



MUNICIPALITY PROFILE
MUNICIPALITY OF BALER, AURORA
CY 2013

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I. BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are several stories attributed to the origin of the name of Baler. Legend has it that the name of the place was originated from **Lakan Balid**, a chieftain of prosperous and thriving village, when the Spanish soldiers came in their exploration of the northeastern coast of Luzon. The Spanish soldiers found it hard to utter the native word Balid that they called him instead as Lakan Baler.

Another story told was that of a certain Fray Valeriano, a priest who was once stationed in the village. He was very kind and people loved him so much. Villagers commonly knew him as Padre Valer. When he died, the village was named in his honor, later become **Baler**.

Moreover, a legend said that Baler denotes a place to come home to “or Pinagbalikan”. Aetas tribes known for their nomadic character, but no matter where they roam or their nomadic instinct took them; they always come back to place along the coast which they called **Balid**.

Another legend told was that of a Spanish priest asking a native woman the name of the place. The woman replied Valé who mistook him asking for her name and gave her own name instead. Later, the Spaniards called the place “Baler” for they found it hard to utter Valé.

But the most popular and accepted origin was recorded and defined in “*Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala*” a Spanish dictionary published in 1754 by Juan dela Noceda and Pedro de San Lucar. Accordingly, the name Baler was originated from the word “**Balod**” a large mountain dove (Paloma Montes) that once abundant in this place. Additionally, tales handed down to generations said that no matter where Balerians go in their search of fame and glory, they would always hope of going back home to Baler.

In 1609, seven (7) intrepid Franciscan Missionaries led by Fray Blas Palomino penetrated the thick forest of the Sierra Madre Mountains and found Baler as a settlement. This small settlement was improved and converted into town by the Augustinians and the Recolletos in 1658. Due to scarcity of religious missionaries, the

Franciscan again took over the administration of the settlement in 1703. In 1856 Baler was the principal town “El Principe”, a district of the province of Nueva Ecija. In 1901 under the American Administration the district was incorporated to the Province of Tayabas, later named Quezon Province.

On June 14, 1951 by virtue of R.A 648 Baler became the capital town of sub-province of Aurora. The town serves as the capital town when Aurora was officially created as an independent province by virtue of Batas Pambansa Blg. 07.

The town Baler is most remembered in the annals of Philippine history as the last bastion of Spanish rule in the country, depicted in an epic story “Siege of Baler.

It claims historic significance as well as, being the birthplace of the late President Manuel L. Quezon, Father of the Filipino Language, Father of Social Justice and President of Philippine Commonwealth.

Baler is the hometown of Senator Edgardo J. Angara, one of its illustrious sons, who has famed much for his brilliant service in the country.

II. Geographical and Resource Endowment

➤ Land Area

Baler has a total land area of 9,255 hectares (source: DENR, Land Management Bureau). However, several studies account for varying land area of the municipality. It ranges from 8,565 to 12,127 hectares which could be attributed to boundary disputes being one of the oldest municipalities in the province where adjoining municipalities took from its territory.

Moreover, Baler is the smallest among the municipalities in the Province of Aurora in terms of land area which comprises only about four percent (4%) of the province’s land area. It is politically composed of (13) thirteen barangays, seven (7) urban barangays in poblacion and nearby periphery and six (6) barangays in the outlying areas.

➤ Location

Baler is situated in the eastern coast of Luzon, within the central part of Aurora province. It is 232 kilometers from Manila and geographically located at coordinates 121° 35” east longitude and 15°45’ north latitude. It is bound by the municipalities of

Dipaculao in the north, Maria Aurora in the northwest and San Luis in the southwest. The town faces the large expanse of the Pacific Ocean in the east.

➤ **Terrain**

Baler has almost equal area of lowland and upland at 43% and 57% respectively. The upland is located at the southeastern part of municipality. It consists of hills and mountains which formed part of the great Sierra Madre Mountain Range. The northwestern part of the municipality is classified lowland and serves as the drainage of the municipality, which accommodates water discharges to two (2) of its main rivers, the Suklayin and Aguang Rivers. The table below shows the detailed distribution of slope classes of the municipality of Baler.

0-18% slope	level to rolling	5,353 has.	57.9%
18-30% slope	rolling to hilly	2,962 has	32.0%
30-50% slope	steep hills/mountains	940 has.	10.1%

In terms of elevation, Baler has an elevation range of 0 to 625 meters above sea level. The peak of Dibudalan Mountain is considered the highest point in the Municipality and is found at the southwestern portion of the municipality. The table of elevation shows the distribution and location of elevation classes of Baler’s topography.

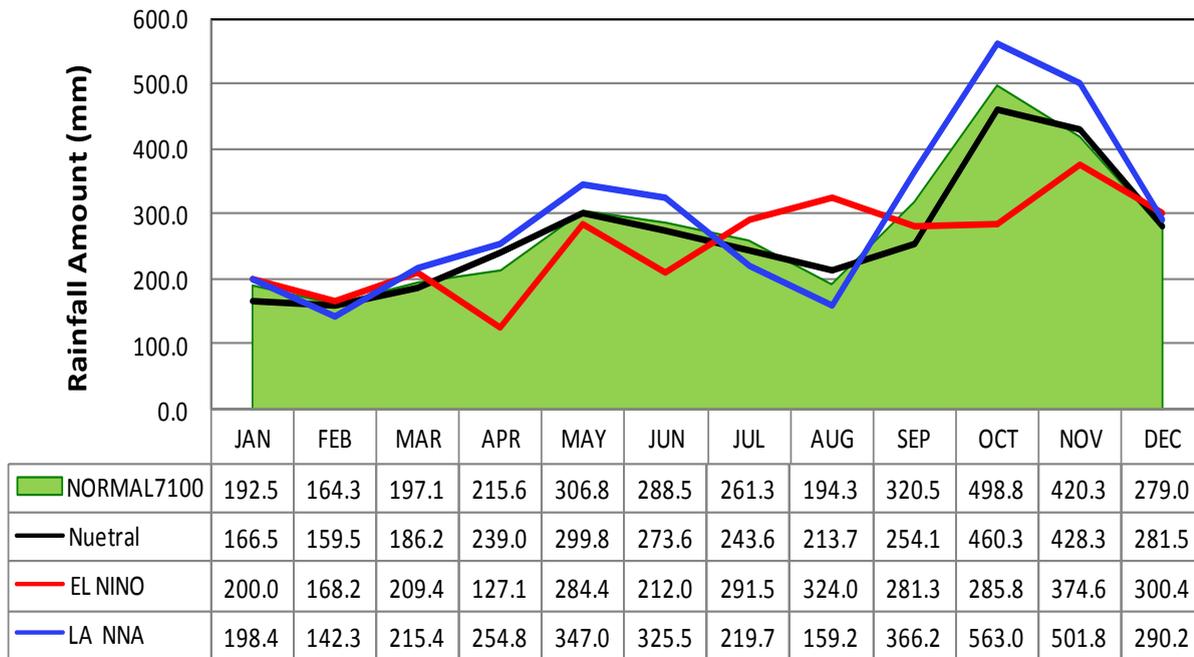
Elevation Range	Description	Area (has)	%
0-100	A-very low	7195	59
100-300	B-low	1886	25
300-625	C- moderately low to moderate high	3047	46
	TOTAL	12,128	100

➤ **Seasons**

Baler falls under Type IV climate of the Corona Classification with no distinct dry and wet seasons. Significant rainfall (>150mm) generally occurs every month.

Rainfall. The wettest months are October and November while the driest months are January and February. The mean total annual rainfall is 3,287 mm. and mean monthly average is 276 mm. This high level of rainfall can be attributed to tropical cyclones that commonly strike eastern Luzon between July and November.

Mean Monthly Rainfall (mm) for Baler



Temperature and Relative Humidity. The recorded lowest mean monthly minimum temperature was 20.3° C in January. While the highest mean monthly maximum temperature was 33.1 in June. As to the annual average temperatures, the maximum was 31.1°C, the minimum was 22.3°C, and the annual mean was 26.7°C.

The annual mean temperature (26.7°C) changes with rise in elevation. The lapse rate of temperature in Baler at sea level is close to 0.5°C per 100 meter increase in elevation.

The most humid months in Baler, with relative humidity of 83%, was recorded during the months of April, October and November, while the months of June, July and August are the least humid months with 80%. On the average, Baler has a mean relative humidity of 82%.

Wind. About 2 meters per second is the normal wind speed in Baler or 7.2 kph. The prevailing wind direction is southwesterly during the months of June and September, westerly in July and August, and easterly for other remaining months.

➤ **Natural Resources**

Forest Resources

Baler has 4,777 hectares of forestland, 16.2% are residual forest while 28.5% are sub-marginal forest. Brush land and grassland cover 695 hectares.

The present forest condition of Baler is attributed to the logging concessions in the timberland area in the year 1979's-80's. Such massive logging operations resulted to the access of forestland by the kaingeros (slash and burn farming) and charcoal makers.

During the previous years of logging industry, the major forest product of the municipality was timber. Today, minor forest products include rattan, bamboo, lukmoy, nito, tikiw, coco-midrib, and banban mostly found in upland areas. The famous sabutan (*Pandanus Sabotan*) also abound in the area found mostly in lowlands intercropped between the coconuts. These raw materials are found to be growing extensively and used as major raw materials for different craft industries especially in the hand woven manufacturing.

Wildlife Resources:

The vast forest areas in Baler were a refuge to different species of flora and fauna. Though there are no available records on wildlife, the Philippine deer, Philippine hawk eagle, big species of bats, water monitor lizards, butterflies, are known to have existed in the municipality. Population pressure has ushered the disturbance of wildlife resources not only in Baler but also in the whole province of Aurora particularly in the areas where *kaingin system* is being practiced This system is an instrument in driving the wild animals and birds away from the areas.

Fishery

Baler has vast marine fishery resources, however fishing industry is still underdeveloped. The Baler Bay which is part of the great Pacific Ocean serves as marine fishing ground that supports the local marginal fishermen. Among the common species caught in Baler Bay are Blue Marlin, Yellow Fin Tuna, Salmon and other local species like Talakitok and Lapu-lapu. In addition, a number of estuaries are considerable expanse of brackish water which are sources of milkfish (bangus) fry transported to other provinces.

Agriculture

The municipality is predominantly an agricultural area. Majority (51%) of its population are engaged in different agricultural activities. Its major crops are coconut and palay. Other crops like citrus, banana, coffee and root crops are planted in the relatively smaller areas. The area coverage of agricultural farming structures are as follows: coconut-2,631.60 hectares, rice- 1,141.68 hectares, corn- 75.00 hectares, citrus- 54.00 hectares, coffee- 6.5 hectares, banana- 48.00 hectares.

Livestock and poultry raising activities in the municipality are largely backyard in nature. This includes hogs, having the biggest share, goats, carabao and cattle. Poultry population on the other hand, is composed of chicken, ducks, turkey, quail, pigeons and geese.

III. Population and Language

➤ Population

According to the latest NSO 2010 Census of Population, Baler has a total population of 36,010 with an average annual growth rate of 0.84 percent in urban and 2.22% in rural areas for the last seven years. Projected population for 2013 is 38,309.

The census has recorded a total number of 7,231 households. The average household size is computed at 4.6 members per household.

The mean population density of Baler in 2007 was 323 persons per sq. km. The distribution of population by barangay land area shows that Poblacion is the most densely populated areas.

Baler Population per Barangay (1990-2013)

Barangay	1990 Popul ation	1995 Popula tion	2000 Popula tion	2007 Popul ation	2008 Popula tion (P)	2009 Popula tion (P)	2010 Popula tion	2011 Popula tion (P)	2012 Popula tion (P)	2013 Popul ation (P)	Annual Increase, 2008-2009
Barangay I	1,109	1,030	802	841	858	875	717	910	729	735	1.98%
Barangay II	685	676	516	390	398	406	374	422	380	384	2.01%
Barangay III	657	592	482	449	458	467	434	485	441	445	1.96%
Barangay IV	517	501	422	423	431	440	389	458	396	399	2.08%
Barangay V	1,126	1,436	1,485	1,827	1,863	1,900	1662	1,976	1690	1704	1.98%
Buhangin	3,947	4,322	4,735	5,009	5,108	5,209	5057	5,417	5284	5401	1.97%
Calabuanan	2,336	2,454	2,947	3,274	3,339	3,405	3221	3,540	3366	3440	1.97%
Obligacion	921	858	856	1,041	1,062	1,083	1135	1,126	1186	1212	1.98%
Pingit	1,724	2,164	2,972	4,355	4,441	4,529	4989	4,710	5213	5329	1.98%
Reserva	2,523	2,622	3,093	3,634	3,706	3,779	4064	3,929	4246	4341	1.96%
Sabang	3,721	3,959	4,212	4,816	4,911	5,008	4829	5,208	5046	5158	1.97%
Suklayin	3,735	4,266	4,913	5,498	5,607	5,717	5923	5,944	6189	6326	1.96%
Zabali	1,688	2,039	2,488	2,935	2,993	3,052	3216	3,173	3360	3435	1.97%
TOTAL	24,689	26,919	29,923	34,492	35,175	35,871	36,010	37,298	37,526	38,309	1.97%

Source: NSO (note: 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013 are projected)

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD 2012

BARANGAY	NO. OF HOUSEHOLD	HOUSEHOLD POPULATION 15 YEARS OLD AND OVER WITH GAINFUL OCCUPATION
Brgy 1	156	320
Brgy 2	87	173
Brgy 3	101	168
Brgy 4	97	147
Brgy 5	427	637
Buhangin	1,097	1571
Calabuanan	667	920
Obligacion	262	347
Pingit	1,201	1,296
Reserva	929	1,189
Sabang	1,093	1,556
Suklayin	1,395	1,916
Zabali	696	916
TOTAL	8,208	11,156

➤ Language and Dialect

Most of the inhabitants in Baler are native Tagalog-speaking people (82%). Ilocano is next to frequently spoken dialect particularly of families originated from the

Ilocos Region who permanently resides in Baler. Other minority dialects are also spoken which rooted from their families' place of origin like Bisaya, Bikolano and Ilongo. The native Dumagat people also have their own native vernacular.

IV. *Financial Institutions*

➤ **Banks**

Some of Local Financing Institution were Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Aurora Bank, Rural Bank of Maria Aurora (RBMA), Producer's Bank, and Maria Aurora Development Cooperative Inc. (MADECO).

➤ **Insurance**

The insurance agency present in Baler is a branch of PhilAm Life, Inc.

V. **Transportation and Communication**

➤ *Airport*

Thus far, one regular commercial air transport services flights the Baler Airport in Brgy. San Isidro of the nearby Municipality of San Luis, about seven (7) kilometers away from the town proper. It is a feeder airport that can accommodate light chartered flights.

➤ *Seaport*

Baler has one (1) fishport and a small wharf at Sitio Cemento, Zabali and Sitio Duongan, Brgy. 5 Poblacion, respectively. Baler port, eight (8) kilometers from the town, has a total length of 250 meters and is primarily used for shipment and unloading of agricultural and fishery products and also for docking of sea vessels coming from the neighboring coastal municipalities in the province. In the same way, the port is used by small and medium scale commercial fishers and fish traders. The wharf is utilized for loading and unloading of passengers and light cargoes. Likewise, it is best used as place for refuge of small vessels during poor weather conditions and typhoons.

➤ *Means of Transportation*

Within the Poblacion and neighboring barangays, tricycles are the most commonly used public transport services. Tricycles are also routing from Baler to the adjacent municipalities and vice-versa. However, some passenger jeepneys are also routing from Baler to Maria Aurora and vice versa. Likewise, jeepneys, vans, and buses are used to transport travelers coming in and going out of the province. Traders use cargo trucks in by-land shipment of their products.

Bus lines plying to various parts of Luzon are operated by bus companies such as: Genesis, Joy Bus, Aurora Bus, D' Liner and Lizardo Bus. Public Utility Vans covered by informal franchise are also augmenting the public transport services plying the Baler-Pantabangan and Baler-Bongabon national roads.

Normally, the scheduled departure of buses from Baler is as early as 5:00 AM up to the late hours in the morning. Public utility van usually leaves in the afternoon.

➤ **TV Station**

There is no regular local TV channel broadcasting in the municipality. Two national TV channels have relay station in the town, however, almost all national and international cable TV channels are being accessed through the available private local cable TV company.

➤ **Radio Station**

Three regular local radio broadcast stations are DZJO-FM 101.7 (CMN), DZRA 92.1 and DZRH 88.5 (MBC).

➤ **Courier**

LBC is the only courier company that is operating in Baler which also caters the other municipalities in Aurora.

➤ **Telephone**

Today no telephone companies are servicing in Baler .

➤ ***Money Transfer***

There are various money transfer companies in the town such as Cebuana Lhuillier, M. L. Lhuillier, Western Union, Smart Padala, Tambunting and LBC which are currently providing services to the inhabitants of Baler and also of the other municipalities.

➤ ***Internet***

Internet are accessible through the private internet cafés like Gr8site , Quiknet, DJ Internet and to a number of small computer shops operating in the Poblacion. Internet connectivity in Baler can be availed through the Smart and Globe Communication Subsidiaries.

➤ ***Newspaper***

There are several newspapers of national circulation arrive at the municipality. It comprises six (6) broadsheets and eight (8) tabloids. In addition, there are weekly national magazines that circulate in the area. These printed media reach Baler in the early hours of the afternoon and are being provided by privately owned newspaper distributor.

Two (2) local newspapers of regional circulation are available in the area. These are Newsbreak Aurora and Time Record Aurora, both are issued weekly.

➤ ***Trade and Investment***

Being the capital town, Baler is the trading and commercial center of Aurora Province. Records from DTI shows that in 2007 almost 600 business establishments are flourishing in Baler, which constitutes to around 49% of all business establishments in the province. These comprise 46% trading, 38% services and trade-support facilities, 15% manufacturing and 0.84% agricultural support/others.

➤ ***Products***

Aside from the major agricultural crops produced in the municipality which include coconut, rice, banana, corn, citrus, rambutan, pineapple, lansones, rootcrops, and other high value crops, Baler is known for its famous different sabutan products from hats and mats to other novelty items made from indigenous materials of the municipality.

Other related industries include wood carving, salted egg making, hollow blocks making, rattan craft, native sash furniture, basketry, food processing and pottery.

➤ ***Potential Products for Export/Export Products***

Potential products for exports are the well-known hand woven sabutan crafts, coconut by-products such as virgin coconut oil, coco coir, palm wines, processed foods, and high quality wood-based furniture and decorative carvings. High value commercial agricultural crops such as fruits and vegetables are also considered prospects for exports.

➤ ***Investment Potentials***

Being endowed with rich natural resources and scenic beauty, promotion of eco-tourism industry is one of the priority development investment potential of the municipality as well as the province. Development of identified eco-tourism destinations in the area, such as Ermita Hill, Sabang and Cemento Beaches and mangroves. Aniao Islets, Marine Sanctuary, diving sites, and mountain rain forests are being looked forward to possible investments through public and private collaboration.

VII. Historical and Tourist Spots

➤ ***Tourist Spots/ attractions***

Baler is noted for its historical sites, beautiful beaches and bays, unspoiled marine reserve and pristine forest. Among its historical markers are Baler Catholic Church where the famous “Siege of Baler” took place, the Municipal Quezon Park where the replica of late President Manuel Luis Quezon’s house stands and the Museo De Baler. The Sta. Isabel Chapel at Ermita Hill is a serene place which was once a watch tower during the Moro piracy in the late 1700’s. The place served as refuge of few families who survived from “Tromba Marina” in 1735. On the other hand, the beautiful beach of Baler is now the location of several resorts. The sea waves of Baler coastlines are conducive to surfing where both local and foreign surfers engage in annual surfing competitions.

In addition, the forested mountains of the municipality are sources of crystal clear waters flowing down the rivers/creeks of Baler where people use as recreational areas.