

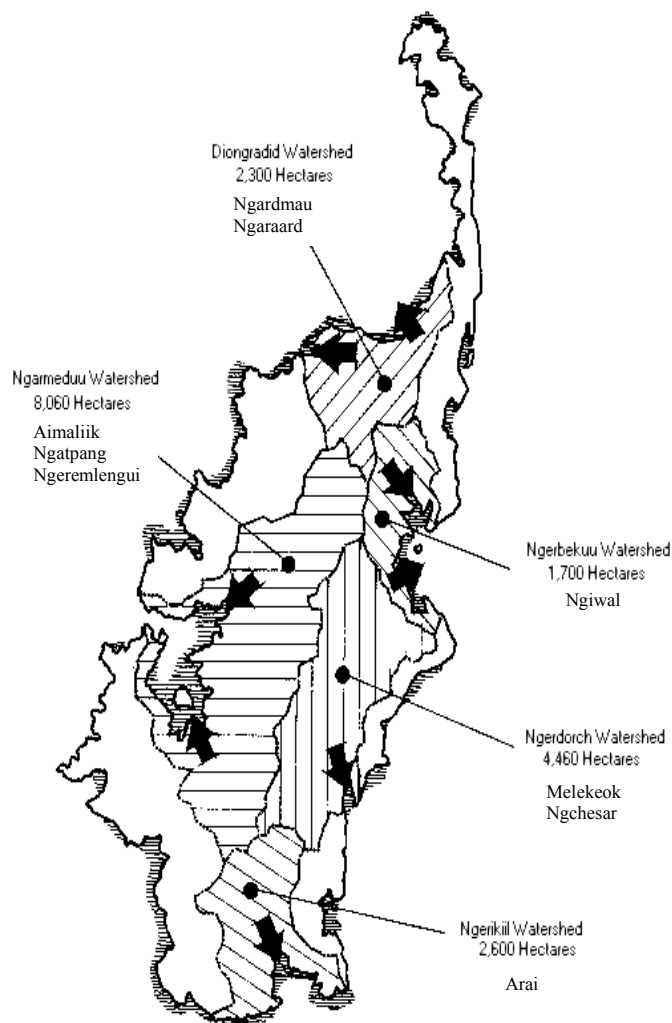
FACT SHEET: Babeldaob

Geology

- Babeldaob was formed approximately 70 million years ago as a result of volcanic activity.
- At 330 square kilometers (127 square miles), Babeldaob is the largest island in Palau and second largest in Micronesia. Accounting for 70% of total land in Palau.
- Babeldaob can be characterized as having rolling uplands and carved streams. Flat areas along the coast and near the river mouths. Rugged areas with sharp ridges and cliffs up to 100 ft or more in height.
- Mt. Ngerchelchuus in Ngardmau represents the highest elevation within Palau at 213 meters (700 ft) above sea level.
- Coastlines of Babeldaob are irregular with numerous small bays.

Political Boundaries

- Babeldaob is divided into 10 sub-political divisions called states.
- States are further subdivided into hamlets/villages. There are 50 hamlets/villages in Babeldaob, however only 47 are permanently inhabited.
- Each state has its own constitution.



History/Culture

- Archaeological evidence shows that Babeldaob was initially settled over 3,000 years ago. Radiocarbon dating shows cultural activity at terraced sites in Ngiwal around 1439-1110 BC, in Ngatpang around 1131-811 BC and Ngerdubech village around 1410-998 BC.
- Over 1,000 historical and cultural sites have been identified throughout the Palau archipelago. Since 1989, eighty eight of these sites have been registered by the Division of Cultural Affairs as important for the preservation of historical and cultural heritage.. 55 of these registered sites are found on the island



Water Resources

- There are five major watersheds on Babeldaob: Ngeremeduu, Ngerdorch, Ngerikiil, Diongradid, and Ngerbekuu. A watershed is the area which drains into a river including all the land right up to the ridges and all the small streams that feed into the main river.
- An average of 500 million gallons of freshwater flow out of Babeldaob streams every day. The Ngeremeduu, Ngerdorch and Ngerikiil watersheds are responsible for half of the total discharge.
- Ngeremeduu watershed is the largest in Palau. With its size of 31 sq. miles, it is approximately 4 times the size of Koror State.
- There are 345 miles of permanent streams and rivers in Palau, nearly all of them in Babeldaob. With a total length of all its tributaries measuring at 72 miles, Ngerdorch River in Babeldaob is the longest in Palau.
- The only two natural freshwater lakes in Palau are located on Babeldaob: Lake Ngardok in Melekeok State has a surface area of 12 acres and a volume of about 12 million gallons and Ngerkall Pond in Ngaraard State has a surface area of 1 acre and a volume of about 400 thousand gallons.

Soils

- Babeldaob's soils are very old and have been weathered by millions of years of heavy rain. They are quite infertile and deep. Soils become even less fertile when forests supporting the soils are cleared or burned.
- Sixty percent of the soil types found in Babeldaob have slopes of 30% or more. Areas that have slope of more than 25% are considered steep. These are high risk areas for soil erosion.

Vegetation

- A vegetation survey found 106 mi² of forest in Babeldaob: Upland forest 84 mi²; mangrove forest 16 mi²; swamp forest 6 mi²; rock island forest 0.4 mi²; plantation 0.1 mi².
- It is estimated that 88% of Palau's primary forest is in Babeldaob.
- The latest survey estimated that there are 820 species and varieties of plants on Babeldaob. Slightly more than 70%, or more than 580 plants, are considered indigenous, or native.
- 201, or 25%, of the plants in Babeldaob are believed to be endemic to Palau, which means they are found nowhere else in the world.
- 235, or 29%, of the plants found in Babeldaob are believed to have been introduced by people or their

Animals

- The latest study on birds shows that about 43 of the total 50 residents bird species in Palau permanently inhabit the island of Babeldaob.
- Babeldaob streams contain at least 40 species of fish.
- Other terrestrial and freshwater vertebrate animals found on Babeldaob include one native frog, 20 species of lizards, and at least five species of snakes.
- Saltwater crocodiles also exist in Babeldaob. Lake Ngardok in Melekeok State is an important breeding ground for this highly endangered animal. Palau is the only country in Micronesia that has crocodiles.
- Palau has the highest number of insect species in Micronesia. Approximately 5,000 species have been identified in Palau, many of them found in Babeldaob.
- Feral animals that live on Babeldaob include pigs, dogs, cats, and rats. These are domestic animals that have gone wild. In other parts of the Pacific, feral animals have been responsible for destruction of many important plants and animals.