



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
ARTISANAL FISHERIES  
AND AQUACULTURE  
2022



FISH  
FOREVER



**The United Nations has declared 2022 as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture, with the Food and Agriculture Organization as the lead agency. The celebration aims to focus global attention on the tens of millions of people, almost half of them women, who are directly or indirectly engaged in capture fisheries worldwide. They play an important role in providing food and nutrition to billions of people, as well as the sustainable use of natural resources in achieving Zero Hunger. (FAO, 2022)**

**In this booklet, we provide a snapshot of community-led management of coastal fisheries in the Philippines from the perspective of 10 small-scale fishers. From their experiences in guarding marine protected areas to promoting economic resilience for fishing households, they give a voice to the 1.9 million municipal fishers that rely on coastal ecosystems for food security and livelihood.**

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# JOSE ROEL LABAJO

*Coastal fisher and community leader in Sipaway island in San Carlos City, on the importance of people's organizations in sustaining municipal fisheries*

**“**  
*Sa meeting kada bulan, kung duna pay mga iligal gina-apil namu na tungod kay mao man gyud na siya'y dako kaayo nga imuhang katungod. Maghugpong gyud ug kung duna man sila'y nakita gina-report gyud dayon. Bilang usa ka nga mananagat, mulaban gyud ka sa imuhang gikuhaag panginabuhian.*  
**”**

**“**  
*In our meetings every month, we invite fishers who are still doing illegal activities because it's our responsibility to encourage unity and report violators. As fishers, we have to make sure that we protect the source of our livelihood.*  
**”**



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# AMSIA EMPANG

*President of the all-women Katipunan Vegetable and Agar-agar Growers Association in the Municipality of Ibil, Province of Zamboanga Sibugay, on the impact of the pandemic on their livelihood*

***Sa una nga wala pa ang pandemic, pwedeng daghan ug magdikit-dikit ang tawo mao nga mahuman sulod sa isa hangtud tulo ka oras lang ang pag-butang sa seedling. Pero karon, muabot na ug lima ka oras. Ang presyo sa seaweed sa merkado ubos kaayo tungod sa lockdown, unya mahal ang tanang palalitun. Ang pagbayad sa mga tawo mahal usab kay mao na man lang panginabuhian diri. Ang akong pangandoy, mahuman ang pandemic, nga mubalik na sa una ang among panginabuhian.***



***Before the pandemic, when we processed seaweed seedlings, we could have many people sitting side by side so it would only take one hour to three hours at the most. Now, it would take us up to five hours. The price of seaweed in the market is very low due to the lockdown. Prices of goods have gone up. We have to pay our seedling processors higher because this is the only available livelihood here. I am hoping that after the pandemic, our livelihood will go back to what it was before.***



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# FREDERICK TESADO

*Former Bantay Dagat member in an island community in Siargao islands, Surigao del Norte,  
on the impact of sustained patrols on their fishing grounds*

**“**  
*Five years na ko nga boluntaryo  
sa una, liban-liban tapos  
managatay. Naa na siguro sa mga  
30 nadakpan namo, mga dayo sa  
lain-lain nga lugar nga maabot  
diri sa pagpangita ug panggal.  
Diri sa Barangay Caub, dako ang  
kabaguan kay gumikan sa pag-  
roving namo adlaw-adlaw, na-  
maintain na namo diri ang serbisyo  
sa pagdumaya. Sa kajun, nawaya  
na mga iligal tapos mga dayo diri  
sa amo.*  
**”**

**“**  
*I have been with Bantay Dagat for  
five years, doing volunteer work  
after my fishing activities.  
We have caught around 30 people  
from different places who come  
here looking for crab traps.  
Here in Barangay Caub, things have  
changed a lot because of our daily  
roving patrols and sustainable  
management of our resources.  
There are no more illegal fishers  
and poachers here.*  
**”**



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# GERLITA BUCALON

*Fish Forever savings club member in Ayoke island in Cantilan, Surigao del Sur,  
on the benefits of financial resilience*

**Daku kaayo ug tabang  
ang savings club sa  
among panimalay.  
Sa akong naipon nga  
23,000 pesos nakapalit  
ko ug bag-o nga pukot  
para magamit sa akong  
bana nga mananagat.**

”

**Being a member of our  
savings club has been  
a huge help for our  
household. From my  
savings of 23,000 pesos,  
I was able to buy new  
gillnets for my husband  
who is a fisher.**

”



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# HENRY SAMMY JARIL

*Bantay Dagat member in Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte,  
on his journey from illegal fisher to protector of fishing grounds*

**“**  
*Sa una iligalista ako – dynamite,  
tanan busok. Pagkahuman,  
nasayod ko anang Bantay Dagat  
tapos nagbutang ug santwari.*

*Hamok natabang nako kay  
pahibawan namo mga tawo nga  
ilugal na, pahuway na.*

*Minteyn kami sa pagmonitor  
tapos jaya naay mga iligal, usahay  
dakpon namo. Ang panginabuhian  
diri sa amo, arang na mga isda  
makita diri. Ang corals makit-an  
diri madayaw na sab.*

**”**

**“**  
*I used to be an illegal fisher –  
dynamite, everything. And then I  
learned about the Bantay Dagat  
and the marine sanctuary.*

*I have contributed a lot by  
informing people that we should  
stop illegal fishing. We monitor  
continuously and if there are illegal  
fishers, sometimes we arrest them.*

*Our livelihood has improved.  
There are plenty of fish now and  
the corals are healthier too.*

**”**



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# MARIBEL MATEO

*Fish trader in Libertad in the Province of Antique, on how OurFish app helps with government requirements to report fish catch and lessen overfishing*

**“**  
*Sa mga bulan tang Abril asta Hunyo, damo tang tuna sa Pandan Bay. Daw ga-parada sa lawod ang mga bangka kun aga. Pag-abot sa bodega, kilohun namon kag ilista sa papel kung pila ka kilo ang kabug-aton. Pagka-deliver sa nagbakal, bayaran namon ang manginisda. Sa OurFish, dali na lang kay ara sa selpon ang tanan nga datus sang transaksyun.*  
**”**

**“**  
*When tuna is plentiful from April to June in Pandan Bay, it looks like a parade of boats at sea early in the morning. The fish is weighed at the bodega and we list down the number of fish and weight on paper. We pay the fisher after the fish is delivered to the buyer. With OurFish, the task is easier because all the transactions are now in our cell phone.*  
**”**



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# VIRGILIO AVISO

*Chairman of Tandayag Fishermen's Association in Amlan, Negros Oriental,  
on building the capacity of fishers to sustain fisheries*

***Kasagarang manginisda, dili kaayo taas ang mga grado, mao nga importante nilang mahibaloan kung unsa ang ensaktong kinaiya sa pagpanagat. Dako kaayo'g ikatabang nga naa gyu'y pagpasabot nga bawal na dihang dapita, angay atong gamiton ang tarong nga klase nga panagat, aron dili makasupak sa balaod. Pinaagi sa asosasyon, dako na kaayo ang kausaban sa mga manginisda. Mutambong na ug miting, kabalo nang manubag sa mga isyu. Respetado na sila.***

***Many fishers do not have a high level of schooling, so it is important to educate and help them understand proper fishing behavior, what gear to use and where not to fish so we don't violate the law. Through our association, the fishers have changed a lot. They now attend meetings and discuss issues. They are respected now.***



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# JACQUELYN CARANAY

*Fish buyer in San Benito, Province of Surigao del Norte,  
on the importance of reporting fish catch data and diversifying income sources*

**“**  
*Jaon koy duha ka bangka nga  
ginapagamit sa mga mangisdaay.  
Sa mga panahon nga waya gajoy kuha,  
malisud gajud hilabi na para sa ila.  
Amo ako rakan gyapon sila padayon gina-  
encourage bisan malisud gyapon kanako.  
Gabaligya sab ako nan mga produkto  
na dili kun lamang pangpangisda  
aron hamok kapilian, masiguro an  
panginabuhian. Nagahatag gajud ako ug  
datos sa gobyerno isip usa ka benipisaryo  
sa atong kadagatan para magamit sa mga  
eksperto pagpanday nan mga programa  
nga angay ug makahatag nan karajawan.*  
**”**

**“**  
*I have two boats that are used by  
municipal fishers. Whenever the fish  
catch is poor, it's a bad day for me,  
but most especially for the fishers so I  
try to give them encouragement even  
though it is also a loss for me.  
To have a steady source of livelihood,  
I sell non-marine products in our  
neighborhood. As someone who  
benefits from our ocean's abundance,  
I have been providing data to  
government staff so their experts can  
design programs that are relevant and  
useful for everyone.*  
**”**



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# JEFFREY TORMENTO

New recruit for Bantay Dagat in Barangay Caub in Siargao islands, interviewed when he was 26, on the need to protect municipal waters for fishers in the future

**Dose anyos pa lang, nanagat na ko diri. Tungod sa kaabunda diri sa among dagat, hamok mga dili taga diri, dili taga Surigao nga mangari. Para mas maprotektahan namo amo dagat, nag-entra ko niining nga kalihokan kay kung daan na kami hamok diri sa Caub na managatay, kon daun pa lain taga ya nay kuan sa sunod na mga generasyon, ya nay makuha.**

**I have been fishing since I was 12 years old. Because of the abundance of our seas, many fishers who are not from Surigao come here to fish. I joined (Bantay Dagat) to protect our fishing grounds from outsiders because if they keep coming here, future generations will have nothing left to catch.**



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## BEBELITO PATAGAN

60-year-old fisher from Dapa, Surigao del Norte,  
on the role of fisher registration in promoting responsible behavior

***Mukanhi gajud ako sa munisipyo para magpa-rehistro isip managatay kay tungod sa kalisud, nanginanghanlan man gajud kami na malakip kung jaoy mga marajaw na programa o suporta para sa amo mga managatay. Lima akong anak, puros nasa dagat. Single net amo gamit panagat para makapanginabuhi kami nan legal gajud.***

***I always go to the municipal hall to get registered so we can avail of good programs and support for fishers, because our life is difficult. I have five children who are all fishers. We use single nets and make sure that our source of livelihood is legal.***



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**Rare's Fish Forever program is a global leader in reducing coastal overfishing and revitalizing small-scale fisheries. Through a replicable model rooted in behavioral science, Fish Forever employs an innovative approach that empowers communities and gives them control over their future. Strong governance, data for decision-making, financial inclusion, and participatory management help coastal fishers to sustain production while conserving marine resources. Today, Fish Forever is engaging over a thousand communities across eight countries where high biodiversity meets high human use.**

For more information, visit our [Fish Forever page](#)