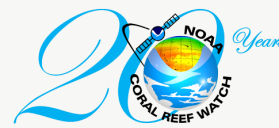




Philippines - Visayas



Regional summary of 7 dive sites. Figures are averages across the sites that report them (n = sites with a value); each site's own page has its individual values. Part of the [Philippines](#) overview.



Coral Health Index: TBD

COUNTRY

[Philippines](#)

SITES

7

each linked below

HARD CORAL COVER
(REGIONAL MEAN)

—

n = 0 of 7 sites

WATER TEMP. DURING
SURVEYS (REGIONAL MEAN)

—

n = 0 of 7 sites

CORAL HEALTH INDEX
(REGIONAL MEAN)

not yet scored

n = 0 of 7 sites

MOST RECENT WATER
TEMPERATURE RECORD

29.7°C

16 Sep 2026 · [Eastern Philippines](#)

MOST RECENT HEAT
STRESS RECORD



2.3°C-weeks

16 Sep 2026 · below alert level

MEAN ANNUAL MAX DEGREE
HEATING WEEKS (DHW), LAST
5 YEARS

5.7°C-weeks

2021–2025 · Eastern Philippines

HIGHEST ANNUAL HEAT
STRESS

11.9°C-weeks

in 2024 · Eastern Philippines

SEVERE HEAT-STRESS YEARS

3

1985–2025 · 2 in the last 10 years

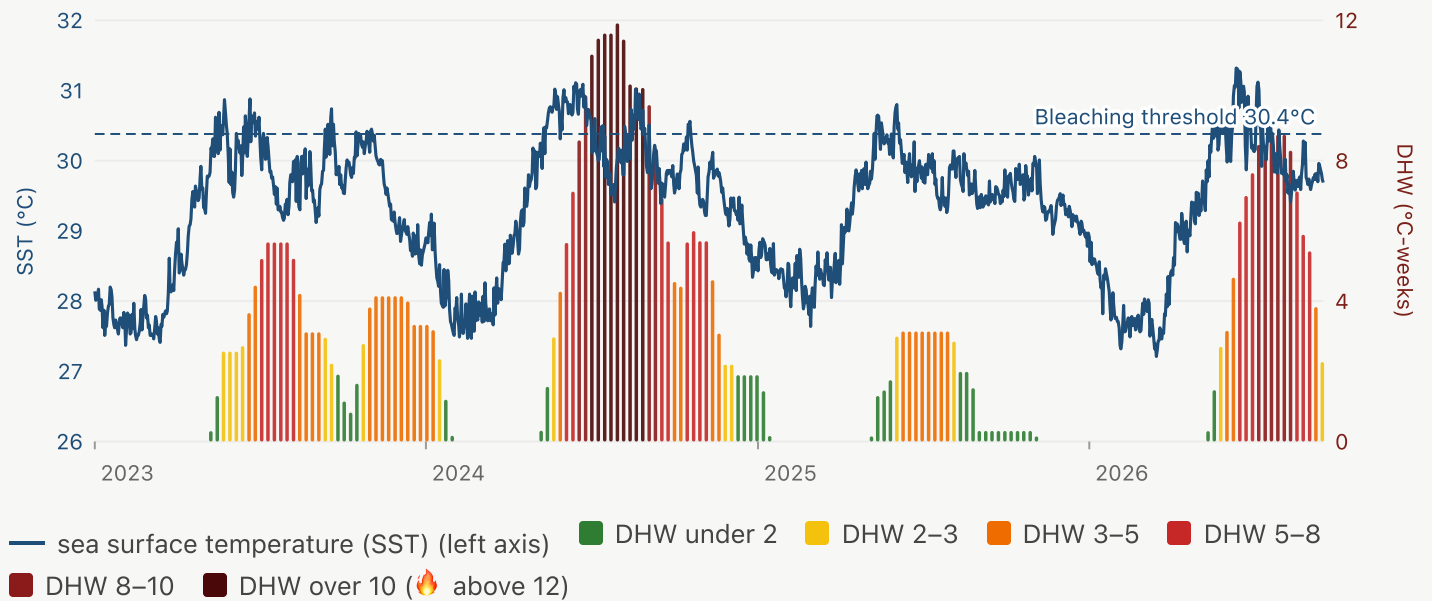
Heat-stress figures: [NOAA Coral Reef Watch](#) — [Eastern Philippines](#) 5-km virtual station. Each pill links its source record and carries the values behind it.

REGIONAL SUMMARY

Anderson's 2013 dives around [Cebu](#), Bohol, Negros, and Boracay are known from his logs: mostly walls with repeatedly outstanding hard coral, including the trip's best coral dive at Moalboal.

Pressures were few but specific, including typhoon-topped [table corals](#) and an overfished Sipalay fish assemblage.

Heat stress



Daily SST (line) and weekly maximum Degree Heating Weeks (bars), Jan 2023–Sep 2026, [NOAA Coral Reef Watch](#) 5-km Eastern Philippines virtual station. Dashed line: bleaching threshold (maximum monthly mean $29.4^{\circ}\text{C} + 1^{\circ}\text{C}$). DHW ≥ 4 : bleaching likely; ≥ 8 : severe bleaching and mortality likely. A bar is drawn only where DHW exceeds zero, so a stretch with no bar is accumulated heat stress of zero, not missing data — the SST line runs the full period.

Long-term record: 3 years since 1985 reached 8 or more $^{\circ}\text{C}$ -weeks at [NOAA's](#) Eastern Philippines station. [Download the annual DHW data \(CSV\)](#).



7 sites in this region — click a marker to open that site.

Read this summary in:

English

Tagalog

Regional setting

[Spalding et al. \(2001\)](#) describe the Visayas as a close-set group of islands, among them Panay, Negros, Cebu, Bohol, Leyte, and Samar, arranged around the Visayan Sea, which exceeds 200 m in depth in places. Fringing reefs line much of the Visayan coast, broken by soft sediment near river mouths, and on some reefs live cover was above 50%. Fish diversity was high where reefs were protected or lightly fished, and the small reserves at Apo Island and Sumilon, off Negros and Cebu, are cited as globally recognized models of community-based management: tiny no-take zones, enforced for years, raised fish numbers, and sizes and lifted yields in surrounding waters, and from 1999 both islands collected fees from visiting dive boats. Against this, Toledo City on Cebu was discharging an estimated 100,000 tons of mine tailings a day, with heavy losses of fish and coral along 7 km of coast. Their protected-area list includes the Apo Island Protected Landscape/Seascape (6.91 km², 1996), the Panglao Island-Balicasag reserve (1978), and Moalboal/Pescador. Nationally, they estimate 25,060 km² of reef, with 421 coral species recorded and 577 estimated.

By 2004, according to [Wilkinson \(2006\)](#), reef decline was continuing in the Philippines, driven by overfishing and destructive fishing, pollution and sediment running off the land, and reclamation. The same review judged only 10-20% of Southeast Asia's more than 630 marine protected areas to be effectively managed, which makes enforced reserves like Apo and Sumilon the exception. [Souter et al. \(2021\)](#) estimate that hard coral cover across the East Asian Seas dropped to 35% by 2012 after the 2010 mass bleaching and to 33.9% in 2017 after the 2016 event, before recovering to about 36.8% in 2019, and they flag marine plastic litter as an emerging threat in a region that may generate up to half of the world's supply.

Overview

The seven Visayas pins cover recreational dives made in February 2013 around Moalboal and Pescador Island off western Cebu, Mactan Island beside Cebu City, Alona Beach on Panglao and Balicasag Island off Bohol, Apo Island off Negros, Punta Ballo at Sipalay in [Negros Occidental](#), and Boracay. The underwater record here comes from Anderson's dive logs rather than photographs, since the surviving frames from these trips are topside.

The logs describe walls as the common setting: a wall at about 10 m at Sambaguita, a 32 m wall at Pescador Island, the deep Sanctuary wall on Balicasag, a wall with a cavern opening at about 25 m at Marigondon Cave on Mactan, and a deep wall through the Chapel dive at Apo. Sipalay offered a reef slope at Dante's Peak and pronounced spur-and-groove coral canyons at Habok Habok, and Boracay's Balinghai dive ran through a rubble canyon between two reef walls.

Hard coral was repeatedly the highlight. Talisay at Moalboal was the dive Anderson rated best of the trip for coral, close to continuous and genus-rich, with [poritids](#), [agaricids](#), [acroporids](#), [pocilloporids](#), [fungids](#), and [gonioporids](#) logged. The Sambaguita shallows at 3-4 m were near-continuous branching *Porites*, Pescador had extensive *Montipora* in the shallows, and the Balicasag Sanctuary wall carried the most coral he had then seen on one dive, turning to mostly encrusting forms with depth. At Marigondon Cave the log calls the hard coral cover and diversity striking given how close the site is to Cebu City. The exit there was through a coral garden interspersed with [seagrass](#).

Pressures in the logs are few but specific: tabular acroporids overturned at Arco Point by a strong typhoon about two months earlier, and a Sipalay fish assemblage that appeared severely overfished despite good coral structure. Sightings include turtles at several sites, a juvenile [blue-ringed octopus](#) on the Moalboal night dive, trevally and sardine schools off Mactan and Balicasag, and at Boracay abundant tabular acroporids, at least fifteen [nudibranchs](#), and the largest [cuttlefish](#) and mantis shrimp he had then seen.

Highlights

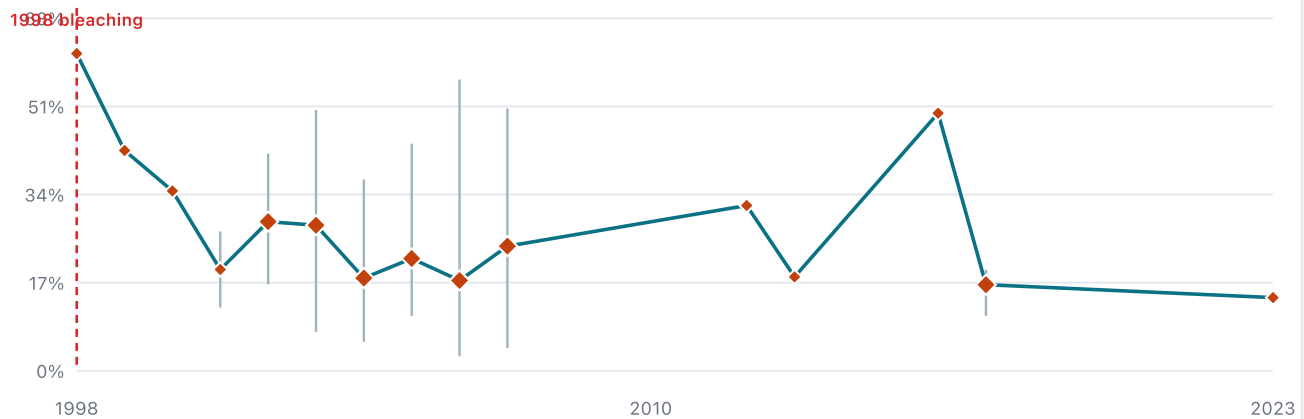
- Talisay (Moalboal): rated the best dive of the trip for coral, close to continuous and genus-rich
- Balicasag Sanctuary wall: the most coral Anderson had seen on a single dive to that point
- Marigondon Cave, Mactan: a cavern opening at about 25 m, with an exit through a coral garden interspersed with seagrass
- Sipalay: spur-and-groove coral canyons in 30.5 m visibility, but a depleted fish assemblage
- Pescador Island: a 32 m wall with extensive *Montipora* in the shallows

Notable observations

- [Philippines - Alona Beach / Panglao \(Bohol\)](#): Tabular [acroporids](#) overturned at Arco Pt. by a strong typhoon about two months earlier (dive log)
- [Philippines - Sipalay \(Punta Ballo, Negros Occidental\)](#): Area 'appears to have been severely overfished' - very few large fish across either dive (dive log)
- [Philippines - Boracay](#): Nearshore 'algal bloom' / 'green algae!' over the shallow sand shelf off White Beach (Anderson's labels) - a beachfront observation, not the offshore reef

Coral cover over time (pooled)

One point per year: the mean of every hard coral cover value available for this region that year — Anderson's own dives and every independent survey station within 5 km of them. The vertical bar is the full range behind that mean. Different programs use different methods at different stations, so this is a regional summary, not a single comparable series. Years resting on fewer than three values are drawn as smaller points (1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2012, 2013, 2016, 2023). Non-CRD points are from [Reef Check Foundation](#).



Sites in this region

- [Philippines - Alona Beach / Panglao \(Bohol\)](#)
- [Philippines - Apo Island \(Negros\)](#)
- [Philippines - Boracay](#)
- [Philippines - Cebu \(Moalboal\)](#)
- [Philippines - Mactan Island \(Cebu\)](#)
- [Philippines - Pescador Island \(Moalboal, Cebu\)](#)
- [Philippines - Sipalay \(Punta Ballo, Negros Occidental\)](#)

Nearby external survey stations

96 independent survey records within 5 km of a site in this region (deduplicated across sites).

► [Show all 96 records](#)

Data are from Coral Reef Diagnostics and [Reef Check Foundation](#).



© Coral Reef Diagnostics.

References

- Souter D, et al. (eds) (2021) *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020*. International Coral Reef Initiative / [Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network](#). [\[PDF\]](#)
- Spalding MD, et al. (2001) *World Atlas of Coral Reefs*. University of California Press, Berkeley. [\[PDF\]](#)
- Wilkinson C (2006) Status of coral reefs of the world: summary of threats and remedial action. In: Côté IM, Reynolds JD (eds) *Coral Reef Conservation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [\[PDF\]](#)