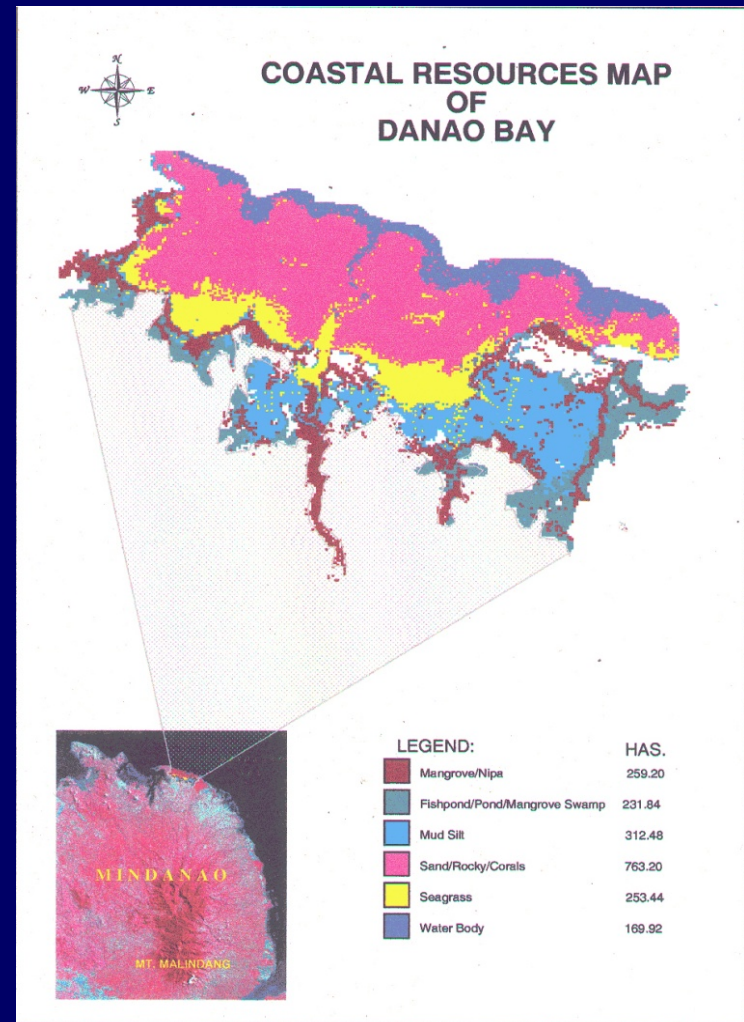
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Journey of the Baliangao Marine Sanctuary to NIPAS

- 74-hectare mangrove-seagrass-coral reef marine reserve complex
- Located in Danao Bay in the northern shore of Misamis Occidental



Source: NAMRIA Landsat map

● **Brief history & Timeline**

- Established as a 74-ha Baliangao Marine Sanctuary in 1991 by the Pipuli Foundation
- Renamed the Baliangao Wetland Park in 1994 with inclusion of 7-ha mangrove forest
- Declaration as NIPAS site in December 22, 2000, renamed the Baliangao Protected Landscape and Seascape (BPLS)
- Creation of a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) on October 4, 2001

Changing Hands

- Change in institutional arrangements
 - Began as NGO-initiated project with municipal support
 - NGO-driven Danao Bay CBCRM program with national/inter'l funding (FPE, SND, VSO, ICCO)
 - Empowerment of the Resource Mgmt Org. (DB-REMO) to undertake mgt after Pipuli exited in 2002

- Changing community perception
 - Sense of 'losing ownership' of the project
→ growing disinterest → decrease in enforcement
- **Small Voice:** lack of representation of the community to the PAMB
 - dominated by LGU officials
 - 7 PO's but only one representative to the PAMB

Management Failure

- By early 2005 law enforcement & guarding the sanctuary became fragmented
- Lack of LGU support & security of sanctuary guards
- In March 2005, a “fishing frenzy” by some 300 fishers and gleaners
- PAMB and DB-REMO unable to stop these violations

When the cradle falls...

Change in Institutional Arrangement (from DB-REMO to PAMB)

Sense of Losing Ownership of MS Project

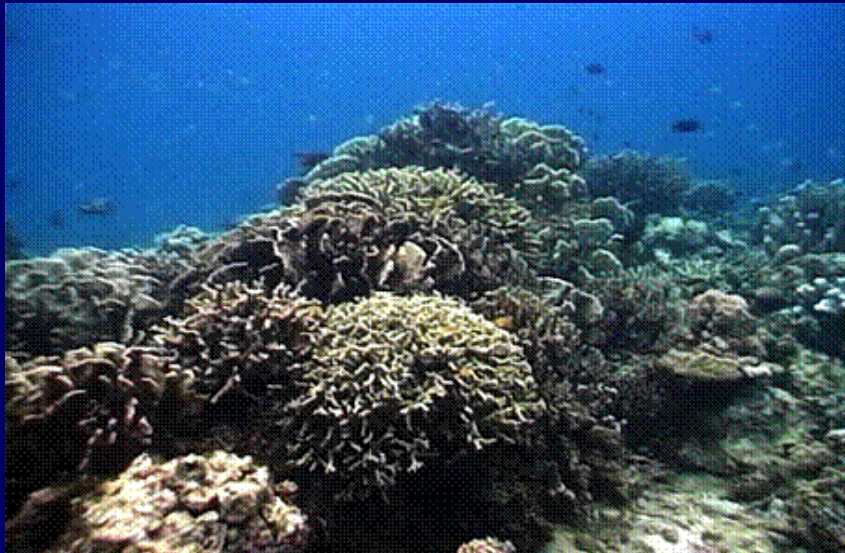
Fragmentation of Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS) protocol

"Opening Up" of Marine Sanctuary to Fishing Frenzy (2005)

Decrease in hard coral cover and fish stocks



Decline in habitat and resource quality

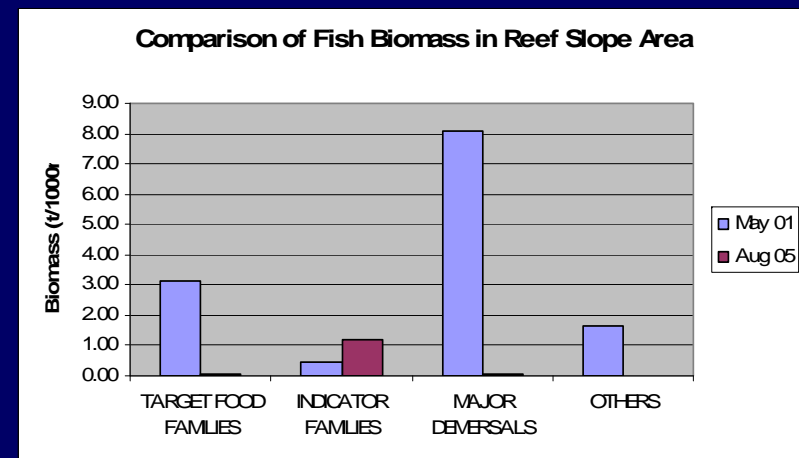
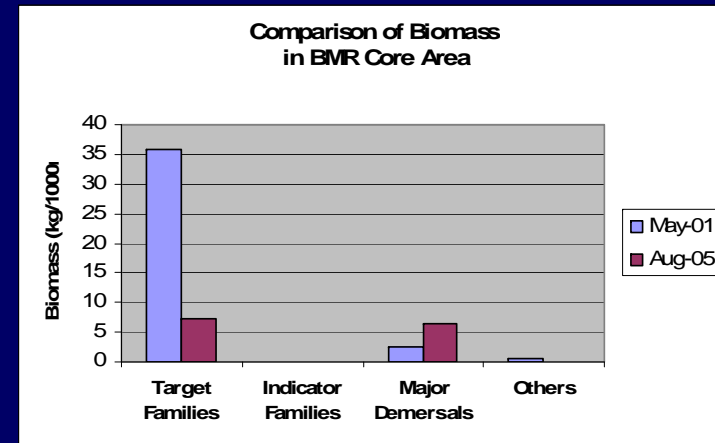
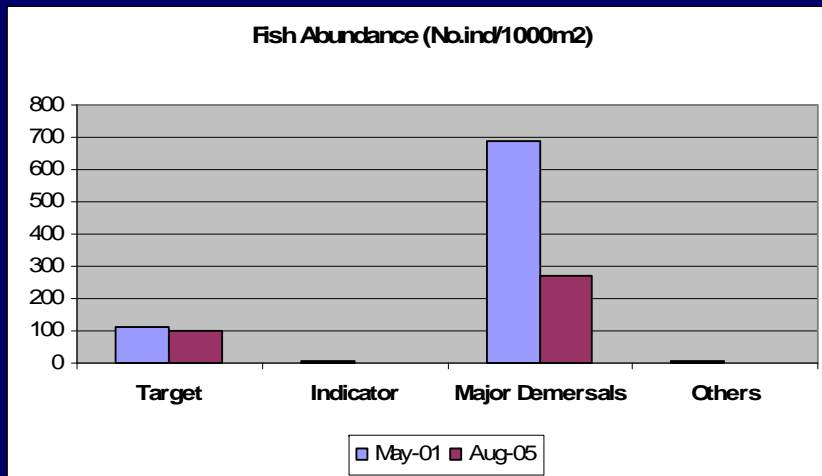


- Decrease in coral cover
- Decrease in fish diversity, abundance & biomass

*Disappearance of large predators
(Lutjanus spp)*

Decline in Bio-physical Quality

- decrease in Fish abundance by 80% (core) and
- decrease in Fish Biomass by - %

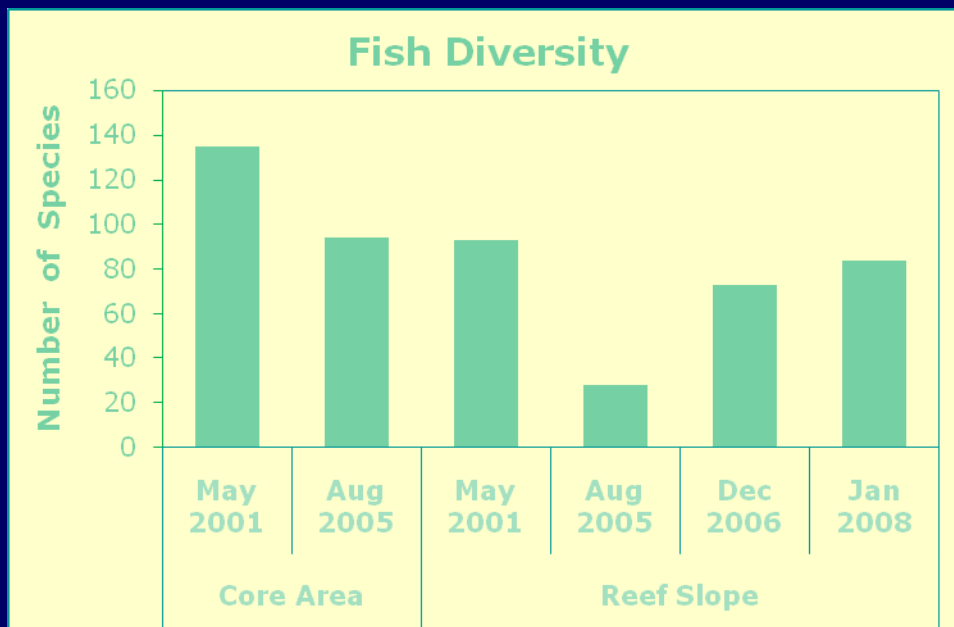
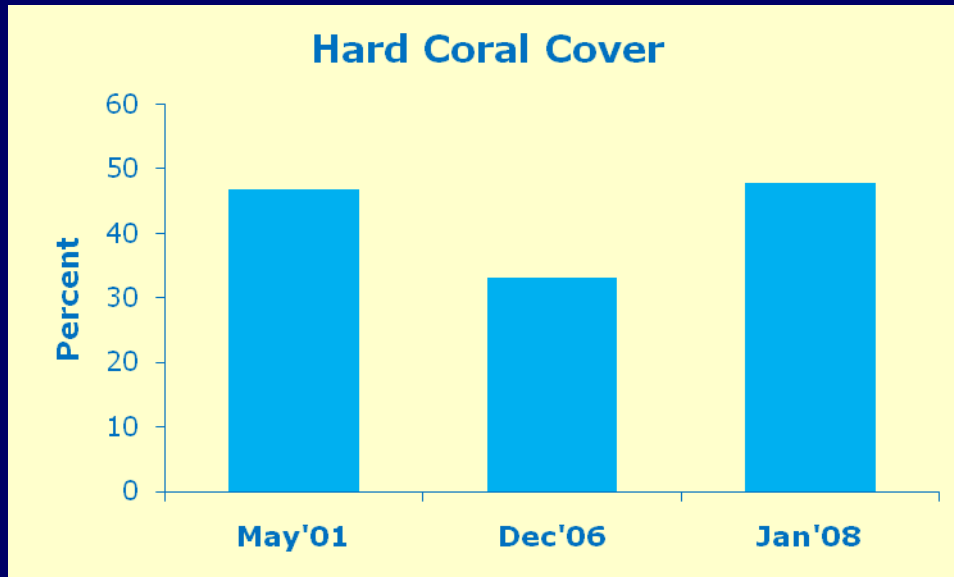


What this adds up to...

- Upscaling of community-managed MPA to a national (NIPAS) site has not been beneficial
 - Has not improved management & environmental governance
 - 'Partnership' between PAMB and community has not translated into co-management of project

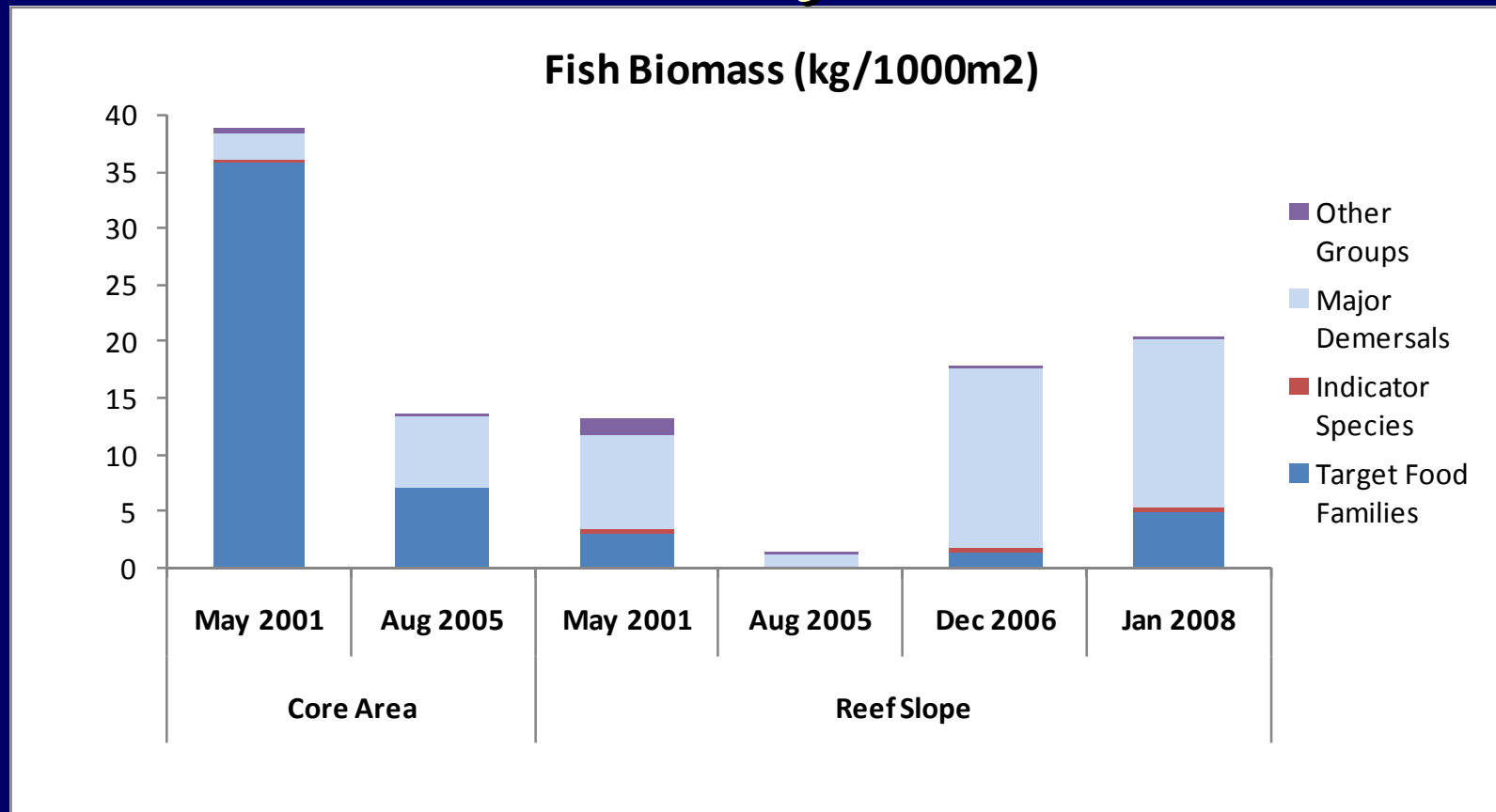
- ‘Top-bottom’ approach “silenced” the community voice and extinguished their enthusiasm
- PAMB also lacks funds to pursue mgt rigorously - has placed enforcement of MPA regulations on the PO
- The PO, having no active support from the LGU, their security continually threatened by violators, became ineffectual in enforcement

A recent attempt to bounce back



- Results of August 2005 assessment presented to PAMB in September meeting
- PAMB & DB-REMO agreed to measures to reverse the decline
- Improvement in hard coral cover during most recent assessment
- Recovery of fish diversity on reef slopes of MPA

Toward recovery?



- Fish biomass recovered after 2005, but dominated by small demersal fish (Pomacentridae, Labridae)
- Target food fish showed increase after 2006.

Still...the NIPAS Issues persist

- Integrated protected area fund (IPAF) remains 'inaccessible' by the local MPA management
 - Past revenues earned by the BMS part of IPAF; 75% for local MPA mgt but rarely accessed
 - Apo Island - generates millions of revenues each year but only a tiny fraction goes back to MPA mgt due to bureaucracy
- Many small, locally managed MPAs proclaimed as NIPAS sites wish to be reverted

Hard-earned Lessons

- Communities or POs have demonstrated ability to effectively manage their MPAs
- What they need is support from LGU, NGAs, academe, NGOs, etc., capacity building and empowerment
- Upscaling well-managed LGU- or community MPAs to NIPAS level is not necessary in certain cases (e.g. Baliangao MS, Apo Is. MR)
- **Moral of the story:** *“Do not mend what is not torn, nor fix what is not damaged”*



Daghang Salamat

