

04 OCTOBER 2020, SUNDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR eyes more trash traps in Calabarzon rivers

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) - October 4, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Forty-two additional trash traps will be established along major rivers in Cavite, Rizal, Laguna and Batangas in line with the Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Calabarzon regional office said it allotted P16.8 million for the establishment of 20 trash traps in Cavite, 10 in Rizal, nine in Laguna and three in Batangas.

The trash traps are expected to be completed next year.

“The DENR-Calabarzon’s plan to put up trash traps in tributaries and rivers draining to Manila Bay aims to prevent waste from entering the bay... Residents should view the trash trap as a reminder of how irresponsible handling of wastes can harm our environment,” DENR regional executive director Nonito Tamayo said.

DENR-Manila Bay Site Coordinating and Management Office deputy regional coordinator Cynthia Rozaldo said two trash traps were established along the Imus River in Dasmariñas, Cavite and Hinulugang Taktak River in Antipolo, Rizal in 2014.

In 2018, four trash traps were constructed in Labac River in Naic, Cavite and two in San Diego River in Nagcarlan, Laguna.

Four more trash traps were put up along Zapote River in Bacoor, Cavite; two in San Cristobal River in Calamba, Laguna; one each in San Juan and Saran Rivers in Calamba and Los Baños, Laguna, respectively; three in Boso-Boso River in Baras, Rizal, and two in Taytay River in 2019 and this year.



SUPORTA NI ISKO SA MLA. BAY REHAB KINILALA NG CITY COUNCIL

On Oct 3, 2020



ISANG resolusyon ang ipinasa ng Manila City Council, sa pangunguna ni Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna bilang Presiding Officer, na nagpapahayag ng buong suporta sa panig ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno at sa kanyang pagpapaghayag ng pagkilala sa national government's Manila Bay rehabilitation program and coastal beach nourishment na ginawa sa baywalk shoreline sa Roxas Boulevard.

Ang nasabing resolusyon na ipinasa ng buong city council at principally authored ni Councilor Don Juan 'DJ' Bagatsing (fourth district) at minority leader Philip Lacuna, ay nagsasaad ng: 'this simple yet important measure now serves as the city's official stand on the issue, further reinforcing the mayor's favorable position earlier and is a clear indication of a unified front in Manila concerning the rehab of the bay.'

Ayon kay Bagatsing, "it is quite saddening to note that certain groups and individuals are noisily opposing such, merely to promote a fractured political agenda of divisiveness, hate and polarization by their reckless carping of false facts, fake news and outright lies on the said project."

"Some of the untruths they had unduly claimed in public are: the alleged 389 million cost alone for white sand topping (in reality, only 28 million), the supposedly health hazardness of the sand composed of crushed dolomite (officially debunked by the DOH), the very short or temporary aspect of the white sand shorefront to be wiped out immediately by the next storm (DENR had instituted a mechanism of geotubes to make the sand stay in place, preventing erosion, used in many parts of the world), its mere aethstetical nature and negative ecological impact (dolomite is known to cleanse water bodies, while having a beautiful baywalk coast would contribute greatly to tourism, economy, investments, job creation etc.), and lastly, the propriety of it all during a pandemic (this project began way back early last year, not just during the corona crisis period and is actually at present on its final stages)," dagdag pa ng konsehal.

Sinabi pa ni Bagatsing na layunin ng resolution na wakasan na ang : 'unfoundedly misplaced misgivings' straight and put to rest any doubt regarding the implementation, as well as, completion of this Manila Bay rehabilitative endeavor.'

"The real glaring truth here is, in any which way one would look at it, this undertaking along Manila Bay's baywalk shoreline is a truly beneficial improvement, much needed and most welcome for our City, having no downside at all, with only a plethora to gain and definitely will make Manila vibrant again," dagdag pa nito.



Sa nasabing resolusyon ay napaglaman na matapos ang isang taon at kalahati ng puspusang paglilinis at pag-aalis ng tonetoneadang basura at maduming buhangin at paglalagay ng mga kagamitang pipigil sa pagguho ng lupa sa seafronts/seawalls sa pamamagitan ng mekanismo ng geotubes, ang malawakang rehab ay malapit ng matapos at sumasailalim na ngayon sa tinatawag na beach nourishment, coastal restoration at enhancement process ng Baywalk shore strip o ng paglalagay ng white sand (gawa sa dinurog na bulk-form dolomite) sa lawak na 120 meters long by 60 meters wide (mula US Embassy side-cove patungong Yacht Club endpoint sa Roxas Boulevard).

Nabatid na noong isang taon, ang pamahalaan, sa tinatayang budget na mahigit na P300 million, ay naglunsad ng malaki at komprehensibong proyekto na i-rehab ang Manila Bay, sa pamamagitan ng DENR at DPWH, kabilang, sa ilalim ng pang-unang hakbang, ay ang paglalagay ng solar-powered sewage treatment plant/facility at ang katabing 1.5 kilometer wastewater interceptor pipeline, ito ay bukod pa sa karagdagang major overhaul/complete repair ng Padre Faura, Remedios, at Estero de San Antonio Abad drainage outfalls/spillways, at iba pa.

Kamakailan lang, walang anu-ano’y napuno ng ingay mula sa public at private sectors ang mainstream at social media at tahasang tinutuligsa at hinahamon ang gobyerno ang ginawang paglalagay ng dolomite dahil aniya, ito ay purong pagpapaganda lang at hindi napapanahon lalo’t may pandemya.

“Amidst the carping cacophony of condemnation and hypocritical rebuke, the unduly mischaracterized project was ably defended, as well as, promoted/endorsed by the DENR, DPWH, DILG, DOT, MMDA, Presidential Spokesperson, some practical Congressmen and most importantly by Mayor Isko Moreno, all of whom highlighted its significant purpose and value for the overall rehabilitative development of Manila Bay and this shall create a positive ripple effect on tourism, ecology, economic opportunities, investment/business activity, job creation, family and individual physical/mental betterment, and many other consequential gains,” saad pa ng resolusyon. **(ANDI GARCIA)**

Source: https://www.policefilestonite.net/2020/10/03/suporta-ni-isko-sa-mla-bay-rehab-kinilala-ng-city-council/?fbclid=IwAR11dGYA9dwGrPdLY9fg8O5keOxXZxvoBCb4_jvAKhmDNC7hOLUvnqTobgl



Spider-Man fan Wilmer Cena takes a selfie on the footbridge with the white sand beach of Manila Bay as his background along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on Saturday, Oct. 3, 2020. DANNY PATA

Man in Spider-Man costume captures attention of Manila Bay visitors

Published October 3, 2020 2:02pm

A man dressed in Spider-Man costume has captured the attention of numerous Manila Bay visitors.

According to dzBB's Manny Vargas, this Spider-Man by the Bay was spotted in Baywalk just this morning.



The Spider-Man fan, whose name is Wilmer Cena, went up the footbridge along Roxas Boulevard to take a selfie, according to photographer Danny Pata.

The police have allowed the public to use the pedestrian footbridge and people can take a selfie but only for a few minutes.

Despite protests from [environmental](#) and fishermen [groups](#) on the project, the artificial white beach "Manila Bay Sands" continued its operation and was opened to the public Sept. 20. – **Kaela Malig/RC, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/hobbiesandactivities/758312/man-in-spiderman-costume-captures-attention-of-manila-bay-visitors/story/>



ABS-CBN News

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SPIDER-MAN SA MANILA BAY. Isang lalaking naka-Spider-Man costume ang nag-selfie sa tapat ng dolomite beach sa Manila Bay Sabado.

Pinapayagan na ulit ng pulisya ang paggamit ng footbridge malapit sa baybayin upang makakuha ng mga larawan ang publiko.

Matatandaang pansamantalang ipinasara ito nang dagsain ng mga turista at hindi na nasunod ang physical distancing. #COVID19

Kaugnay na balita: <https://bit.ly/34g0dX2>



Pao Emmanuel Salting and 4.7K others

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The real thing

posted October 03, 2020 at 08:38 pm

by [Norman Cruz and AFP](#)



A resident wearing a face mask walks along the shoreline in Boracay as authorities eased on Oct. 1 restrictions in the world-famous tourist spot. This allowed local tourists to visit the island and its powdery white sand after more than six months of quarantine as coronavirus infections levelled off. (Inset) Meanwhile, a man wearing a Spider-Man costume takes a selfie at the foot bridge near the portion of Manila Bay that was filled with crushed dolomite to make it look like white sand.

Senate probe sought on Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Oct 3, 2020 4:09:02 PM



Credit: Harold Paras, Cris Salvador/ CNN Philippines

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, October 3) — Senator Leila de Lima wants a probe into the controversial ₱389-million beautification project in Manila Bay, which critics said was a waste of taxpayers’ money.

In a statement issued Saturday, De Lima said she filed Senate Bill 532, asking the Senate to investigate the overlaying of crushed dolomite along the Manila Bay shoreline.

The lawmaker noted the funds for the “white sand” project“ could have been used to feed 5.2 million hungry families because of the pandemic, or allotted for healthcare by way of COVID-19 government response instead.

“The makeover of Manila Bay shows that this administration’s priorities lean towards cosmetic beautification rather than health, economic aid, or education. Now is the opportune time to conduct this investigation as we are nearing fiscal year 2021 deliberations in Congress,” she added.

Environment advocate Oceana Philippines previously said the overlaying of dolomite is a “total waste of taxpayers’ money” since rains will just wash away the synthetic sand. But the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has said it has put in place “[interventions](#)” to avoid that from happening.

Experts from the University of the Philippines [have warned that the use of the ‘white sand’](#) — a project in line with the bay’s rehabilitation program — may pose health risks and threats to the marine environment.

The Health Department earlier said that the dolomite dumped along the stretch in Roxas Boulevard cannot cause adverse health effects, since it is not small enough to be inhaled.

The Environment Department has also published a [report](#) showing the dolomite sand in Manila Bay is not classified as hazardous, as tests done on its samples did not exceed the limits set in the agency’s Revised Procedures and Standards for the Management of Hazardous Wastes.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/10/3/Manila-bay-Senate-probe.html>




DENR gigisahin ng Senado sa 'white sand'

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Oct 3, 2020

FEATURED NEWS



Siniguro kahapon ni Senador Nancy Binay na hindi makakaligtas ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa kinasasangkutan kontrobersiya sa Manila Bay 'white sand.'

 Ad Asia Banner – below 1st paragraph

Ayon kay Binay pagpapaliwanagin nila ang DENR tungkol sa isyu ng dolomite.

"Para may pagkakataon ang DENR na maipaliwanag talaga kung ano ba talaga ang dolomite na programa na ginawa nila sa Manila Bay. I'm sure sa budget hearing may kasamahan tayo na magre-raise ng issue na yan," ani Binay sa panayam sa radyo.

Binanggit din ni Binay na tiyak na bubusiin din ni Senador Cynthia Villar ang proyektong ito ng DENR dahil aktibo ito sa Manila Bay reclamation kung saan ay prayoridad umano nito ang magkaroon ng banyo.

"...at saka sana nga inuna muna ang quality ng water, nakita natin nung binuksan marami pumunta eh baka may nag-swimming eh di pa ata fit for swimming ang water doon. Baka may mga kababayan tayo na matuwa na porke maganda na ang buhangin isipin nila pwede na languyan," sabi pa ni Binay.



De Lima calls for Senate probe on Manila Bay white sand makeover project

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:43 AM October 03, 2020



MANILA, Philippines — Detained Senator Leila De Lima has called for a Senate investigation on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) P389 – million Manila Bay “beach nourishment project”

In a statement issued Saturday, De Lima filed Senate Resolution 532, which calls on the appropriate Senate committee to conduct the probe.

The opposition senator said that the budget for project could have been used to feed 5.2 million hungry families, or help boost the government’s coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response.

The project, which includes dumping crushed dolomite into the bay’s shoreline, has drawn flak from environmental groups and experts, saying it poses harmful impacts.



Sen. Leila De Lima. (INQUIRER FILE PHOTO/ KIMBERLY DELA CRUZ)

Akbayan party-list filed before the Supreme Court petition to cite the DENR for contempt for dumping the dolomite on [Manila Bay’s](#) 500-meter stretch.

De Lima also slammed presidential spokesman Harry Roque after he said that the “white sand” in Manila Bay will be [good for everyone’s mental health](#).

“Contrary to Presidential Spokesperson Roque claims that ‘white sand’ makeover will give immeasurable benefit to Filipinos’ mental health, this P389 million band-aid project has indeed brought more harm than good,” De Lima said.



“The makeover of Manila Bay shows that this administration’s priorities lean towards cosmetic beautification rather than health, economic aid, or education. Now is the opportune time to conduct this investigation as we are nearing fiscal year 2021 deliberations in Congress,” she added.

The senator also said that DENR officials must be held accountable for non-compliance with several laws, such as the Local Government Code, the Philippine Fisheries Code, the Wildlife Conservation Act, and Presidential Decree 1586 or the Environmental Impact Assessment System, among others.

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De Lima wants probe into P389-M Manila Bay 'nourishment' project

Published October 3, 2020 1:00pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

Opposition Senator Leila de Lima on Saturday called for a Senate probe into the controversial P389-million Manila Bay "beach nourishment" project, alleging that it poses environmental and health hazards.

In a statement, De Lima said she filed Senate Resolution (SR) No. 532, which called for an investigation.

She said the budget spent for the Manila Bay project could have been used to feed 5.2 million hungry families because of the pandemic, or allotted for healthcare by way of COVID-19 government response.

“Contrary to Presidential Spokesperson [Harry] Roque’s claims that ‘white sand’ makeover will give immeasurable benefit to Filipinos’ mental health, this P389- million band-aid project has indeed brought more harm than good,” she said.

“The makeover of Manila Bay shows that this administration’s priorities lean towards cosmetic beautification rather than health, economic aid, or education. Now is the opportune time to conduct this investigation as we are nearing fiscal year 2021 deliberations in Congress,” she added.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has drawn criticism for proceeding with a project to fill a 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay coastline with crushed dolomite from Cebu as part of the bay’s rehabilitation.

“A 2012 safety report by Texas distributor and builder Lehigh Hanson showed that crystalline silica in dolomites can cause damage to the lungs, cause irritation to the skin and eyes, or even cancer when it is [inhaled],” De Lima said.

In fact, Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire herself attested to dolomite’s health risk, saying it can cause pain in the stomach and result in diarrhea, but the department later softened its stance to qualify that the process of crushing dolomite rocks – not the rocks themselves – was hazardous, according to the senator.



On the other hand, environmental group Oceana Philippines warned that dolomite could actually destroy both the natural ecosystem and coastal integrity of Manila Bay as the dolomite material is not the natural substrate of that portion of the bay.

“Aside from affecting the ecosystem of the bay, the dolomite sand can also damage the other features of the bay like the mangroves, beaches, and mudflats where shellfish, crabs, and fish nurseries thrive,” De Lima said.

Last September 24, Akbayan Party-list filed a petition before the Supreme Court to cite DENR for contempt for violating the 2008 writ of Continuing Mandamus to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay, saying that the dumping of crushed dolomite boulders on the foreshore areas of Manila Bay contravenes the Court order.

“Officials of DENR must be held accountable for non-compliance with several laws like the Local Government Code, the Philippine Fisheries Code, the Wildlife Conservation Act, and PD 1586 or the Environmental Impact Assessment System, among others, in implementing this project,” she said. —**LBG, GMA News**



Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto recently aired his concern over the proposed Sangley Point International Airport and several reclamation undertakings at Manila Bay, which are near the Philippine Navy's base and headquarters.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman, file

Recto airs alarm over Manila Bay reclamation projects

[Paolo Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - October 4, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Some China-backed reclamation projects in Manila Bay pose possible threats to national security, according to a senator.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto recently aired his concern over the proposed Sangley Point International Airport and several reclamation undertakings at Manila Bay, which are near the Philippine Navy's base and headquarters.

He noted that among the contractors is state-owned China Communications Construction Co. (CCCC), one of the firms involved in the construction of the militarized artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea, and among those blacklisted by the US government and the World Bank.

Recto noted reports that the reclamation projects would block government vessels' access to the Navy's headquarters along Roxas Boulevard while the proposed airport would drive out the naval base at Sangley Point in Cavite.

"They are legitimate concerns. We should not reward Chinese state corporations who are responsible for reclaiming and constructing military facilities on the Spratly islands to do business in the Philippines," Recto said.

Navy chief Adm. Giovanni Bacordo earlier said he would not allow the naval base to be removed from Sangley Point just to give way to the airport project as the military installation is guarding the entrance to Manila Bay.

Manila Bay reclamation projects include two private proponents, UAA Kinmeng and Waterfront, which reportedly partnered with CCCC and China Harbour Engineering Corp.

Waterfront is reportedly the developer of two islands right in front of the Navy headquarters for commercial use in 2017.



Critics have warned that when the two projects are built, it would cut off the Navy headquarters' access to Manila Bay.

The Navy asked that the plan be revised to allow access of naval vessels to the headquarters but Waterfront, CCCC and CHEC gave it a winding channel that was only 120 meters wide.

Bacordo, however, told The STAR said the Navy has found the channel wide enough "for our patrol gunboats."



Pagtatanim ng bacawan sa Manila Bay inirekomenda



October 3, 2020 @ 2:08 PM 16 hours ago

Cagayan, Philippines – Inirekomenda ng Grupong Kalikasan sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang malawakang pagtatanim ng bacawan sa ibang bahagi ng Manila Bay bukod sa paglalagay umano ng mga puting buhangin sa nasabing lugar.

Sinabi ni Leon Dolce, national coordinator ng Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, ang pagpapaunlad sa aquatic resources sa pamamagitan ng pagtatanim ng bacawan ang isa sa magandang solusyon sa problema sa Manila Bay.

Malaki rin aniya ang maitutulong nito para mas mahikayat ang mga turistang mamasyal sa lugar tulad na lang sa white sand beach.

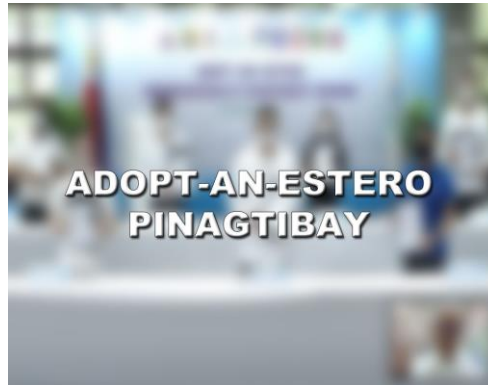
Inirerekomenda rin ng grupo ang paglalagay ng mga isda sa bahaging tatamnan ng bacawan upang makatulong pa sa mga residente sa lugar na ang kabuhayan ay pangingisda.

Tiwala rin ang grupo na ang naturang hakbang ay isang magandang sagot sa suliranin ng pagbaha at pagkatibag ng dalampasigan na mangangailangan lang ng mababang pondo. **Jun C. Fuentes**



ADOPT-AN-ESTERO PINAGTIBAY

October 2, 2020



PINANGUNAHAN ng Manila Water ang Adopt-an-Estero Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Ceremonial Signing sa pakikipagtulungan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kasama ang iba't ibang lokal na pamahalaan (LGUs) na kinabibilangan ng mga lungsod ng Quezon, San Juan at Mandaluyong, upang maisakatuparan ang clean-up o paglilinis ng San Juan River at ng mga estero at tributaries nito.

Layon din ng programa na mapagtibay ang bawat pangako ng mga partner-agencies upang masolusyunan ang problema sa kapaligiran lalung-lalo ang paglilinis ng mga ilog at iba pang dinadaluyan ng tubig.

Kasama rin sa ginanap na MOA signing ang paglagda sa updated usufruct agreement sa pagitan ng DENR at Manila Water para sa pagsasaayos at pag-upgrade ng East Avenue Sewage Treatment Plant sa lungsod ng Quezon.

Saklaw sa pag-upgrade ang retrofitting ng pasilidad alinsunod sa DENR AO 2016-08 na pasado sa itinakdang pamantayan para sa biological nutrient removal sa treated effluent, pati na rin ang pagpapalawak ng sewerage network nito.

Matatandaan noong Enero 2020, ibinahagi ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu na isa sa layunin ng kagawaran ay linisin ang San Juan River na siya namang tinugunan ng Manila Water sa pamamagitan ng pagtataguyod ng programang Adopt-an-Estero na may kaakibat na mga technical at social solutions upang malinis ang mga estero at mga daluyan ng tubig.

Samantala, nangako naman ang mga LGU na susuportahan ang mga programang nakapaloob dito kasama na ang desludging services o pagpapasipsip ng poso negro sa mga kabahayan; donasyon at pagbibigay ng cleaning materials at tools para sa pagsasagawa ng clean-up drive; pakikilahok sa mga kampanya para sa impormasyon, edukasyon at komunikasyon (IEC) at iba pang mga inisyatibo sa ilalim ng programang Adopt-an-Estero.

Si DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon ang kumatawan kay Sec. Roy Cimatu sa naturang ceremonial signing at nagpahayag ng pasasalamat sa Manila Water at sa iba pang katuwang sa proyekto para sa hindi matatawarang suporta ng mga ito sa implementasyon ng iba't ibang programang pangkalikasan.

Kapwa nagbigay rin sina Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte at San Juan Mayor Francis Zamora ng kanilang buong suporta para sa nasabing programa kasabay ang pagkilala sa Manila Water sa pagsisikap nitong higit pang mapalawak ang serbisyo sa tubig at alkantarilya sa kanilang mga lungsod.

Binigyang-diin naman ng Pangulo at CEO ng Manila Water na si Jose Rene Almendras na bilang suporta sa mandato at programang imprastruktura ng ating pamahalaan, magtatayo pa ng mga karagdagang sewage treatment facilities at palalawakin ang sewer network sa East Zone bilang bahagi ng overall wastewater roadmap ng Manila Water.

Dagdag pa ni Almendras, ito ay nagpapatunay na matatag ang pangako at layunin ng Manila Water na makapagbigay ng malaking kontribusyon para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay at mga daluyan ng tubig.



Ani Almendras, ito ang kauna-unahang pagkakataon para sa Manila Water na magsagawa nang sabay na physical at virtual memorandum signing upang matugunan ang matagal nang suliranan hinggil sa tinaguriang walo sa pinakamaruruming creek o estero sa Metro Manila kabilang na ang Maytunas at Ermitanyo Creek, pati na rin ang Buhangin at Buayang Bato Creek.

Kabilang sa MOA signing sina Manila Water President at CEO Jose Rene Almendras kasama sina DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora, MWSS Administrator Emmanuel Salamat, MWSS-RO Chief Regulator Patrick Ty, Mandaluyong City Administrator Ernesto Victorino at Manila Water Chief Operating Officer Abelardo Basilio. (TJ DELOS REYES)

Source: http://saksingayon.com/news-break/adopt-an-estero-pinagtibay/?utm_source=ReviveOldPost&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ReviveOldPost&fbclid=IwAR3Hq3jbxAI5Eg1WY-0LwlmIXOZX6tYvtvxgn2C33D6imSoVnmcNUR94q4



New threat to wild plants: Ornamental gardening

Renewed interest in gardening during the quarantine gave rise to 'plantitos, plantitas'

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

October 4, 2020



Endangered plants are targeted by collectors of rare plants, many of which are endemic to the Philippines. Among these are coral plant, Wade's pitogo or Wade's cycad, Greeniopsis megalantha, kamraj or tunjuk-langit fern, Malaysian Grapes or Malaysian orchid and pitcher plant.

Massive destruction of habitats caused by mining, quarrying and land-use conversion from forest to other purposes are not the only threats to biological diversity.

Amid the threats of the new coronavirus disease (Covid-19), the hazards to wildlife intensified as the community quarantine put in place by the government since March saw a renewed interest in urban gardening. Sadly, the gathering of rare and wild plant species with high commercial value from the forests is being resorted to.

During quarantine, the country's forests, including protected areas and national parks, are left with very little protection against enterprising Filipinos who saw the opportunity for quick cash.

Rise of 'plantitos, plantitas'

With businesses closing up shop, many Filipinos who lost their jobs were compelled to start their own little business.

While some resorted to online selling of cooked food and other wares, enterprising Filipinos have started making money from what started as quarantine stress reliever—planting ornamental plants, earning them the tag “plantitos and plantitas.”

They are now selling online their plants, pots, while some have even opened shops, selling and reselling garden products—from plants and pots, garden soil, tools to fertilizers and pesticides.

Sadly, the popularity of urban gardening or home gardening made rare and wild plant species in forests easy targets by those who find the venture financially rewarding.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is well aware of the growing threat posed by this threat to wild plants.



DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon expressed alarm that the illegal harvesting of plants may be happening in protected areas, and collectors may be unaware that the species they are collecting are endangered or already on the brink of extinction.

Haven for rare plants, too

Protected areas and national parks are not only a haven for threatened animals. They are also home to some of the country's unique but threatened plant species, an official of the DENR said. Unlike animals who can escape captivity, plants are easy targets.

With the growing demand for rare plants, their prices went sky-high, making harvesting plants in the wild more enticing, said Don Guevarra, chief of the Regional Public Affairs Office of DENR Region 3.

He cited the case of Mount Arayat National Park (MANP) in Pampanga, where a new plant species—*Pyrostria arayatensis*—was recently discovered.

The discovery, Guevarra said, only proved that Mount Arayat has sustained its biological diversity, and the more reason for the DENR to communicate the importance of protecting the area against wild plant thieves.

Extinction before discovery

Many plants species are in fact becoming extinct even before they are being discovered.

Gueverra said in Mount Arayat, there are more plant species that have not been discovered or recorded.

Dr. Marlon Suba, discovered *Pyrostria arayatensis*, along with his teammates Dr. Axel Arriola, Dr. Grecebio Jonathan Alejandro, Nicolas Raphael Arcangel, Jomari Jalipa, Joaquim Gerardo Jurilla, and Jose Manuel Villasenor in the lowland forest of MANP while conducting a botanical study in 2017.

The newly discovered species belongs to the family Rubiaceae and is endemic to the Philippines. Their report, as part of Suba's dissertation in the University of Santo Tomas, was published in the international scientific journal *Annales Botanici Fennici* on August 10.

It took three years for the discovery to be published in a scientific journal and be recognized as a new plant species because of several factors.

In his case, Suba his first attempt to publish his report upon the plant's discovery was met with a lot of questions during the peer review process.

"I also have to focus on work, and this year there's the lockdown. Finally, it got recognized," Suba told the BusinessMirror via telephone interview on September 17.

Suba said Mount Arayat is so rich in biodiversity that the area may be home to still undiscovered plant species that may eventually become extinct if they remain unprotected.

Not typical garden plants

The wild plants, like animals, are likely to die when taken out of their natural habitat, said Calderon, concurrent director of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).



“There are [environmental] conditions that [make] these plants survive. Like ferns, these species require specific elevation on which to thrive,” Calderon explained to the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview on September 17.

A forestry expert, Calderon said some plants survive only under conditions that the forest can provide.

The DENR-BMB issues a special permit for those wishing to collect, gather animals or plants in the wild.

The gratuitous permit, however, is only for scientific research and not for commercial purposes.

Calderon explained that those who are collecting wild plants without proper training or knowledge may be gathering critically endangered plants, hence, the need to carefully evaluate the application for a collector’s permit.

Similar to animals, the plant collectors can gather upon issuance of a permit but they can only sell the propagated plants or progeny, he said.

“We have already filed several cases against those who were caught collecting rare plants,” Calderon said.

He cited as example the bantigue mangrove that is being collected in the wild and is being sold in bonsai form.

High commercial value

Calderon said rare and unique plant species in the forest have high commercial value which entice collectors to violate the law, face criminal raps and even go to jail.

He noted that in the time of the pandemic, many have resorted to gathering plants in the forest. “We could not say these plants have no commercial value because they have. These unique plants, when placed in a pot, command high prices,” he said.

According to Calderon, *plantitos* and *plantitas* are now in the radar of the DENR.

“We are reminding the public that protected areas are not only for animals, but also for plants. And the law protects both plants and animals,” he said partly in Filipino.

He said they have alarmed the DENR regional offices about the poaching of plants in the forest.

Jail term and penalty

In Mindanao, DENR-9 Executive Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez has publicly warned those into “plant parenting” that illegal collection of wild plants, particularly those threatened and in areas that are set aside for conservation, is punishable by law, specifically Republic Act 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Rodriguez said Department Administrative Order 2017-11 states that “collection and trade of threatened species are prohibited unless such acts are covered under a permit issued by the DENR and the species are found in areas under a valid tenure instrument or a parcel of land covered by a title under the Torrens System.”



Besides possible jail terms of from six to 12 years, those found guilty of poaching critically endangered plants may be slapped with a fine of P100,000 to P1,000,000.

The DENR-9 Office said the giant staghorn fern or *Capa de Leon*, and *waling-waling* are critically endangered.

Other threatened species are the green velvet *alocasia*, *kris plant* and the *zebra plant*.

Lucrative trade

Leon Dulce, national coordinator of the environmental group *Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment*, said it is much more lucrative to forage the country's remaining forests for unique ornamental flora instead of planting food plants.

"A piece of ornamental goes for P2,500 a pot while vegetables range from P25 to P100 a kilo.

But *plantitos* and *plantitas* may be causing harmful tradeoffs in the long run by depleting the biodiversity in our last remaining forests, Dulce said in an e-mail interview on September 29.

"Facing an exponential increase in demand for ornamental plants, the amount of biomass extracted from our forests may disrupt the balance of its ecosystems," he warned.

According to Dulce, environmental authorities should launch a widespread public information campaign on the dangers of unregulated forest-plant trade.

"The current crop of *plantitos* and *plantitas* are mostly new in the trade during this pandemic season. We must educate the public on which plants are endangered and must be protected, and the ecological consequences if they are uprooted from their natural habitat," he said.

Likewise, besides enforcement of the country's plant protection laws, there should be an incentives for the propagation of more sustainable and useful alternatives to forest flora, he said.

Growing plants is good, but...

Emerson Sy, a researcher at the wildlife traffic monitoring network *Traffic*, said the renewed interests in growing plants among urban dwellers in the Philippines brought about by the pandemic is a welcome development.

However, he said those who found a new hobby, or a way of life in growing plants, should avoid illegally harvested plants.

"Many wild plants are not suitable in urban settings and will just die," he told the *BusinessMirror* via Messenger on September 29.

Sy agreed to the call to review current policies and regulations on plant propagation and trade. "Law enforcement should focus on those who are involved in large-scale plant poaching and trafficking," he said.

"Smuggling should also be addressed since plants could be carrying harmful insects and diseases that can significantly affect our agricultural sector," he said.

Image credits: [DN Tandang and ES Fernando/DENR-BMB](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/10/04/new-threat-to-wild-plants-ornamental-gardening/>



Crested serpent eagle turned over to Cenro Guimbal in Iloilo

By [BusinessMirror](#)

October 4, 2020

A crested serpent eagle was turned over to Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Guimbal, Iloilo, recently.

Geerazel P. Nieves, a resident of Barangay Diday in Miagao, Iloilo, found the raptor and turned it over to the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (Menro) in Miag-ao.

The wildlife was found in good condition after its initial inspection.

It was kept safe at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Wildlife Rescue Center in Barangay Kirayan, Miag-ao, Iloilo.

It is now ready for release in a nearby forest in the area.

“To save our wildlife species, we should conserve their habitat as its destruction threatens the species,” said DENR Regional Executive Director Francisco E. Milla Jr.

“We could help reduce the threats by planting trees, restore wetlands and rivers and clean up the beach or coastal areas. Our environment also needs some tender loving care as we continue the battle to contain the coronavirus disease [Covid-19],” he added.

The crested serpent eagle is a medium-size raptor found in forested habitats across tropical Asia. There are several variations of the species and they have large looking head with long feathers on the back of the head, giving a crested appearance.

Its face is bare and yellow, joining up with the beak and has feet that are heavily scaled but has no feathers.

Crested serpent eagles would usually hold their wings in a shallow V-shape. Its juveniles are distinguished by a much more white plumage especially around the head.

They are usually seen in the edges of forests and river valleys where they can soar and effectively hunt. They are also seen soaring over a territory in pairs and shrill often with a loud and familiar three or two-note call.

Serpent eagles can tolerate a great deal of disturbance to their habitat and are primarily found near secondary forests.

As its name suggests, serpent eagles feed on snakes and also on other reptiles as well as small mammals and birds.

They are apex predators and at the top of their food chain controlling the population of snakes and also other small mammals and birds. Their presence is good indicator of a healthy ecosystem.

It was considered Least Concern by the International Union of Conservation for Nature’s Red List.

Enhance biodiversity conservation is among the top 10 DENR priority programs and projects of Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/10/04/crested-serpent-eagle-turned-over-to-cenro-guimbal-in-iloilo/>



Use water responsibly, NWRB urges the public

Published October 3, 2020, 4:25 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) continues to remind the public to use water responsibly, with Angat Dam's water levels remaining low as the country continues to grapple with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Even as significant amounts of rainfall is expected in the coming months due to La Niña, the NWRB said both water supply and demand must be effectively managed to ensure sustainability.

On Saturday, Oct. 3, the water level in Angat Dam was 178.47 meters, which is 1.53 meters below its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

The Bulacan dam's water level is expected to rise in the coming quarter based on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) rainfall forecast due to La Niña.

According to the weather bureau, most parts of the country, including Central Luzon, will experience above-normal rainfall due to La Niña, which begins this month and may extend up to early 2021.

While rains have yet to pour, NWRB on Oct. 1 has implemented reduced water allocations to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

The MWSS will receive 44 cubic meters per second (cms) of raw water, while NIA will receive 25 cms.

Despite the reduction of 2 cms to MWSS, Metro Manila water consumers were assured of minimal to no significant effects in water distribution.

NWRB explained that water supply is reinforced by local rainfall collected in Ipo and La Mesa dams, activated deepwells, and water treatment plants by concessionaires in Putatan, Muntinlupa and Cardona, Rizal.

Likewise, irrigation of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga will be sustained even with the 5-cms decrease in allocation to NIA due to the contribution of local flows, rainfall collected in Bustos dam, and effective irrigation management, NWRB pointed out.

It appealed for the public's cooperation in the responsible use of water, especially as Filipinos still face the threat of COVID-19.

Having enough supply of water is important in order for people to continue practicing frequent handwashing to fight the spread of the deadly disease.



Suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila, 'di direktang maaapektuhan -- Maynilad, Manila Water

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- October 3, 2020 - 12:00am

Kahit binawasan ang alokasyon mula Angat Dam

MANILA, Philippines — Walang direktahang epekto sa isinusuplay na tubig ng water concessionaires na Maynilad at Manila Water sa Metro Manila sa pagbawas sa water allocation mula sa Angat Dam.

Ito ang paliwanag ng Manila Water at Maynilad sa pagbabawas ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ng alokasyon ng tubig sa Metro Manila ng may 44 cubic meters per second (cms) mula sa dating 46 cms dulot ng pagbaba ng water level ng Angat Dam sa 177.94 meters mula sa minimum operating level na 180 meters.

"Bagama't may napabalita na nagbawas, na-ging 44 cms na lang 'yung ibibigay na supply sa atin wala naman itong magiging direktang epekto sa supply sa Metro Manila," pahayag ni Zmel Grabillo, spokesman ng Maynilad.

Ani Grabillo karaniwang binabawasan ang alokasyong tubig para sa Metro Manila mula Angat dam pagganitong buwan.

"Karaniwan po na kapag sumasapit ang Oktubre ay talaga pong binabawasan ang alokasyon para sa Metro Manila. Ang nangyayari kasi meron tayong local rains kapag October at napupuno nito ang Ipo Dam na siya rin pong direktang nagbibigay o nagsu-supply ng tubig papunta dito sa Metro Manila,"dagdag ni Grabillo.

Nilinaw naman ni Manila Water Corporate Communications head Jeric Sevilla na stable ang suplay ng tubig sa MM sa kabila ng water allocation reduction.

"Generally ang supply maayos naman sa kasalukuyan. Nanatili naman na 24 by 7 ang supply ng konsesyonaryo liban na lamang kung may emergency repairs na ginagawa o maintenance activites. Tayo naman ay nagbibigay ng paunang notice para makapaghanda sila," pahayag ni Sevilla.

Ang pangunahing pinagkukunan ng tubig ng Metro Manila ay ang tubig mula sa Angat, Ipo, at La Mesa dam.

Ayon sa MWSS, ang tubig mula sa natu-rang mga dam ay pinoproseso sa La Mesa at Balara Treatment Plants na nagiging malinis na inuming tubig ng mga taga-Metro Manila.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/metro/2020/10/03/2046889/suplay-ng-tubig-sa-metro-manila-di-direktang-maaapektuhan-maynilad-manila-water/amp/>



Water rationing likely as Angat dam posts below normal level

October 3, 2020 4 min read

MANILA – Residents of Metro Manila may likely experience water rationing until the coming months, as the Angat Dam's current water level is below normal, and the projected rainfall is not enough to normalize it until December, said Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) administrator Vicente Malano on Friday.



In an interview with the Philippine News Agency, Malano said that of the three main sources of water supply in Metro Manila — Angat, Ipo, and La Mesa dams — only Angat is currently below normal level.

“The problem is that the main source of water for La Mesa is Angat. Based on current data, the projected rainfall is not enough to normalize the water level in Angat even until December. (This) requires reduction of water allocation. Our climate and hydromet divisions are closely coordinating with the NWRB (National Water Resources Board),” he said.

The current allocation, he said, is 46 cubic meters per second (cms).

“It (allocation) can be reduced if people would conserve water. It is also a way to force people to conserve water,” he added.

Malano, however, clarified, that he sees water is too essential this time in Metro Manila, considering several ongoing constructions.

He added that he does not see water shortage to the point that residents would not have the water, but reducing allocation is essential.

“We (PAGASA) could only suggest. The NWRB has the final say regarding the allocation,” he pointed out.

La Mesa dam as of 6 a.m. Friday is at 79.10 meters at its rule curve level, while Angat Dam is at 178.37 meters above mean sea level (AMSL).

“The 178.37 m. is below 8.7 m. from rule curve (today), but still at full operational level,” Malano said, adding that a rule curve changes every day.



A rule curve divides the storage volume of a reservoir in zones where different strategies for demand-supply will be applied.

Malano said there is no “normal water level” for La Mesa since its water comes from Angat. Angat Dam’s normal water level, on the other hand, is 212 m. during dry season, and 210 m. during wet season.

Based on PAGASA’s rainfall forecast, the Angat reservoir will be at:

- * 187 m. AMSL by the end of October 2020 (with forecast rainfall of 386 mm.)
- * 190 m. AMSL by the end of November 2020 (with forecast rainfall of 294 mm.)
- * 188 m. AMSL by the end of December 2020 (with forecast rainfall of 129 mm.)

“Angat’s water level will improve by reducing allocation to MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System),” Malano said.

“What the public should look at is the (status) of Angat, since this is the water source of La Mesa,” he said.

Malano also clarified that even if PAGASA has just announced the onset of La Niña, the amount of projected rainfall for dams is not enough as La Niña would mostly affect the eastern section of Luzon, Mimaropa, and Visayas and Mindanao.

The NWRB on Friday announced it is reducing the water allocation to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) for the month of October.

MWSS receives 44 cubic meters per second (cms) while NIA receives 25 cms.

Despite the reduction of 2 cms to MWSS, it said Metro Manila water consumers will experience minimal to no significant effect in the water distribution.

Water supply is reinforced by local rainfall received in Ipo and La Mesa dams, the activated deep wells, and the concessionaires’ water treatment plants in Putatan and Cardona, it added.

Irrigation of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga will also be sustained even with the decreased allocation of 5 cms to NIA due to the contribution of local flows, rainfall received in Bustos Dam and effective irrigation management.

Even though a significant amount of rainfall is expected in the coming months due to La Niña, water must be effectively managed in both supply and demand sides to ensure water sustainability.

The government seeks the public’s cooperation in the responsible use of water especially as we still face the threat of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

Aside from water conservation, Malano also advises the public to maximize rainwater harvesting during the dry season. (PNA)

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2020/10/03/water-rationing-likely-as-angat-dam-posts-below-normal-level/?fbclid=IwAR05KqOPLzytrIPV5A7iZfnB0ER7g_vLoKnUvd_5zzZXxggdOKGSLhYuJpY



Lebel ng tubig sa mga dam bahagyang tumaas



October 3, 2020 @ 11:41 AM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Bahagyang nadagdagan ang lebel ng tubig ng Angat Dam at iba pang dam sa Luzon dahil sa sunod-sunod na pag-ulan.

Batay sa PAGASA Hydrometeorology Division, bahagyang tumaas ang antas ng tubig ng Angat Dam na nasa 178.47 meters alas-6:00 ng umaga ngayong Sabado, Oktubre 3 kumpara sa 178.37 meters noong Biyernes.

Nadagdagan din ang lebel sa La Mesa Dam na nasa 79.16 meters mula sa 79.10 meters.

Gayundin ang naobserbahan sa Ambuklao, Binga, San Roque, Pantabangan at Magat dam. **RNT/FGDC**



Filipinos can save P2.5K to P4.6K if they switch to reusable products

Anna Gabrielle Cerezo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Oct 03 2020 08:15 PM



MANILA -- While garbage taking over our oceans is certainly old news, the glut of plastic waste threatening marine life skyrocketed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, before the COVID-19 outbreak, approximately 300 million tons of plastic waste were produced yearly. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), however, said the spike in the daily use of masks, gloves, and PPEs, as well as the increase in products wrapped in plastic packaging being delivered to homes, further devastated the already ailing condition of the planet.

UNEP approximated at least 11 million tons of the aforementioned plastic waste leak into the oceans yearly, but if no action is taken, the number could nearly triple to 29 million tons per annum in 2040. Meanwhile, by 2050, the UN body also warned plastic waste could outnumber the fish.

UNEP noted about half of the said pollution comes from just five countries: China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

In the Philippines, a research conducted by the #BreakFreeFromPlasticMovement revealed the average Filipino produces around 208 kilos of waste annually, while an entire household yields an estimated total of 1,040 kilos of trash.

Experts and advocates alike had been pleading with the public to cut their plastic consumption for years. Although it is a no-brainer transitioning to a zero-waste lifestyle can help cut one's plastic footprint, it is no doubt a challenging commitment.

If saving the planet, however, is not enough incentive to practice a more sustainable lifestyle, the i-Price Group, acknowledging it would be difficult to break the long-standing plastic habit, conducted a study on how much money Filipinos could save annually if they ditch disposables and switch to reusable products instead.

The price comparison platform learned that the average woman could save as much as P4,600, while a man could keep around P2,500 every year.

“Investing in items that replace plastic waste and disposables may seem like such a commitment, but it could cost the world a whole lot less, if you do the math,” the i-Price Group said.

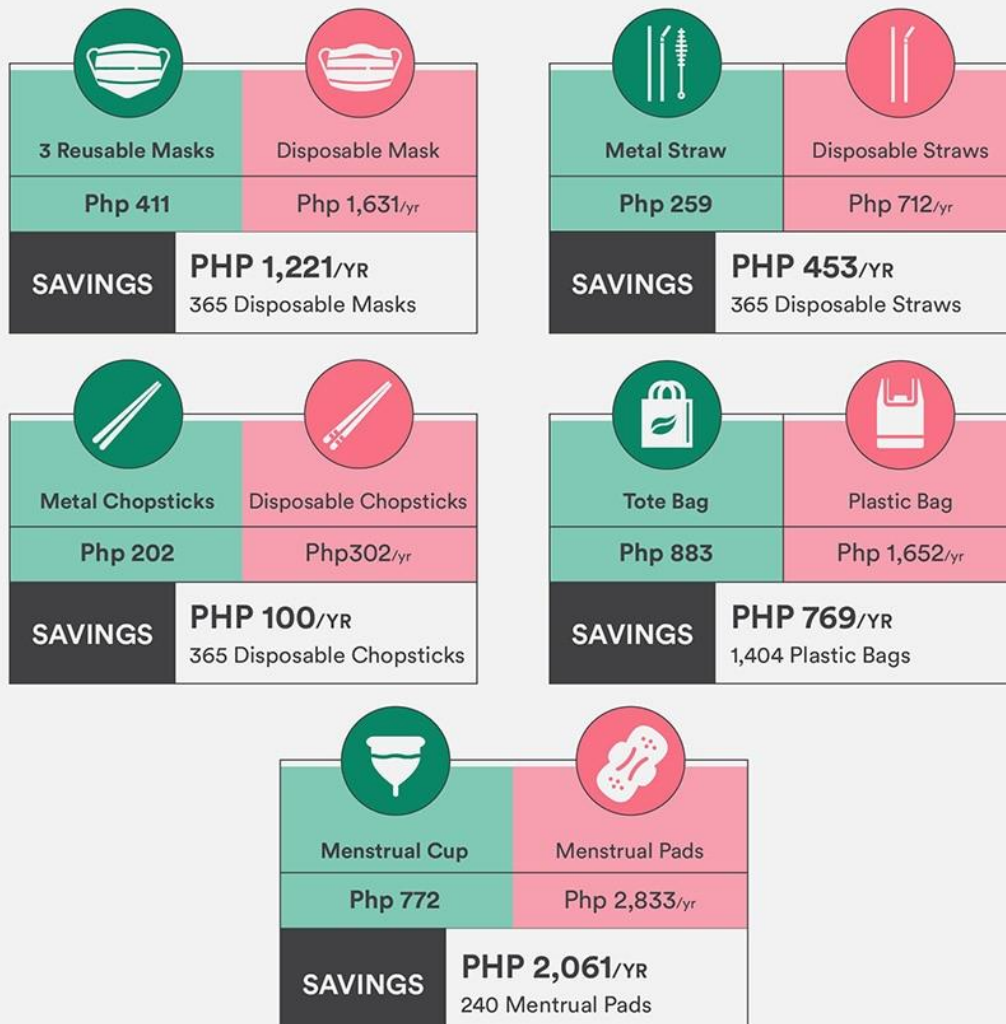
REUSABLE MASKS

While face coverings continue to be required in the new normal to stem the spread of COVID-19, conservationists implore the public to opt for reusable masks instead. Similarly, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reiterates disposable masks such as the N95 respirator and surgical masks should only be reserved for healthcare workers.



How Much Money Can You Save & Waste Can You Reduce if You Go Green?

A study that compared the prices of eco-friendly products and disposable items shows that you can save about PHP 4.6k/yr



Methodology: The price of each item was taken from a single month's average price between January and September 2020 in iPrice's database. iPrice compared the average price of reusable items with disposable alternatives. The price vis-a-vis quantity of waste reduced is based on the database's products. The estimate of waste used in a year was based on external data sources such as no-burn.org (plastic bags) and NBC News (chopsticks), and educated assumptions (menstrual pads, plastic straws, & disposable masks).



According to the i-Price Group, the shift may save Filipinos about P1,221 annually. The e-commerce aggregator said the average price of 365 disposable masks (assuming an individual uses at least one mask daily) would cost around P1,631. Investing in a pack of reusable masks, however, would only cost P411.

“COVID-19 has given us an additional essential cost for face masks. Disposable masks don’t come in cheap, especially the good-quality 3-ply,” the price comparison platform explained.

While some may be hesitant to shift to washable masks, CDC said these coverings can likewise slow the spread of the coronavirus provided they have “two or more layers of breathable fabric, completely cover the nose and mouth, and fit snugly against the side of the face without any gaps.” Cloth masks with exhalation valves and vents, however, should be avoided because they enable virus particles to escape.

UNCTAD, estimated that global sales of disposable masks will total to US\$166 billion this year, a huge leap from around US\$800 million in 2019. The UN body stressed if “if historical data is a reliable indicator, it can be expected that around 75 percent of the masks, as well as other pandemic-related waste, will end up in landfills, or floating in the seas.”



In the country, due to the pandemic, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in April predicted Metro Manila hospitals will produce an additional 280 metric tons of medical waste daily. The figure does not include the waste generated by millions of private citizens.

A individual committed to using cloth coverings, on the other hand, can reduce the number of disposable masks being discarded (and hopefully produced) by the hundreds. While the digits may not seem enormous, it is still several hundred pieces masks that will be kept off the streets and seas.

MENSTRUAL CUP

According to Wen, an environmental justice group campaigning for equal access to knowledge, resources and opportunities for women, certain menstrual pads are made of 90 percent plastic. Hence, like most of its kind, the time it will take for a single pad to decompose will be longer than the lifespan of the woman who used it.

Although menstrual cups, a more economical and eco-friendly option for period management, have been around for decades, it remains unpopular and even unknown for some women.

Data gathered by i-Price suggested high quality cups made out of medical grade silicon may be reused for up to 10 years — this means the accumulated cost of cup advocates is a fraction of those opting for a tampon or pad.

The online shopping aggregator found that the average price of a menstrual cup is P772, while the average price of a year's worth of disposable menstrual pads on i-Price's platform is P 2,833.

Aside from saving P2,061 annually, i-Price suggested women who switch to the cup may reduce the accumulated sanitary waste by roughly 240 pads every year.

In the United Kingdom alone, WEN reported approximately 200,000 tons of menstrual waste (including tampons, pads and applicators) are produced per annum.

While many remain skeptical of the silicone cups due to misinformation, lack of awareness and even taboo surrounding periods, a study published by medical journal Lancet found menstrual cups to be as safe and effective as traditional sanitary products.

TOTE BAGS

Shopping bags are among the most abundant single-use plastics polluting the world's oceans.

Data gathered by iPrice suggested a year's worth of plastic bags would cost about P1,652, while investing in a tote bag that would last several years would only cost about P883.

“Consumers may even find a cheaper, more practical tote bag than the average one on iPrice's platform, as stylish tote bags were also part of the platform's database,” the group reasoned.

Other reusable bag alternatives such as eco bags retail for as low as P15 online.

While most stores do not charge for their plastic packaging, investing in a washable bag can greatly reduce plastic pollution churned out by the country.

According to waste assessment and brand audit published in 2019 by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, an average Filipino uses approximately 174 shopping bags, and 163 plastic labo bags annually.

Collectively, the same study revealed nearly 48 million shopping bags and 45.2 million pieces of plastic labo bags used throughout the Philippines daily or a total of 17.5 billion pieces and 16.5 billion pieces shopping and labo bags are consumed annually.

REUSABLE STRAWS

According to the Strawless Ocean, a campaign developed by the Lonely Whale Foundation, Americans use around 500 million drinking straws daily. Unfortunately, the group explained “most plastic straws are too lightweight to make it through the mechanical recycling sorter.” Hence, a large chunk of it ends up in the ocean.



I-Price estimated a year's worth of plastic straws for a single individual in the country would amount to P712. The shopping aggregator, however, noted since the average person “wouldn't really pay for plastic straws in restaurants or boba stalls,” discarding the item may be a “cost and waste-reducer for restaurant owners.”

While committing to metal straws which retail for around P259 (P453 cheaper than the price of disposable straws) will definitely reduce the waste floating in the oceans, in 2018, researchers from Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, discovered that not only does it take more energy to produce reusable straws compared to single-use plastic straws but it also releases more carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas responsible for climate change.

According to the research, “the stainless steel straw has a higher impact in regards to both energy and carbon dioxide, while the glass straws have a positive impact in energy, but the carbon dioxide emissions are still greater than providing plastic straws.”

Thus, many activists encourage consumers to just remove straws from their drinking habits entirely.

REUSABLE CHOPSTICKS

Chopsticks are an important component of Asian cuisine — and with dining in as the new normal, disposable chopsticks might be an addition to the shopping list of Filipinos hoping to enjoy their homemade samgyupsal or sushi meal.

I-Price, however, said opting for a reusable chopstick could save shoppers about 100 every year.

“If an average Filipino uses 100 pieces of chopsticks a year, half of how much a Chinese uses, according to a study, would cost them about P302,” the group said.

I-Price added the product catalogs they scoured indicated investing in reusable chopsticks would only cost around P202.

“Not everyone necessarily purchases their own disposable chopsticks. Thus, this figure could also be an indicator for restaurant owners to go greener,” the online platform shared.

Albeit most chopsticks decompose faster than plastics, it is likewise an environmental nightmare. While the amount is small, the impact of boycotting the disposable chopsticks is more than just saving a few pesos and lessening your trash as the production of the disposable cutlery.

As early as 2009, news of China’s insatiable demand for disposable chopsticks threatening its forestry surfaced. According to reports, an estimate of 57 billion pairs of chopsticks were manufactured annually requiring about 1.18 million square meters of forest to be cut down.

Aside from eliminating plastic waste, environmental advocates urged the public to also to be mindful of how the products they buy are sourced and to be vigilant of their carbon footprint as well by travelling more sustainably, purchasing items for delivery from the nearest store, saving energy, reducing meat consumption, etc.

While every citizen is steward for the planet, most green groups argue the government and companies have a bigger role to play in saving it.

According to the United Nations, plastic pollution, for example, could be reduced by as much as 80 percent if governing bodies and private corporations “replace inadequate regulation, change business models and introduce incentives leading to the reduced production of plastics, design products and packaging easier to recycle, and expand waste collection, particularly in lower income countries.”

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/10/03/20/filipinos-can-save-p25k-to-p46k-if-they-switch-to-reusable-products>



DOH reports 459 new recoveries, total tally now 255,046

By Marita Moaje October 3, 2020, 7:54 pm



Newly reported deaths per region and month

	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
NCR			3	5	11	1	20
CARAGA					8		8
Region 7: Central Visayas	1	1	1		3		6
Region 6: Western Visayas			1	1	2		4
Region 11: Davao					4		4
Region 4A: CALABARZON					4		4
Region 2: Cagayan Valley					3		3
Region 3: Central Luzon					3		3
Region 10: Northern Mindanao					3		3
Region 1: Ilocos					2		2

(Data courtesy of DOH)

MANILA – The total number of reported recoveries in the country is now at 255,046 after the Department of Health (DOH) announced on Saturday 459 new recoveries.

The DOH bulletin showed that the total number of recoveries constitutes 79.9 percent of the total number of confirmed cases.

On the other hand, some 2,674 newly confirmed cases were reported as of 4 p.m. on Saturday, bringing to 58,606 the number of total active cases.

The coronavirus disease (Covid-19) case bulletin released by the DOH said the total number of cases is now at 319,330 since the outbreak started.

Of the 2,674 reported cases, some 2,237 or 84 percent of these occurred within the recent 14 days, from Sept. 20 to Oct. 3, 2020.

The top regions with cases in the recent two weeks were the National Capital Region (NCR) with 865 or 39 percent, Region 4A with 567 or 25 percent, and Region 3 with 157 or 7 percent.

The total number of deaths is now at 5,678 after 62 new deaths were reported.

Of the newly reported deaths, 2 occurred in October at 3 percent, 47 in September at 76 percent, 6 in August at 10 percent, 5 in July at 8 percent, 1 in June at 2 percent, and 1 in May or 2 percent.

The report added that 22 duplicates were removed from the total case count and of these, 11 were recovered cases.

Some 19 cases previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths after the DOH conducted a final validation. (**PNA**)



Cleaner Boracay reopens to tourists

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Oct 01 2020 08:10 AM

MANILA - A "cleaner" Boracay awaits travelers as the world-renowned island reopens Thursday, Oct. 1, the mayor of Malay town said.

"Maganda ang Boracay kasi nagpahinga siya nang for how many months," Mayor Frolibar Bautista told Teleradyo's "Gising Pilipinas".

He added waters off the long beach had become cleaner after the island was closed to tourists since March to arrest the spread of COVID-19. It earlier opened to tourists coming from Western Visayas in June.

At least 2,000 travelers would be allowed entry to Boracay, Bautista earlier said.

Hotels will be allowed to operate at 50 percent capacity with a maximum of 2 guests per room while some 382 bars and restaurants have been accredited.

Tourists will be required to present a negative confirmatory test result for COVID-19 taken 48 to 72 hours prior to their travel.

Bautista also said Boracay has an isolation facility and those who test positive or were suspected of carrying the disease would be transferred to mainland Aklan.

"Panawagan ko sa Filipino tourists natin please bring your friends and families and enjoy our beautiful island," he said.

In 2018, the top Philippine tourist destination was closed for 6 months for massive rehabilitation.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/10/01/20/cleaner-boracay-reopens-to-tourists?fbclid=IwAR1qObOCMm8ZC-Tn0EqMbeq5JfyGYHVGqjP-_5M2_F3x4AUDJTGMrr6PhKU



Health protocol costs may discourage Boracay visits –Sen. Binay

Published October 3, 2020 7:49pm

By JAMIL SANTOS, GMA News

Senator Nancy Binay on Saturday said that while Boracay was ready for its October reopening, tourists may still be discouraged from visiting the destination due to expenses from the health protocols.

"Siyempre nangingibabaw pa rin ang concern ko baka magkaroon ng outbreak uli ang virus but I think nasabi naman ni [Department of Tourism] Sec. Berna [Puyat] na in place naman ang kanilang health protocols at 'pag inisip mo naman ang health protocols, parang 'di ka rin gaganahan na pumunta," Binay said in a radio interview.

"Kung apat kayo, sa PCR test pa lang nasa P16,000 na ang magagastos mo, wala pa ang air fare at accommodation at ang tsansa mo na makuha ang virus malaki kasi lumabas ka na ng bahay mo," she continued.

The senator was also against allowing senior citizens and children at the tourist hotspot.

Binay urged the government to be "realistic" and cautious so as not to give the tourism sector false hopes that everything would return to normal.

"Di magiging normal hangga't andito sa [COVID-19 pandemic], may mga empleyado na madi-displace, tulungan natin sila makahanap ng puwede nlang pagkakitaan dahil for sure baka 'di bumalik ang dati nilang kinikita. Baka for the meantime puwede sa program ng DA na magtanim, i-manage natin ang expectations ng mga kababayan natin," she said.

Some [35 tourists visited Boracay Island on the first day of its reopening](#), Puyat had said. The tourist spot was closed to visitors for almost seven months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visitors to Boracay needed to secure a negative RT-PCR (nasal swab) COVID-19 test result taken within 48 hours before the trip, book an accommodation with a hotel accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT), and register by filling out a health declaration form on the Aklan local government website to access a QR code for contact tracing if the need arises.

Puyat, however, assured the public that Boracay was prepared if a tourist exhibited COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. — **DVM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/758342/health-protocol-costs-may-discourage-boracay-visits-sen-binay/story/>

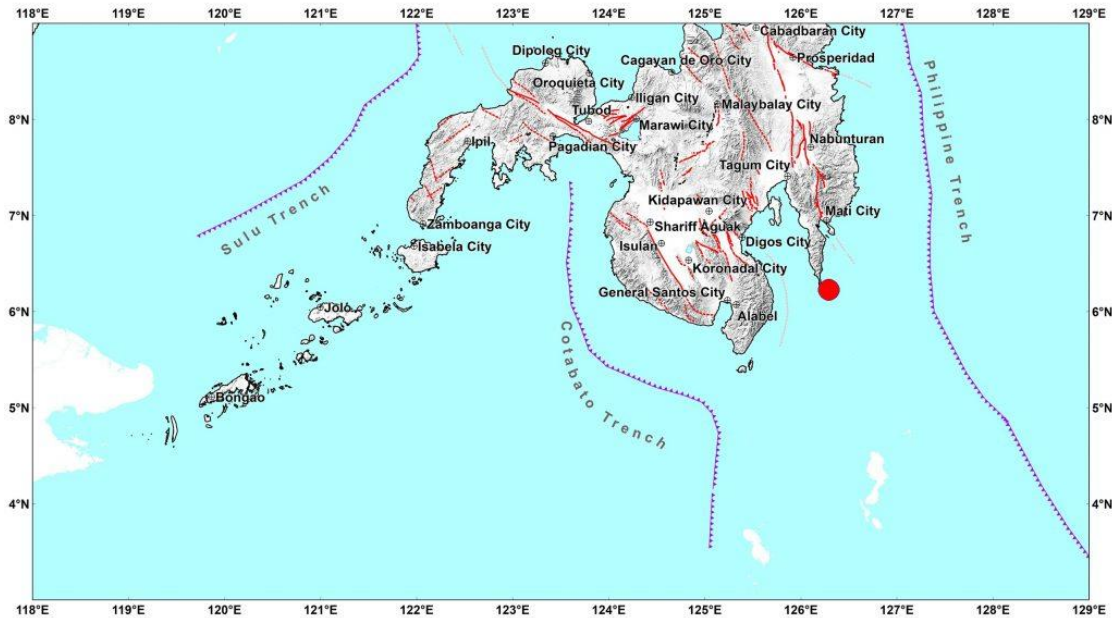


Magnitude-5 quake jolts parts of Mindanao

Published October 3, 2020, 12:26 PM

by [Antonio Colina IV](#)

DAVAO CITY — A magnitude-5 earthquake hit parts of Mindanao at 11:25 a.m. on Saturday, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).



Based on the agency's latest earthquake advisory, the tremor's epicenter was reported at 54 kilometers southeast of Governor Generoso in Davao Oriental with a depth of 118 kilometers.

The earthquake was tectonic in origin.

Intensity II was felt in Tupi in South Cotabato General Santos City, and Alabel in Sarangani and Intensity I in Kiamba in Sarangani and Koronadal City in the Soccsksargen Region.

No damage was reported.

The agency said aftershocks were expected.



Magnitude 4.6 earthquake shakes Tarlac, nearby areas

By: [Consuelo Marquez](#) - Reporter / [@ConsINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:51 PM October 03, 2020



MANILA, Philippines —A magnitude 4.6 earthquake shook Tarlac and nearby areas on Saturday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

Based on the initial Phivolcs bulletin, tremor hit 5 kilometers southwest of Camiling, Tarlac at 10:15 p.m.

The quake, which was tectonic in origin, had a depth of 11 km.

The earthquake was felt at various reported intensities in the following areas:

Intensity IV – Villasis, Pangasinan

Intensity II – Quezon City

Instrumental Intensities:

Intensity II – Cabanatuan City

Intensity I – San Jose, Nueva Ecija

State seismologists assured the public that no aftershocks and damage were expected from the earthquake.

[atm]

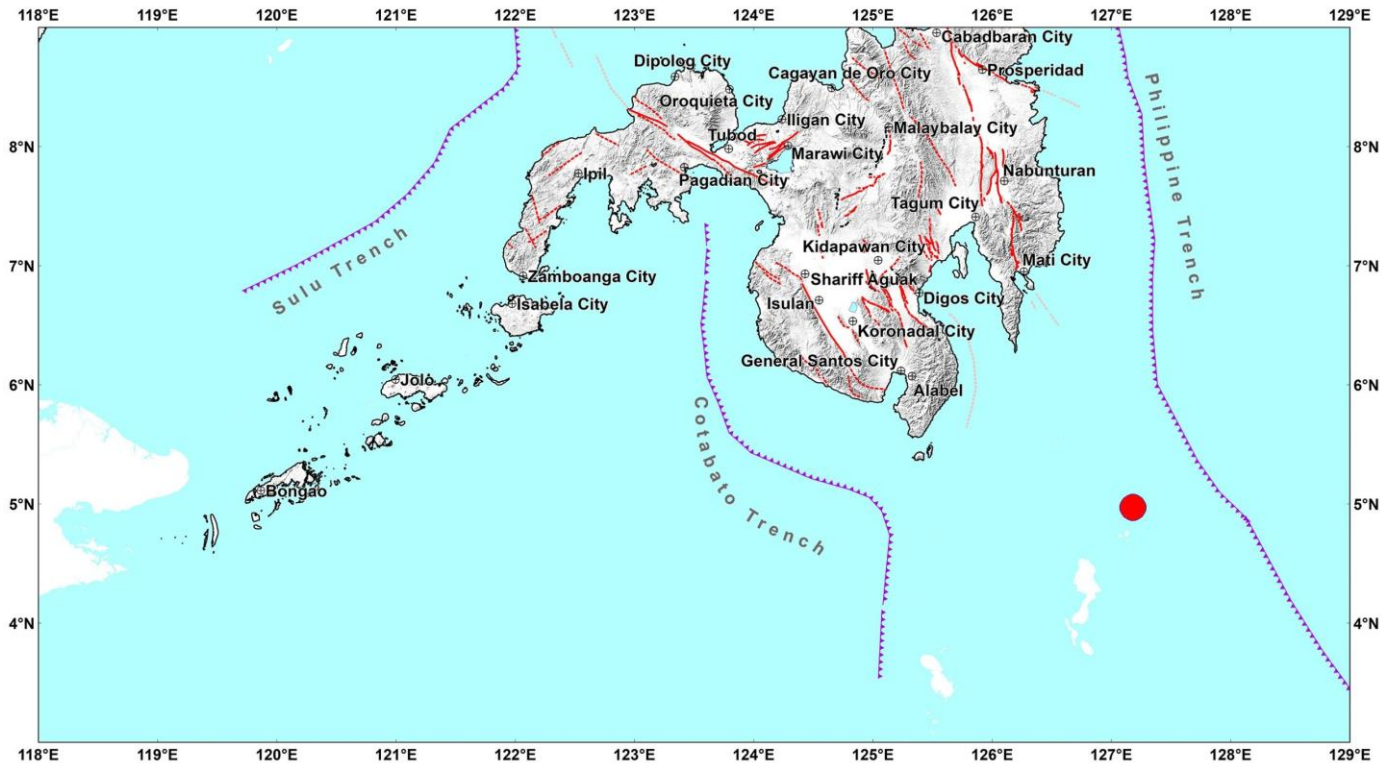
Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1343309/magnitude-4-6-earthquake-shakes-tarlac-nearby-areas>



Magnitude 4.6 earthquake hits off coast of Davao Occidental

By: [Consuelo Marquez](#) - Reporter / [@ConsINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:15 PM October 03, 2020



MANILA, Philippines —A magnitude 4.6 earthquake struck a point off Davao Occidental on Saturday night, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

In its initial earthquake bulletin, state seismologists said the tremor hit 200 kilometers southeast of Jose Abad Santos, Davao Occidental at 8:29 p.m.

The earthquake, which was tectonic in origin, had a depth of 4 km.

State seismologists also noted that no aftershocks and damage were expected.

CFC

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1343293/4-6-magnitude-earthquake-hits-coast-off-davao-occidental>



La Niña pumasok na - PAGASA

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- October 3, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Asahan na ang above normal o matinding pag-uulan sa huling mga buwan ng taong 2020 at sa unang bahagi ng 2021.

Ito'y matapos ianunsyo ng PAGASA ang pagsisimula na ng La Niña phenomenon sa bansa o ang panahon na mas madaming ulan.

Ayon sa PAGASA, ipinapakita ng mga indicators ng temperatura sa dagat at sa galaw ng mga hangin sa Pasipiko na posibleng maranasan ng bansa ang weak La Niña sa katapusan ng Oktubre o sa unang bahagi ng Nobyembre 2020.

Habang posibleng maranasan ang full blown La Niña sa first quarter ng 2021.

Kabilang sa tatamaan ng La Niña ay ang bahagi ng Luzon, Bicol Region, Eastern Visayas at Mindanao.

Dahil dito, nagbabala ang PAGASA sa mga pagbaha, pagguho ng lupa, pag-apaw ng mga dam at pagkasira ng mga pananim.



China's top climate scientists plan road map to 2060 goal

By Bloomberg News

October 4, 2020

The most ambitious climate goal the world's ever seen now has a road map for how to arrive at it. One of China's top climate research institutes last week laid out a plan of increasing renewable and nuclear energy and completely phasing out coal power.

It's the first blueprint from a group that works closely with the government showing how the country might become carbon neutral by 2060, a goal laid out by President Xi Jinping last week in a speech to the United Nations.

The plan, from Tsinghua University's Institute of Energy, Environment and Economy, entails a more gradual transition over the next decade-and-a-half, with a rapid acceleration after 2035.

The institute works closely with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment on projecting long-term goals. It also works with a separate climate research institute at Tsinghua run by Xie Zhenhua, who led China's climate policies and represented the country in international climate negotiations for more than 10 years.

Carbon emissions will peak sometime between 2025 and 2030, and total energy demand will start to decline around 2035, the institute's director, Zhang Xiliang, said in a Sunday webinar.

"We are trying to set the most cost-effective model to push every sector to realize the goal," he said.

Investments needed to meet the 2060 target could total 100 trillion yuan (\$15 trillion) over the next 30 years, He Jiankun, another Tsinghua researcher, said last week.

UNDER the plan, coal-fired electricity would be eliminated by 2050, and China's energy mix would undergo a drastic transformation:

Energy source	2025	2060	Percent change
Coal	2.86 billion tons of coal equivalent	110 million	-96%
Natural gas	560 million	140 million	-75%
Oil	980 million	340 million	-65%
Hydro	440 million	660 million	50%
Biomass	110 million	220 million	100%
Wind	240 million	1.07 billion	346%
Nuclear	170 million	820 million	382%
Solar	150 million	1.03 billion	587%

Power generation would nearly double from 2025 to about 16.4 terrawatt-hours in 2060, with electricity making up 80 percent of total energy consumption by 2060.



Wind, solar and nuclear power will have to be boosted to offset the decline of dirty power as total electricity demand keeps increasing.

If realized, China's nuclear power generation is set to quadruple between 2025 and 2060, which will probably mean enough plants to more than double the size of the US's current fleet, which is the world's largest.

China would need to boost its share of non-fossil fuel energy to 20 percent by 2025, five years earlier than it planned.

Chinese renewable-energy companies have soared in the past few weeks on the possibility.

Bloomberg News reported earlier that China is considering formalizing the target in its upcoming five-year plan.

The elimination of coal power would call into question dozens of power plants currently under construction. They would be rendered obsolete in 30 years, typically the time needed to recoup capital costs on them.

“While this proposal might get China to carbon neutrality by 2060, it would be better for the economy and the environment if emissions would decline more rapidly,” said Dimitri de Boer, China representative of ClientEarth, a European nongovernment organization focused on environmental law.

“China has an opportunity now to boost the strategic sectors of the future, such as renewable energy, hydrogen, electric vehicles, green buildings, and smart grids,” de Boer said.

Some of the other key benchmarks Zhang laid out include:

- China's carbon emissions are projected to rise from about 9.6 billion tons a year to 10.2 billion between 2025 and 2030.
 - Emissions will fall to about 9 billion tons in 2035, and then will decline dramatically to 3 billion per year by 2050, 900 million by 2055 and 200 million by 2060.
 - Energy demand will peak around 2035 at somewhere between 6 billion and 6.5 billion tons of coal equivalent.
 - Coal-fired power will be phased out around 2050.
- The share of non-fossil fuels in total energy demand will grow from about 15 percent last year to 20 percent by 2025, 24 percent in 2030, 62 percent in 2050, and 84 percent in 2060.

China will have to apply carbon capture and sequestration or bio-CCS to mitigate the remaining carbon dioxide.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/10/04/chinas-top-climate-scientists-plan-road-map-to-2060-goal/>



Antarctic Peninsula at warmest in decades, study finds

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 06:54 PM October 03, 2020



Tourists visit Yankee Bay in the South Shetlands, Antarctica in November 2019. Image: AFP/Johan Ordóñez

The year 2020 is the hottest in the Antarctic Peninsula in the past three decades, a study by the University of Santiago de Chile on Friday found out.

Between January and August, temperatures reached between 2 and 3 degrees Celsius (35.6 and 37.4 degrees Fahrenheit) on the peninsula, which is the northernmost part of mainland Antarctica, according to researchers at the Chilean Air Force's Frei Base on King George Island.

Those temperatures are "more than 2 degrees Celsius over typical values," climatologist Raul Cordero said in a statement released by the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH).

"In the far northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, the average maximum temperature so far this year has been above 0 degrees. This had not happened for 31 years," Cordero added.

He called that fact "alarming," since it could indicate that the rapid rate of ocean warming observed in the area at the end of the 20th century is resuming.

The high Southern Hemisphere winter temperatures are in contrast, however, with those registered between August and September, which reached -16.8 degrees Celsius, the lowest since 1970.

The Antarctic Peninsula is the northernmost part of Antarctica, where there are scientific and military bases from several countries, including Argentina, Chile and Britain. **IB**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/104533/antarctic-peninsula-at-warmest-in-decades-study-finds>



Antarctic Peninsula at warmest in decades: study

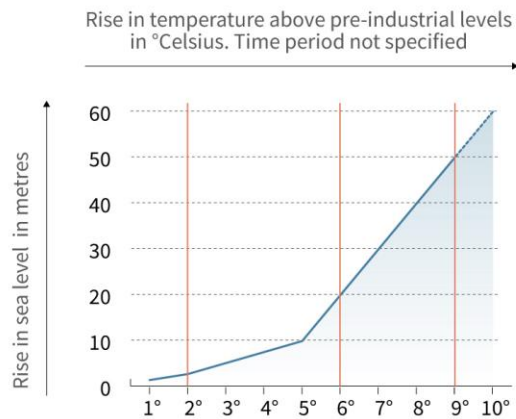
posted October 03, 2020 at 11:30 am

by [AFP](#)

The year 2020 is the hottest in the Antarctic Peninsula in the past three decades, a study by the University of Santiago de Chile out Friday found.

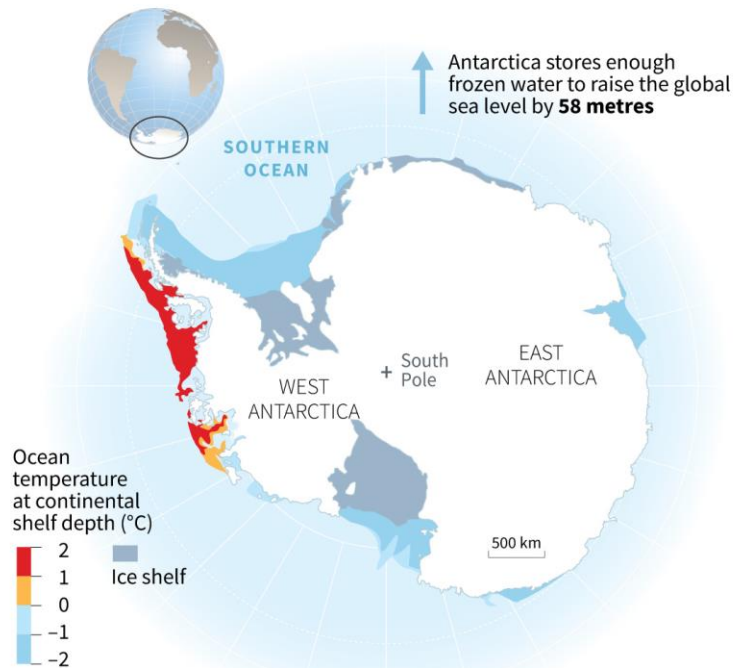
Antarctic ice loss and sea-level rise

Continued global warming would lead to an exponential rise in sea level due to Antarctic ice sheet melt



Temperature threshold beyond which ice sheet loss becomes irreversible

- 2°C:** Part of West Antarctic marine ice sheet collapses permanently
- 6-9°C:** Up to 70% of ice melts on East Antarctic land mass
- >9°C:** Continent is virtually ice free



Source: Nature



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The Antarctic Peninsula is the northernmost part of Antarctica, where there are scientific and military bases from several countries, including Argentina, Chile and Britain.

Antarctica's ice loss could soon be irreversible

Global heating means the southern ice will melt. Antarctica's ice loss could then be permanent, drowning many great cities.



The Ross Ice Shelf at the Bay of Whales in Antarctica is the southernmost navigable point on Earth. Image: [sjrankin, CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

By Tim Radford, Climate News Network
Oct. 2, 2020

The greatest mass of ice on the planet is growing steadily more unstable, and that means Antarctica's ice loss may before long be inexorable.

New studies show that right now, just [one degree of warming must mean an eventual sea level rise of 1.3 metres](#), simply from the flow of melting ice from the continent of Antarctica.

If the annual average temperature of the planet goes beyond 2°C, then the Antarctic melting rate will double. And when global heating really steps up to 6°C or beyond, melting accelerates to the almost unimaginable level of 10 metres for every single degree rise in planetary average temperatures.

And, the researchers say, there is no way back. Even if the world's nations stick to [a promise made in Paris in 2015](#), to keep global heating to "well below" 2°C by the end of the century, the losses of the southern polar ice sheet cannot be restored: the process of melting, once triggered by global temperature rise, becomes inexorable.

European and US researchers report in the journal [Nature](#) that they worked through ice core records of long-ago change in Antarctica and employed a million hours of computer simulation time to build up a reliable picture of change on the Antarctic continent, in response to ever-higher planetary average temperatures, driven by ever more profligate use of fossil fuels to generate ever-higher atmospheric ratios of greenhouse gases.

If we give up the Paris Agreement, we give up Hamburg, Tokyo and New York. Anders Levermann, climate scientist, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Their word for the state they wanted to study is hysteresis: this can be interpreted as the way altered conditions might commit a state to further change.

The planet's climate has oscillated many times over many millions of years. What this climate shift does to the polar regions can literally change the map of the planet. Antarctica is an enormous continent, the size of the US, Mexico and India together, and the ice it bears would, if it all were to melt, raise global sea levels by 58 metres.



“Antarctica holds more than half of Earth’s fresh water, frozen in a vast ice-sheet which is nearly five kilometres thick. As the surrounding ocean water and atmosphere warm due to human greenhouse gas emissions, the white cap on the South Pole loses mass and eventually becomes unstable,” said [Ricarda Winkelmann, of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research](#).

“Because of its sheer magnitude, Antarctica’s potential for sea level contribution is enormous. We find that already at two degrees of warming, melting and the accelerated ice flow into the ocean will, eventually, entail 2.5 metres of global sea level rise just from Antarctica alone. At four degrees, it will be 6.5 metres and at six degrees almost 12 metres, if these temperature levels would be sustained long enough.”

That loss of ice would be slow – it would take many thousands of years – but the point the researchers make is that [the continent may already be nearing a tipping point](#), after which the slide towards ever-higher sea levels would be unstoppable.

Since the great ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica are part of the planetary cooling system – their whiteness reflects solar radiation back into space, so that the ice becomes its own insulation – [their loss would inevitably trigger](#) the process of [further and faster warming](#).

Scientists from all nations have been warning for more than a decade that the continent is losing [its protective screen of seaborne shelf ice](#), which in turn [would make glacier flow towards the sea ever faster](#), and that the rate of loss of ice has begun to accelerate.

No going back

“In the end, [it is our burning of coal and oil that determines ongoing and future greenhouse gas emissions](#) and, therefore, if and when critical temperature thresholds in Antarctica are crossed.

“And even if the ice loss happens on long time scales, the respective carbon dioxide levels can already be reached in the near future,” said Professor Winkelmann.

“We decide now whether we manage to halt the warming. So Antarctica’s fate really lies in our hands – and with it that of our cities and cultural sites across the globe, from Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana to Sydney’s Opera House. Thus this study really is another exclamation mark behind the importance of the Paris Climate Accord: Keep global warming below two degrees.”

And [her Potsdam co-author Anders Levermann reinforced the argument](#). “Our simulations show that once it’s melted, it does not regrow to its initial state even if temperatures eventually sank again.

“Indeed, temperatures would have to go back to pre-industrial levels to allow its full recovery – a highly unlikely scenario. In other words: what we lose of Antarctica now is lost forever.”

And he warned: “If we give up the Paris Agreement, we give up Hamburg, Tokyo and New York.”

This story was published with permission from [Climate News Network](#).

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/antarcticas-ice-loss-could-soon-be-irreversible/>



How climate targets can help economic recovery

Instead of delaying updates to nationally determined climate targets while Covid-19 continues, governments should consider how these targets could be used to leverage the economic contribution of nature-based solutions.



Puertecillo Beach, Chile. Chile's climate plan links ocean and climate health, while acknowledging the economic value of coastal ecosystems. Image: [Maximiliano Reichenbauer, CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

By [Francisca Tondreau](#)

Oct. 2, 2020

With the world gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic, policymakers have turned their attention to economic stimulus and financial support of households and firms. As a result, many countries have been delaying the preparation and submission of their new emissions-reduction targets under the Paris climate agreement.

These updated targets, known as nationally determined contributions, or NDCs, were originally due earlier this year, ahead of the COP26 climate-change conference in Glasgow, Scotland in November. But that, too, has been postponed.

The switch from summits to stimulus is understandable. But we should not lose sight of the important role that NDCs can play in economic recovery efforts. NDCs are among the best vehicles for governments to articulate their vision of future economic growth and technological transformation, both of which have clear links to job creation.

Moreover, setting the targets provides a golden opportunity for countries to identify shovel-ready projects and activities that can deliver both climate and economic benefits.

Chile is a good example. The government announced an updated climate pledge in April, together with a new climate bill that is currently before the National Congress. The updated NDC links climate action to sustainable development and a just energy transition.

At its core is a commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, and it is easy to see how the government's pandemic response can help to achieve this goal by accelerating the necessary transitions in the energy and transportation sectors.

But Chile's new NDC also shows another front where countries' economic recovery plans can receive a significant boost: nature-based solutions. The NDC demonstrates an understanding of the role nature can play in achieving carbon neutrality, as well as in adapting to the effects of climate change and recognising the importance of creating and maintaining natural carbon sinks.

For starters, Chile's climate plan links ocean and climate health, while acknowledging the economic value of coastal ecosystems. We don't need to look far for an example of how healthy marine ecosystems support local economies. In Mexico, in the Gulf of California and the Baja California Peninsula alone, marine ecosystems generate \$518 million in annual tourism revenues and directly account for at least 3,575 jobs.

Given Chile's extensive coastline, the possibilities are much likely orders of magnitude higher. The NDC does not disappoint in this regard: It includes a commitment to turn 25 per cent of its exclusive economic zone into a protected area. If properly implemented, this pledge would create new economic opportunities for the country.

The [new NDC](#) also significantly strengthens Chile's commitments regarding forests. The government has doubled its target for sustainable forests management and restoration from 100,000 hectares to 200,000 hectares by 2030.

Likewise, it will plant 200,000 hectares of new forests (up from 100,000 hectares), of which at least 100,000 hectares will comprise permanent forest cover and at least 70,000 hectares will be native species. Finally, Chile has said it will cut emissions from deforestation and land degradation by 25 per cent by 2030.

The link to economic growth (albeit understudied and underappreciated) is clear here as well. Pursuing these targets will enable governments to create a variety of jobs, including foresters, botanists, machinery operators, and laborers. And restored landscapes offer additional benefits.

A 2016 [study](#) by the World Resources Institute found that in Latin America, reviving degraded lands would yield \$23 billion in net benefits over a period of 50 years. On average, farmers who restore their land can earn an extra \$1,140 per hectare in net economic value.

Let's be clear: Chile still has some way to go to achieve the targets in its original climate pledge. The government's response to Covid-19 has thus far been a mixed bag, and it has yet to demonstrate any serious commitment to advancing climate action since releasing the plan months ago.

But, at the very least, Chile's NDC gives us a good example of what an NDC can and should be: not a legally binding policy document, but a political signal to ministries, private-sector actors, and development-finance institutions to identify and pursue opportunities to link a government's climate plans to economic recovery.

Each updated NDC creates greater political momentum and builds the international trust we need to combat climate change. Instead of delaying work on the NDCs while the pandemic continues, governments should consider how these targets could be used to leverage the economic contribution of nature-based solutions.

In short, climate action, as expressed through an NDC, can go hand in hand with economic recovery plans. When nature is protected, it has much to offer in return.

Francisca Tondreau is Country Director for Chile, Paraguay, and Bolivia at The Nature Conservancy.

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www.project-syndicate.org

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/how-climate-targets-can-help-economic-recovery/>



NDAAs Interim Rule Prohibits Sourcing Tantalum From Non-Allied Nations

UNTV News • October 3, 2020

WELLESLEY, Massachusetts, Oct. 3, 2020 /PRNewswire/ — Global Advanced Metals Pty Ltd (GAM), a world leader in the socially responsible production of tantalum, recognizes the importance of the latest action from the U.S. government to encourage secure and sustainable production of tantalum from trusted producers. On September 29, the U.S. Department of Defense (“DoD”) issued an interim rule that will require DoD contractors to cease supplying tantalum originally sourced in various forms from adversarial foreign suppliers in a specified list of nations.

GAM’s operations — from mine to finished product — are fully compliant under DoD’s new rule (DFARS 225.7018) that restricts the department from purchasing tantalum oxides, metals, and alloys which were derived at nearly any point in the supply chain from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. The rule formally implements a national security measure, signed into law last year, designed to limit DoD’s exposure to non-allied sources for tantalum. Prized for its unique properties and uses in key defense technologies, tantalum is a designated critical mineral whose absence “would have significant consequences for the economy or national security,” reported the Department of Interior in 2018.

“As the world’s leading vertically integrated tantalum producer, we stand ready to deliver high performance and DFARS-compliant tantalum products to our customers,” said Steve Krause, President of GAM Technology. “Now, more than ever, U.S. Department of Defense suppliers need dependable partners with reliable critical material supply chains, and GAM is capable of meeting their tantalum powder, chips, ingot, rod, plate or sheet enabling them to conform to this requirement.”

DFARS 225.7018 implements section 849 of the National Defense Authorization Act (“NDAA”) for Fiscal Year 2020. Section 849 of the NDAA added tantalum to an existing statute (10 U.S.C. §2533c) that lists critical materials DoD cannot source (with few exceptions) from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.

About Global Advanced Metals (GAM)

A leading conflict-free tantalum producer fully compliant with DFARS 225.7018 and 10 U.S.C. §2533c, GAM has exclusive rights to the world’s largest industrial resources of tantalum ore located in Western Australia. GAM produces conflict-free tantalum powders and metallurgical products at its Pennsylvania, USA, and Aizu, Japan plants for a range of industries including electronics, aerospace, automotive, medical, and chemical processing. GAM’s processing facilities in Japan and the USA were first declared “Conflict-Free” in 2010 under the former EICC/GeSI Conflict Free Sourcing Initiative (CFSI) audit program and continue to maintain their conformance status under the Responsible Minerals Initiative (RMI). Further information regarding GAM is available at www.globaladvancedmetals.com

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Source: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/ndaa-interim-rule-prohibits-sourcing-tantalum-from-non-allied-nations/>



Nepal is a model for vulture conservation

By Inter Press Service

October 4, 2020

By Karun Dewan

NAWALPARASI, Lumbini, Nepal: Vultures get a lot of bad press. Unlike other birds that are praised for their melodious song or bright plumage, vultures have been traditionally reviled for feeding greedily on carcasses and what many see as a repulsive look. In many cultures, they are considered an ill omen, and the Nepali language has many derogatory phrases.



White-rumped vultures PHOTO FROM NATIONAL TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION/SAGAR GIRI

A famous dialogue in the critically acclaimed and commercially successful recent Nepali movie “Loot” proclaims Kathmandu as a “the city of vultures.” What an insult to vultures.

This negative perception of vultures does not take into account the enormous ecosystem services provided by the raptors in consuming carrion and reducing the spread of disease.

In fact, when vultures nearly became extinct in the subcontinent in the past two decades because of the use of the veterinary anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac, animal carcasses lay rotting in the fields and jungles becoming hotbeds for pathogens.

South Asia first started seeing a massive decline in its vulture population starting the 1990s, and no one quite knew why. The White-rumped, Long-billed and Slender-billed vultures declined by more than 99 percent in India and Pakistan.

In Nepal, between 1995 and 2001, there was a 96-percent decline in the Slender-billed vulture population, and the numbers of White-rumped vultures had gone down by 91 percent until 2011.

Researchers then zeroed in on the cause: the use of the analgesic diclofenac to treat sick livestock. Residue of the drug in the carcasses of those animals when consumed by vultures caused their kidneys to fail. Studies have shown that just 30 milliliters of diclofenac can kill as many as 800 vultures.

The good news is that Nepal has established itself as a pioneer in vulture conservation over the years, and the birds are now showing signs of coming back.

Nepal is home to nine species of vultures of which seven have undergone considerable decline in recent years. The White-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), Slender-billed vulture (*Gyps tenuirostris*), Red-headed vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) and Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*) are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature critically endangered list.

The Egyptian vulture (*Nephron percnopterus*) is listed as endangered, and three species – Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), Cinerous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) and Himalayan Griffon (*Gyps himalayensis*) — are near threatened.



The first Vulture Conservation Summit in Kathmandu in 2004 took three key decisions: ban the use of diclofenac, establish breeding centers for endangered vultures and rehabilitate them in the wild.

In 2006, diclofenac was banned by the governments of South Asia. The same year, Nepal opened world's first food center for the birds called the "Vulture Restaurant" locally known as "Jatayu Restaurant" in Nawalparasi district.

Operated and managed locally in an effort to provide the birds of prey with uncontaminated meat, it saw a significant revival of vulture populations in the area. Seven more vulture restaurants have been set up across the Tarai and mid-hill districts: Rupandehi, Dang, Kailali, Kaski and Sunsari.

Similarly, a vulture conservation and breeding center was set up in Kasara in the Chitwan National Park in 2008. The same year a Vulture Conservation Action Plan 2009-2013 was approved and implemented followed by a second action plan 2015-2019. The campaign has seen 74 districts (except Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) declared diclofenac free.

At present, Nepal is on the verge of establishing the world's first vulture sanctuary — which will not have a defined perimeter like other protected areas but will stretch over 30,000 square kilometers divided into inner core area and a buffer zone. The amount of diclofenac in the core area should be zero and less than 1 percent in the buffer region.

In order to increase the population of vultures in these protected areas, 31 vultures tagged with satellite devices have been released into the natural habitat in the last three years. Additional monitoring of 30 wild vultures fitted with satellite equipment is being carried out.

Despite these achievements, vulture conservation is not without challenges. Most conservation programs are limited to the Tarai and hence should be expanded to the mid-hills and the mountains.

Apart from diclofenac, other chemicals such as nimuslide, aceclofenac, and ketoprofen also appear to be harmful to vultures and regular monitoring to prevent excessive use of these drugs is recommended. Additional risks also come from declining natural habitat, food shortage and transmission lines.

Vultures mate for life, they stay together from nesting to hatching to rearing their young ones. They are found primarily in the Tarai and mid-hill forests of western Nepal and generally prefer to nest in enormous simal trees.

Despite the negative perception of vultures in culture and folklore, the birds have religious, cultural and environmental significance. Hindus worship it as the vehicle of Saturn. In the Ramayana, the vulture Jatayu fought till his last breath when Ravana abducted Sita. The practice of feeding the deceased to vultures is still prevalent in Himalayan communities that worship the scavenger as carriers of human souls to heaven.

More importantly, in the absence of vultures there will be no scavengers to dispose of carrion, leading to disease outbreaks among humans and cattle.

In monetary terms, one vulture in its lifetime saves about \$11,000 for its role in carcass management. It is in our interest to invest in vulture conservation. The first Saturday of September every year is marked as the International Vulture Awareness Day and it is in its 12th edition this year, Nepal should commit to work together with the communities, governments, environmentalists and conservation groups, because by protecting vultures we preserve biodiversity, and ultimately the safety and health of human beings.

Karun Dewan is with the World Wildlife Fund, Nepal.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/10/04/opinion/analysis/nepal-is-a-model-for-vulture-conservation/775891/>



Singaporean antsy selling ants as pets

Published 18 hours ago on October 3, 2020 12:01 PM

By [ConceptNews Central](#)



ANTS epitomize industry, something lacking in many people. W. Commons

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Ants scurry around in transparent boxes stacked outside a Singaporean store that is tapping into an unlikely but growing local trend of keeping the six-legged creatures as pets.

John Ye says he became fascinated with the “altruistic, compassionate” creepy-crawlies after receiving some as a gift from his brother-in-law.

The 41-year-old eventually ditched a job in electronics distribution to open “Just Ants” in January and cater to fellow enthusiasts.

“I wish to have a place where people can gather and share insights, and share their ant-keeping journey,” Ye told *AFP*.

The shop sells ant farms along with specialist equipment, including mini handheld vacuums for catching the insects, tiny feeding dishes and mealworms used as feed.

It was forced to close for a period due to a coronavirus lockdown earlier this year but has reopened since restrictions were eased, and business is picking up.

It stocks 30 to 40 species, sourced from ant-keeper friends or collected by Ye and his team around Singapore.

Catching the creatures is no easy task. It is usually only possible during so-called “nuptial flights” — when new queens and winged male ants take to the air in the hope of finding a mate.

Pets or pests?

The queen ants are then placed in test tubes or small tanks, where they give birth to a colony of worker ants if they have mated.

Ye’s personal collection includes tens of thousands of marauder ants, a species of the creature commonly found across Asia, housed in a large box.

The number of ant aficionados in Singapore is small but growing, according to Ye — a Facebook group where keepers exchange advice and information has nearly 4,000 members.

But Ye knows he has his work cut out to convince people in Singapore, where ant-keeping is rare, that the creatures are pets and not pests.

Most Singaporeans believe “you should actually not keep ants because ants... are poisonous, they are dirty, disgusting, they carry diseases”, he conceded.



“We always fear something that we don’t understand.”

Beginner ant-keeper Wei Sern Lim visited the shop to buy a box of food and a new home for his colony.

“It’s nicer to see the products and a lot more convenient just to have a physical shop,” the 30-year-old told AFP.

Others simply turned up to see whether such a shop really existed.

“I’m very tickled, they are actually selling ants as pets — it’s totally unheard of,” said visitor Michelle Serio.

p/jd



New Hoya species found

Published 8 mins ago on October 4, 2020 06:10 AM

By [Xinhua](#)

KUNMING, China (Xinhua) — A team of Chinese researchers has discovered a new species of Apocynaceae in southwest China's Yunnan Province and named it *Hoya gaoligongensis*, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA) said.

Scientists from the Kunming Institute of Survey and Design under the NFGA found a previously unknown *Hoya* of Apocynaceae in Longling Xiaoheishan Provincial Nature Reserve, located in the southern region of Gaoligong Mountains.

Hoyas are also known as wax plants and commonly used as indoor ornamental plants. The new species, however, has an extremely small population and is found in primary forests of only three counties — Longling, Gongshan and Deqin — in western and northwestern Yunnan, said Zhao Mingxu, a scientist from the institute.

Zhao described *Hoya gaoligongensis* as an epiphytic climbing liana with oblong, long-oblongate, or spatulate leaf blades. Its hemispherical-shaped inflorescences consist of many fragrant flowers.

The discovery has increased China's *Hoya* species to 48 with one variety, according to researchers, who published the study in the journal *Phytotaxa*.