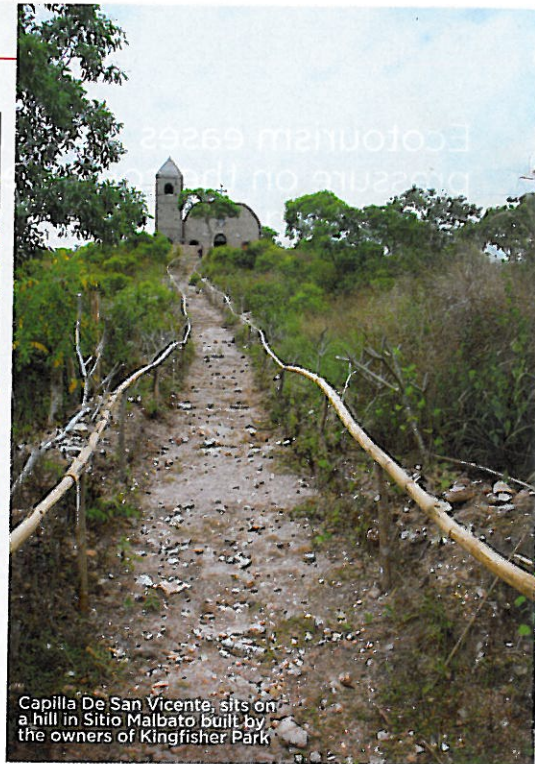




Guides Manong Godie and Mang Ben prep the bamboo in which they will cook rice for the picnic



Capilla De San Vicente, sits on a hill in Sitio Malbato built by the owners of Kingfisher Park

a large population of Kenyan animals including impalas, zebras and giraffes.

Before dinner guests often stroll down to the town pier and watch the sun set over the sea and surrounding islands. Back at the house, Carol serves sumptuous feasts of local produce such as barracuda, organic pork, home-grown rice and delicious squash with, coconut milk, ginger and lemongrass. *Contact Carol Sariego, tel: +63 (918) 461 2636.*

VISIT KINGFISHER PARK

A short boat ride from Coron town is a 400-acre wildlife sanctuary run by cousins Borge and Micah Reyes and Nikko Santos. The land was bought by their grandfather in the 1950s but it was not until 2007 that Kingfisher Park was launched as a nature reserve and community project. Entrance fees paid by visitors go directly to environmental education and livelihood initiatives in Malbato.

"In the years before 2007, the population of Malbato had grown to a point that they could not sustainably live in the area," says Micah. "People were driven to illegal logging, slash and burn agriculture and mangrove charcoaling. We needed alternative livelihoods and education to solve the problems."

Kingfisher Park offers mountain trekking, camping, kayaking, bird watching and firefly tours. Trek in the early morning or late afternoon to see the sun set from the summit of Mount Lunes Santo, Malbato's highest peak. Trekkers are provided with picnic lunches of grilled meat, fresh fish, vegetables and aromatic rice traditionally cooked inside bamboo.

The park is home to a staggering 83 species of birds, including seven species of kingfisher. Kayaking is a great way to see the wildlife and is best done in the



A tranquil "starry starry night" in Malbato Cove

early morning when the birds are active in the mangrove forest. Other animals you might encounter here are Palawan anteaters, skunks, porcupines, macaques, snakes, monitor lizards and, on rare occasions, dugongs.

In the evening, "starry starry night" tours take place near the seashore. Hundreds of fireflies light up the mangroves like Christmas trees. The sky is a blanket of stars and the boat leaves a sparkling trail of bioluminescence. *Kingfisher Park, Coron, tel: +63 (916) 462 0197 (contact Borge Reyes or Nikko Santos), kingfisherbiodiversitypark@yahoo.com, kingfisherpark.com* ■



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WHAT IS ECOTOURISM?

- Ecotourism is about responsible, low-impact travel needed by environmentally sensitive areas.
- Ecotourism fosters appreciation of local culture and biodiversity by both travelers and local communities.
- Ecotourism provides support for conservation and helps the economic development of local communities.