



Tourist arrivals to Sohoton Caves and Natural Bridge posts remarkable growth in 2009

Tourist arrivals to Sohoton Caves and Natural Bridge in Basey, Samar escalated by 156.6% in 2009, more than double the previous year's figure of 1,579. This is in contrast to the meager 9.8% growth in 2008.

Sohoton Cave and Natural Bridge is one of the premier tourist destinations of the region. It is known for its inherent beauty, fascinating geological features like caves, limestone boulders, rock holes, rock formations, and underground rivers.

The remarkable boom in tourist arrivals reaching 4,052 in 2009, could be attributed to the 185.9% growth in domestic tourists, which accounted for the bulk or 91.8% of total tourist arrivals. Volume of domestic tourists increased from 1,301 in 2008 to 3,719 in 2009.

Foreign tourists, which comprised 8.2% of the total tourist arrivals, also grew albeit slower at 19.8%, from 278 tourists in 2008 to 333 in 2009. Top foreign tourists who visited the scenic spot from 2007 to 2009 came from the European market, followed by North American market.

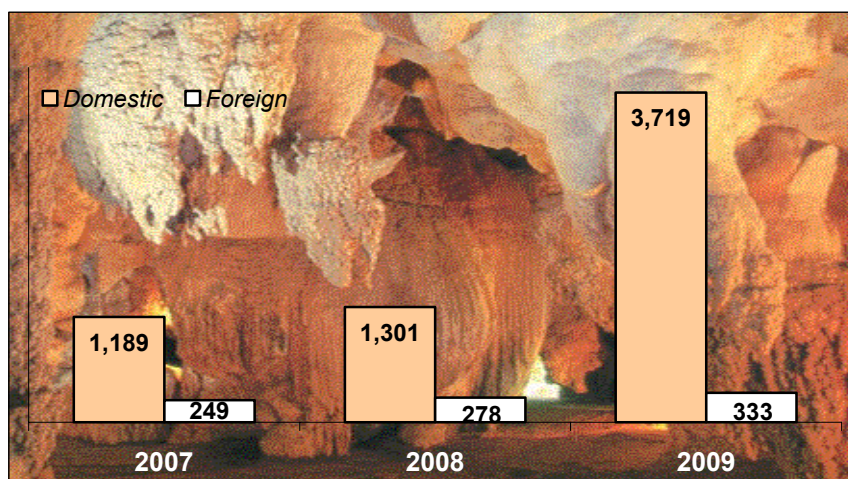
The flourishing of the local tourism industry can be credited to the concerted efforts of the Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Office VIII and the Local Government Unit of Basey in attracting more tourists.

Table 1. DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS BY COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE SOHOTON CAVES AND NATURAL BRIDGE: 2007-2010

Country of Residence	2007	2008	2009	Jan-Oct 2010
Total	1,438	1,579	4,052	3,271
Domestic	1,189	1,301	3,719	2,970
Foreign	249	278	333	301
Asia	35	20	27	41
North America	61	89	108	53
South America	1	-	1	1
Europe	128	143	148	153
Oceania	13	15	38	25
Others not classified	11	11	11	28

Source: Municipal Tourism Operations Office, Basey, Samar
Department of Tourism, Region VIII

Figure 1. TOURIST ARRIVALS BY TYPE SOHOTON CAVES AND NATURAL BRIDGE: 2007-2009



Source: Municipal Tourism Operations Office, Basey, Samar
Department of Tourism, Region VIII

In the second semester of 2009, the DOT has turned over caving equipments, such as, kayaks, caving gears, medical kits and cave and kayak guide's uniforms.

The National Caving Congress held last May 11-15, 2009, hosted by the DOT and the local government of Basey, has also given the Sohoton Caves and Natural Bridge the much-needed tourism promotion mileage. The annual event underscored the importance of conserving cave and karst resources; protecting access to caves; encouraged responsible management of caves and their unique environment; and promoted responsible caving.

For your inquiries and other information needs, visit or call the:

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