SUSAN LUNA, also known as Tuttay, has been with FishBase even before the project was born. Back in 1989, she started working with Daniel Pauly at the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management ICLARM, and as FishBase was being conceived, she was quickly recruited into the project. Her job? Testing the database prototype being developed by Rainer Froese, which involved sending printed pages of complete encoded information from the database for different subjects such as species biology, morphology, distribution or countries via snail mail to Rainer in Kiel, Germany.

“When FishBase was finally launched as a project in 1990, I - together with another colleague from the Aquaculture Program at ICLARM, Belen Acosta - began working on the database,” Luna recalled.

After spending almost three decades as a researcher at FishBase, Tuttay - who studied Marine Science at the University of the Philippines - decided to switch gears. In 2018, she became an executive assistant at the recently-created Quantitative Aquatics, an organization that manages FishBase, SeaLifeBase and AquaMaps. At Q-quatics, she provides high-level support to the executive director, Mary Ann Bimbao, on all matters pertaining to administrative, human resources, and financial affairs.

The new role allows her to help address what she perceives to be the biggest challenge these legacy projects are facing nowadays: continuous research funding.

Susan believes that guaranteeing that these databases remain alive is very important for humanity’s growing knowledge of marine life.
“I hope that the legacy of FishBase and SeaLifeBase will continue long after we are gone and that provision for development and maintenance will always come,” she said. “I’m sure that the global scope of FishBase guarantees that work on this database will never cease as information and knowledge are continuously generated.”