

FACT SHEET: Ngardok Nature Reserve

Micronesia's Largest Natural Lake

Lake Ngardok is the largest natural lake in all of Micronesia. The lake, wetlands, and upland forest provide habitat for plants, wildlife, and birds, some of which are found only in Palau. These include the Palau Fruit Dove (biib), Micronesian Pigeon (belochel), Palau Fantail (melimdelebddeb), Gray Duck (debar), Palau Flycatcher (charmelaichull), and the Fruit Bat (ollik). The lake and the wet marshes surrounding it are home to the endangered crocodile (ius), and it is probably an important breeding area for them. The Ngerdorch River serves as travel-route for ius from the lake to the sea.

The leadership of Melekeok established the Ngardok Nature Reserve to protect the watershed from degradation, because the integrity of the forests are critical to preserving the water quality in the lake.



Protecting the Water Supply of Palau's capitol

The Ngardok watershed consists of approximately 1,000 acres of land above Lake Ngardok. Every drop of rain that falls in the area above Lake Ngardok either evaporates from the forest, percolates into the groundwater, or makes its way to the lake. It then drains into the Ngerdorch River and flows through Ngchesar and to the sea.

Most of the Ngardok watershed is covered with native forest in very healthy condition. But the soils in the watershed are easily eroded once the vegetation has been disturbed, and it is very difficult to re-forest these areas once the trees are gone. There are a few areas in the watershed that are already covered with grasses, recently burned, or completely bare.

As long as the forest in the watershed is healthy, the watershed will provide clean and plentiful water to the villages of Melekeok and Ngchesar. During times of drought, the lake can serve as a natural reserve source of water. With the national capitol moving to Melekeok, water will be an especially valuable resource.

The Ngardok Nature Reserve Act of 1997 established the Reserve and the Ngardok Nature Reserve Board. The Board determines the activities to be allowed and has adopted a management plan for the reserve.

Recent activities in the reserve are: construction of a nature trail, installation of interpretive signs, and installation of a floating viewing platform on the lake. This work has been led by the Ngardok Reserve Board and is being implemented by Melekeok State, PCS, Palau Forestry Section, the Bureau of Agriculture, and the United States Forest Service.

PERMISSION IS REQUIRED FROM THE RESERVE MANAGER OR FROM THE STATE OFFICE TO ENTER THE RESERVE.

For more information, contact:

Melekok State Office at
488-2728 or 654-1066