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**DENR**

# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DENR orders shutdown of sanitary landfill in Pangasinan

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:49 PM March 06, 2021



Photo from DENR PENRO Pangasinan.

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the shutdown of a sanitary landfill facility in Urdaneta, Pangasinan after it failed to address its environmental violations within the set deadline.

In a statement on Saturday, the DENR said that DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB)-Region 1 Director Maria Dorica Naz-Hipe and other officials served the cease and desist order (CDO) to stop the operation of the Urdaneta City engineered sanitary landfill in Barangay Catablan on Friday.

According to the DENR, the 18,000 square meter-sanitary landfill was served with two CDOs back in January for violation of environmental laws that include Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 and Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

**DENR SHUTS DOWN SANITARY LANDFILL IN URDANETA CITY, PANGASINAN** Operations of a sanitary landfill being operated by the...

Posted by [DENR PENRO Pangasinan](#) on [Friday, March 5, 2021](#)

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda made a surprise inspection on the sanitary landfill on Jan. 27 and gave the management until February 2021 “to implement the improvements, such as constructing a water treatment facility, siphoning the garbage seepage, and identifying an ideal new cell, among others.”

“With the marching order of DENR Secretary [Roy] Cimatu to close all dumpsites by end of March, the demand for sanitary landfills increased significantly in several areas across the country. Sanitary landfills are a better alternative to open dumpsites, but this does not guarantee that they will be given the permit to operate right away,” he said.

Based on DENR data, around 169 open dumpsites are still operating across the country, while 107 have been closed down.

Cimatu previously ordered that [200 open dumps across the country](#) must be shut by March.  
CFC

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1403767/denr-orders-shutdown-of-sanitary-landfill-in-pangasinan-for-failing-to-address-violations>



# DENR closes Pangasinan sanitary landfill

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) - March 7, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A sanitary landfill in Pangasinan has been closed.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Environmental Management Bureau Ilocos regional director Maria Dorica Naz-Hipe and other DENR officials served the closure order of the facility in Barangay Catablan in Urdaneta City on Friday.

The 18,000-square meter sanitary landfill was ordered closed in January for violating the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and Philippine Clean Water Act.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda, who inspected the site on Jan. 27, gave the management of the landfill until last month to make improvements, such as the construction of a water treatment facility.

However, a follow-up inspection on March 1 showed that no action was taken by the city government.

“With the order of DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu to close all dumps by end of March, the demand for sanitary landfills increased in several areas across the country. Sanitary landfills are a better alternative to open dumps, but this does not guarantee that they will be given the permit to operate right away,” Antiporda said.

The DENR said 169 dumps are still operating across the country. A total of 107 have been closed.



# Urdaneta City landfill ordered shut down as DENR intensifies crackdown on dumpsites

Published March 6, 2021, 8:41 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

Authorities have shut down a sanitary landfill in Urdaneta City in Pangasinan, the latest on the intensified crackdown on dumpsites violating environmental laws.

Although not an open dumpsite, a sanitary landfill facility in Barangay Catablan, Urdaneta City was ordered closed due to environmental violations, according to Maria Dorica Naz-Hipe, director of the Environmental Management Bureau-Region 1 of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The 18,000-square meter sanitary landfill facility (SLF) was shut down after two cease and desist orders (CDO) were issued by the Urdaneta City Engineered Sanitary Landfill on March 5.

“Sanitary landfill facilities causing environmental hazards are not spared from the government’s open dumpsite crackdown nationwide,” the DENR said in a statement.

Hipe said the landfill violated Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 and RA 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

It was disclosed that a surprise inspection was conducted in the landfill on January 27.

The management was then given until February 2021 to implement the improvements, such as constructing a water treatment facility, siphoning the garbage seepage, and identifying an ideal new cell.

But the order was not followed, which led to the closure.

The closure was part of the order of DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu to close all dumpsites by end of March this year. A total of 107 open dumpsites have been closed down so far, while around 169 open dumpsites are still operating across the country.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/06/urdaneta-city-landfill-ordered-shut-down-as-denr-intensifies-crackdown-on-dumpsites/>



## Urdaneta landfill kinandado ng DENR

By Abante News Online — Last updated Mar 6, 2021

METRO



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENR-EMB



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Pinasara ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) ang sanitary landfill sa Urdaneta City, Pangasinan matapos umanong makitaan ng mga paglabag.

Kabilang sa nakitang paglabag ay ang Clean Water Act gayundin ang Presidential Decree 1586 o Philippine Environmental Impact Statement at RA 9003 Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

“The violation under RA 9003 is the operation of an open dumpsite. Although it is a sanitary landfill, what happened is that they just dumped the wastes and it was no longer being managed. It is no longer based on the operation of a sanitary landfill that it has become an open dumpsite,” pahayag ni EMB Ilocos regional director Dorica Hipe kamakalawa.

Giit niya, ang tubig n amula sa landfill ay nakaabot pa sa kalapit nitong Sinocalan River. Aniya, maaari namang magsagawa ng rehabilitasyon ang lokal na pamahalaan habang nakasara ang landfill. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.abante.com.ph/urdaneta-landfill-kinandado-ng-denr/>



## DENR-EMB shuts down sanitary landfill in Urdaneta City

March 5, 2021 14 min read

URDANETA CITY, Pangasinan – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) has issued a cease and desist order for the closure of the sanitary landfill here due to several violations.

In an interview on Friday, EMB Ilocos regional director Dorica Hipe said the landfill has violated the Clean Water Act upon the recommendation of the Pollution Adjudication Board, as well as the Presidential Decree 1586 or the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement, and the Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

“The violation under RA 9003 is the operation of an open dumpsite. Although it is a sanitary landfill, what happened is that they just dumped the wastes and it was no longer being managed. It is no longer based on the operation of a sanitary landfill that it has become an open dumpsite,” she said.

Hipe said it has also violated the Clean Water Act as the analysis on its water sample exceeded the effluent standard and the water pollution violation.

The waste juice from the landfill has reached almost the nearby Sinocalan River system, she said.

“The conditions of the environmental compliance certificate issued to the local government unit (LGU) for the operation of the sanitary landfill were not complied with like the designation of a control officer, submission of the compliance report, and ensuring that the operations of the landfill are in accordance with the guidelines for the proper operation and management,” she added.

Hipe said the LGU may take legal recourse but in the meantime, the sanitary landfill will be closed.

“While it is closed, the LGU should make time for rehabilitation as the equipment will be allowed to enter to somehow manage the wastes. The residents who pass by the gates of the landfill will also be arranged,” she said.

The order was served to the LGU on Friday and the DENR-EMB team proceeded to the landfill to ensure its closure.

Hipe said they had technical conferences with the LGU since 2019 and advised them on what to do but there were still violations seen in 2020.



“We observed due process, we conducted sampling, confirmatory sampling. Once it was confirmed, that’s the time we build our case and endorse it to the central office. They scheduled hearings and conducted (a) series of monitoring activities, issued a notice of violation, conferences, and then lastly the show-cause order. They have given a timeframe until December last year to implement measures. They were given until the end of February but they did not comply,” she added.

Hipe said the LGU has taken some actions but these were not sufficient to address the violations.

Meanwhile, Mayor Julio Parayno III said they will appeal to the DENR to allow Urdaneta City to still use the landfill for their wastes.

“We will do away with the other LGUs dumping in the landfill. More or less, there are 30 LGUs under contract,” he said in an interview.

Parayno said the private company they had a contract with for the rehabilitation of the landfill did not deliver as expected.

“We cannot close it yet because of breach of contract but now, it is the DENR that issued the closure. This private company will have to answer to the LGUs that have contracted for the use of the landfill,” he added.

The landfill located on an 18-hectare property owned by the city in Sitio Calegu, Barangay Catablan was inaugurated in 2011. (PNA)

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/05/denr-emb-shuts-down-sanitary-landfill-in-urdaneta-city/?fbclid=IwAR0DGwGw1TLi-oycChuGMA1v3oSF3OZnBupET5z0QbxMpJz85R5q9quLhvc>



# USAID turns over wildlife ambulance to DENR

March 6, 2021, 5:41 pm



**WILDLIFE AMBULANCE.** Officials of USAID ceremonially hands over the key to the wildlife ambulance to the DENR. In the photo are USAID's Protect Wildlife project Chief of Party Rebecca Paz, US Embassy Environment, Science, Technology and Health Officer Claire Bea, USAID Philippines Environment Office Deputy Director Paul Seong, DENR Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo, Jr., and DENR-BMB Wildlife Resources Division Chief Atty. Theresa Tenazas. *(Photo courtesy of US Embassy in Manila)*

**MANILA** – To mark World Wildlife Day and strengthen the Philippine government's wildlife rescue and rehabilitation efforts, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) turned over on March 2 a new wildlife ambulance to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The turnover of the wildlife ambulance was part of USAID's PHP1.2-billion Protect Wildlife Project.

The wildlife ambulance, the first of its kind in the country, will help the DENR's National Wildlife Rescue and Research Center improve its response time during wildlife rescue and retrieval, as well as facilitate the provision of immediate on-site care for injured and trafficked wildlife.

The specially designed vehicle has furnished cabinets for veterinary and wildlife handling equipment, a collapsible veterinary examination table and seats, and a roof rack for transporting animal crates, ladders, and other equipment for wildlife rescue.

USAID also handed over WILDBase, a centralized online system for recording and monitoring rescued wildlife. WILDBase will help rescue centers keep track of wildlife in their care, as well as medical records, inventory, and other important information for rescue center operations and decision-making.

DENR Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo, Jr. received the wildlife ambulance and WILDBase from USAID Philippines Environment Office Deputy Director Paul Seong at a turnover ceremony held at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center.

"We appreciate USAID's continued generosity to the DENR through the years. The enforcement of our wildlife laws, rules, and regulations does not end with the confiscation of the wildlife and the prosecution of the violators. With this new ambulance, WILDBase, and newest equipment and materials, we can more easily treat and monitor the health of confiscated wildlife."

"This ambulance and online system complete USAID's program of assistance for the DENR's National Wildlife Rescue and Research Center, and complements the Center's new wildlife diagnostics equipment, wildlife handling tools, and digital innovations," said Seong.

Since 2016, the Protect Wildlife project has helped protect 750,000 hectares of diverse landscapes and seascapes, trained 2,300 men and women in improved environmental enforcement practices, and brought economic and environmental benefits to 95,000 Filipinos through environmentally sustainable livelihoods, community-based enforcement, and sustainably managed natural resources. **(PR)**





## 4 illegal wildlife traders collared in Pampanga

By Marna Dagumboy Del Rosario March 6, 2021, 4:14 pm



**ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADING.** Four suspected illegal wildlife traders, including two minors, were arrested on Saturday (March 6, 2021) in Barangay San Rafael, Guagua, Pampanga for selling a monitor lizard (*Varanus marmoratus*), locally known as *bayawak*. The suspects were arrested after a joint operation conducted by the operatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Guagua local police. *(Contributed Photo)*

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga** – Four suspected illegal wildlife traders, including two minors, were arrested on Saturday in Barangay San Rafael, Guagua town, this province for selling a monitor lizard (*Varanus marmoratus*), locally known as *bayawak*.

The suspects were arrested after a joint operation conducted by the operatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Guagua local police.

Lt. Julius Javier, chief of the Guagua Municipal Police Station, said their agents posed as buyers and using marked money were able to buy one live *bayawak* for PHP1,000 from Raymond Sto. Domingo, 27, resident of Barangay Tokwing, and Marlon Dacani, 37, of Barangay Babo Sakan, both in Porac town and two minors aged 15 and 17, residents of Barangay San Pedro, Sasmuan.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) Laudemir Salac said the DENR would file charges against the suspects for violating Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Law while the two minors will be referred to the appropriate Municipal Social Work Development Office (MSWDO).

“Collecting, hunting, or possessing and trading of wildlife is punishable by a maximum imprisonment of one year and a fine of up to PHP1 million, depending on the species, under the law,” Salac said in a statement.

He said the *bayawak* which was sold has already been rescued and would undergo rehabilitation in a wildlife center before being released back into its natural habitat.

DENR 3 regional director Paquito Moreno, Jr. warned the public to refrain from catching and selling wildlife, and even eating its bushmeat to prevent the spread of another disease.

“If Covid-19 pandemic held a lesson for us, it’s that when it comes to wildlife, we have to live and let live,” he said, adding that consumption of wildlife is not just illegal but also exposes people to the dangers of catching and spreading zoonotic diseases.

Moreno thanked the public including the netizens who continue to be vigilant in monitoring and reporting wildlife and other environmental crimes.

He also appealed to the public to report to the nearest DENR office or the official social media page and e-mail address any illegal wildlife activities.

Last year, DENR Pampanga has also rescued 11 monitor lizards from two illegal wildlife traders in Lubao town.

Since 2015, DENR Region 3 has saved 300 various wildlife species from illegal trade and filed criminal charges against 20 individuals. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1132801>



## 4 illegal wildlife traders nabbed in Pampanga

Published March 6, 2021, 4:58 PM

by [Philippine News Agency](#)

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CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – Four suspected illegal wildlife traders, including two minors, were arrested Saturday in Barangay San Rafael, Guagua, this province for selling a monitor lizard (*Varanus marmoratus*), locally known as “bayawak.” The suspects were arrested in a joint operation conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Guagua police.



Monitor Lizard (Photo via PNA / MANILA BULLETIN)

Police Lt. Julius Javier, chief of the Guagua Municipal Police Station, said their agents posed as buyers and using marked money, were able to buy one live bayawak for P1,000 from Raymond Sto. Domingo, 27, resident of Barangay Tokwing, and Marlon Dacani, 37, of Barangay Babo Sakan, both in Porac, this province, and two minors aged 15 and 17, residents of Barangay San Pedro, Sasmuan, also in this province.

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## DENR signs pact with PNP for protection of forest plantations



Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Tarlac Police Provincial Office partnered in forest protection and greening program. (DENR photo)

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

March 06, 2021

LOCAL police forces are now partners in the protection and development of the established forest plantations in Tarlac as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The agreement brings in 10 local PNP and the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company in the protection of forest plantations established under the National Greening Program (NGP).

Tarlac Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) Celia Esteban said that the police station in the towns of Anao, Camiling, Mayantoc, Moncada, Paniqui, Pura, Ramos, San Clemente, San Manuel and Sta. Ignacia have committed to continue the protection and development of some 20 hectares NGP plantations found in Sitio Candang and Sitio Libag in Barangay Maasin of San Clemente town in the province.

“After three years, the established NGP plantations have no more funds for protection and maintenance. And this is where the local police will enter to adopt these areas which were established by our partner people’s organizations (PO),” she explained.

She said the PNP of the first district of Tarlac will continue the protection and maintenance of the NGP areas to sustain its growth and development.

Under the agreement, the municipal police stations shall act as the overall project manager and provides mobilization of manpower giving consideration to the PO in the area, which they will hire as laborer in activities to be undertaken and pay them in cash.

They shall also shoulder the funding of survey, mapping and planning, produce seedlings for replanting, maintenance and protection of the adopted plantation, and coordinate with the DENR for technical support in the documentation and geo-tagging and inventory of seedlings.

DENR, on the other hand, shall provide technical assistance in the survey, mapping and planning, plantation management, site evaluation, biodiversity conservation, and species selection, and assist the PNP in the documentation of planted trees, which includes, but shall not be limited to geo-tagging, plantation registry and mapping including the conduct of regular



For their part, Police Lieutenant Colonel Jovy Arceo, chief of the Camiling Municipal Police Station, vowed to further protect and develop the NGP plantations they adopted to increase forest cover in the province.

Esteban expressed her gratitude to the PNP especially the Kaligtasan Kalikasan (KALIGKASAN) program for their support in the forest protection and greening program of the government.

Since 2011, DENR-Central Luzon has already established more than 122,000 hectares of forest plantations within degraded watersheds and forestlands in the region.



# Mobile app para sa pagbabantay sa Manila Bay, Laguna de Bay inilunsad

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Mar 05 2021 07:03 PM



MAYNILA - Inilunsad ng Department of Science and Technology ang isang app na layong ma-monitor ang kalidad ng tubig sa Manila Bay, Laguna de Bay at iba pang yamang kalikasan sa bansa at magsilbing plataporma para iulat ang ilang paglabag kontra sa konserbasyon nito.

Ito ang MASDAN app, na binuo sa ilalim ng DOST Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development. Layunin nito na makatulong sa pangangalap ng reports tungkol sa iba't-ibang isyung pangkalikasan.

Parte ito ng IM4ManilaBay Program kung saan layon na magkaroon ng integrated mapping, monitoring at analytical network system para sa Manila Bay at ng project MapABLE na gumagamit ng makabagong teknolohiya pagdating sa kalikasan.

Sa app, nais maitala ang mga sumbong tungkol sa mga paglabag na may kinalaman sa kalikasan gamit ang makabagong teknolohiya, ayon sa proponent ng programa na si Dr. Ariel Blanco.

"We want to enable mapping and monitoring of the environment using geo-spatial technology such as remote sensing, surveying, graphic report systems and other related technologies as well as citizen science," ani Blanco.

Idinetalye ni Jomer Medina, isang Senior Science Research Specialist, kung paano pumapasok ang mga report sa kanilang system.

Una, mag-a-upload ng mga detalye ang gagamit ng app.

Pangalawa, papasok ang mga ulat sa isang server na nakakonekta sa isang interface kung saan makikita ang detalye at maimamapa ang lokasyon ng report.

Nilinaw nila na hindi lang para sa Manila Bay at Laguna de Bay ang proyekto. Puwede rin magbahagi dito ng ano mang impormasyon, reklamo at sumbong na may kinalaman sa kalikasan kahit sa buong Pilipinas.

Kung sumbong ang laman ng kanilang report, beberipikahin ito at idudulog sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources para matugunan ng naayon sa kailangang aksyon.

"Ang mga report ay pumapasok sa isang server na nakakonekta sa isang monitoring interface kung saan makikita ang detalye at maimamapa ang lokasyon ng report. Ang mga isyung pangkalikasan ay maaring ireport sa Masdan kahit sa ibang bahagi ng Pilipinas at maaring gamitin sa labas ng Manila Bay, dahil environmental concerns naman ang nakapaloob doon," ani Medina.

Para kay Medina, mahalaga sa proyekto ang partisipasyon din ng mga scientist, akademya, pamahalaan at ng publiko nang sa gayon ay maging "sustainable" o mapanatili ang kalidad ng aplikasyon.

"Kailangan ng partisipasyon ng iba't-ibang sektor gaya ng pamahalaan, akademya, mga organisasyon, pribadong sektor at mga mamamayan o publiko para maging sustainable ang mga gagawing programa hindi lang sa Manila bay kundi sa lahat ng natural resources sa buong Pilipinas," ani Medina.



Sa ngayon, mga retrato pa lang ang maaaring i-upload sa app at wala pang kakayahan ito para sa video uploading.

Hinihiling ng DOST ang pakikiisa ng publiko, civil society at mga organisasyon na gustong maging partner sa programang ito para mas lalo pang mapalakas ang mobile app at maging mas epektibo sa lahat.

Magagamit lang sa mga Android phone ang app. Maaaring bumisita sa Facebook page ng DOST para sa karagdagang impormasyon.



# Million Trees Foundation plays key role in saving watersheds

By Ben Cal [March 6, 2021, 8:45 pm](#)



**ECO WARRIORS.** The Philippine National Police and Department of Environment and Natural Resources take active steps to reforest a portion of the Marikina Watershed Area in Rizal in January. Some 10,000 assorted seedlings of hardwood and fruit-bearing species were planted. *(Photo courtesy of PNP Facebook)*

**MANILA** – One noble project considered as a legacy of President Rodrigo Duterte is the establishment of the Million Trees Foundation (MTF) that would ensure the continuity and sustainability of the Annual Million Trees Challenge (AMTC) for the rehabilitation of seven critical watersheds in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

This was emphasized by Reynaldo Velasco, chair of the board of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, in a statement to the *Philippine News Agency* Saturday.

Velasco also cited the importance of the incorporation and registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the MTF, a five-year watershed rehabilitation program launched in February 2017.

AMTC will benefit critical watersheds namely Angat, Ipo, Kaliwa, La Mesa, Laguna Lake, Umiray, and Upper Marikina, including Manila Bay, through the planting of one million trees yearly.

It was in response to President Duterte's socio-economic development agenda, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022.

The AMTC program corresponds with the PDP focus areas on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience through partnerships in rehabilitating critical watersheds and convergence/complementation of resources.

Until December 2020, a total of 4,021,626 seedlings have been planted in the watersheds while 9,509.375 hectares were reforested. At the Ipo-Angat watershed, reforested area was 5,035.19 hectares; La Mesa, 1,723.39; Laguna de Bay, 347.83; Kaliwa-Umiray, 150.84; Upper Marikina, 1,928.99; and Manila Bay, 323.135.

The River Basin Control Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources also identified 142 critical watersheds.

MTF will network with international foundations and entities focused on watershed management and planting of trees. Inspired by success stories in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, it will utilize drones for tree-planting, especially at the Rizal/Wawa watershed, to fast-track tree-planting targets.

Million Trees Foundation is advocating for the planting of bamboos along river banks; and narra and ylang-ylang (*Cananga odorata*) trees in the other areas. It will also push for the massive planting of bamboos along riverbanks in Marikina and Laguna Lake.

Bamboos help absorb excess water, cut soil losses, and minimize soil erosion.

The foundation is not only concerned with tree-planting, reforestation and environmental sustainability.

"We also want to provide livelihood opportunities to people, particular those in the communities through our tree-planting advocacy," Velasco said.



The livelihood projects include putting up a nursery for saplings to be planted in target areas, engaging local settlers to take care of the nursery and planted areas, developing wood carving home industries, and organizing small/marginalized farmers to be suppliers of ylang-ylang flowers to manufacturers. **(PNA)**





# PCG seizes ‘biggest haul’ of giant clams in Palawan

By Raymond Carl Dela Cruz March 5, 2021, 4:57 pm



**GIANT CLAMS SEIZED.** Personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) dig up shells of endangered giant clams along a beach at Barangay VI, Johnson Island, Roxas in Palawan on March 3, 2021. The PCG on Friday (March 5, 2021) said the seizure, a haul of around 80 tons of giant clam shells, was the biggest of its kind in Palawan. *(Photo courtesy of PCG)*

**MANILA** – The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has seized 324 pieces of giant clam shells in Palawan on Wednesday, reportedly the “biggest haul of its kind” in the island province.

In a Facebook post on Friday, the PCG said the seizure was made at Barangay VI, Johnson Island, Roxas in Palawan, with the giant clams weighing a total of 80 tons with an approximate market value of PHP160 million pesos.

It said harvesting these endangered giant clams, locally known as “taklobo,” is prohibited under the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 or Republic Act No. 10654.

“Violators shall be penalized with an administrative fine of up to PHP3 million and suffer imprisonment of up to eight years,” the PCG said.

In a Viber message, the PCG said there were no suspects yet based on the initial investigation of the PCG unit in Palawan.

It noted that the haul was most likely gathered along the Eastern part of Palawan—from El Nido to the municipal waters of Roxas, Palawan—for about six months to one year.

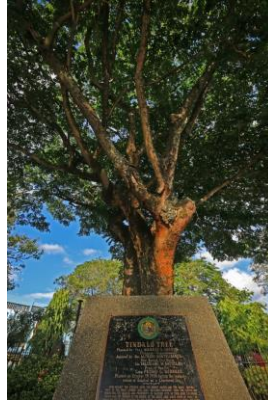
The giant clams, it said, are used for decorations, creating luxury goods such as chandeliers, buttons, and may also be pulverized and used in traditional medicine.

During the operation, the PCG, joined by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff, Marine Battalion Landing Team 3, and Bantay Dagat Roxas, also discovered 124 pieces of illegally cut mangrove trees and were confiscated for violating the Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines. **(PNA)**

## Seeds of good deeds

Published 6 hours ago on March 7, 2021 01:00 AM

By [France Ariola](#)



TINDALO mother tree in Bacolod that President Quezon planted was where the Binhi team got the seedling.

It all started with the planting of a single tindalo seedling in the heart of the Quezon Memorial Circle 12 years ago.

The commitment to plant more trees was rooted in Binhi, a forest restoration and native tree species propagation program of the Lopez family-led geothermal firm Energy Development Company (EDC).

Binhi began as EDC's next-level greening initiative born of a need to maintain lush forests to sustain its geothermal reservoir.

Instead of planting fast-growing and invasive exotic tree species, EDC's Watershed Management team focused on the use of Philippine native tree species and fruit trees to bridge forest gaps in its areas of operation.

"We realized that it was not enough to just plant any random tree seedlings to maintain, if not enhance, the biodiversity in our areas of operation. Beyond this, we knew when we launched this program that Binhi will benefit not only EDC but more so our partner communities and our planet," said lawyer Allan V. Barcena, head of EDC corporate social responsibility and public relations.



BINHI youth champion Ivan Cordevilla.

Barcena and the rest of the Binhi team realized that this ambitious initiative entailed a huge responsibility that EDC alone cannot fulfill — something as big as the 270,000 hectares of geothermal watersheds across the country that the company is managing, which is close to one percent of the country's total land area.

There was a need for collaboration.

Beyond the local and international accolades that Binhi, the country's biggest private sector-led greening initiative, has garnered, EDC considers one of the program's true greening legacies the 6.44 million native and fruit tree seedlings that it has planted on close to 10,000 hectares of land inside its geothermal reservations across the country.

This would not have been possible without the help of the 88 farmers associations that EDC has transformed from being slash-and-burn farmers or kainginero to responsible forest stewards.

“This paradigm shift of the farmers in our host communities has likewise given them a viable source of livelihood since EDC incentivized them for helping us manage our BINHI areas,” Barcena said.



THE flowering tindalo that the Binhi team planted in Sorsogon.

### **Coffee program**

One of its most successful Binhi initiatives is the Baslay coffee program. Operated by the Baslay Farmers Association (BFA) in Dauin, Negros Oriental, three generations of farmers have learned the value and income potential of taking care of the forests that also take care of them. Through EDC’s intervention, Baslay’s community forest is now refuge to 113 species of birds and one of the primary sources of quality coffee (Robusta and Arabica) in Central Visayas.

More importantly, the former kainginero are now masters of interplanting coffee with native tree species.

The BFA is the first farmers’ association in Negros Oriental to produce premium and quality organic coffee recognized by globally trained baristas from various parts of the Philippines.

To enable more people to savor the taste of its delicious coffee, BFA opened its own coffee shop near the Baslay Hot Springs which both foreign and local tourists frequent.

Baslay is EDC’s most awarded corporate social responsibility (CSR) endeavor, having recently won the Gold Standard Award for Corporate Citizenship and besting entries from Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

Over 100 senior practitioners judged the entries of this 12-year award giving body organized by PublicAffairsAsia, in collaboration with the Public Relations and Communication Association (PRCA) and the International Communications Consultancy Organization.

Baslay has likewise earned the distinction of being CSR Guild’s most outstanding CSR program for enterprise development, organized by the League of Corporate Foundations.

It received the Grand Anvil award from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines in 2020.



EDC chair emeritus Oscar Lopez (left), chair and CEO Federico Lopez and his son planted seedlings during the Binhi launch in December 2008.



## 12th anniversary

For its 12th anniversary celebration, EDC launched the Binhi Biodiversity Hub at its Mount Apo Geothermal facility that showcases Mount Apo Natural Park's rich flora and fauna.

EDC has been nurturing the hub since it started operating its 108-megawatt geothermal facility at the foot of Mt. Apo.

The hub houses the newly operational Vegetative Materials Reproduction (VMR) or automated tree species nursery, as well as the biodiversity education center and EDC's Binhi arboretum.

"Our Mindanao tree species collection of 75 out of EDC's 96 flagship Binhi native tree species can be found inside the arboretum," said Myrissa L. Tabao, head of EDC's Corporate Social Responsibility team in Mount Apo Geothermal Project (MAGP).

"We likewise propagate our priority species through the adjacent VMR nursery that allows us to fast track the production of its seedlings via automated misting system."

These Mindanao tree species include pinulog (*Ganua obovatifolia*) that is endemic to Lanao del Norte and Matutum, South Cotabato; Basilan yakal (*Hopea basilensis*) and Basilan apitong (*Dipterocarpus eurynchus*) of Basilan and Zamboanga Sibugay; Mindanao narek (*Hopea brachyptera*) of Zamboanga City and Zamboanga Sibugay; and Mindanao narig (*Vatica mindanensis*) in Zamboanga.

EDC recently formed a partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) for the propagation of 11 most rare and threatened tree species, which include four Mindanao endemic species.

This VMR nursery is EDC's fourth, the first two of which were established in the company's Northern and Southern Negros facilities, while the third was put up in Antipolo City, Rizal to cater to requests for Binhi seedlings from EDC's growing list of partners.

"Our Binhi partnerships that enable us to bring back to abundance our threatened Philippine native tree seedlings likewise set our program apart from other greening programs and make it regenerative," Barcena said.

Being regenerative is about uplifting everything that EDC touches or, in the case of the environment, restoring to its original state as much as possible. It embodies the new mission of "forging collaborative pathways for a decarbonized and regenerative future" that EDC and the rest of the Lopez group have committed to achieve through the way the conglomerate operates its businesses.

## Partners

To date, EDC has 183 Binhi partners that helped the company establish 15 arboreta these past 12 years, with six more lined up next year.

Not even the COVID-19 pandemic stopped EDC and like-minded organizations from forming Binhi partnerships as six of them signed up during this lockdown period.

Among the partnership agreements were two from the academe: Bicol University in Legazpi, Albay and Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental; two homeowners' associations, Victoria Valley Homeowners' Association in Antipolo City and La Vista Homeowners' Association in Quezon City; a religious organization from Bulacan, the Priests of Notre Dame de Vie (PNDV); and from local government, the recently signed agreement with City of Ormoc.

"We are very grateful to forge partnerships with different groups across the country who share the same goal of regenerating our environment with us. Even in the midst of a pandemic, it's still vital to work together to achieve our shared commitment for a greener future," said Barcena.



Around 2,000 square meters to two hectares of land from these six new partnerships are expected to become a nesting place of 96 premium native Philippine tree species.

EDC will provide the seedlings to the partner groups and the latter will be responsible for the nourishment and maintenance of the tree species.

The EDC Binhi team will provide technical assistance to the latter to ensure the growth of the native tree seedlings.

Most Rev. Bishop Benjamin Almoneda from PNDV stressed the significance of the partnership between two institutions which coincides with the year of Laudato Si or Pope Francis' encyclical that calls for everyone to care for the earth, the vulnerable and the poor.

"This event is very significant. This has been planned by God several years ago. This project is fueled by the fire of the Holy Spirit and as we plant more trees, especially Philippine native tree species, we are taking care of the earth, our home," Almoneda said during the virtual signing ceremony.



The Binhi tree nursey.

### **Global**

Silliman University president Dr. Betty McCann said their partnership with EDC widens the impact of promoting forest conservation and the preservation and the propagation of threatened native tree species.

"It is our hope that this arboretum may serve not only as a tree refuge and source of viable seeds for reforestation but also as a venue for student and community learning to enhance our nature conservation and environmental awareness," she said.

EDC's Binhi partnerships have become global in 2019 after the company was chosen as the International Union of Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) only Philippine partner for its Global Tree Assessment of 800 Philippine native tree species through its secretariat, Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

To date, EDC has assessed 200 species and IUCN has updated and published 89 species on their Red List.

"We hope that more partners will be encouraged to collaborate with us in saving the earth by helping us bring back to abundance our threatened Philippine native tree species through BINHI. This will all be our greening legacy," Barcena said.

EDC's over 1,499-megawatt total installed capacity accounts for 20 percent percent of the country's total installed RE capacity.

Its 1,204.67-megawatt geothermal portfolio accounts for 62 percent of the country's total installed geothermal capacity and has put the Philippines on the map as the 3rd largest geothermal producer in the world.



## Patrol Partylist joins eco-warriors in fight to save the environment



PAMPANGA. Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go receives a self portrait from a Fernandino artist who is a person with disability while Congressman Jorge Bustos of PATROL Partylist and his son Jose Antonio Bustos, chairperson of National PATROL Youth, turned over paint brushes on Thursday, March 4, 2021 during the gift giving marking the 50th birthday of Representative Bustos at the Angeles City Police Office. (Chris Navarro)

March 06, 2021

PATROL Partylist Representative Jorge Bustos said his group has embarked on environmental projects to save the environment and eventually weather climate change.

Bustos, a former officer of Philippine National Police-PNPA class 1996, distributed cleaning materials to different communities, such as broomsticks, shovels and garbage bins, as an initial step to address the sanitation and garbage problem in the countryside.

Thousands of fruit-bearing trees were also distributed to the public and a tree planting activity was also held at the Angeles City Police Office.

Bustos, who celebrated his 50th birthday last March 2, said the PATROL Partylist also known as Partido ng Pamilyang Pilipino coordinated with religious organization in Pampanga in making the project a success as he reminded the public to be conscious on the proper waste disposal to prevent the mounting garbage problem.

Part of the project, Bustos said, is to give rice subsidy in exchange of garbage collected in the community and households.

"We have prepared an initial of 50 sacks of rice for the program that is being implemented in Masantol, Pampanga by the parish church there," said

During the launching of "SingKwento", a project of the PATROL partylist, Bustos said they will focus on environment and peace and order.

At least 50 different organizations mostly environmentalists and business leaders have joined the "SingKwento" launching held in this police camp.

PATROL Partylist also distributed 50 computer sets to different police units in Central Luzon and 50 bicycles for use of cops deployed in tourist destination areas.

"This our own little way in helping our police and the environment. Sana makatulong and go a long way," Bustos pointed out, adding that the peace and order and restoration of ecology are shared responsibilities between the government and the communities.

"Our main advocacy is about public safety and importance of balance ecology that is why we have came up with the Singkwento program that has reached as far as Zamboanga del Sur," he added. **(Chris Navarro)**

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1887974/Pampanga/Local-News/Patrol-Partylist-joins-eco-warriors-in-fight-to-save-the-environment>



## Uncovering the secrets of Obong caves



HINOBAAN. Kakampi Rey Siason stands behind the former dwelling of the image of the Blessed Mother. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



BATS EVERYWHERE. One of the best finds inside the Obong Cave is the colony of bats lurking in the dark. They are safe but noisy. In the photo are broadcasters Garry Doruelo, Rey Siason, CNC, and Marlon Genovea, (extreme right). Ramil Estilo, (4th from left) is a former broadcaster and currently a government employee. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



HINOBAAN. The dolphin-shaped passageway of the Obong Cave with the immensity of the sea harmonizing with its glorious background. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



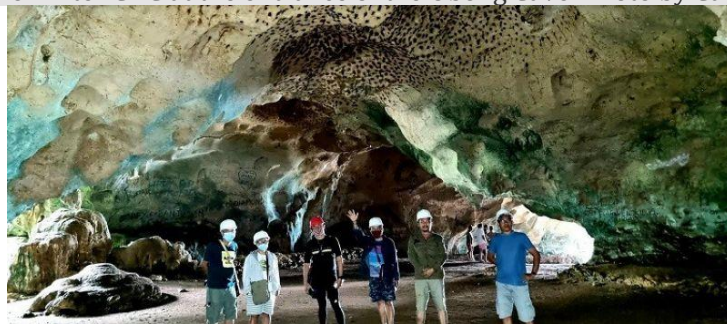
HINOBAAN. Garry Doruelo, Boy Factor, Rey Siason, Teresa Ellera, Merile, Gerlyn, and Naomi Fukuda. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



HINOBAAN. Naomi Fukuda showcases the Fukuda Machi serving as the gateway to Obong Cave. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



HINOBAAN. YUHOM lifestyle writer CNC at the entrance of the Obong Cave. Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



HINOBAAN. The splendor of the cave never ceases to amaze the visiting tourists. This used to be occupied by cults during the Japanese occupation. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



HINOBAAN. Kakampi Rey Siason stands behind the former dwelling of the image of the Blessed Mother. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



BATS EVERYWHERE. One of the best finds inside the Obong Cave is the colony of bats lurking in the dark. They are safe but noisy. In the photo are broadcasters Garry Doruelo, Rey Siason, CNC, and Marlon Genovea, (extreme right). Ramil Estilo, (4th from left) is a former broadcaster and currently a government employee. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)





HINOBAAN. The dolphin-shaped passageway of the Obong Cave with the immensity of the sea harmonizing with its glorious background. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)



HINOBAAN. Garry Doruelo, Boy Factor, Rey Siason, Teresa Ellera, Merile, Gerlyn, and Naomi Fukuda. (Photo by Carla N. Cañet)

[CARLA N. CAÑET](#)

March 06, 2021

HINOBAAN town is the home of natural wonders citing their pristine beaches and waterfronts and the Obong caves that still clench their magnificence.

The town continues to fascinate domestic and foreign tourists. It was however slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic due to strict travel regulations.

Some media practitioners in Bacolod City and some friends were able to explore the town's natural wonders with the assistance of the local officials led by Mayor Ernesto Estrao, Councilor Jason Tupas, and Naomi Fukuda, representing Negrense philanthropist Eleanor Fukuda who owns the Fukuda Machi.

The local officials have showcased Hinubaan's fine beaches with seafood and their local treats.

A few of the top interests were the two unique Obong caves with distinct features of wet and dry.

These Obong caves were once the refuge of Captain Jesus Villamor aboard the US Submarine "Gudgeon" during World War II.

The group of media practitioners was able to get inside the caves that are rich in mineral formations of stalactites and stalagmites formed in remarkable shapes dangling from the ceiling of the caves.

The colony of bats in their noisy nature likewise dwelled at the ceiling of the caves. That is also one incredible attraction inside the caves.

Also, a mineral formation that has a contour of the Blessed Mother is a picturesque corner inside the Obong Caves. A masskara festival-shaped stones with a smiling face can also be found inside.

Jun Ibanez, the tour guide at Obong caves showed us the loveliness of the Obong caves which local tourists love to have photos with.

The quiet sea complement the Obong caves with the Fukuda Machi serving as its gateway.



Mayor Estrao is pleased to showcase its town to the local tourists and visitors as long as they comply with the health protocol.

That time, during our recent visit, the territorial borders between Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental were impenetrable unless health protocols were strictly complied with.

The local government hopes that travel restrictions will soon be eased so that local tourism can safely thrive again.



Devotees maintain proper social distancing and follow other health protocols as they attend the first Friday of the month mass at the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, Manila on March 5, 2021.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

# Philippines logs over 3,000 new COVID-19 cases for the 2nd day in a row

[Bella Perez-Rubio](#) (Philstar.com) - March 6, 2021 - 4:05pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health on Saturday logged 3,439 new coronavirus infections, bringing the national caseload to 591,138.

Of the total number of cases recorded, 43,323 or 7.3% are marked by the department as active.

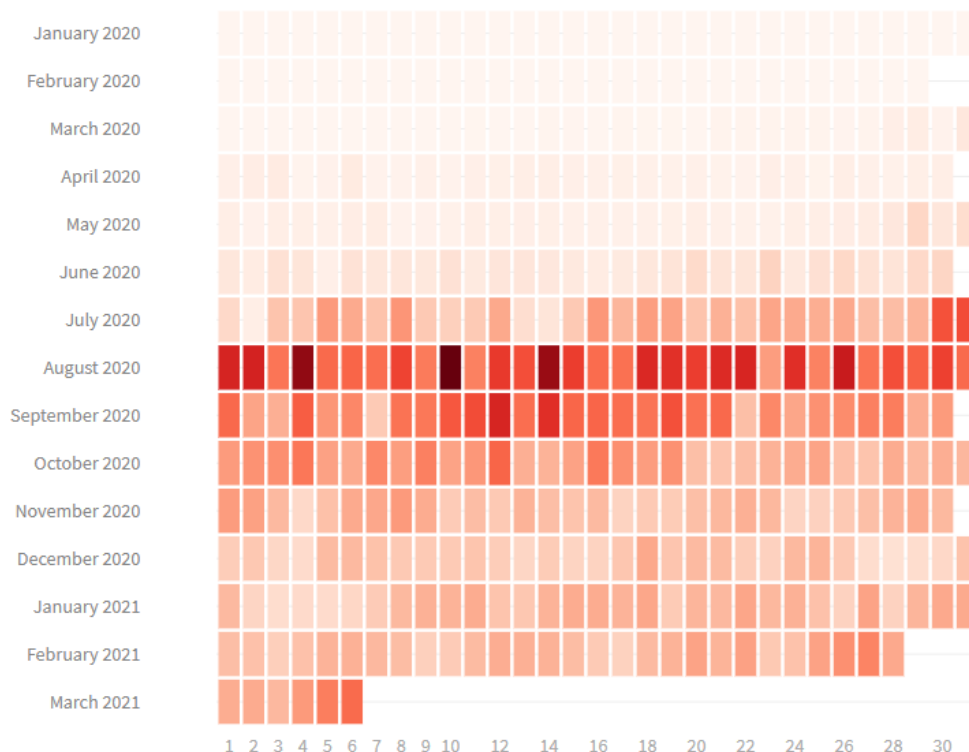
Recoveries hit 535,350 after 160 more people recovered from the virus.

But the death toll rose to 12,465 after 42 more patients succumbed to the disease.

## COVID-19 cases in the Philippines

The Philippines recorded the most number of COVID-19 cases in a single day on August 10, 2020.

Cases 0 7000



Source: Department of Health • As of March 6, 2021, 4 p.m.



## What's new today?

- This is the second day in a row that the country has logged over 3,000 new COVID-19 infections. Saturday's tally also marks the highest daily rise since Oct. 12, 2020, when the country logged 3,564 new cases.
- The number of active cases reported by the DOH is the highest since Oct. 24, 2020, when the agency said there were 47,773 patients receiving treatment for coronavirus.
- Vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. said [38,400 more jabs from AstraZeneca will arrive in the country on Sunday evening](#). The shipment completes the World Health Organization-led COVAX facility's initial delivery of 525,600 vaccines to the Philippines.
- The government is also expecting around 20 million coronavirus jabs from Moderna to arrive in the country by end-May or early June, according to Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez. Moderna's vaccine has an efficacy rate of 94%.
- St Luke's Medical Center in a public advisory [disputed](#) circulating posts that their intensive care units and ward capacities were at full capacity due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila. "The cases that we are treating remain at manageable levels, ensuring that all our COVID-19 patients will get quality care," it said.

— with reports from Xave Gregorio



## Pinas may 52 bagong kaso ng South African variant, 42 mutations

By [Danilo Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - March 6, 2021 - 12:00am



Bukod dito, 31 bagong kaso ng United Kingdom variant at 42 bagong kaso ng lokal na mutations ng virus ang naitala rin ng UP-PGC mula sa ika-siyam na batch ng 350 samples na kanilang sinuri.

AFP/Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — Nakapagtala ang Department of Health (DOH) ng 52 bagong kaso ng mas nakahahawang South African variant ng COVID-19 makaraan ang isinagawang sequencing ng UP-Philippine Genome Center (PGC).

Bukod dito, 31 bagong kaso ng United Kingdom variant at 42 bagong kaso ng lokal na mutations ng virus ang naitala rin ng UP-PGC mula sa ika-siyam na batch ng 350 samples na kanilang sinuri.

Sa ulat ng DOH, sa 52 bagong kaso ng South African o B.1.351 variant, 41 nito ay natukoy sa iba't ibang lugar sa Metro Manila habang 11 ay biniberipika pa kung mga lokal na kaso o mga 'returning overseas Filipinos (ROFs)'.

Isa sa mga kaso ay nakarekober na habang ang nalalabing 51 ay mga aktibo at kasalukuyang kinokontrol na ng pamahalaan para hindi kumalat.

Nasa 31 naman ay ang UK o B.1.1.7 variant. Ang 28 sa kanila ay natukoy sa Metro Manila habang ang tatlo pang kaso ay kinukumpirma pa. Lahat naman sila ay mga aktibong kaso.

Ang nalalabing 42 bagong kaso ay mga lokal na N501Y at E484K mutations. Ang 34 sa mga ito ay natukoy sa Region 7, anim sa Metro Manila, habang dalawa ang kinukumpirma pa.

Dahil dito, umakyat na ang kabuuang bilang ng kaso ng South African variant sa 58, UK variant sa 118 at 76 na kaso ng mutations.

"The DOH and its concerned Centers for Health Development is coordinating with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and Local Government Units (LGUs) in NCR and Region 7 to institute measures to contain further transmission of these variants and mutations," ayon sa DOH.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2021/03/06/2082316/pinas-may-52-bagong-kaso-ng-south-african-variant-42-mutations/amp/>



## Mt. Pinatubo nananatili sa Alert Level 1



March 6, 2021 @ 1:32 PM 17 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nananatili sa Alert Level 1 ang Mount Pinatubo sa Central Luzon, batay sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Sa 8 a.m. bulletin, nakapagtala ng anim na pagyanig ang Pinatubo Volcano sa nagdaang magdamag.

“Alert Level 1 prevails over Pinatubo Volcano, which means that there is low-level unrest that may be related to tectonic processes beneath its edifice and that no imminent eruption is foreseen,” lahad ng ahensya. **RNT/FGDC**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/mt-pinatubo-nananatili-sa-alert-level-1/>



## Protect forests for 'people, planet and prosperity'

Under increasing threat from the unsustainable use of forest resources and wildlife trafficking, the UN chief called on Wednesday for people and governments everywhere to step up efforts to protect forests and support forest communities.

"In so doing, we will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for people, planet and prosperity," Secretary-General António Guterres said in a message commemorating World Wildlife Day.

Highlighting the benefits of forests, home to about 80 percent of all terrestrial wild species, Guterres explained that "they help regulate the climate and support the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people."

In addition, forest resources support, in one way or another, about 90 percent of the world's poorest people, a fact especially true for indigenous communities that live in or near them.

"They provide livelihoods and cultural identity," the UN chief continued.

However, unsustainable exploitation of forests harms these communities and contributes to biodiversity loss and climate disruption, he added.

Every year, unsustainable agriculture, timber trafficking, organized crime and illegal trade in wild animal species, costs the world about 4.7 million hectares of forests – an area larger than Denmark.

The latter also raises the risk of zoonotic diseases, such as Ebola and Covid-19, Guterres said.

"So, on this year's World Wildlife Day, I urge governments, businesses and people everywhere to scale up efforts to conserve forests and forest species, and to support and listen to the voices of forest communities," he said.

This year's World Wildlife Day is being marked with the theme of Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet, underscoring the central role of forests, forest species and ecosystems in sustaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people globally.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UN MEMBERS of an indigenous community living in the forests in one of the most remote regions of Republic of the Congo.

### Untreated hearing loss threatens around 1-in-4 persons



# 2020: Lowest carbon emissions, hottest year?

By: [Rodel D. Lasco](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:04 AM March 07, 2021

Global carbon emissions declined at record rates in 2020, and yet that same year was the hottest year on record (tied with 2016). If carbon emission is the chief culprit behind global warming, how did this happen?

The decline in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2020 was the steepest since World War II because of pandemic-related restrictions. In the first half of the year, when most countries imposed some form of lockdown, carbon emissions contracted by almost 9 percent relative to the year before, according to Liu and co-workers (2020) in their paper in “Nature Communications.” Consistent with this, Friedlingstein and co-workers (2020), in their article in “Earth Systems Science Data,” estimated that fossil fuel carbon emissions shrank by 7 percent in the whole of 2020.

So why was it scorching hot in 2020? The main reason is that much of the carbon dioxide gases that have been emitted in the past century are still in our atmosphere. Carbon dioxide molecules can last in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. In 2020, carbon dioxide concentration averaged 409 ppm, much higher than in the 1850s (less than 300 ppm) when the use of fossil fuels began.

The disturbing implication of the long residence time of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is that even if we stop emitting GHG, our planet will continue to warm in the decades ahead. And if we don’t radically control GHG emissions, then the warming trend will accelerate.

Given the above, it is therefore not surprising that the planet warmed at record levels in the past year despite a decline in carbon emissions. Worse, as the pandemic wanes with vaccines becoming available widely, scientists are expecting a rebound in GHG emissions, negating any temporary gains.

The UN-sponsored Paris Agreement calls for capping temperature rise to no more than 2 degrees Celsius. For this to happen, a United Nations Environmental Programme report, released just before the pandemic hit, showed the world needs to reduce GHG emissions by 7.6 percent every year from 2020 to 2031. Quite amazingly, we achieved this target in 2020, but not in the way anyone could have wished or foreseen.

No one in their right mind would want the pandemic to persist simply to keep GHG emissions down. But there are lessons we can learn from what happened. For one, we saw that given the right incentive, the global community could change, both at the national and individual levels. This change offers some hope. If our leaders and people take climate change seriously, we can find ways to reduce our GHG emissions dramatically.

Building back after the pandemic offers another window of opportunity to address longstanding problems. Massive investments will be poured to recover from the ill-effects of COVID-19. Such strategies that respond to and prevent future pandemics must be tied to broader resilience strategies, which should focus heavily on investments in “greening” the economy. These include shifting to cleaner energy sources and investing in nature-based solutions such as forests and mangroves.

Not a few people want to forget the year 2020. That may be understandable, but let us not forget its lessons. The hottest year may turn out to be the wake-up call we need to cool down our planet.

\* \* \*

*Rodel D. Lasco is a member of the National Academy of Science and Technology of the Philippines. He is the executive director of The OML Center, a foundation devoted to discovering climate change adaptation solutions (<http://www.omlopezcenter.org/>).*

Source: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/138274/2020-lowest-carbon-emissions-hottest-year>





## GLOBAL GOALS

# Wasting food feeds climate change

Reducing food waste would cut greenhouse gas emissions, slow the destruction of nature through land conversion and pollution, enhance the availability of food and thus reduce hunger and save money at a time of global recession.

Published 3 hours ago on March 7, 2021 03:30 AM

By [TDT](#) @tribunephl



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UN More than 900 million tonnes of food is thrown away every year.

More than 930 million tons of food sold in 2019 landed in waste bins, according to a new United Nations (UN) research in support of global efforts to halve food waste by 2030.

Produced by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organization WRAP, the Food Waste Index Report 2021 reveals that between food wasted in homes, restaurants and shops, 17 percent of all food is just dumped.

Some food is also lost on farms and in supply chains, indicating that overall a third of food is never eaten.

The study represents the most comprehensive food waste data collection, analysis and modelling ever done, and offers a methodology for countries to accurately measure loss.

“If we want to get serious about tackling climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, businesses, governments and citizens around the world have to do their part to reduce food waste,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Although food waste had been thought of as a problem mostly affecting rich countries, the report found levels of waste were surprisingly similar in all nations, though data is scarce in the poorest countries.

The study reveals that households discard 11 percent of food at the consumption stage of the supply chain, while food services and retail outlets waste five and two percent, respectively.

This has substantial environmental, social and economic impacts, according to the report, which points out that eight to 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are associated with unconsumed food.

“Reducing food waste would cut greenhouse gas emissions, slow the destruction of nature through land conversion and pollution, enhance the availability of food and thus reduce hunger and save money at a time of global recession,” Andersen said.

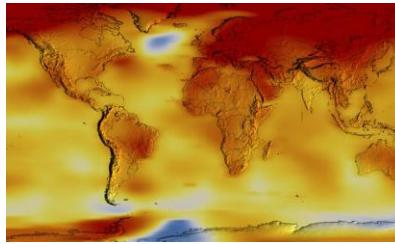
Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/03/07/wasting-food-feeds-climate-change/>



# The slowing down of ocean currents could have a devastating effect on our climate

By Jackson Dill and Brandon Miller, CNN

Published Mar 2, 2021 11:00:55 PM



*Photo courtesy: NASA*

**(CNN)** -- Remember the movie, "The Day After Tomorrow," in which a catastrophic series of global disasters strike after climate change causes the world's ocean currents to stop?

Well, new research reveals Earth's major ocean currents are slowing down, and though the consequences will not be as immediate or dramatic as in the Hollywood fiction, there are real-world impacts for global weather patterns and sea levels.

The slowdown of ocean circulation is directly caused by warming global temperatures and has been predicted by climate scientists.

"This has been predicted, basically, for decades that this circulation would weaken in response to global warming. And now we have the strongest evidence that this is already happening," said Stefan Rahmstorf of Potsdam University who contributed to this research.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) transports water across the planet's oceans, including the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian. The region contributing to the slowdown is the North Atlantic, according to the research.

"The idea (of this film), which is actually correct, is that if this Atlantic overturning circulation breaks down all together, this will lead to a strong cooling around the northern Atlantic, especially into Europe, into the kind of coastal areas (of) Britain and Scandinavia. But that's only true if the overturning breaks down all together," Rahmstorf said.

In this part of the ocean, the Greenland ice sheets are melting, contributing to both a rise in sea levels and serving to reduce the speed of the circulation.

"This indicates that the slowdown is likely not a natural change but the result of human influence. The AMOC has a profound influence on global climate, and particularly in North America and Europe, so this evidence of an ongoing weakening of the circulation is critical new evidence for the interpretation of future projections of regional and global climate," said Andrew Meijers, deputy science leader of polar oceans at British Antarctic Survey.

Ice melting in Greenland and the heavy rainfall over the North Atlantic induced by climate change has affected the salinity and density of the waters, Rahmstorf explained.

"Both surface warming and the increased water cycle, increased rainfall and the ice melt are all a consequence of global warming" across parts of the North Atlantic Ocean, he said.

As warm water currents move north, they typically turn back south as it gets cooler and heavier. Added freshwater from the melting ice is causing this turn to be slower because of reduced salinity.

"This weakening also leads to cold in the northern Atlantic, but it's confined to the ocean. This cold blob, as we call it, is over the ocean, and it doesn't touch on land areas," said Rahmstorf. Current estimates show this weakening is moderate, at about 15% weaker compared to normal and based on data analyzed up from to 1,600 years ago.



## US East Coast to see higher sea levels

One of the main impacts of the slowing ocean circulation is on sea levels, especially those of the US East Coast.

"The northward surface flow of the AMOC leads to a deflection of water masses to the right, away from the US East Coast. This is due to Earth's rotation that diverts moving objects such as currents to the right in the Northern Hemisphere and to the left in the Southern Hemisphere. As the current slows down, this effect weakens and more water can pile up at the US East Coast, leading to an enhanced sea-level rise," said Levke Caesar, one of the authors of the report.

Sea-level rise is already happening due to factors like melting ice sheets and warming oceans. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), water levels have risen by 8 to 9 inches on average within the past 140 years.

The rate at which these waters are rising has also increased in recent years.

"The pace of global sea-level rise more than doubled from 1.4 mm per year throughout most of the twentieth century to 3.6 mm per year from 2006-2015," said NOAA.

A further slowdown of global ocean circulation, especially along the crucial Gulf Stream current off the eastern coastline of the US, could combine with the already accelerating sea-level rise to make major Northeastern cities even more vulnerable to flooding.

## Hotter heat waves, stronger hurricanes

Global weather patterns are critically linked with the ocean circulations and their transport of heat and nutrients around the planet.

An increase in heat waves across Europe and stronger hurricanes closer to the US coastline because of warmer water drifting closer to the coast can be linked to the ocean circulation, Rahmstorf said.

"The world's seven warmest years have all occurred since 2014, with 10 of the warmest years occurring since 2005," said NOAA. Heat waves are becoming more frequent already.

The ocean and the currents also play a role in absorbing carbon dioxide, the most dominant greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere. The changing currents could decrease the amount of carbon being taken out of the atmosphere, according to NASA.

In addition to people being affected, the marine biology population is also at risk.

Marine organisms "very strongly depend on these ocean currents, which basically set the conditions for the whole ecosystem in terms of nutrient supply, temperature, and salinity conditions," Rahmstorf said.

When asked whether the AMOC could slow down further or even stop, Rahmstorf said climate models suggest currents will slow down to between 34% and 45% by 2100.

"Despite a lot of research over the last decade on this, it's very hard to pin down quantitatively, how far away is this tipping point. But the kind of model simulations that I know suggest that if you weaken this circulation by roughly half, you're getting into a critical state. And so this could well ... happen by the end of the century," Rahmstorf said.

"We should (strive to) stay well clear of that tipping point because the consequences if the circulation would break down all together would be really dramatic."

Hollywood has shown us this potential worst-case scenario from climate change. And while the consequences shown in "The Day After Tomorrow" are very unlikely, they do illustrate how runaway impacts from climate change could result if we do not listen to the warnings coming from climate scientists.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2021/3/2/slowdown-ocean-currents-climate-change.html>

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