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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR to plant Forest trees, bamboo saplings along Baseco beach area

PUBLISHED BY [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

17 HOURS AGO

More beach-type forest trees and bamboo saplings will be planted at the Baseco in Tondo, Manila this year as part of the rehabilitation of the area and contribute to efforts in cleaning the Manila Bay.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan led last Oct. 1 the sourcing of bamboo saplings from the DENR-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) office in Los Baños, Laguna, which they will use for the tree-planting project in Baseco.

ERDB Director Henry Adornado committed to provide around 300 saplings, consisting of three species, Kauyang Tinik (*Bambusa blumeana*), Kauyang Kiling (*Bambusa vulgaris*), and Bayog (*Bambusa meriliana*).

According to Arturo Calderon, chief of the Production Forest Management Section of the DENR-NCR, tree-planting in Baseco is a continuous program of the department to rehabilitate the Manila Bay. "We have initially planted 200 bamboo seedlings from DENR-Region 4A early this year," he said in a phone interview.

The tree planting project in Baseco and other parts of Manila has also the support of Manila Mayor Francisco Domagoso for the city's urban greening plan.

"(Manila) Mayor Isko (Moreno) has also suggested planting bamboo along stream banks. We are now sourcing out bamboo saplings that will be planted along the reclaimed easements in Manila," Calderon cited.

Aside from planting bamboo, Calderon said the DENR-NCR will be planting at least 100 full-size beach forest trees in Baseco this year.

"These are full size, which are 8 to 10 feet in height, of beach-type forest tree species, like Talisay, Botong, Bitag, and Bani," he pointed out.



Calderon said mangroves are also planted inside the lagoon in Baseco area to help improve water quality and contribute to efforts in cleaning and rehabilitating the Manila Bay.

Mangroves also serve as the first line of defense against storm surges, attract migratory birds, and beautify the area, he added. It also improves the productivity of marine life, which serves as a natural habitat for fishes.

In January 2020, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu inaugurated the rehabilitated Baseco boardwalk. The facility is located at the Mangrove Forest Nursery Operations and Livelihood Center fronting the Baseco Beach area.

The rehabilitation of Baseco Boardwalk was a large enhancement to the area and this is used to monitor the growth of the mangroves planted inside the lagoon.



ABS-CBN News

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20h · 🌐

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'Water lily 'invasion' in Pasig River due to pollution' — DENR

Published October 6, 2020, 4:27 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The recent invasion of water lilies in a portion of the Pasig River may have been due to water pollution from fertilizers used in aquaculture farming and domestic wastes, according to an office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).



CLOGGED – A tug boat is overwhelmed by water lilies as it makes its way along the Pasig River on Sunday, October 4. (Manny Llanes / MANILA BULLETIN)

DENR's Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office (PRCMO) said water lilies or water hyacinths are usually observed thriving in Pasig River during the rainy season.

"The recent proliferation of the aquatic plant in the Pasig River can be attributed to the high level of nutrients in the water, probably because of aquaculture farming areas in the upstream portion of the Pasig River System, as well as due to the domestic wastes that drain from the tributaries to the main river," PRCMO said in a social media post.

The DENR office called on the public to be "environmentally-responsible" to prevent from further polluting the Pasig River.

During a cleanup in Parola, Tondo last weekend, the department's "river warriors" were able to collect around 120 sacks of waste along the riverbanks near the entrance to Manila Bay.

Most of the wastes that were recovered were domestic or household wastes from residents living near or along waterways and water hyacinths flowing from Laguna de Bay, the PRCMO said.

It said that with the collective efforts of DENR-PRCMO and its partner-stakeholders, "we will not only stop the spread of water hyacinths, but more importantly, stop the abuse and misuse of our waterways for a cleaner, healthier, and safer environment and a better future."

Water hyacinth, with scientific name "Eichhoria crassipes," is an aquatic plant which can live and reproduce while floating on the surface of freshwaters.

The plant size ranges from six inches to 38 inches depending on its growing condition. Its rate of proliferation under certain growth habitat could be extremely rapid, causing vast infestation of large areas of water.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/10/06/water-lily-invasion-in-pasig-river-due-to-pollution-denr/>



MMDA suspends Pasig ferry over plant overgrowth

posted October 06, 2020 at 11:40 pm

by [Joel E. Zurbano](#)

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority announced on Tuesday it had temporarily suspended the operation of the Pasig River Ferry system due to the carpet of water lilies and other aquatic plants that are clogging the river.

“Due to water hyacinths, the operations of the Pasig River Ferry System was suspended since Saturday until further notice,” said MMDA chief information officer Sharon Gentalian in a Viber group message to reporters.



TOO MANY LILIES. A barge struggles to cross over a portion of the Pasig River in Manila through a bunch of water hyacinth that filled a portion of the river on Tuesday. Norman Cruz

The water lilies that clog the river during the rainy season have long been the problem affecting the operation of the ferry system since the time of then MMDA chairman and now Senator Francis Tolentino, who initiated the revival of the system.

MMDA officials say water lilies entangle the ferry’s propeller, preventing the boats from traveling at normal speed. The propellers have to be elevated so that the tangled water lilies and even pieces of trash can be removed.

The MMDA revived the Pasig River system in 2014 to decongest Metro Manila’s major roads affected by the road construction projects of the government. The program also aimed to boost Metro Manila’s tourism and can be used for disaster and rescue purposes as well.

Reports showed that the government stopped the Pasig River Ferry operations in 2011 following complaints from passengers about the long waiting time at the terminals and the river’s foul smell.

It also showed that 65% of the pollution in the Pasig River was caused by household waste, 30% from industrial waste, and 5% from solid waste coming from the squatters living along the river.

The MMDA recently reopened two stations of the ferry system in Hulo and Sta. Ana to serve residents in the cities of Mandaluyong and Manila. The six other ferry stations are Pinagbuhatan and San Joaquin in Pasig City; Guadalupe and Valenzuela in Makati City; and Lawton and Escolta, also in Maynila.

At present, the ferry system serves authorized persons outside residence (APOR), health workers and government employees who need to report for work free of charge from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. while the general community quarantine status is being enforced in the National Capital Region.



Pasig River Ferry ops suspendido dahil sa mga water lily



October 6, 2020 @ 7:35 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pansamantalang sinuspende ng Pasig River Ferry Service ang kanilang operasyon dahil sa malago at nagkalat na water lily.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni Irene Navera ng Pasig River Ferry Service central administration na mula pa noong Sabado nang kanilang itigil ito.

“Last Saturday pa po natigil ang aming operasyon sa kadahilanan po sa sobrang dami ng water hyacinth,” lahad ni Navera.

“Yong efficient operation is naapektuhan. ‘Pag ang ating mga bangka ay napuluputan ng water lily.”

“From June to November, sobrang dami po ang bilis po mag-produce ng water hyacinth during rainy season so hindi po namin kontrolado ‘yon,” punto pa nito. **RNT/FGDC**



LGU warned on medical waste mishandling

Published 4 hours ago on October 7, 2020 02:29 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The public should do their part in the proper disposal of medical waste. (DENR image)

LOCAL government units (LGU) must take medical waste management seriously during this time of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in order to protect the public from the highly-contagious virus.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny Antiporda made the statement after six garbage bags containing medical waste were dumped along Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA) near White Planes Avenue last week, 28 September.

The medical waste, which include face masks and gloves, allegedly belong to Cardinal Santos Medical Center and according to the leadership of the hospital an investigation will be conducted to determine how the garbage bags ended up along the highway.

“We are again reminding LGUs of their duty to ensure compliance with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which includes the safe and environmentally sound management of health care waste,” said Antiporda.

Antiporda reiterated that hospitals and other health care facilities that fail on their obligation to segregate their medical waste by using color-coded bags, disinfect such trash, and observe the proper transfer procedures can be held criminally liable for violating Republic Act 9003.

He said under the law, LGU are first and foremost responsible for the efficient and effective solid waste management, most especially on garbage segregation and disposal.

“The public should do their part in the management of medical waste as the proper disposal of this kind of waste should start from households to prevent further the spread of the virus,” said Antiporda.

The Department of Health reported 326,833 total COVID-19 cases with 2,093 more infections tallied as of Tuesday, 6 October.

Recoveries, on the other hand, also escalated to 273,313 with total fatalities at 5,865.



MMDA urged to ensure that NCR solid wastes are properly collected and disposed

PUBLISHED BY [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

18 HOURS AGO

Caloocan 2nd District Rep. Edgar Erice had asked the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to ensure that the estimated 60,000 cubic meters per day of solid wastes in Metro Manila are properly collected and disposed of by the local government units (LGUs).



Caloocan 2nd District Rep. Edgar Erice
(Office of Caloocan 2nd District Rep. Edgar Erice / MANILA BULLETIN)

The opposition lawmaker made the call during the House of Representatives' recent plenary deliberations on the MMDA's proposed P4.39-billion budget for 2021.

“Halos lahat ng local government units, ang kanilang contract ay clean-all package deal (Almost all of the local government units have clean-all package deal contracts). We are estimating each resident of Manila is producing .7 kilo of garbage and that is the basis of clean all package deal contracts of almost all the LGUS in Metro Manila,” he said.

He asked Zamboanga del Norte 1st District Rep. Romeo Jalosjos Jr., vice chairperson of the House Committee on Appropriations who defended the MMDA's spending proposal for next year, if there is a way to check if the solid wastes in the National Capital Region (NCR) are properly collected.

Jalosjos conceded that it will be difficult to check the volume of wastes being brought to the sanitary landfill.

“Dapat po siguro i-check natin, talaga bang nakokolekta at nadidipose ‘yung basura dito sa Metro Manila.,” Erice said. (Maybe we should check if the solid wastes in Metro Manila are being collected and disposed of properly).

He noted that the hauling fee or charge for the collection of the garbages is being paid by the local government unit, while the MMDA is paying for the tipping fee.

“You are maintaining creeks and waterways and the garbage contractors who are supposed to collect are not collecting and you are the ones collecting for them and spending for them,” Erice said.



“Hindi po ba double payment or double effort dahil binabayaran na ng kontratista ng LGU, ang kumokolekta pa rin ay MMDA? Hindi po ba nagiging duplication iyon?” he asked. (Isn't it double payment or double effort because the contractors are being paid by the LGUs, and yet the MMDA is still collecting the garbage? Don't you think this is duplication?)

He said LGUs are currently paying for clean-all package deals to all garbage contractors.

During the deliberations, Jalosjos disclosed that the MMDA has recorded a total P3 billion annual expenditure for solid waste management in Metro Manila.

He said only P1.9 billion has been allocated for the solid waste disposal under the proposed General Appropriations Act (GAA) for 2021.

He said such an amount “is not enough” to dispose of all the solid wastes in the NCR.

According to Jalosjos, the estimated waste generation in Metro Manila is 60,000 cubic meters per day.



Groups seek transparency on use of hazardous chemicals in plastic production

Published October 6, 2020, 1:41 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Groups under the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN) on Tuesday joined calls for transparency on hazardous chemicals used in plastic production amid the release of a global report identifying “substances of concern” in plastics.



(PIXABAY / MANILA BULLETIN)

The report titled “Plastic’s Toxic Additives and the Circular Economy,” which was developed in collaboration with United Nations convention groups, technical experts, and organizations working to address pollution, highlighted the extensive evidence of toxic chemical components in plastics that can harm human and environmental health and impede a safe circular economy.

“This report is notable because it identifies hazardous chemical additives in common, widely available products and illustrates how they pose a threat to health and the environment whether in products, in waste, in recycling, landfill, or incineration. In order to achieve a non-toxic circular economy, we must ensure a precautionary approach to prevent hazardous chemicals in all stages of the lifecycle of plastics,” IPEN science adviser Dr. Sara Brosché said.

Among the identified “substances of concern” in plastics cited in the report include flame retardants, perfluorinated chemicals, phthalates, bisphenols, and nonylphenols.

It explained that these substances, many of which are endocrine disrupting chemicals, are toxic additives in plastics that are commonly used in everyday consumer goods such as children’s toys, food packaging, electronics, textiles, upholstery, and furniture.

“The loads of undisclosed toxic additives in plastics can make recycling complicated, difficult, and dangerous,” Mother Earth Foundation (MEF) chair Sonia Mendoza said.

“This situation undermines efforts to eliminate plastic pollution and achieve the zero waste goal and validates our call for chemical transparency and clean production,” she added.

Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS) executive director Chinkie Peliño-Golle recommended that policy makers and implementers, including the National Solid Waste Management Commission and local government units (LGUs) should use the report to enforce the prohibition on the manufacture, distribution, or use of non-environmentally acceptable packaging (NEAP) materials under Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

“The issuance of the long-overdue NEAP list as required by law will help household and community efforts to prevent and reduce waste and pollution,” she added.



EcoWaste Coalition chemical safety campaigner Thony Dizon also urged the authorities to require compulsory chemical content labeling in all plastic materials.

“Transparency in labeling is an essential tool that can assist policy makers, advocates, entrepreneurs, and consumers in promoting industry shift to ecological and safe designs, materials, and products that pose no harm to human health and the ecosystems,” he said.

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat said “there are a wide variety of chemical additives in plastics, some of them have been identified as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and are now listed under the Stockholm Convention—for example, brominated flame retardants and fluorinated water repellents.”

The report cited four key approaches that will help reduce the production and use of chemicals of concern, prevent regrettable substitutions, and realize a safe circular economy.

This includes designing materials in accordance with goals of causing no harm to environmental and human health and achieving zero waste.

The report also recommended investments for the development of new and safer materials and systems that avoid the production and use of plastics with hazardous chemical additives and avoid the replacement of toxic additives with regrettable substitutions.

“Industry collaboration will be key for the industry to take responsibility for the hazardous materials they produce,” the report also pointed out, adding that “transparent chemical composition labelling must be applied to all plastic materials.”



DENR-7 urges public to report poachers, collectors of illegal wild plants

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - CDN Digital | October 06, 2020 - 05:24 PM

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Wild plants may be trending these days, but the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas (DENR-7) is reminding the public that some of these plants are protected species.

In a statement, [DENR-7](#) urged the public to report individuals poaching or trading endemic and threatened wildlife plants during the community quarantine.

“Cutting, collecting, and gathering wild plants in the forest is a violation of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act,” said DENR 7 Executive Director Paquito D. Melicor.

DENR is responsible for the protection of wildlife from poaching and illegal commercialization, and while DENR wildlife enforcement officers are working closely with partner enforcement agencies nationwide, it also seeks the help of the public to tip or report for violators in their respective areas.

Wildlife Enforcement Officers in the four provinces in Central Visayas are already directed to intensify monitoring and surveillance activities.

Due to the economic impact brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, communities in rural areas have resorted to poaching of wild plants as alternative source of income. And since there is a high demand for these plants on social media, they have resorted to selling them to interested buyers.

The increasing demand for unattended and unregulated trade of wild flora/wild plants in the market results to the detriment of the number of endemic and threatened wildlife plants in our forests or loss of biodiversity.

“We want to remind everyone that collection and trade of threatened species are prohibited unless such acts are covered by a permit issued by the DENR. Please help us protect our wildlife by not patronizing and reporting these illegal activities,” said Meliquor.

Under Republic Act 9147, the penalty depends not only on the act committed but also on the conservation status of the wildlife.

For hunting and trading, the penalty ranges from two to four years of imprisonment and/or fine of P30,000 to P300,000 for hunting and P5,000 to P300,000 for trading of wildlife. For the mere transport of wildlife, the penalty is six months to one-year imprisonment and/or P50,000 to P100,000 fine.

To report wildlife-related crimes, DENR- Community Environment Offices are open through the following numbers: CENRO Cebu City – 254-2565; CENRO Argao – 367-7387; CENRO Tagbilaran City – (038) 412-1026; CENRO Talibon – (038) 416-0156; CENRO Dumaguete City – (035) 422-4367; CENRO Ayungon – (038) 404-0829; PENRO Siquijor (035) 377-2419.

Source: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/344177/denr-7-urges-public-to-report-poachers-collectors-of-illegal-wild-plants>



Endangered wild plants seized in Zamboanga del Norte

Published October 6, 2020, 6:15 AM

by [Philippine News Agency](#)

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PNA) – An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 9 (DENR-9) on Monday said the agency has strengthened surveillance and monitoring against the sale of wild flora in the region.



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 9 strengthens surveillance and monitoring against the sale of wild flora as online selling of plants flourished amid the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. DENR-9 personnel seize on Saturday (Oct. 3, 2020) 15 pitcher plants. (Photo courtesy of DENR-9/ MANILA BULLETIN)

This came following observations that the online sale of plants, mostly through social media, has flourished amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, said Rosevirico Tan, DENR-9 information officer.

Tan said they have noticed some online traders selling wild flora, the collection of which is strictly prohibited, aside from homegrown ornamental plants.

Personnel of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in Liloy, Zamboanga del Norte, have seized 15 pitcher plants (*Nepenthes ventricosa* Blanco) last Saturday in Barangay Malintubonan.

Tan said that a post on social media led to the retrieval of pitcher plants by personnel from the Conservation and Development Section and Monitoring and Enforcement Section of CENRO-Liloy headed by Dionisio Rago.

The pitcher plant is listed as "Category B, Endangered" per DENR Administrative Order No. 2017-11 dated May 2, 2017.

Tan said the collection and trade of pitcher plants are prohibited under Republic Act 9147 otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

An investigation is underway, he said, to ascertain who collected the pitcher plant from the wild as no one claim ownership when the CENRO-Liloy personnel arrived at the display area and retrieved the plants.

Earlier, DENR Regional Director Crisanta Marlen Rodriguez warned the public against the collection of wild flora from the forest, especially those considered as threatened species, without the necessary permit from DENR.



‘Plantitos,’ ‘plantitas,’ and the environment

By: [Gideon Lasco](#), [Theresa Mundita Lim](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:00 AM October 06, 2020

If there’s one thriving industry amid the pandemic, it’s undoubtedly been gardening. An overgrowth of plants can be seen on Facebook, with proud “plant parents” sharing pictures of their “children.” And one can buy plants in online marketplaces and highways alike. This trend is very understandable. Intuitively, we know that plants are a relaxing, calming presence; a source of refreshment and therapy amid a strange and stressful time. Cut off from our national parks and our beautiful mountains, many would surely take comfort in at least being with a part of our environment. Moreover, the fact that many Filipinos are finding this new “plant economy” a source of income is surely a welcome development amid rising unemployment.

However, this trend also has environmental consequences we would like to raise.

Some of the plants on sale are sourced from our mountains and other unique ecosystems, disrupting habitats and potentially further endangering plant species and the wild fauna that depend on them for food and shelter. With rarity and “exotic-ness” being valued characteristics in plant collecting, this craze might drive unscrupulous entrepreneurs deeper into our forests in search of plants that will command high prices in both local and international markets. Already, Department of Environment and Natural Resources offices in many parts of the country are reporting encroachments driven by the demand for these plants.

We also need to keep in mind that plants collected from the wild are not a good investment for your backyard garden or your apartment collection, as they will not survive for long, requiring the special natural environment they were in before they were uprooted by poachers.

If not from our native natural forests, plants that could thrive and overgrow under local conditions are brought in from foreign places. These types of vegetation are occasionally introduced and propagated in areas where they then compete and replace rare, endangered flora that are found only in the country and nowhere else in the world. The foreign plants can also bring along with them pests and diseases that can infest, infect, and kill other plants in one’s collection. These plants are considered invasive species. The global and local circulation of plants also comes with a significant ecological footprint, and so do all the materials used to tend to them—from plastic pots to potentially polluting pesticides, not to mention all the packages that accompany their transport and sale. We tend to think of plants as “natural,” but they are actually products of our economy, with all the environmental impacts such commerce entails. Plants also produce waste in the form of the material (e.g., peat) that are used to grow them on. Moreover, some farmers/entrepreneurs may resort to shifting land use from agriculture to horticulture, which, while not a bad thing in itself, could spell consequences to our quest for food security.

Of course, taking care of plants can foster a greater appreciation for the environment and a deeper ecological consciousness. However, we must take steps to ensure that we continue to enjoy living with plants in a sustainable way — for instance, making sure that the plants we are getting are neither endangered nor invasive; adopting environment-friendly gardening practices such as avoiding the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides; and applying the 3 Rs of waste management: reducing the use of single-use plastics, reusing old plant pots and boxes, and recycling gardening-related waste.



Still, the best way to take care of our plants is to protect the habitats where they are sourced. Plants are a renewable resource that can be appreciated by countless generations, not only for their beauty but also for their role in keeping our air clean and breathable. If we can commit to protecting our forests and unique ecosystems—and supporting the people who do so—then we can preserve the biodiversity not just within our homes, but throughout our home planet.

* * *

Theresa Mundita Lim is the executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity. Gideon Lasco is an anthropologist and Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist.



3 drug pushers, 6 illegal loggers held

[JONATHAN LLANES](#)

October 6, 2020

A PORTION of Puguis Communal Forest in La Trinidad, Benguet is being pushed as a training ground for police in a bid to prevent the putting up of illegal structures.

The local government unit (LGU) of La Trinidad, together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and Philippine National Police Regional Special Training Unit (PNP-RSTU)-CAR recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the aim to come up with a training ground for police.

Mayor Romeo Salda said only a portion of the communal forest will be utilized as training ground of PNP.

PNP-RSTU-CAR penned a letter last August 18, requesting for the conduct of a joint ocular inspection at the communal forest in reference to their proposal for a training ground in the area.

“In a bid to strengthen the co-management approach in ensuring the sustainability as well as security of the Puguis Communal Forest, there is a significant need for concerned stakeholders to take significant action towards protecting the remaining forests in our community,” the MOU said.

A series of demolition were conducted earlier this year at the communal forest by personnel from the LGU, DENR-CAR, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro)-Benguet, Bureau of Fire Protection, Health Services Office, together with Scene of the Crime Operatives (Soco) and La Trinidad Municipal Police Station (MPS).

Present during the MOU signing were LGU officials led by Salda, Vice Mayor Roderick Awingan, RSTU-COR Training Manager P/Lieutenant Colonel Myles Angel Pascual, DENR-CAR Cenro Baguio representative Walter Pedro, La Trinidad MPS chief Police Major Cleff Vencio, Municipal General Service Officer Dwight Daodao and Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer Arthur Pedro.

On September 25, 300 coffee Arabica seedlings were planted by the La Trinidad Municipal Employees Multi-purpose Cooperative and 200 coffee seedlings and 30 culms of Bamboo planted by the Congregation from Holy Guardian Angels Parish of Pico with the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew, Episcopal Youth Movement and Episcopal Church of Women over the weekend.



Foundation seeks to 'relocate' aggressive macaque troop out of Corregidor Island

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

October 6, 2020



Corregidor monkeys Photo by John Moffitt

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will conduct an assessment of the native monkey population in Corregidor Island, a tourist spot in Manila Bay, to determine whether if there is a need to relocate the primate species there to other areas.

This as the Corregidor Foundation Inc. (CFI) bared plans to reopen Corregidor Island to tourists next month, amid the presence of what it described as an “aggressive” monkey population the foundation is seeking to relocate out of the island “permanently.”

Cynthia L. Carrion, CFI chairman and CEO, wrote a letter to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) on September 25, 2020, expressing concern over the “threat” of the monkey population to prospective tourists on the island.

It was learned that the CFI Board of Trustees approved a resolution for the capture of the native monkeys and take them away from the historic island to prevent any possible animal attack on tourists.

At least a hundred long-tailed macaques are believed to inhabit Corregidor Island at present but there could be more lurking deep in the forest, according to an official of the DENR.

CFI manages the tourism activities on the historic island. Strategically located at the entrance of Manila Bay, Corregidor Island is considered a national shrine that commemorate the battle fought by Filipino and American forces against Japanese imperial forces during World War II. It is now a popular tourism area in Luzon. While the island is close to Bataan, it is part of the political jurisdiction of Cavite province.

In her letter addressed to BAI Director Ronnie D. Domingo, Carrion appealed that the monkeys be relocated to a suitable place “where they can be of good use and purpose.”

On September 29, 2020, the BAI referred the letter to the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the DENR, which has mandate and jurisdiction over wild animals.

The growing population of the native monkeys on the island has been a problem to them even before the Covid-19 pandemic started, Carrion said.

While acknowledging that the native monkeys on the island are also an added attraction as tourists are amazed by their presence, Carrion said the monkeys lately have become “too aggressive to the point of lurking inside hotel rooms, stealing food and on several occasions, run[ning] after tourists.”



“We are afraid that if we let this matter slip longer, the monkeys will be up to something more damaging like harming tourists, which will cause the image of Corregidor Island more harm than good,” she said.

It was learned that the CFI has tentatively scheduled the reopening of the island to tourists on November 7, 2020.

However, they want the native monkeys taken to another place first to make sure that no untoward incident will happen to tourists during their visit.

DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, concurrent director of the DENR-BMB, told the BusinessMirror that they will coordinate with the Animal Health and Welfare Division of the DA-BAI to address the concerns raised by CFI. “We will coordinate and work with BAI to look into the problem,” he said.

“We are hoping that the monkey population in the area remains manageable. If the population is more than a hundred, it will be a problem,” Calderon, a forestry expert said.

Normally, Calderon said, monkeys would not go out to the open as they prefer to stay in the forest.

He said native monkeys in the Philippines, notably the long-tailed macaque, has been known to become aggressive and territorial.

Aside from natural breeding, or reproduction, migration to the island may have contributed to the growth of the primate population on the island, Calderon said.

“In my experience, I’ve seen monkeys crossing the ocean. I saw this first hand in Palawan when I was regional director. They can go from island to island,” said Calderon.

Calderon said if possible, the DENR-BMB will conduct an assessment of the situation and the monkey population on the island.

“We need to conduct an assessment first. But the problem is, how can we go there? We need to coordinate with BAI to seek what can be done,” he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

The official also expressed his appreciation to the CFI for raising the concern on the monkey population on the island, saying the threat posed by aggressive animals, particularly troops of aggressive monkeys should not be taken lightly.

“Remember they are also possible carriers of a virus and they can trigger a zoonotic disease and cause another pandemic,” he said.

Calderon said he will send a team to conduct the assessment and come up with a possible course of action, depending on the situation.

To prevent possible human-macaque conflict, Calderon said they may need to capture the monkeys and relocate them to other suitable areas and, more importantly, where they will be accepted. “Social preparation is one thing we need to do also in relocating animals to a new habitat,” he said.

The official said that in addressing human-macaque conflict, the DENR-BMB will ensure that the most humane way of treating animals as mandated by the Wildlife Act and other DENR rules and regulation will be observed.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/10/06/foundation-seeks-to-relocate-aggressive-macaque-troop-out-of-corregidor-island/>



PH serpent eagle turned over to authorities by residents in Naga, Cebu

Published October 6, 2020, 1:03 PM

by [Calvin Cordova](#)

CEBU CITY—A Philippine serpent eagle was turned over to authorities in the City of Naga, southern Cebu.



A Philippine Serpent Eagle is turned over to the City Environment and Natural Resources Office in the City of Naga, Cebu. (Photo from the Facebook page of Naga CENRO/MANILA BULLETIN)

The serpent eagle was turned over by Tomasa Repollo and Rochelle Denotol, residents of Sitio Suba, Barangay Tuyan, Naga last Monday morning.

Repollo said she found the bird perched on the roof of her house past 4 p.m. Sunday. The bird had a shoestring tied on its right leg.

Wynser Pañoso, environment management specialist of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), said that Republic Act 9147, or an Act providing for the conservation and protection of wildlife and their habitats, prohibits keeping a serpent eagle as a household pet.

“Because the bird had a shoestring tied in its leg, it was possible that it was being kept by someone, but was able to escape,” said Pañoso.

According to Pañoso, the Philippine serpent eagle is found in the major islands of the Philippines, mostly in Luzon and Mindanao, except Palawan.

Such kind of bird is usually found in forest clearings, open woodlands and sometimes in cultivated lands with scattered trees. It is reportedly listed as “least concern species”, or its population is decreasing, by BirdLife International due to habitat loss.

Pañoso said they were not able to determine the gender of the bird, but it was in good condition when it was turned over.

Pañoso said representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Central Visayas (DENR 7) were scheduled to check on the bird yesterday.

“The DENR 7 will be taking custody of the bird and it will be up to them when or where to release it,” said Pañoso.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/10/06/ph-serpent-eagle-turned-over-to-authorities-by-residents-in-naga-cebu/>



Philippine serpent eagle rescued in Naga

By [Le Phyllis F. Antojado](#)(The Freeman)

- October 7, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — A Philippine serpent eagle with a shoestring tied on the bird's right leg was rescued in the City of Naga in Metro Cebu.

The eagle was found on the roof of Tomasa Repollo's house on Sunday.

Repollo and Rochelee Denotol, both residents of Sitio Suba, Barangay Tuyan, turned over the bird to the City Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) Monday morning.

Wynser Pañoso, environment management specialist of CENRO in Naga, said the eagle was being kept by someone, but was able to escape.

Republic Act 9147 (The Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act) prohibits keeping a serpent eagle as a household pet.

The eagle, Pañoso, is in good condition. Authorities are yet to determine the gender of the bird.

"Although, eagles are listed as least concern species by BirdLife International, they are also threatened due to habitat loss," reads the Facebook post of the Naga City government.

Serpent eagles are found in Luzon and in Mindanao, except in Palawan. They are usually found in forest clearings, open woodlands and sometimes in cultivated land with scattered trees. — **KQD (FREEMAN)**

UPLB scientists confirm new micro-snail sub-species in Masungi Georeserve

Published October 6, 2020, 5:25 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

After three years of study and assessment, Filipino scientists from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) have finally introduced a new sub-species of microsnail that is endemic to Masungi Georeserve in the municipality of Baras, Rizal province.



(Masungi Georeserve Foundation / MANILA BULLETIN)

Discovered in 2017 by a team of scientists composed of Harold Lipae, Angelique Estabillo, Ian Kendrick Fontanilla, and Emmanuel Ryan de Chavez, the snail was observed as similar to what was only recorded in Baguio City.

The group however became curious as to how a site-specific snail ended up 200 kilometers south of the country's summer capital. It took them three years to study and analyze the specimen and found that it is indeed a new sub-species of *Hypselostoma latispira*.



(Masungi Georeserve Foundation / MANILA BULLETIN)

Named *Hypselostoma latispira masungiensis*, the new sub-species of microsnail has been published in the Philippine Journal of Systematic Biology with an extensive description by the Filipino scientists who discovered it.

It is described as a karst-dependent land snail, which can be found attached to limestone boulders feeding on lichens and other vegetation.

The sub-species is considered a microsnail with a size of less than 5 millimeters, about the size of a worker ant.

The snail found in Masungi is distinguished from *H. I. latispira* from Baguio City through several distinct shell characteristics.

A morphological study of two snail populations established that the snails from Baguio were found to be smaller in shell size and have narrower body whorl and apertural width, while those from Masungi were bigger and have larger body whorl and apertural width.

The snails from Masungi also have five apertural teeth inside its shell, while the snails from Baguio only have four teeth.



The discovery of a new microsnail sub-species just highlights the importance of karst ecosystems like Masungi as areas of high conservation value.



(Masungi Georeserve Foundation / MANILA BULLETIN)

According to Masungi Georeserve Foundation managing trustee Ann Dumaliang, “the discovery of the Masungi-endemic snail only stresses the urgent need to protect Masungi against destructive interests, such as quarrying and land trafficking, which significantly alter the landscape.”

“With low mobility, snails are among the most vulnerable and helpless animals. If the rocks and soils are extracted, these species will be annihilated without a trace,” Dumaliang added.

Dr. Ryan de Chavez of the Animal Biology Division, Institute of Biological Sciences of the UPLB said *Hypselostoma* are dependent on karsts as a source of calcium for their shell and eggs.

“Some land snails are exclusively found on limestones due to their dependence on high calcium content (calcium carbonate) which are plenty in karsts. Karsts can also be considered as habitat islands. Snails through time became intimately dependent on these habitats, are then ‘trapped’ in these areas. This is true for *Hypselostoma*,” he explained.

Dumaliang recommended aggressively applying innovative area-based conservation management models and engaging all sectors to save karst ecosystems.

The research team, with the support of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), is continuously studying the high diversity of snail species at Masungi, which “may be one of the highest ever recorded in the country.”



New snail subspecies discovered at Masungi Georeserve

Kristine Sabillo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Oct 06 2020 11:39 PM



Photo courtesy of Masungi Georeserve

MANILA — A new snail subspecies found in a popular eco-tourism spot in Rizal was recently recorded by a group of scientists from University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Masungi Georeserve, a tourist favorite for its limestone formations and rope courses, is believed to be the only known habitat of a subspecies of the *Hypselostoma latispira*, which has so far only been seen in Baguio City.

Dubbed the *Hypselostoma latispira masungiensis*, the new subspecies was identified after 3 years of extensive morphological and DNA analyses and specimen collection by Filipino scientists Harold B. Lipae, Angelique L. Estabillo, Ian Kendrick C. Fontanilla, and Emmanuel Ryan C. de Chavez.

Their findings were recently published in the *Philippine Journal of Systematic Biology*.

According to Masungi Georeserve management, *H.I. masungiensis* is a land snail usually found attached to limestone boulders. It feeds on lichens and other vegetation. As a “microsnail,” it is less than 5 millimeters in size or just the same size of a worker ant.

It is considered a new subspecies because its shell differs from the Baguio City snail, which has a smaller shell and a narrower body whorl.

“The snails from Masungi also have five apertural teeth inside its shell, while the snails from Baguio only have four teeth,” a media release of the finding said.

According to the study, while the snails differ physically, their genetic similarity was found to be at 99.98%, suggesting that the snails from Masungi are from the same species.

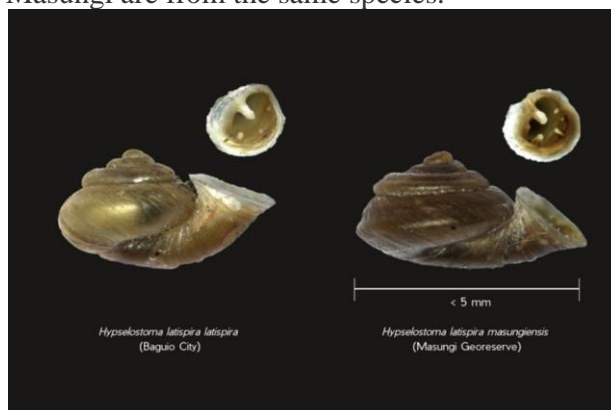


Photo courtesy of Masungi Georeserve

“The slight divergence of genes between the two subspecies may be attributed to the different environmental conditions between the two sites (e.g. 1000-m elevation difference). The research team also notes that genetic differentiations are more likely to occur where physical barriers are present, such as the 200-km distance between Baguio and Masungi,” the release said.

According to Masungi Georeserve, the discovery of a new microsnail subspecies highlights the importance of karst (limestone) ecosystems like Masungi as areas of high conservation value.

This is especially evident in the fact that the snails are dependent on karsts as a source of calcium for their shell and eggs.

“Some land snails are exclusively found on limestones due to their dependence on high calcium content (calcium carbonate) which are plenty in karsts. Karsts can also be considered as habitat islands. Snails through time became intimately dependent on these habitats, are then "trapped" in these areas. This is true for *Hypselostoma*,” said Dr. Ryan de Chavez of the Animal Biology Division, Institute of Biological Sciences at University of the Philippines Los Baños.



Photo courtesy of Masungi Georeserve

Ann Dumaliang, Managing Trustee at the Masungi Georeserve Foundation, said the discovery “stresses the urgent need to protect Masungi against destructive interests, such as quarrying and land trafficking, which significantly alter the landscape.”

Earlier this year, Masungi Georeserve faced problems as a quarry company blocked a portion of its reforestation area in Rizal.

Masungi Georeserve has previously been plagued by alleged incidents of land grabbing, illegal logging and even treasure hunting. The Masungi Georeserve Foundation, which now manages the area, has won awards for its conservation and geo-tourism work.

“With low mobility, snails are among the most vulnerable and helpless animals. If the rocks and soils are extracted, these species will be annihilated without a trace,” Dumaliang said.

She said limestone ecosystems were often overlooked despite being “arcs of biodiversity and vital waterways.”

“We must aggressively apply innovative area-based conservation management models and engage all sectors of society,” she said.

For now, the Masungi Georeserve Foundation and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) continue to study the high diversity of snail species at Masungi, which they said may be one of the “highest ever” recorded in the country.

They are also working with public and private sector groups to restore 3,000 hectares of degraded land around the limestone formations at the Masungi Geopark Project.



Filipino scientists discover new microsnail subspecies at Masungi Georeserve

Published October 6, 2020 7:34pm

A new subspecies of microsnail has been discovered at Masungi Georeserve in Rizal.

After a three-year study, Filipino scientists from University of the Philippines Los Baños discovered *Hypselostoma latispira masungiensis*, a “karst-dependent land snail which can be found attached to limestone boulders feeding on lichens and other vegetation.”

According to a release by Masungi Georeserve, the conservation area is the only known habitat of the newly discovered microsnail, which has the size of less than 5 mm similar to that of a worker ant.

The study, led by Harold B. Lipae, Angelique L. Estabillo, Ian Kendrick C. Fontanilla, and Emmanuel Ryan C. de Chavez, began in 2017 when the team discovered the snail upon exploring the nature reserve.

The snail, said the scientists, bore similarities with the *Hypselostoma latispira* which was recorded only in Baguio City, Benguet. Curious how a site-specific snail ended up 200 km south of the city, the team conducted more research and morphological and DNA analyses on the newly discovered subspecies.

[The study](#), which is now published in the Philippine Journal of Systematic Biology, found that the snails from Baguio were smaller in shell size and had “narrower body whorl and apertural width,” while the snails from Masungi were bigger and had “larger body whorl and apertural width.”

“The snails from Masungi also have five apertural teeth inside its shell, while the snails from Baguio only have four teeth,” said the release.

However, despite the distance between the two, the two kinds of snails were found to have 99.98% genetic similarity, suggesting that the snails in Masungi were “from the same species but a new subspecies of microsnail.”

The slight divergence in genes could be attributed to the different environmental conditions between the two sites, said the statement by Masungi Georeserve.

According to Dr. Ryan de Chavez of the animal biology division, UPLB Institute of Biological Sciences, karst ecosystems, such as Masungi, can be considered habitat islands.

“Snails through time became intimately dependent on these habitats, are then ‘trapped’ in these areas,” he shared.

“The discovery of the Masungi-endemic snail only stresses the urgent need to protect Masungi against destructive interests, such as quarrying and land trafficking, which significantly alter the landscape,” said Ann Dumaliang, managing trustee at Masungi Georeserve Foundation.



“With low mobility, snails are among the most vulnerable and helpless animals. If the rocks and soils are extracted, these species will be annihilated without a trace. We all need to be working together to ensure the perpetual conservation of known and unknown species living here. It is possible by genuinely protecting and restoring the land, their habitat,” she added.

The team, with the support of Masungi Georeserve Foundation, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, continues to study the high diversity of snail species at the reserve, which “may be one of the highest ever recorded in the country.” – **Kaela Malig/RC, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/758715/filipino-scientists-discover-new-microsnail-subspecies-at-masungi-georeserve/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2x-vyMZ9S-jkQG9bTznToksU4UEOffL8SxKGU2Q0ZTrrdNSMI7juUYkcE



Mountain quarries lure contractors

Published 3 hours ago on October 7, 2020 03:10 AM

By [Andrio Atienza](#)



Potential profit to be earned from mountain quarries near the various unspoiled rivers in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan have recently made the mouths of local contractors water.

Mining Engineer Charilyn Manas of the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (ENRO) said there are at least five active mountain quarry operations within the city's jurisdiction, as stated in the report she submitted to City-ENRO chief Atty. Carlo Gomez.

Said report contained an updated list of existing and cancelled mountain quarry permits as well as pending applications subject for approval by their office and Mayor Lucilo Bayron.

"As of this month (October), our updated (data), we have five operating mountain quarries, and four of them are in Sitio Maldeng, Barangay Bacungan, and the other one is from Sitio Tagbariri in (Barangay) Sta. Lourdes," Manas said during the regular session of the City Council.

Manas said the city government, under the City Mining and Regulatory Board (CMRB), had been allowing mountain quarrying by issuing license to operate for a period of five years that would be limited to a less than 5-hectare area where commonly done along the river.

She also bared that their office the City-ENRO had been conducting regular inspection in the mountain quarry areas to ascertain if there are violations on environmental regulations of the quarry operators.

"As of now, there are no violations. They are following what was stipulated in the quarry permit," stated Manas, shooting down allegations that there have been mountain degradation and soil erosions because of the quarrying activities.

City Councilor Peter Maristela, on the other hand, had asked the City-ENRO to require the attendance of other quarry operators in the next committee on environment hearing because he received reports that some of the names used in the quarry applications were fictitious and must be double checked by Bayron.

"What if there will be environmental violations or severe soil erosions, who will be responsible if the applicant's name is bogus? We should be diligent here" Maristela stressed.

The Daily Tribune obtained a copy of the list of existing river and mountain quarry permits from the City-ENRO which showed that Bayron had been allowing the extraction of natural resources in exchange for hefty fees of permits.

Records show that 16 existing river and mountain quarry permits and a total of 79 pending applications passed through the office of Bayron.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/10/07/mountain-quarries-lure-contractors/>



Commuters line up at a bus stop in Calocan to buy Beep cards on the first day of cashless transactions for carousel buses in EDSA busway on October 1, 2020.

The STAR/Michael Varcas

Confirmed coronavirus cases in Philippines now at 326,833

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - October 6, 2020 - 4:00pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health confirmed 2,093 new coronavirus cases Tuesday, bringing to 326,833 the total number of cases in the Philippines.

The country still has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia. It is also the country with the 20th highest number of reported coronavirus infections.

Majority of the newly-announced cases were from Metro Manila (557). It was followed by Cavite (253), Iloilo (166), Bulacan (124) and Batangas (118).

Eighty-three percent of the additional infections occurred in the last 14 days.

Total recoveries in the country reached 273,313 after 209 more patients had been declared recovered from the disease.

But total fatalities due to the new coronavirus rose to 5,865 after the agency logged 25 additional deaths.

The number of active cases in the country now stands at 47,665.

The Philippines has been recording less than 3,000 cases daily in the last weeks except for September 28 and October 4.

While there is a downward trend in COVID-19 cases, the public should not be complacent as there are still areas reporting an increase in infections, the DOH said.

More than 3.7 million people have been tested in the country.

The number of cases globally has risen to more than 35 million, with over one million deaths.

The World Health Organization, however, estimated that 10% of the planet's 7.8 billion people have been infected by the new coronavirus since it first emerged in China late last year.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/10/06/2047577/confirmed-coronavirus-cases-philippines-now-326833>



Duterte assures funds under Bayanihan 2 are well spent

Marje Pelayo • October 6, 2020



MANILA, Philippines – President Rodrigo Duterte assures the public that all funds intended for the country's response against coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are well-accounted for.

The President said that he had made sure that the funds in the Bayanihan to Heal as One or Bayanihan 1 were well-spent and given out to concerned individuals and projects.

The president added that such prudent spending will also be applied to the budget under the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2, amounting to P165.5B.

"We will be careful with the next Bayanihan. There's still money to be given to the poor, especially," he said.

Meanwhile, the Duterte administration has already submitted to Congress its first report on the progress of the implementation of the Bayanihan 2 Law.

Included in the report was the P18.058-B budget given to local governments under the Bayanihan Grants.

Meanwhile, the palace also announced the US\$9.91-B loans that the Department of Finance has secured as a supplemental amount intended for COVID-19 response. **–MNP (with reports from Rosalie Coz)**

Source: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/duterte-assures-funds-under-bayanihan-2-are-well-spent/>



Roque on Boracay opening: 'Panahon na para magbakasyon'

By [Melissa Luz Lopez, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Oct 5, 2020 3:53:10 PM

Updated Oct 5, 2020 7:55:00 PM



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque invites Filipinos to visit Boracay

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, October 5) — Malacañang has dropped its months-old "stay at home" campaign and is now calling on Filipinos to head out and fly to Boracay island.

"Ang mensahe po ng Presidente, kinakailangang mabuhay po tayo sa kabila ng COVID-19... Panahon na po para tayo ay magbakasyon matapos ng napakatagal na lockdown, lalong-lalo na sa Metro Manila," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said on Monday as he staged his regular press briefing from the white sand shores of the popular tourist spot.

[Translation: The President's message is that we need to live with COVID-19... It's time to take a vacation after the long lockdown, especially in Metro Manila.]

Boracay reopened its doors to all tourists on October 1 but subject to strict guidelines. Negative swab tests are required before visitors are allowed to enter the white sand paradise. This comes weeks after the island started accepting visitors from within the Western Visayas region only.

Roque and his team headed to Malay, Aklan over the weekend, joining a handful of tourists who braved the COVID-19 pandemic after seven months of community quarantine.

"Ang talagang messaging po natin ngayon doon sa advertisement na pinroduce ng Office of the Press Secretary at suportado po ng IATF, DOH, at Department of Finance: ingat-buhay para sa hanapbuhay... 'Yan din po ang thrust ng second National Action Plan ng national task force on COVID-19," the Malacañang official said, even shooting a promotional video featuring himself as he walked around Boracay to shop and eat while showing the safety protocols in place.

[Translation: Our real messaging now as seen in the advertisement produced by the Office of the Press Secretary and supported by the IATF, DOH, and Department of Finance: taking care of yourself while supporting other people's livelihoods... That's also the thrust of the second National Action Plan of the national task force on COVID-19.]

Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores said [only about 50 tourists per day](#) have entered the province since last Thursday, as local businesses hope to entice more to revive sales and jobs. He assured that strict health standards are being followed to maintain Boracay's COVID-free status.

Tourists need a negative polymerase chain reaction test result taken within 48 hours of traveling to Boracay to be allowed entry.

Roque said that while Boracay may seem ready to accept foreign tourists, he doubts if they are willing to take the trip now as most countries require residents to undergo two-week quarantine upon returning home. Prior to the pandemic, Korean and Chinese tourists visited the island in droves.



Henry Chusuey, who owns the Henann Resorts chain in the island, said the hassle and cost of swab tests could be stopping travelers from taking a trip to Boracay. Miraflores said local hotels are offering up to 75 percent discount on room rates just to attract customers, with Chusuey revealing that only about 20 of his resort's more than 1,600 rooms are currently occupied.

"If it is easier for the tourists at hindi masyadong hassle ang requirements, more tourists, I believe, would come and more employment will be given to the workers," Chusuey said, adding that not all of their group's employees have returned to their posts as clients remain scarce.

The Boracay-based businessman also batted for antigen swab testing at the Caticlan airport, which is cheaper and yields faster results than the PCR method to detect COVID-19.

However, Roque said antigen tests are still being studied and the IATF has decided to wait for the findings of the pilot run in Baguio City before approving their widespread use.

"Hindi naman po kasi natin pupwedeng isakripisyo 'yung kalusugan din ng mga tiga-Boracay [We cannot also sacrifice the safety of Boracay residents]," Roque said, disclosing that doubts remain on the validity of a negative result from an antigen test and that the PCR test is still the "gold standard" for detecting the coronavirus from throat and nose swab samples.



After Quarantine, Boracay Reverts To Its 1980s-1990s State; Gov't Now Encourages Vacation Instead Of Staying Home

Ingat na lang? The government's message now is that people must live with COVID-19 and that work and even vacation can be done by taking the necessary health and safety protocols to avoid contracting the disease.

Alexis Romero Tuesday, October 6, 2020



The pristine white beach of Boracay gets a breather during quarantine amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Iloilo City resident Fritz Mendez, a bank employee assigned in a branch in the island, captured this photo in April.

The emphasis of the government's messaging has shifted from staying home to taking care of one's health while at work and even while taking a vacation amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, Malacañang said on Monday, Oct. 5.

In fact, presidential spokesman Harry Roque urged Filipinos to enjoy and have a break in Boracay Island, which opened its doors to domestic tourists on Oct. 1 after seven months of closure due to lockdowns imposed to curb coronavirus transmission.

"Boracay has returned to its condition during the 1980s, 1990s. The beach is good and Boracay is very safe," Aklan Gov. Florencio Miraflores said. "We're expecting more tourists in the next few weeks and months."

Roque, who traveled to Boracay last weekend, said the only way to recover from the impact of the pandemic is to reopen the economy.

"*Ingat buhay para sa hanapbuhay*' – *iyang na po ang ating mensahe at iyang din po iyong thrust ng second national action plan ng National Task Force (Against) COVID-19* ('Take care of your life for your livelihood' – that's our message now and that is the thrust of the second national action plan of the National Task Force Against COVID-19)," he said.

"[President Duterte's] message is, we must live despite COVID-19," Roque said in Filipino as he held a virtual briefing from Boracay. "It is time for us to take a vacation after a very long lockdown, especially in Metro Manila. The most beautiful beach in the world is waiting, Boracay. Open for business."

"Pupuwede naman pong mangyari sa pamamagitan nang pag-iingat ng buhay para makapaghanapbuhay (That can happen if we take care of our health so we can continue with our livelihood)," Roque said.

Asked how he would reconcile the government's advice for people to stay home with his visit to Boracay, Roque replied: "Our messaging now is based on the advertisement produced by the (Presidential Communications Operations Office), and it is supported by the IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases), the DOH (Department of Health) and the Department of Finance."

The government has been easing quarantine restrictions to allow the gradual reopening of businesses. During the first few months of the pandemic, the government's slogan was, "bahay muna, buhay muna" – or roughly, stay at home for now to protect your life.

The IATF has also approved recommendations of the economic development cluster to improve the management of COVID-19 risks in the country. The recommendations, which are contained in Resolution No. 76 issued on Oct. 2 are as follows:

- Further gradual reopening of the economy in increments proportional to the healthcare capacity of the country.
- Further enhance the approved 'Prevent, Detect, Isolate, Treat, Recover' strategy of the National Task Force Against COVID-19, through the continuous improvement of hospital care capacity; further reopening of public transportation "in such manner that is sufficient and safe to the public following health experts' guidance on minimum health standards;" and maintaining the current community quarantine classifications of provinces, highly urbanized cities and independent component cities, with the stricter implementation and observance of health and safety protocols.

"For this purpose, escalation of community quarantine levels shall be reserved as a last resort to address the rising COVID-19 situation in their jurisdiction," the resolution read.

The IATF also enforced a dietary supplementation program for children aged six to 23 months old and nutritionally-at-risk pregnant women through the provision of cash or food packs.

The government is also studying the proposal of Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III to increase public transportation capacity to 70 percent.

"The IATF is thinking about that because we know that the only way to recover is to reopen the economy," Roque said. "I think it's a matter of time before we bring back to 70 percent our transportation (capacity)."



Photo taken by The Philippine STAR's Walter Bollozos on April 27, 2018 shows Boracay on the second day of its closure. President Duterte ordered the island's six-month shutdown for rehabilitation.

Boracay back to its pristine condition

Tourist destination Boracay is ready to welcome international tourists, but quarantine rules in other countries are preventing the entry of foreign visitors, Roque said on Monday.

"The problem is I do not know if they would come," Roque noted.

"Most of the visitors of Boracay – Koreans, Chinese, Japanese – are quarantined once they return home. While a travel bubble between the Philippines and Korea has been under discussion for a long time, if they are quarantined upon their return, they would not go to Boracay," he said.



Roque believes there should be talks with foreign territories to encourage international tourists to visit Boracay, which got a breather during the quarantine and had gone back to its pristine state. In 2018, Duterte ordered the closure of the island for rehabilitation after calling it a “cesspool.”

“Perhaps we should have negotiations with Korea, Taiwan and China. They can emulate our process wherein someone undergoes quarantine until PCR results are issued because the process of the issuance of PCR results is now fast,” he said, referring to the real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction swab test.

Local officials have given assurances that it is safe to visit the island, which remains COVID-free.

Miraflores said 35 tourists arrived on Oct. 1. Visitors increased to 47 on Oct. 2 and to 53 the following day.

“The numbers are slowly increasing. But we expected this because people still have difficulties coming here. There are still fears, but in the next few weeks or in the next few months, the tourists will return and they will see the beauty of Boracay,” the governor said.

Malay town Mayor Frolibar Bautista said residents of the island are following minimum health standards such as wearing face masks and physical distancing. He said the Department of Tourism has issued certificates of authority to operate to 204 business establishments.

“Workers are gradually returning to their work places,” Bautista added. “We really need more tourists so that all 30,000 workers can return to work.”

Henry Chusuey, chairman of the Henann Group, stressed tourists should not be inconvenienced when visiting Boracay. He urged the government to conduct antigen tests in Boracay to make it easier for tourists to visit the island.

“The antigen test should be at the airport so it would be easy... (If you undergo) PCR tests, you have to go to a hospital, then you have to wait. If the results come in late, it won’t be valid anymore,” Chusuey said. “Tourism is not so essential now. The more hassles you give them, the more people will not come.”

Roque said Chusuey’s suggestion may be implemented if the antigen tests in Baguio City yield good results.

Asked whether Duterte would visit Boracay, Roque replied: “For now, the movement of the President is limited because of the pandemic. But after this, I will go to Malacañang and tell him people from Aklan, especially those from Boracay, are asking him to visit them.”

Source: https://www.onenews.ph/after-quarantine-boracay-reverts-to-its-1980s-1990s-state-gov-t-now-encourages-vacation-instead-of-staying-home?fbclid=IwAR3OoHdJR4Fx_BAb5E2deU85bBDVVBGZFHIZ24DCUIDIUONLWmeU-INEBu3E



Double down on protocols, not lockdown

Published October 6, 2020, 4:41 PM

by [Former Senate President Manny Villar](#)

OF TREES AND FOREST



Former Senate President Manny Villar

It has been almost 7 months since government imposed a lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was March 15 when a General Community Quarantine (GCQ) was first implemented. Since then we have experienced ECQ (Enhanced Community Quarantine), MECQ (Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine), and MGCQ (Modified General Community Quarantine). Regardless of the acronyms, the fact is that it has devastated our people's health and livelihood.

The lockdown has caused hardships on our people and slowed down the fastest growing economy in the region. It has cost people their jobs. Data from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) revealed that more than 3.5 million workers have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic with over 200,000 Filipinos who "permanently" lost their source of income.

Meanwhile, there are currently close to 8 million people (as of October 4) globally who are infected with the coronavirus disease but notably 1% are considered serious or critical and 99% have mild symptoms. The Philippines has over 58,000 active cases with 1,758 cases considered as serious or critical.

Our experience with the pandemic and the lockdown has taught us two very important imperatives: (1) we need to strengthen our health capabilities in order to confront the threat of the coronavirus, and (2) we need to learn how to live with the virus in order to allow our economy to recover.

I read a very interesting article in the New York Times which quoted the health minister of Italy — the first European country to impose a national lockdown and one of the very first hardest hit country in the world — as saying that "we are in a living-with-the-virus phase." Roberto Speranza added that though a "zero infection rate does not exist, we are now far better equipped to handle a surge in infections."

This is the capability that we need to harness. All levels and agencies of government need to switch to the "living-with-the-virus" mode. This is because as the Italian minister emphatically proclaimed, "there is not going to be another lockdown." And the only way we can get rid of the lockdown which has paralyzed our economy is to apply what we have learned and implement them strictly.

This means national and local governments need to strictly impose the wearing of face masks, the practice of social distancing especially in areas that tend to be crowded, and more importantly, the provision of more resources so that agencies can test, isolate, and trace the coronavirus. We cannot sit by and be reactive. We need to be able to react quickly to surge in infections locally.

This is especially critical now that government has plans to gradually reopen important aspects of the economy. Government has recently announced that it will gradually reopen the country's tourist destinations to local tourists. This follows the path of Baguio City and Boracay which opened to local visitors with health restrictions in place to prevent further transmission of COVID-19.



I support this gradual, step-by-step plan to reopen tourism. This will certainly help people and communities whose livelihoods are reliant on local and foreign tourism. The key element here is that implementing agencies need to double down on health protocols. And government needs people's cooperation in this regard.

“Living with the virus” means we need the public to develop habits based on health and safety protocols — wear our face masks properly especially if there are other people near us, even if we are in a hurry make sure that we keep our distance, avoid touching surfaces, and touching our faces.

It has been like a long nightmare and we just want to wake up. But it's not as easy as waking up and it will be all over. The virus is here to stay. We need to wake up to a whole new world, not on lockdown, but with people working together to outlive this health menace.



Plastic pandemic: COVID-19 trashed the recycling dream

October 6, 2020 | 3:49 pm



Since COVID-19, even drinks bottles made of recycled plastic—the most commonly recycled plastic item—have become less viable. The recycled plastic to make them is 83% to 93% more expensive than new bottle-grade plastic, according to market analysts at the Independent Commodity Intelligence Services (ICIS).

The coronavirus pandemic has sparked a rush for plastic.

From Wuhan to New York, demand for face shields, gloves, takeaway food containers, and bubble wrap for online shopping has surged. Since most of that cannot be recycled, so has the waste.

But there is another consequence. The pandemic has intensified a price war between recycled and new plastic, made by the oil industry. It's a war that recyclers worldwide are losing, price data and interviews with more than two dozen businesses across five continents show.

"I really see a lot of people struggling," Steve Wong, CEO of Hong-Kong based Fukutomi Recycling and chairman of the China Scrap Plastics Association told Reuters in an interview. "They don't see a light at the end of the tunnel."

The reason: Nearly every piece of plastic begins life as a fossil fuel. The economic slowdown has punctured demand for oil. In turn, that has cut the price of new plastic.

Already since 1950, the world has created 6.3 billion tonnes of plastic waste, 91% of which has never been recycled, according to a 2017 study published in the journal *Science*. Most is hard to recycle, and many recyclers have long depended on government support. New plastic, known to the industry as "virgin" material, can be half the price of the most common recycled plastic.

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The pandemic hit as politicians in many countries promised to wage war on waste from single-use plastics. China, which used to import more than half the world's traded plastic waste, banned imports of most of it in 2018. The European Union plans to ban many single-use plastic items from 2021. The US Senate is considering a ban on single-use plastic and may introduce legal recycling targets.

Plastic, most of which does not decompose, is a significant driver of climate change.

The manufacture of four plastic bottles alone releases the equivalent greenhouse gas emissions of driving one mile in a car, according to the World Economic Forum, based on a study by the drinks industry. The United States burns six times more plastic than it recycles, according to research in April 2019 by Jan Dell, a chemical engineer and former vice chair of the US Federal climate committee.



But the coronavirus has accentuated a trend to create more, not less, plastic trash.

The oil and gas industry plans to spend around \$400 billion over the next five years on plants to make raw materials for virgin plastic, according to a study in September by Carbon Tracker, an energy think tank.

This is because, as a growing fleet of electric vehicles and improved engine efficiency reduce fuel demand, the industry hopes rising demand for new plastic can assure future growth in demand for oil and gas. It is counting on soaring use of plastic-based consumer goods by millions of new middle-class consumers in Asia and elsewhere.

“Over the next few decades, population and income growth are expected to create more demand for plastics, which help support safety, convenience and improved living standards,” ExxonMobil spokeswoman Sarah Nordin told Reuters.

Most companies say they share concerns about plastic waste and are supporting efforts to reduce it. However, their investments in these efforts are a fraction of those going into making new plastic, Reuters found.

Reuters surveyed 12 of the largest oil and chemicals firms globally—BASF, Chevron, Dow, Exxon, Formosa Plastics, INEOS, LG Chem, LyondellBasell, Mitsubishi Chemical, SABIC, Shell and Sinopec. Only a handful gave details of how much they are investing in waste reduction. Three declined to comment in detail or did not respond.

Most said they channel their efforts through a group called the Alliance to End Plastic Waste, which is also backed by consumer goods companies, and which has pledged \$1.5 billion over the next five years on that effort. Its 47 members, most of whom are in the plastics industry, had combined annual revenue of almost \$2.5 trillion last year, according to a Reuters tally of company results.

In total, commitments by the Alliance and the companies surveyed amounted to less than \$2 billion over five years, or \$400 million a year, the Reuters survey found. That’s a fraction of their sales.

Plans to invest so heavily in new plastic are “quite a concerning move,” said Lisa Beauvilain, head of sustainability at Impax Asset Management, a fund with \$18.5 billion under management.

“Countries with often undeveloped waste management and recycling infrastructure will be ill-equipped to handle even larger volumes of plastic waste,” she said. “We are literally drowning in plastics.”

Since the coronavirus struck, recyclers worldwide told Reuters, their businesses have shrunk, by more than 20% in Europe, by 50% in parts of Asia and as much as 60% for some firms in the United States.

Greg Janson, whose St. Louis, Missouri, recycling company QRS has been in business for 46 years, says his position would have been unimaginable a decade ago: The United States has become one of the cheapest places to make virgin plastic, so more is coming onto the market.

“The pandemic exacerbated this tsunami,” he said.

The oil and chemicals companies that Reuters surveyed said plastic can be part of the solution to global challenges related to a growing population. Six said they were also developing new technologies to reuse waste plastic.

Some said other packaging products can cause more emissions than plastics; because plastic is light, it is indispensable for the world’s consumers and can help reduce emissions. A few called on governments to improve waste management infrastructure.



“Higher production capacities do not necessarily mean more plastic waste pollution,” said a spokesman at BASF SE of Germany, the world’s biggest chemicals producer, adding that it has been innovating for many years in packaging materials to reduce the resources required. The new plastic wave is breaking on shores across the globe.

MAKE PLASTIC

Richard Pontillas, 33, runs a family-owned “sari-sari” or “sundries” store in Quezon City, the most populous metropolis in the Philippines. The liquid goods he sells used to be packaged in glass. Many customers, in fact, brought in their own bottles to be refilled.

Merchants like him are among key targets for the plastic industry, looking to extend a trend established after 1907, when Belgian-American chemist Leo Baekeland invented Bakelite. Since World War Two, mass-produced plastic has fuelled economic growth and spawned a new era of consumerism and convenience packaging.

“Many years ago ... we relied on goods repackaged in bottles and plastic bags,” said Mr. Pontillas, whose store sells rice, condiments and sachets of coffee, chocolate drink and seasonings.

Today, thousands of small-scale vendors in the developing world stock daily goods in plastic pouches, or sachets, which hang in strips from the roofs of roadside shacks and cost a few cents a go.

Already, 164 million such sachets are used every day in the Philippines, according to the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, an NGO. That’s nearly 60 billion a year.

Consumer goods firms including Nestle and P&G say they are working hard to make their packaging either recyclable or reusable. For example, P&G said it has a project in schools in the Manila region which aims to collect one million sachets for “upcycling.”

But sachets are very difficult to recycle. They are just one form of pollution that the pandemic is adding to, clogging drains, polluting water, suffocating marine life, and attracting rodents and disease-carrying insects.

So are face masks, which are made partly from plastic.

In March, China used 116 million of them—12 times more than in February, official data show.

Total production of masks in China is expected to exceed 100 billion in 2020, according to a report by Chinese consultancy iiMedia Research. The United States generated an entire year’s worth of medical waste in two months at the height of the pandemic, according to another consultancy, Frost & Sullivan.

Even as the waste mounts, much is at stake for the oil industry.

Exxon forecasts that demand for petrochemicals will rise by 4% a year over the next few decades, the company said in an investor presentation in March.

And oil’s share of energy for transport will fall from more than 90% in 2018 to just under 80% or as low as 20% by 2050, BP Plc said in its annual market report in September.

Oil companies worry that environmental concerns may blunt petrochemical growth.

The United Nations (UN) said last year that 127 countries have adopted bans or other laws to manage plastic bags. BP’s chief economist Spencer Dale said in 2018 that global plastic bans could result in 2 million barrels per day of lower oil demand growth by 2040—around 2% of current daily demand. The company declined further comment.



USE PLASTIC

This year alone, Exxon, Royal Dutch Shell Plc, and BASF have announced petrochemical plant investments in China worth a combined \$25 billion, tapping into rising demand for consumer goods in the world's most populous country.

An additional 176 new petrochemical plants are planned in the next five years, of which nearly 80% will be in Asia, energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie says.

In the United States since 2010, energy companies have invested more than \$200 billion in 333 plastic and other chemical projects, according to the American Chemistry Council (ACC), an industry body.

Those investments have come as the US industry sought to capitalise on a sudden abundance of cheap natural gas released by the shale revolution.

The industry says disposable plastics have saved lives.

"Single-use plastics have been the difference between life and death during this pandemic," Tony Radoszewski, president and CEO of the Plastic Industry Association (PLASTICS), the industry's lobbying group in the United States, told Reuters. Bags for intravenous solutions and ventilators require single-use plastics, he said.

"Hospital gowns, gloves and masks are made from safe, sanitary plastic."

In March, PLASTICS wrote to the US Department of Health and Human Services, calling for a rollback of plastic bag bans on health grounds. It said plastic bags are safer because germs live on reusable bags and other substances.

Researchers led by the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a U.S. government agency, found later that month that the coronavirus was still active on plastic after 72 hours, compared with up to 24 hours on cardboard and copper.

The industry's letter was part of a long-standing campaign for single-use material.

The ACC's managing director for plastics, Keith Christman, said the chemicals lobby is opposed to plastic bans because it believes consumers would switch to using other disposable materials like glass and paper, rather than reusing bags and bottles.

"The challenge comes when you ban plastic but the alternative might not be a reusable product ... so it really wouldn't accomplish much," Mr. Christman said.

Plastic makes up 80% of marine debris, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, a global alliance backed by governments, NGOs and companies including Shell, which is also a member of the ACC.

Plastic pollution has been shown to be deadly to turtles, whales and baby seals and releases chemicals that we inhale, ingest or touch that cause a wide range of harms including hormonal disruption and cancer, the UN says.

RECYCLE?

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Demand for recycled material from packaging businesses fell by 20% to 30% in Europe in the second quarter compared with the previous year, ICIS says.

At the same time, people who stayed at home created more recycling waste, said Sandra Castro, CEO of Extruplas, a Portuguese recycling firm which transforms recycled plastics into outdoor furniture.



“There are many recycling companies that may not be able to cope,” she said. “We need the industry to be able to provide a solution to the waste we produce.”

In the United States, QRS’s Mr. Janson said that for two months after the pandemic lockdowns, his orders were down 60% and he dropped his prices by 15%.

And the pandemic has added to costs for big consumer companies that use recycled plastic. The Coca-Cola Co. told Reuters in September it missed a target to get recycled plastic into half its UK packaging by early 2020 due to COVID-19 delays. The company said it hopes now to meet that by November.

Coca-Cola, Nestle, and PepsiCo have been the world’s top three plastic polluters for two years running, according to a yearly brand audit by Break Free From Plastic, an NGO.

These companies have for decades made voluntary goals to increase recycled plastic in their products. They have largely failed to meet them. Coke and Nestle said it can be hard to get the plastic they need from recycled sources.

“We often pay more for recycled plastic than we would if we purchased virgin plastic,” a Nestle spokesperson said, adding that investment in recycled material was a company priority.

Asked how much they were investing in recycling and waste cleanup programs, the three companies named initiatives totalling \$215 million over a seven-year period.

At current investment levels in recycling, brands will not meet their targets, analysts at ICIS and Wood Mackenzie say.

TOSS

Even if existing recycling pledges are met, the plastic going into the oceans is on course to rise from 11 million tonnes now to 29 million by 2040, according to a study published in June by Pew Trusts, an independent public interest group.

Cumulatively, this would reach 600 million tonnes—the weight of 3 million blue whales. In response to mounting public concerns, the Alliance to End Plastic Waste says it will partner existing small-scale NGOs that clean up waste in developing countries.

One venture, which helps women earn money from selling plastic scrap in Ghana, says it has successfully diverted 35 tonnes of plastic from becoming litter since March 2017.

That’s less than 0.01% of the annual plastic waste generated in Ghana, or 2% of the plastic waste that the United States exported to Ghana last year, according to World Bank and US trade data.

“We do realize change won’t happen overnight,” said Alliance president and CEO Jacob Duer. “What is important for us is that our projects are not seen as the end, but the beginning.”

In the Philippines, Vietnam, and India, as much as 80% of the recycling industry was not operating during the height of the pandemic. And there was a 50% drop in demand for recycled plastic on average across South and Southeast Asia, according to Circulate Capital, a Singapore-based investor in Asian recycling operations.

“The combination of the impact of COVID-19 and low oil prices is like a double whammy” for plastic recycling, said Circulate’s CEO, Rob Kaplan.

“We’re seeing massive disruption.” — **Joe Brock/Reuters**

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/plastic-pandemic-covid-19-trashed-the-recycling-dream/?fbclid=IwAR0bKu3BLe6VDtWKTp9GJC01RICsus5lhLMO_gHiIXfQTM8S_cbd5sDbeRg



PLASTIC PANDEMIC | COVID-19 trashes recycling dream

October 6, 2020 , 11:38 AM

By Joe Brock

Oct 5 (Reuters) – The coronavirus pandemic has sparked a rush for plastic.

From Wuhan to New York, demand for face shields, gloves, takeaway food containers and bubble wrap for online shopping has surged. Since most of that cannot be recycled, so has the waste.

But there is another consequence. The pandemic has intensified a price war between recycled and new plastic, made by the oil industry. It's a war recyclers worldwide are losing, price data and interviews with more than two dozen businesses across five continents show.

"I really see a lot of people struggling," Steve Wong, CEO of Hong-Kong based Fukutomi Recycling and chairman of the China Scrap Plastics Association told Reuters in an interview. "They don't see a light at the end of the tunnel."



Workers sort through bags of garbage at a disposal facility in Payatas, Quezon City, Philippines, July 21, 2020.

Picture taken July 21, 2020. To match Special Report: HEALTH-CORONAVIRUS/PLASTIC-RECYCLING.

REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

The reason: Nearly every piece of plastic begins life as a fossil fuel. The economic slowdown has punctured demand for oil. In turn, that has cut the price of new plastic.

Already since 1950, the world has created 6.3 billion tonnes of plastic waste, 91% of which has never been recycled, according to a 2017 study published in the journal Science. Most is hard to recycle, and many recyclers have long depended on government support. New plastic, known to the industry as "virgin" material, can be half the price of the most common recycled plastic.

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Sachets of products are displayed at a "sari-sari", or "sundries", store in Tanay, Rizal, Philippines, August 11, 2020. Picture taken August 11, 2020. To match Special Report: HEALTH-CORONAVIRUS/PLASTIC-RECYCLING. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

Today, thousands of small-scale vendors in the developing world stock daily goods in plastic pouches, or sachets, which hang in strips from the roofs of roadside shacks and cost a few cents a go.

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A junk shop worker sorts through a sack of plastic bottles in Tondo, Manila, Philippines, July 20, 2020. Picture taken July 20, 2020. To match Special Report: HEALTH-CORONAVIRUS/PLASTIC-RECYCLING. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

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"We're seeing massive disruption."

(Reporting by Joe Brock; Additional reporting by Neil Jerome Morales in Quezon City, Catarina Demony in Lisbon, Noah Browning in London, Karen Lema in Manila, Heekyong Yang in Seoul, Yuka Obayashi in Tokyo and Marwa Rashad in Riyadh Edited by Sara Ledwith)

Source: https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/plastic-pandemic-covid-19-trashes-recycling-dream?fbclid=IwAR0Wn5sKXJRAQr4WQ01h3RMJ9_1rW8WWjRwoNGRT8WjoaVI4P3GOVC7lhUA



Fears of toxic fuel leak as sea creatures die in Russia 'ecological disaster'

Published October 6, 2020, 6:43 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Water pollution in Russia's Kamchatka region that caused sea creatures to wash up dead on beaches prompted fears on Monday that rocket fuel stored in the region's military testing grounds could have leaked out.



The contamination happened in the sea off Kamchatka Peninsula, a 1,250-kilometer long peninsula in the Russian Far East (PHOTO FROM PHYS.ORG/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The water pollution came to light late last month after local surfers reported stinging eyes and said the water had changed colour and developed an odour. Officials later confirmed the surfers had suffered mild burns to their corneas.

Then locals witnessed large numbers of dead sea creatures including seals, octopuses and sea urchins washed up onto a black-sanded beach popular with tourists.

The regional governor, Vladimir Solodov, said Monday that the sea off the remote Kamchatka peninsula may have been contaminated with toxic chemicals as Greenpeace warned of an "ecological disaster" for marine life.

Officials have said tests soon after found above-permitted levels of phenol and petroleum products.

Experts were investigating whether this was linked to "spills of some toxic substances," Solodov said in a statement.

He added that divers had confirmed the deaths of sea creatures and pollution appeared to be spread over a wide area.

Officials are scrambling to come up with the cause after President Vladimir Putin in June reacted angrily to the late reporting of an oil leak in Arctic Siberia that poured thousands of tons of diesel into land and waterways.

Ecology Minister Dmitry Kobytkin said in televised comments that Putin had ordered him to get to the bottom of the situation.

- Military sites -

The 38-year-old Kamchatka governor, dressed in a "I/We are the Pacific Ocean" T-shirt, vowed on Instagram to lead a "transparent" probe and sack any official who covered up the scale of the pollution.

He said there would be checks on Tuesday at two military testing sites, Radygino and Kozelsky, that could be responsible, citing a "yellow film" on a local river.

"Early tomorrow morning there will be inspections of two key test sites that are raising everyone's concerns," he said.



Some experts have suggested that highly toxic rocket fuel could have leaked into the sea.

The first test site, Radygino, is around 10 kilometres (miles) from the sea and was used for drills in August.

Vladimir Burkanov, a biologist specialising in seals, in a comment published by Novaya Gazeta opposition newspaper suggested that old stores of rocket fuel kept in Radygino could have rusted and the fuel leaked into streams.

The other site, Kozelsky, has been used to bury toxic chemicals and pesticides, according to the governor's website.

Greenpeace said its team currently assessing the situation had seen patches of "yellowish foam" and murky water in several areas, with some pollution drifting towards a UNESCO-protected area of volcanoes.

The group said it saw dead animals in one area.

Ecology Minister Kobylkin said in televised comments that so far tests had only found slightly raised levels of iron and phosphates and suggested that the incident might not be manmade but caused by the stormy conditions and microorganisms altering the oxygen levels.

Environmental inspectors and experts from a fisheries and oceanography research centre were set to continue tests.

Greenpeace said it had contacted state ecological monitors, the armed forces and the Prosecutor General's Office urging an immediate investigation.

Prosecutors and investigators announced they would carry out checks into whether a crime had been committed but have not released any findings.

The emergencies ministry said it was using boats and drones to monitor the coastline but added that "no pollution is visible."

Governor Solodov said it was a problem that the region had no unified system of environmental monitoring.

The pristine peninsula is a popular destination for adventure tourism with its abundance of wildlife and live volcanoes.

The incident came as authorities urged tourists not to visit a live volcano on Kamchatka, warning eruption could be imminent.

Mining and the cost of the energy transition

Mining can come at great environmental cost, but is necessary to fuel the energy transition. Michael Salvatico from Trucost tells the Eco-Business podcast about the risk and opportunity confronting Australia's mining sector — and what it could mean for Asia Pacific.

By [Robin Hicks](#)

Tuesday 6 October 2020

Biodiversity loss. Soil contamination. Erosion. Pollution. Mining can have a major impact on the environment and local communities — not only where mines are located, but where mined materials are used. But the minerals mining produces are also critical to the energy transition and the fight against climate change.

Australia is one of the world's biggest mining countries, and is at a crossroads in its development. It is the world's biggest exporter of coal, particularly to its regional neighbours, and mining the fossil fuel is one of the enduring pillars of its economy. But Australia also [wants to be the renewable energy superpower of Asia Pacific](#), and has the potential to be a hub for the minerals needed to make solar panels and wind turbines, and power the region's transition to clean energy.

Can Australia be both the region's renewables champion and king of coal? As the deadline nears for the Eco-Business A-List, an [annual search for Asia Pacific's most influential sustainability executives](#), it's worth asking what steps Australia's mining firms are taking to make environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues part of their operations, as pressure builds from activists and investors for miners to be more accountable for their considerable impact.

Joining the Eco-Business podcast to talk about the environmental and social impact of mining and the energy transition is Michael Salvatico, the Sydney-based Asia Pacific head of ESG business development for sustainability data and analytics firm Trucost, part of S&P.

Tune in as we talk about:

- Where Australia's mining sector stands on sustainability
- Why Australia needs more — not less — mining
- The mining sector's best and worst sustainability performers
- Australia's opportunity to be a renewables super power
- Mining and the just transition
- What does the future of mining look like?