



BANWA

PRIVATE ISLAND

# A MARINE PROTECTED SANCTUARY IN THE HEART OF AN ANCIENT BIOSPHERE

An insight into the conservation programmes and local community support work undertaken by Banwa Private Island's Aquos Foundation.



AQUOS

FOUNDATION

BANWA PRIVATE ISLAND





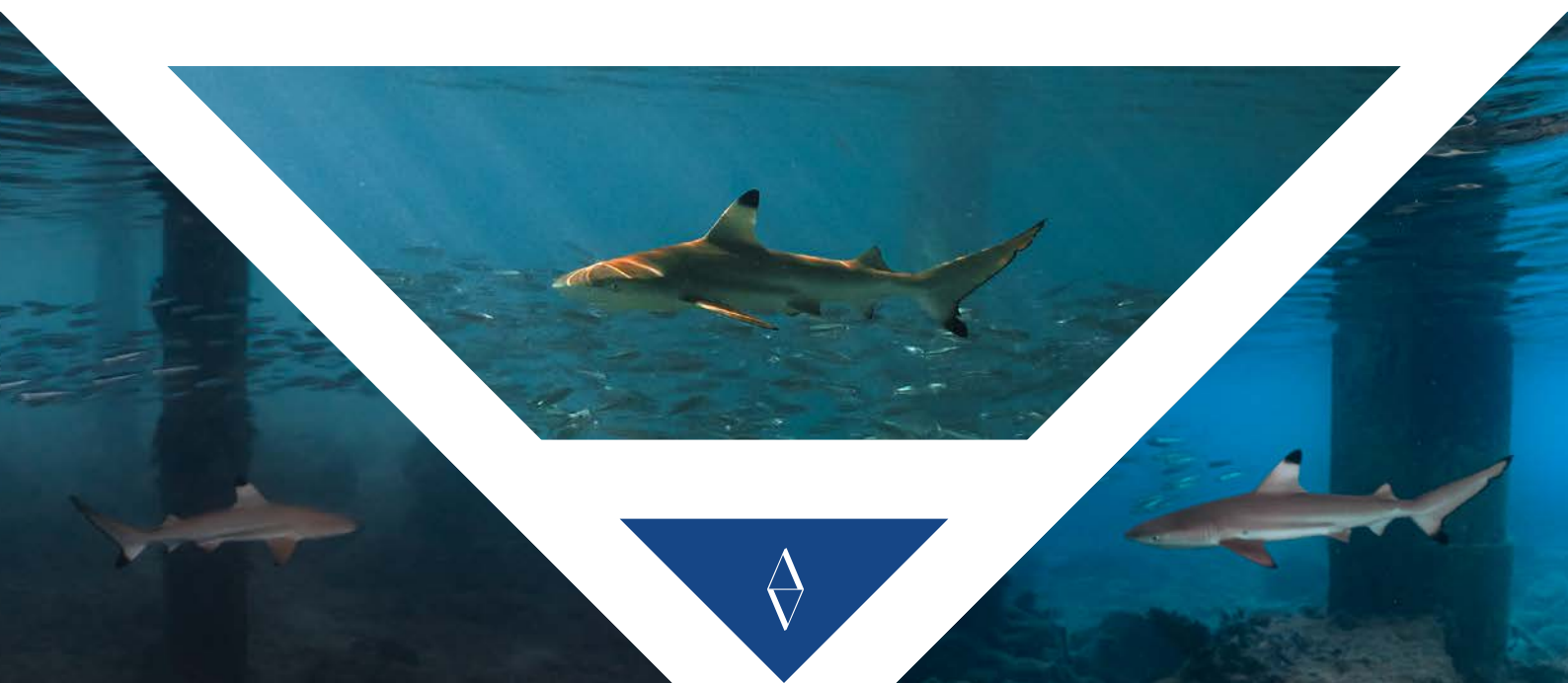
Central to Banwa Private Island's ethos from the very beginning was a desire to support, nurture, and protect the island's delicate ecosystem and the rich array of flora and fauna it provides habitat for. It's this mission that inspired us to set up the Aquos Foundation.

We at Aquos Foundation are dedicated to preserving the pristine marine ecosystem surrounding Banwa Private Island. As a committed partner of the Tumarbong Marine Protected Area (TMPA), the foundation plays a crucial role in safeguarding this 1,896-hectare sanctuary.

Our first goal was to help protect the critically endangered Hawksbill Turtle, and as part of this work a reef rehabilitation programme was also initiated. To date, we've successfully deployed over 200 Reef Balls, providing crucial habitat for coral colonization. These efforts have yielded encouraging results, with coral growth rates of up to 10cm per annum and a significant increase in the variety and density of fish species, including threatened species like the Napoleon Wrasse, Coral Catshark, and Humpback Grouper.

Banwa Private Island has long been a favoured nesting site for the Hawksbill, and we quickly set up conservation practices to protect preferential areas for the turtles to lay their eggs. Our efforts have yielded significant results, with over 100 nests successfully protected since 2016. More than 4,500 Hawksbill eggs have been laid and 61% of these have hatched.

The foundation has also initiated initiatives to protect the Giant Clam (*Tridacna Gigas*) and Black Tip Reef Shark. These majestic creatures are vital components of the marine ecosystem, and their conservation is essential for maintaining a healthy ocean. In 2022, we successfully repopulated the in-house reef with 53 Giant Clams, contributing to the preservation of this endangered species.







Banwa Private Island is a distinguished haven for marine biodiversity, honored to be named one of the Philippines' 10 Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) in 2024. This recognition underscores the island's vital role in protecting and conserving threatened marine species.

Our passion for conservation extends beyond the ocean. Banwa Private Island is a sanctuary for terrestrial biodiversity as well. We are committed to protecting and studying the island's unique ecosystem. Our efforts encompass the protection of the Philippine Megapode, commonly known as the Tabon Bird, the conservation of the rare Mantanani Scops Owl, and comprehensive bird surveys to safeguard avian biodiversity.

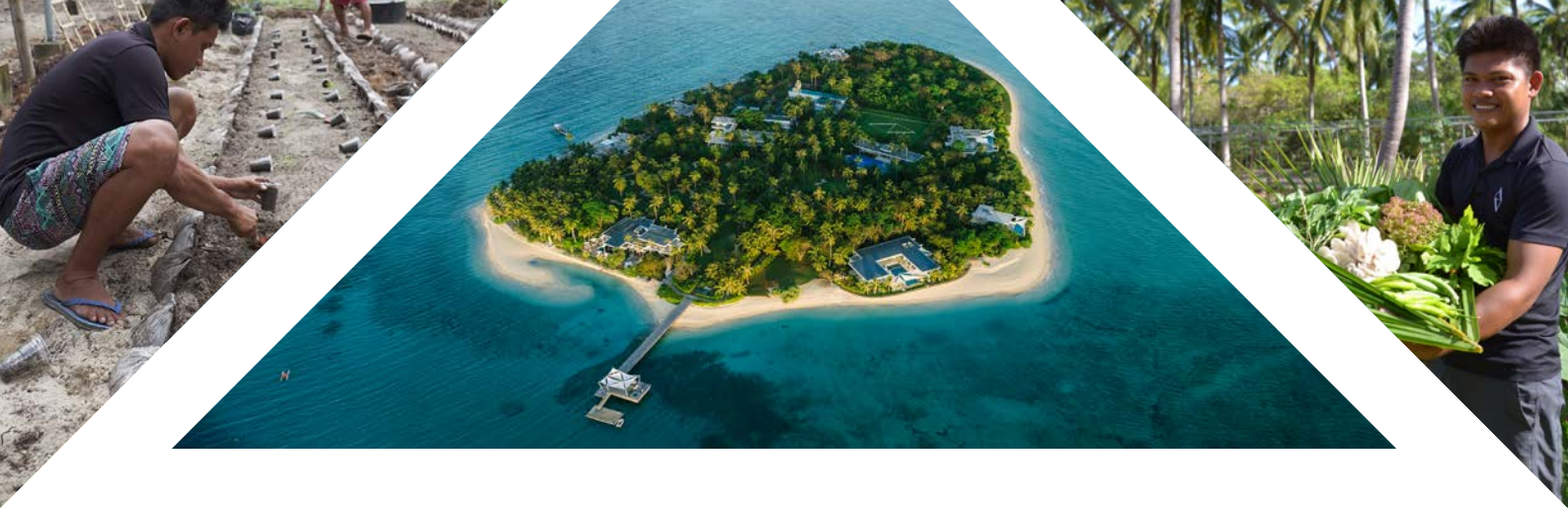
Our flagship terrestrial conservation project focuses on the Philippine Megapode. Since 2016, we have meticulously monitored their behavior and habitat, witnessing a remarkable increase in their population from 16 active nest sites in 2016 to 143 active nest sites in 2023. This achievement is a testament to our dedication and the island's thriving ecosystem.

Our research on the Mantanani Scops Owl has yielded significant results. We've successfully identified their nesting season, observed their habitat preferences, and supported the hatching of 13 young owls since 2016. Notably, two pairs nested on the island in 2021 and 2023.

We are deeply committed to uplifting the lives of the local communities surrounding Banwa Private Island. Through education, healthcare, and sustainable development initiatives, we strive to create a positive and lasting impact. Our organic farm empowers local farmers and promotes sustainable agriculture. By investing in the community's well-being, we foster a strong partnership and create a shared vision for a brighter future.







Indeed, the strong sense of community and connection to the ocean provided the original inspiration for the naming of the island. Previously known as Puerco, we renamed the island Banwa, meaning 'community', and derived from Tagbanwa, the name of the tribe whose people can be traced back to Tabon Man, believed to be the earliest human Palawan settlers, dating back to 14,000 years BC.

The warmth and generosity of our neighbours has been inspiring, as has their enthusiasm for sharing their infinite knowledge of, and passion for, the region's history and culture.

We at Aquos Foundation believe in the power of citizen science to drive conservation efforts. By involving our team in various monitoring activities, we've enhanced data collection and deepened their understanding of our conservation programs. From tracking marine turtles to monitoring bird populations and assessing reef health, our team plays a vital role in safeguarding the island's natural treasures.

Our work to enhance Banwa Private Island's environmental credentials and provide further sustainable benefits continues apace. On the mainland, the settlement of Tumarbong is home to the island's organic farm, providing ethically cultivated produce for Banwa Private Island's guests and staff.

Our unwavering dedication to environmental stewardship and community development creates a virtuous cycle. As our conservation efforts flourish, the island's natural beauty is enhanced, attracting discerning travelers seeking an extraordinary experience. Our guests continue to contribute to our ongoing initiatives, ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come. Banwa Private Island is more than just a destination; it's a sanctuary where luxury meets purpose.

Banwa Private Island offers both exclusive island charters  
and villa accommodations.

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