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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Pampanga wetland cited as country's 8th Wetland of International Importance

Published February 9, 2021, 6:47 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

This Pampanga wetland put the Philippines on the world map anew as far as wetland conservation is concerned.



(photo from PNA)

No less than Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu hailed the inclusion of the Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands (SPCW) in the Ramsar Convention's List of Wetlands of International Importance, the agency said Tuesday, February 9.

"The Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands fulfills four criteria of the Ramsar Convention, which confirms the international significance of its biodiversity and its services both at the species and ecosystems level," Cimatu said in his keynote speech, which was delivered by Undersecretary for Attached Agencies and Chief of Staff, Rodolfo Garcia.

Garcia delivered the speech during the virtual celebration of the 50th World Wetlands Day that was organized by the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) on Tuesday, February 2.

The SPCW joins the roster of officially declared Ramsar Sites around the world as Ramsar Site No. 2445. Since the accession to the Convention on November 8, 1994, the Philippines has designated eight Wetlands of International Importance.

"Wetlands are not wastelands. The success stories of the wetlands of Boracay Island, Manila Bay Rehabilitation as well as the Pasig River, are testament to that. Wetlands, like water, play a vital role not only in our planet's health but also in our life and well-being," Garcia said, quoting Cimatu.

Cimatu expressed his commendation to DENR-Region 3, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office-Pampanga and the local governments of Sasmuan and Pampanga for their hardwork and dedication to make SPCW's recognition happen.

He said the Ramsar Convention's List inclusion "demonstrates the country's commitment to protect wetland ecosystems."

The SPCW, which covers over 3,500 hectares of coastal waters and four barangays in Sasmuan town in Pampanga province, is the first Ramsar Site in Central Luzon.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/09/pampanga-wetland-cited-as-countrys-8th-wetland-of-international-importance/>



SPCW recognition proves PH commitment to protect wetlands

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 Cory Martinez¹⁷

THE inclusion of the Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands (SPCW) in the Ramsar Convention's List of Wetlands of International Importance demonstrated the country's commitment to protect wetland ecosystems. This was stressed by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu as he was elated over the SPCW's inclusion in said list.

In his keynote speech delivered by Undersecretary for Attached Agencies and Chief of Staff Rodolfo Garcia during the recent virtual celebration of the 50th World Wetlands Day, Cimatu said the SPCW fulfills four criteria of the Ramsar Convention, which confirms the international significance of its biodiversity and its services both at the species and ecosystems level.

"Wetlands are not wastelands. The success stories of the wetlands of Boracay Island, Manila Bay Rehabilitation as well as the Pasig River, are testament to that. Wetlands, like water, play a vital role not only in our planet's health but also in our life and wellbeing," Cimatu said.

Cimatu commended the DENR-Region 3, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office-Pampanga and the local governments of Sasmuan and Pampanga for their hard work and dedication to make SPCW's recognition happen.

For his part, DENR-Region 3 Executive Director Paquito Moreno Jr. said that they are honored and fortunate that the annual celebration of World Wetlands Day has become more significant and special because the SPCW is now officially declared as a Wetland of International Importance.

Moreno said the SPCW, which covers over 3,500 hectares of coastal waters and four barangays in Sasmuan town in Pampanga province, is the first Ramsar Site in Central Luzon.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretary General Martha Rojas-Urrego, on the other hand, also congratulated the Philippines on the inclusion of the SPCW to the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance or as a Ramsar Site.

The SPCW joins the roster of officially declared Ramsar Sites around the world as Ramsar Site No. 2445.

"Today, 171 Contracting Parties, including the Philippines have signed the Convention. Collectively these countries have designated a total of 2,414 Wetlands of International Importance, known as Ramsar Sites. On February 2, 2021, Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands joins this prestigious list of wetland-protected sites as the 8th Ramsar Site in the Philippines," Urrego said.

The Convention on Wetlands is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. Also known as the Ramsar Convention, it is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran where the convention was signed in 1971.

Since the accession to the Convention on November 8, 1994, the Philippines has designated eight Wetlands of International Importance.

World Wetlands Day is being celebrated every Feb. 2 to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet.

Presidential Proclamation no. 74 series of 1999 also declares Feb. 2 of every year as National Wetlands Day in recognition of immense importance of wetlands to the welfare of the Filipino people and the protection of global biodiversity.

The theme for this year's World Wetlands Day celebration is *"Wetlands and water."*

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/provincial/spcw-recognition-proves-ph-commitment-to-protect-wetlands/>



Water quality monitoring device to be installed in Baseco

Published February 9, 2021, 6:11 PM

by [Minka Klaudia Tiangco](#)

A Water Quality Monitoring Equipment (WQME) will be installed at the Baseco Beach area in Manila in line with the government's efforts to rehabilitate the Manila Bay.



WATER QUALITY MONITORING DEVICE—The Manila city government and Department of Environment and Natural Resources entered a partnership to install a water quality monitoring device at Baseco Beach. (Photos from Manila Public Information Office)

Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso on Tuesday signed a memorandum of agreement for the installation of the water quality monitoring device

This was done through a partnership between the Manila city government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

According to the DENR, the device would be placed on a buoy for authorities to gather data, as well as detect and record levels of the following: biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), dissolved oxygen (DO), pressure, chloride, pH, temperature, optical brighteners, nitrate, fecal coliforms, refined oils, ammonium, electrical conductivity, salinity, total dissolved solids (TDS), turbidity, crude oils, colored dissolved organic matter (CDOM), and total organic carbon (TOC)

"Today is a testament to our commitment to the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay. Both the national government and the local government stepped up the efforts to make this happen," Domagoso said in his speech.

"Now, we submit ourselves to this machine which can monitor if what we are doing is effective. Malalaman natin kung nagbunga ang ating ginagawa. Seryoso po ang gobyerno sa paglilinis ng Maynila (We will know if our efforts are bearing fruit. The government is serious in cleaning Manila)," he added.

The DENR said WQMEs will also be installed soon along other parts of the Manila Bay coastline, particularly in Navotas and Parañaque.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/09/water-quality-monitoring-device-to-be-installed-in-baseco/>



DENR pushes one-year phaseout of plastic stirrers, straws

By Catherine Teves February 9, 2021, 5:17 pm



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – Stakeholders in the industry of plastic coffee stirrers and softdrink straws will have a year to phase out these soon-to-be-banned non-environmentally acceptable products (NEAPs).

The grace period would help them prepare for the ban and adjust accordingly, according to Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, also National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) alternate chairperson, on Tuesday.

"There'll be a phase-out period so their industry won't be that affected," he said.

He noted the one-year countdown will begin after publication of the official resolution banning plastic coffee stirrers and softdrink straws nationwide.

Both are the first two products for inclusion in the country's maiden NEAP list of prohibited items.

NSWMC already approved such products' inclusion in that long-overdue list, the environment department noted in its Feb. 3, 2021 press release.

Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000) ordered NSWMC to prepare, within one year from effectivity of this law and in consultation with stakeholders concerned, a list of NEAPs that the government will ban.

According to RA 9003's implementing rules and regulations, NEAPs are "products or packaging that are unsafe in production, use, post-consumer use, or that produce or release harmful products".

Plastic coffee stirrers and softdrink straws made it to the NEAP list as Antiporda said studies showed these are not environment-friendly.

"Those are also the first products that we saw have alternatives," he said.

Among the alternatives are reusable straws and stirrers.

"We can live without plastic coffee stirrers and softdrink straws since these are not necessities," said Antiporda.

Studies and public consultations on other products will continue to determine which of these will also make it to the NEAP list, he said.

NSWMC must annually review and update the list.

RA 9003 prohibits banning NEAPs unless the NSWMC finds alternatives available to the public at costs that are not more than 10 percent higher than the corresponding prices of items these will replace.

The law also said that "notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary," its section on NEAPs "shall not apply to Packaging used at hospitals, nursing homes or other medical facilities; and Any packaging which is not environmentally acceptable, but for which there is no commercially available alternative as determined by the Commission". (**PNA**)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1130089>



DENR pushes one-year phaseout of plastic stirrers, straws

February 9, 2021 3 min read

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Source: https://maharlika.tv/2021/02/09/denr-pushes-one-year-phaseout-of-plastic-stirrers-straws/?fbclid=IwAR1ENgd70kjGMEdy_JfGxfQj-raHM22SGpp88BpOp9tOZQ3U9e1NCjziw8k



DENR shuts down LGU-run open dumpsite in Pampanga

By DENR Published on February 9, 2021

QUEZON CITY, Feb. 9 -- In line with the order of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to close all open dumpsites nationwide by end of March this year, DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda on Friday (Feb. 5) terminated the operation of an estimated four-hectare open dumpsite being managed by the municipal government of Sta. Ana in Pampanga province.

Antiporda personally went to Barangay San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampanga to see the blatant violation wherein he cited cases where the operation of open dumpsites is disguised as recycling facility.

"We are again in this situation that they use the term materials recovery facility (MRF) but in reality, it is an open dumpsite, which the law prohibits," he said.

The Undersecretary was further exasperated when he found out that Sta. Ana Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer (MENRO) Bryan James Garcia, a former employee of DENR-Region 3, prepared the report used as basis for the Notice of Violation (NOV) issued to the municipal government of Sta. Ana in 2018. The NOV was relative to the operation of the dumpsite but the LGU did not act on the notice.

"Nagagalit ako kasi nalaman ko na ikaw pa pala ang gumawa ng report tungkol dito nung ikaw ay nasa DENR pa. Ano ang ginawa mo upang maiwasto ang mga violations na inisyu noon ngayong ikaw na ang MENRO dito?" Antiporda lamented.

Garcia was then the monitoring officer of the DENR-Solid Waste Enforcement and Education Program under the Environmental Monitoring Office.

The DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 3, together with the Philippine National Police-Maritime Group and Sta. Ana Municipal Police Station, served the cease and desist order against the open dumpsite located at Barangay San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampanga, for violating Section 37 of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Likewise, it also directed Sta. Ana MENRO to provide a safe closure and rehabilitation plan within seven days.

Based on the recent investigation of EMB-Region 3, the open dumpsite is adjacent to the MRF owned and operated by the municipality. However, further investigation showed that the MRF is also being operated as an open dumpsite.

"They are not really using the MRF. They just used the name but still make and use this as an open dumpsite," Antiporda stressed.

He further stressed that the open dumpsite is located in a farmland, which causes degradation of environment and poses health hazards to the residents living within the area as the leachate from the dumped waste goes to the ground and contaminates the groundwater.

"You can see napakaganda po ng ating kabukiran then lalagyan mo ng basurahan sa gitna, malalason po ang tubig sa ilalim ng lupang ito kung kaya't kailangang ma-safe closure and rehab ito," Antiporda emphasized. (DENR)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/releases/1066437>



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OPEN DUMPSITE SA BANSA IPASASARANG LAHAT

A PAT pala na ektaryang open dumpsite na pinatatakbo ng municipal government ng Santa Ana. Pampangang kahalakilek ang ipinapakita rinunod sa opis ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu at sinasabing mapapata ang lahat ng open dumpsite sa bansa sa kalapusan ng Marso na ipinahinto ni Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

Pumunta po ng personal sa Antiporda sa Barangay San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampangang ipinapakita ang lahasang paglalagay kung saan binanggit niya na nagpapanggap lamang na recycling facility ang open dumpsite.

"We are again in this situation that they use the term material recovery facility (MRF) but in reality, it is an open dumpsite, which the law prohibits," sabi ni Antiporda.

Nagalit din si Antiporda nang malaman ang Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer ng Sta. Ana na si Bryan James Garcia, na dating employado ng DENR-Region 3, ang gumawa ng report na naglagay basehan ng notice of violation (NOV) na in-issuue sa taglagapan ng Sta. Ana noong 2018.

Ang nasabing NOV ay dahil sa operasyon ng dumpsite bigat na hindi inakkyunan ng nasabing LGU.

Nagpapalit ako kasi alamatin ko na ikaw po pala ang gumawa ng report tungkol dito nang ikaw ay nasa DENR pa.

Ang ang gumawa mo upang malawak ang mga violations na inayunoon ngayong ikaw na ang MENRO dito? ayon kay Antiporda.

Si Garcia ay dating monitoring officer ng DENR-Solid Waste Enforcement Education Program sa ilalim ng Environmental Monitoring Office.

Kasama ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng DENR ang Philippine National Police-Maritime Group at Santa Ana Municipal

Police Station nang ibigay ang cease and desist order (CDO) laban sa open dumpsite sa Barangay San Nicolas dahil sa paglalagay sa Section 37, ng Republic Act 9003 o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Geyunahin, inatasaat na rin ang Sta. Ana MENRO na magbigay ng self-closure and rehabilitation plan sa loob ng ibang araw.

Bata sa imbestigasyon ng EMB-Region 3, ang open dumpsite ay katapos lamang ng MRF na pagmamitay-aw at pinatatakbo ng municipalidad. Subalit lamang din sa imbestigasyon na ang MRF ay ginagamit din bilang open dumpsite.

"They are not really using the MRF. They just used the name but still make and use this as an open dumpsite," dagdag pa nito.

Dagdag pa ni Antiporda na ang open dumpsite ay mas isang bukirin na mababing magdulot ng pagkasira ng kalikasan at masamang apakan sa kalapangan ng mga residente ng nakatira sa paligid ng dumpsite dahil mababing pumunta sa ilalim ng lupa ang kaka ng mga basuras at lamang ang lubog.

"You can see napakaganda po ng ating kabukiran then itatagyan mo ng basurahan sa gitna, matatalan po ang tubig sa ilalim ng lupang ibo kung kaya'ng katanggap ma-safe closure and rehab ito," Antiporda napatipuhan.

PARANAQUE CITY NAGSIMULA NG VACCINATION SIMULATION

SINIMULAN na din po ng Paranaque City Government ang coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) vaccination simulation sa Ayala Malls, Manila Bay sa Paranaque City bilang bahagi ng plano sa pagbabakuna ngayong 2021.

Pinangunahan ni Paranaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez at maybahay na si Janet ang "mock vaccination" habang hinihiray ang pagdating sa bansa ng bakuna sa second quarter ng taon.

"The simulation shows the readiness of the city from the facilities



to be used to the skills of the officers, doctors and nurses who will assist each resident who will be given a vaccine for COVID," patiwag ni Olivarez.

Nasabihag sa unang mock vaccination simulation exercise ang nose 200 community-based target individuals at mga City Health Medical personnel at Barangay Healthcare workers.

Ayos bukod, sa mga matatag na mali sa lungsod, maglalagay din ng Covid vaccination sa mga komunidad.

Inihayag rin ni Olivarez na patuloy pa ang COVID-19 vaccine pre-registration at screening sa pamamagitan ng caniling ng QR code sa kaniyang Facebook account n kay ay sa [preparanaque.net](https://www.facebook.com/preparanaque).

Napagmamán na ang Paranaque LGU ay naglitan ng P250 milyon para sa pagbabakuna laban sa COVID-19 sa mga residente, habang P1 bilyon pa ang standby funds na hihiramin sa Landbank of the Philippines. "To protect our residents from the deadly disease, we will prioritize our frontliners, senior citizens and other vulnerable," ani Olivarez.

Sinigur ng alkalde na makatanggap ng ibang bakuna ang masa 500,000 bonafide residents ng lungsod.



**PEOPLE'S
VIEW**

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**NAKAHANDA NA ANG SISTEMA
PARA SA PAGHUHUKAY AT
PAGPATIBAY NG CAGAYAN
RIVER – CIMATU**

NAKATAKDA nang simulan sa Pebrero 2 ang pagtanggap ng sandbars, pagpapalawak sa makitid na bahagi ng Cagayan River na tinatawag na Magapit Narrows at ang malawakang pagtatanim ng kawayan sa gilid ng ilog. Ito ay inanunsiyo kamakailan ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary at Task Force Build Back Better Chair Roy A. Cimatu.

"This is the culmination of weeks of meticulous planning and detailed coordination to ensure that each of the dredging equipment is safely transported to the sandbar sites and that bamboos are grown at critical portions of the riverbank needing immediate measures to address stream bank erosion and instability," ayon pa kay Sec. Cimatu.

Napakainam na tataniman daw o may 925 na punla ang mga gilid ng kawayan na may habang humigit kumulang isang kilometro sa riverbank ng Barangay Bangag sa Lallo. Tinuunan ng pansin ni Cimatu na ang pagtanggap ng sandbars at pagtatanim ng kawayan ay matatawag na "inseperable twins" na isang istratehiya na gagawin ng TFBBB upang maprotektahan ang agricultural lands at mga pananim tuwing may bagyo.

Bukod naman sa anim na amphibious dredgers na manggagaling sa Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) ay magpapadala rin ng 40 dredging equipment and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na kinabibilangan ng dump trucks, bulldozers, tractors at scoop loaders ayon pa sa pahayag.

Sisimulan daw ang proyekto sa unang bahagi ng dredging operations na kinakailangang tanggalin ang tatlong priority sandbars sa Magapit Narrows na may sukat na 235 ektarya at tinatayang aabot sa seven million cubic meters. Aabot sa 19 sandbars ang kanilang natukoy ngunit ang uunahin ay ang tatlong sandbars na nakahahadlang sa daloy ng tubig baha sa Aparri Delta papunta sa Babuyan Channel, ayon na rin sa DPWH. Mayroon daw na tatlong sandbars na may estimated volume na seven million cubic meters at may sukat na 235 hectares. Sa Barangay Bangag, Lal-lo ito matatagpuan na mayroong 11.4 hectares at may daming 334,305 cubic meters ng buhangin; Casicallan Norte, Gattaran, 89 hectares at may 2.7 million cubic meters ng buhangin at Dummun, Gattaran, 174.70 hectares at 4.04 million cubic meters ng buhangin.

Ang mga benipisyaryo ng Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers program ng Department of Labor and Employment ay kukuha din daw ng 100 local residents na magsisilbing laborers sa planting operation. Ganuon din ang mga dumaan sa pagsasanay sa Technical Education and Skills Development Authority ay kabahagi din ang 48 laborers and operators.



DENR uses bamboo to prevent riverbank erosion in 3 Bicol provinces

By: [Michael B. Jaucian](#) - Correspondent / [@mbjaucianINQ](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 08:24 PM February 09, 2021

LIGAO CITY—At least 6,000 bamboo trees were planted simultaneously on the riverbanks of three towns in Albay province on Tuesday (Feb. 9).

Bamboos could help prevent erosion of riverbanks in the Bicol River Basin that traverses Albay and also the provinces of Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte, according to officer in charge, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Bicol executive director Antonio Abawag.

Assistant Environment Secretary Gilbert Gonzales said the bamboo-planting was part of rehabilitation and recovery programs in areas hit by typhoons in December 2020.

He said it was under Executive Order No. 120 signed by President Rodrigo Duterte.

Gonzales said different government agencies and military units are involved in the program which sought to rebuild areas devastated by typhoons and protect vulnerable communities.

TSB



Ilocos Norte board calls for reforestation program audit

By Leilanie Adriano February 9, 2021, 7:22 pm



TREE PLANTING. Volunteers representing various public and private organizations help in Ilocos Norte's effort to build a green wall to protect the province against flash floods and soil erosion. Ten years after its launching, the massive re-greening program will be assessed and evaluated to determine its impact on the community as well as the environment. (PNA photo by Leilanie G. Adriano)

LAOAG CITY – After appropriating millions of pesos to build its so-called "Green Wall" to secure residents against flash floods and soil erosion, members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Ilocos Norte has called for a thorough assessment, re-evaluation, and revalidation on the present status of the project.

Ten years ago or in 2011, Ilocos Norte launched a massive re-greening program with the backing of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The DENR, through its National Greening Program, allocated PHP60 million as counterpart fund for the green wall project covering major sources of water in the mountainous towns of Solsona, Marcos, Nueva Era, Dingras, Vintar, and the cities of Batac and Laoag.

The provincial government likewise established a provincial nursery where forest tree saplings and fruit-bearing tree seedlings including coffee and bamboo were propagated and planted in various parts of the province, including schools and villages where there are idle or vacant lots waiting to be developed.

To determine the extent of accomplishment, Provincial Board member Da Vinci Crisostomo, who sponsored Draft Resolution No. 2021-02-266, said Monday "there is a need re-assess, re-evaluate and revalidate the project as there have been no concrete or tangible results" that were reported to the body so far.

"We have been allocating millions of pesos for our reforestation project. So, we would like to know where we are exactly now," said Crisostomo in sponsoring the resolution which was unanimously approved by the board on Monday.

As stated in the resolution, a multi-agency committee will be created to check if the province succeeded in building a vibrant reforestation haven. The specific guidelines for the assessment procedure will be formulated at the discretion of the governor.

Aside from various public and private organizations who are helping the province in tree planting activities, investors of renewable energy companies have also expressed their commitment to plant and grow more trees to replace thousands of cut trees that were sacrificed to give way for the establishment of solar and wind farm projects in the towns of Currimao, Burgos, Bangui, and Pagudpud, respectively.

The green wall project was initiated during the term of then Governor and now Senator Ma. Imelda "Imee" R. Marcos. It aims to ensure the long-term protection of dams and irrigation facilities including sustainable management of watershed areas. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1129965>

No illegal collection of wild plants: DENR warns as photo of Mt. Malindig ‘hikers’ with pitcher plant go viral

By Jeline Malasig - February 9, 2021 - 5:32 PM



Picture of a pitcher plant. (Photo by John Rey Callado of NMP-BNHD via NM Marinduque-Romblon Area Museum Facebook)

The environmental department reminded the public against the unauthorized collection of rare and endangered wild plants after a picture of **Mt. Malindig** “hikers” posing and taking wild plants went viral.

The Marinduque office of the **Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Provincial Environment and Natural Resources** (DENR-PENRO) said that such acts are illegal and punishable under the **Wildlife Act of 2001**.

The office released a list of the most common plant species that are illegally collected from the wild, based on the DENR and the **Biodiversity Management Bureau**.

These include the pitcher plant, a plant that a local news outlet said were among those held by the “hikers” in the viral photo.

“We call on the public to help protect these wild plants. Collecting and trading of wildlife species including plants, especially those that are threatened, rare and endangered without securing a permit from the DENR, is illegal and punishable under the provisions of the Republic Act 9147, also known as the Wildlife Act of 2001,” DENR PENRO Marinduque said in an [advisory](#).

The office said that violators may be imprisoned for a maximum of two years and one day to four years and be fined for P30,000 to P300,000.

“If you know anyone who is involved in the illegal collection and trade of these wild plants, please inform the DENR-PENRO Marinduque, Local Government Units, and/or Police Officers in your area,” it added.

Marinduque News on Monday [reported](#) that the group recently hiked to Mt. Malindig through the Makulilis Peak.

“Subalit makikita sa larawan na tila may pitcher o wild plant na hawak ang ilan. Ayon sa DENR, ang ganitong uri ng mga halaman ay itinuturing na endangered at kabilang sa mga ipinagbabawal na species,” the news outlet wrote on Facebook.

“Ibig sabihin, ang mga ito ay hindi dapat kinukuha o ginagalaw mula sa orihinal nitong pinagtutubuan,” it added.

In a separate post, DENR PENRO Marinduque asked those who have information on the individuals’ identities in the viral photo to come forward to their office.



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DENR PENRO Marinduque

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT BUREAU

PUBLIC ADVISORY

Amidst the surge of interest on ornamental plants, including "rare" and wild plants, the public is hereby advised to refrain from engaging in the unauthorized collection, trade, or buying of illegally collected wild plants, instead, the public is advised to utilize propagated ornamental plants from plant nurseries.

Unauthorized collection and patronizing illegally collected wild plants may cause the decimation or possible extinction of these wild plants which reproduce slowly in nature. Keeping the diversity of wild plants contributes to the maintenance of natural balance or integrity of an ecosystem and the ecosystem services that they provide to humans, e.g. food, control, watershed functions, etc.

We call on the public to help protect these wild plants. Collecting and trading of wildlife including plants, especially those that are threatened, without securing a permit from the DENR, is illegal and punishable under the provisions of the Republic Act 9147, also known as the Wildlife Act of 2001. Violators may face a maximum imprisonment of Two (2) years and one (1) day to Four (4) years and a fine of Thirty Thousand Pesos (PHP 30,000.00) to Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (PHP 300,000.00).

If you know anyone who is involved in the illegal collection and trade of these wild plants, please inform the nearest DENR Field Office, Local Government Unit, and/or Police Officer in your area. Information may also be sent to the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), Telefax No. (02) 8825-8948 or by email at btmb@denr.gov.ph.

Thank you for your cooperation.

RICARDO R. CALDERON, CESO-II
Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and
Conservation Director, Biodiversity Management Bureau

2021-2022
Annual Strategic Plan 44 Biodiversity

UPDATED:
FOR PUBLIC ADVISORY, AWARENESS AND FULL COOPERATION

Attached is the Public Advisory from the DENR-BMB on the unauthorized collection, trade, or buying of rare and endangered wild plants amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.... See More

👍 69
💬 25
➡️ 248

DENR PENRO Marinduque

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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👍 886
💬 871
➡️ 5.4K

The pitcher plant

The National Museum-Marinduque Romblon Area Museum said the pitcher plant or the **Nepenthes sibuyanensis** is one of the endemic plants found in **Mt. Guiting-Guiting**.

Nepenthes is carnivorous and has modified leaves called pitfall traps that are shaped like water “pitchers,” hence the name.



The plant lures flying and crawling insects into its secreted nectary liquids and then digests them for nutrition.

The museum describes its appearance as the following:

“The stem and leaf margins may have reddish highlights. Lower pitcher is yellowish to red, sometimes with some scattered red spots below the peristome. The peristome is usually darker than the rest of the pitcher, being dark red to almost black. The lid is yellowish to orange.”

It added that the *Nepenthes sibuyanensis* is a “critically endangered plant,” citing the database of Co’s Digital Flora of the Philippines.

“As part of the country’s rich biodiversity it needs to be protected and conserved for the next generation,” the museum added.

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/trends-spotlights/2021/02/09/185169/no-illegal-collection-of-wild-plants-denr-warns-as-photo-of-mt-malindig-hikers-with-pitcher-plant-go-viral/>



Hundreds of whales, dolphins show up during annual marine mammal count in Sarangani Bay

By Jonathan L. Mayuga
February 10, 2021



The Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS) has reported the sightings of hundreds of whales, dolphins during its annual marine mammal count early this month.

The Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS), a marine protected area in the Province of Sarangani, continues to host hundreds of marine mammals that frequent the area in search of food and place to nurse calves.

From February 2 to 5, 2021, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 12 and its partners reported that around 20 to 30 individuals of short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) were recorded during their activity.

Signed on March 5, 1996, Proclamation 756 established Sarangani Bay and a portion of the municipal waters of Maitum, Kiamba, and Maasim Sarangani province, as a protected seascape for the purpose of protecting and maintaining its coastal and marine resources.

The area, a productive fishing ground, with Sarangani being known as the country's tuna capital, boasts of rich marine biodiversity.

The monitoring team was composed of personnel from DENR Region 12 Conservation and Development Division, Protected Area Management Office (PAMO) of SBPS, and Protection Center of Sarangani Province.

Risso's Dolphins (8), Spinner dolphins (80-100), and Fraser's Dolphins (150-200) were also sighted between the coastal waters of Malapatan and Glan in Sarangani Province.

Photographs of the marine mammals were posted on the DENR Soccsksargen Facebook page.

Of this year's visitors, the pilot whales were the surprise addition, Joy C. Ologuin, SBPS Protected Area Superintendent (PASu) told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview.

"They are new records in Sarangani Bay. They are seldom seen here," she said.

The annual marine mammal monitoring is being conducted in the SBPS to help ensure the protection of the SBPS and the marine mammals that frequent its waters.

The DENR Region 12, SBPS Protected Area Management Office and the Provincial Government of Sarangani are exploring the possibility of promoting whale watching as an added tourism attraction in the area.

Unlike in Oslob, Cebu, where tourism officials encourage feeding whale sharks, locally called butanding to make whale watching interesting to tourists, the DENR and the SBPS-PAMO will not allow such practice.

"We will not promote feeding of whales that way here in Sarangani," she said, adding that the practice somehow changes the behavior of marine mammals.

To protect the SBPS, Ologuin said the coastal barangays in the municipalities that share the bounty of the Sarangani Bay conduct weekly coastal cleanups.



“Garbage from the upland is the biggest threat to the Sarangani Bay and the marine mammals,” she said in Filipino.

During the rainy season, Sarangani Bay is covered with floating trash that flows from the river. All the garbage in the upland, she said, end up in Sarangani Bay.

“That’s why we are working closely with all coastal barangays to do the coastal cleanup. We will do it on a weekly basis,” she said.

Fortunately, she said the DENR was able to gain the support of the concerned local government units and coastal barangays to keep the Sarangani Bay clean and its waters pristine.

Image credits: [DENR Region 12](#)

Recent sightings of sea mammals in Philippine provinces place critically endangered dolphins on spotlight

By **Catalina Ricci S. Madarang** - February 9, 2021 - 6:11 PM



A photo of one of the dolphins spotted at the Sarangani Bay (DENR/Released)

Marine life advocates call to work together for critically endangered dolphins after photos of recent sightings of these sea creatures were shared online.

The **Department of Natural Resources-Region 12 (Soccsksargen)** and the **National Museum-Western Visayas Regional Museum** shared photos of sightings of whales and dolphins on Facebook on Monday night.

The beautiful shots of these marine mammals immediately caught the attention of social media users as some local media outlets also reported them.

Mammals sightings

The Sarangani Bay Seascape

The DENR-Soccsksargen in its post said hundreds of different species of whales and dolphins were spotted in Sarangani Bay during their marine mammal monitoring from February 2 to 5.



Joy Ologuin, protected area superintendent (PASu) of the **Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS)**, [said](#) that their monitoring activities are conducted every month “to ensure the strict protection and conservation of the SBPS.”

Ologuin said that while monitoring, they spotted around 20 to 30 short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*).

They also saw the following species between the coastal waters of Malapatan and Glan in Sarangani Province.

- Eight Risso’s dolphins
- Around 80 to 100 spinner dolphins
- Around 150 to 200 Fraser’s dolphins

Ologuin cited food hunting and nursing of calves as possible reasons for the presence of whales and dolphins at the bay.

Sarangani Bay is a protected area under **Proclamation 756 in 1996** wherein it [covers](#) the following waters:

“Bounded on the South by the Celebes Sea; on the West-Northwest from corner 15 to corner 18 by the Municipalities of Maitum, Kiamba and Maasim; on the North from corner 18 to corner 20 by the City of General Santos; on the East-Southeast from corner 22 to corner 1 by the Municipalities of Alabel, Malapatan and Glan.”

Iloilo-Guimaras Straits

The Western Visayas regional museum, meanwhile, highlighted that the **Irrawaddy dolphins** (*Orcaella brevirostris*) or **lumba-lumba** sighted at the straits of Iloilo and Guimaras are already critically endangered.





“Yes! There are dolphins in the waters off Iloilo and Guimaras. But we might not get a chance to see them in the next few years if we don’t save this subpopulation fast,” the post read.

“The Irrawaddy dolphin is a range-restricted marine mammal that inhabits coastal, estuarine and freshwater habitats in Indo-Pacific region. Isolated populations of Irrawaddy dolphins are found near estuaries, semi-enclosed and protected bodies of water with freshwater inputs like bays, lagoons and rivers,” it added..

The organization said that according to surveys conducted from 2009 to 2016, only eight to 18 mature individuals remained in this subpopulation and their numbers continue to decline.

The subpopulation was then listed as critically endangered.

The **World Wildlife Fund** [explained](#) that **critically endangered** means “a species facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.”

This status can be found under the comprehensive **International Union of Conservation of Nature’s Red List of Threatened Species**, a database that indicates the conservation of the world’s biodiversity.

Another group of marine advocates called **Balyena.org** re-posted this and stressed the threats to the dolphin’s sub-population.

“Kung hindi nyo pa alam...meron mga lumba-lumba sa Iloilo-Guimaras Straits! A small, subpopulation of Irrawaddy dolphins reside in the Iloilo-Guimaras Straits. Threatened by entanglement in fishing gears, pollution, habitat degradation and destruction this subpopulation is Critically Endangered,” the group [said](#).

Use of mining SocDev funds for COVID vaccines allowed

By Jaime S. CabagPublished on February 9, 2021

ILOILO CITY, Feb. 9 (PIA) – As the Philippine government prepares to implement its vaccination plan to fight the coronavirus, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has authorized mining contractors and permit holders to realign this year’s funds allocated for social development, safety and health programs to purchase COVID-19 vaccines for their host communities and workforce.

As mandated by the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, mining contractors and permit holders allocate funds for the implementation of a Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) and Safety and Health Program (SHP).

MGB Region VI here said in a press report that their office has issued a memorandum on January 29, 2021 directing mining contractors and permit holders to realign the 2021 SDMP funds intended for the development of host and neighboring communities to purchase the COVID-19 vaccines for the host barangays and municipalities.

The agency also authorizes the purchase of vaccines for company employees and workers from the funds allocated by mining companies for the health and control services under their SHP.

“The implementation of this memorandum shall be included in the quarterly accomplishment reports to be submitted by mining companies subject to the monitoring of the MGB Regional Office concerned,” the MGB said.

MGB further states “the procurement of the COVID-19 vaccines will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines and procedures of the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Task Force on COVID-19 of the Inter-agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.”

Meanwhile, MGB said their regional offices are coordinating with mining contractors and permit holders in their areas to conduct a study that aims to assess how a mining project has contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of mining host and neighboring communities over the years.

The study will focus on the aspects of health, education, livelihood/household income, and infrastructure. MGB expects the study to be conducted this year.

The study will be undertaken using funds intended for the IEC component of the SDMP. (DENR/MGB 6/PIA6)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1066283>

DENR sets hearings re environmental impact of AG&P LNG terminal

[POWER PHILIPPINES NEWS](#)

on February 9, 2021 at 11:41 am



THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has announced that it will be conducting hearings regarding the environmental impact of Atlantic Gulf & Pacific's (AG&P) proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal on February 18 and 19.

AG&P, through local arm Linseed Field Power Corporation, recently submitted its environment impact study (EIS) to the DENR on [the Php14.6 billion project, which would be located right next to the existing Ilijan Combined-Cycle Power Plant in Batangas City](#).

In its Notice of Public Hearing, the DENR said that the February 18 hearing will be conducted onsite at the Ilijan Barangay Hall, while the February 19 hearing would be done via videoconference.

Parties who wish to participate in the hearings and give their opinions have to confirm their attendance and positions, respectively, via e-mail by February 15. Those with opinions, in particular, must submit a concise position paper.

The hearings will be held in aid of reviewing Linseed's EIS, which it submitted last January. The proposed facility would be built on nine hectares, leased from Ilijan Primeline Holdings, Inc.

When completed, the import terminal will serve the LNG demand requirements of the current 1,200-megawatt (MW) Ilijan plant, its 850MW expansion, and future power projects of SMC Global Power Holdings (SMCGPH). The 850MW expansion is expected to begin operations in 2022.

[SMCGPH, Luzon's largest and the country's second-biggest generating company](#), is the power generation arm of San Miguel Corporation.

To meet the plant's requirements, Linseed plans to construct an onshore regasification, storage, utilities and balance of plant, supplemented with a floating storage unit. The company is targeting to commence the import terminal's operations by June 2022, a month ahead of the Malampaya supply agreement's expiration in July.

[The Department of Energy is currently reviewing the new Ilijan project's notice to proceed](#).

Source: <http://powerphilippines.com/denr-sets-hearings-re-environmental-impact-of-agp-lng-terminal/>



ATN secures environmental compliance certificate for aggregates project in Rizal

February 10, 2021 | 12:07 am



ATN Holdings, Inc. has obtained an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for its 82-hectare integrated aggregates project in Rodriguez, Rizal, the listed firm said in a disclosure on Tuesday.

The certificate, which was issued by a unit of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), covers a yearly extraction rate of 7 million dry metric tons (DMT) of aggregates in the project area.

An ECC must be secured from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau for "environmentally critical" projects, according to the department's citizens charter.

ATN's project has an estimated 66.12 million metric tons of mineable aggregates. Its components include a crushing plant, batching plant, concrete hollow blocks plant, and pollution control facilities.

Through consultancy service provider Permata Resources, Inc., ATN said in the project's description previously submitted to the DENR that it would be engaged in quarrying and crushing operations.

"With industrialization and continuous quest for development, the project is foreseen to aid in augmenting the higher demand for rock aggregates and cement raw materials by the construction industry for the infrastructure development and the government's prioritized infrastructure projects," Permata told the DENR bureau.

In a disclosure in November, ATN said that it was looking to earn P1 billion by 2022 from selling construction materials, adding that there would be a projected demand for building materials as the government pursues its "Build, Build, Build" program.

ATN Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Arsenio T. Ng was previously quoted as saying that the 2022 sales target would come from a combination of rock aggregates, pre-mixed concrete and boulders.

Shares in ATN at the local bourse rose 1.16% or 0.01 centavo to close at P0.87 apiece on Tuesday. — **Angelica Y. Yang**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/atn-secures-environmental-compliance-certificate-for-aggregates-project-in-rizal/>



SM ties up with group to collect plastic waste

By VG Cabuag

February 10, 2021



Shopping mall operator SM Prime Holdings Inc. said it has partnered with nonprofit group Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX) for an initiative that aims to promote proper plastic waste disposal.

The initiative will start at SM Megamall in Ortigas beginning February 10 and will soon be rolled out in stages across other shopping malls nationwide.

Mall shoppers, communities and offices within the area are encouraged to bring their empty, cleaned, and dried plastic waste every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The project promotes responsible plastic waste disposal by encouraging individuals to clean and dry all kinds of plastic waste they generate at home, including plastic bottles, food containers, plastic utensils, and sachets.

Acceptable types of plastics include soda bottles, furniture, grocery bags, and pouches, among others. “Our partnership with SM Supermalls and SM Cares will provide a more extensive opportunity for Filipinos to dispose of their plastic waste responsibly. The PCEX Team remains committed to furthering programs and channels to help save the environment. We all have the collective responsibility to do our part for the planet, and this plastic waste collection program is just one of the many initiatives lined up,” said Richard de Guzman, PCEX sustainable community development manager.

“We are hoping to help instill an eco-conscious mindset among Filipinos when it comes to their use and disposal of plastic. This will be a good community-based initiative on responsible solid waste management, and we are grateful for the partnership with Plastic Credit Exchange,” said SM Cares Program Director on Environment Liza B. Silerio.

According to a report by the World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines published in October, Filipinos consumed about 2.15 million tons of plastic in 2019, of which 35 percent were dumped to the open environment. The report also revealed that the plastic waste recycling rate was only at 9 percent of the said figure for that year.

PCEX is the world’s first global, nonprofit, fully integrated plastic offset platform.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/02/10/sm-ties-up-with-group-to-collect-plastic-waste/>



Eastern Visayas towns barter plastic waste with rice

February 9, 2021 2 min read

TACLOBAN CITY – The local government units of Tarangnan, Samar, and Carigara, Leyte have been encouraging residents to participate in the program that collects solid waste in exchange for food items.

In Tarangnan town, Mayor Arnel Tan said on Tuesday that residents are entitled to two kilograms of rice and several canned goods for every kilo of shredded plastic waste inside a 1.5 liter of a plastic bottle.

Students are also encouraged to participate, the local chief executive said.

“Each plastic waste inside a 1.5 liter bottle is equivalent to school supplies,” Tan said.

For those inclined into planting ornamentals, he said they created a semi-annual competition wherein participants will be encouraged to plant vegetables and fruit-bearing trees.

“We will select the best garden, most colorful, and with the most harvest, and they will receive a cash prize and some items,” Tan added.

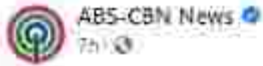
He said the local government will provide seedlings and recycled materials for those who already established a backyard garden.

In Carigara town, the local government announced on its social media page that they will start the Project Barter in a bid to reduce the disposal of trash. Participants will get rice and canned goods.

A kilogram of garbage such as plastic bags and cups, milk tea cups, sachets of shampoo, coffee, milk, vinegar, soy sauce, and snack and candy wrappers, disposable spoon and fork can be exchanged with a kilogram of rice and a can of sardines.

Garbage that will be subject to barter should be cleaned thoroughly. **(PNA)**

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2021/02/09/eastern-visayas-towns-barter-plastic-waste-with-rice/?fbclid=IwAR2DMKhTzcWXyGb1U6_rmRI3-2BqKWZcNeyCFtb70mD4LZMVu7e-cLdUgUg



ABS-CBN News

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TINGNAN: Pinakawalan ang 213 baby pawikan sa baybayin ng Barangay Allmanguan, San Vicente, Palawan, Lunes.

Nakolekta ang hatchlings ng olive ridley sea turtle noon pang Disyembre 2020 at naghintay nang higit sa isang buwan bago napisa ang mga ito.

Dumaan sa pagssahay ang ilang residente para magling tagapangalaga at bantay ng mahigit 150 nesting sites sa mga barangay na sakop ng sikat na "Long Beach" sa bayan.

Niilipat nila sa hatchery ang mga nakikitang itlog para malayo sa banta ng pagtaas ng tubig sa dagat, poachers, at magling sa mga hayop na kinakain ang mga itlog. (📷: Allmanguan Segip Pawikan) | Courtesy: Rex Rufe

BASA'IN DITO ang kaugnay na ulat: <https://bit.ly/3x3tWWW>



👍👎👁️ 2.5K

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Indigenous leader in Philippines 'red-tagged' and killed over dam opposition

The killing of nine Indigenous leaders by police during an operation in the central Philippines on 30 Dec 2020, has drawn widespread condemnation from environmental and human rights groups, politicians, lawyers, and Catholic bishops.



One of the projects, on the Jalaur River, is largely funded through a \$208 million loan from the South Korean government. An illustration of the JRMP II high dam. Image: [National Irrigation Administration JRMP Project Stage II, via Flickr](#), [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

[Jun N. Aguirre, Mongabay](#)

Feb. 9, 2021

At dawn on 30 Dec 2020, police officers raided Indigenous villages within a military reservation camp in the central Philippines in search of alleged members of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the banned communist party.

During the raid, authorities killed nine leaders and arrested 16 members of the Tumandok ethnic group.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), who led the synchronized raids on the island of Panay, said the members were rebel sympathisers.

Human rights and environmental groups have linked the raids to two major dam projects in the area: one on the Jalaur River and the other on the Panay River.

Lawmakers and local groups say the targets of the raid, especially those who were killed, had been opposed to the ongoing construction of the controversial Jalaur dam in the nearby municipality of Calinog.

Indigenous groups there have long complained that the project is destroying their ancestral domain.

Conflicting narratives

The PNP's internal affairs division has opened an investigation into the raids, but insists those killed and arrested were NPA supporters.

Roger James Brillantes, a police colonel who heads the internal affairs office for the Western Visayas region, said at a press conference that the operation was part of a government campaign against rebels.

"The PNP did the raid because it is armed with warrant of arrests," he said. "There is an ongoing investigation if the operatives have conducted lapses in its operation."

Police allege some of the Indigenous leaders fired at officers during the raids, prompting a return of fire in which the Indigenous men were killed. Police reportedly seized some firearms from the operation.

But those arrested deny there was any resistance on their part, saying the police raided their homes at about 4 a.m., when they were asleep. The Indigenous groups say the firearms and explosives the government says it seized were planted.

The Jalaur project is the first large-scale dam to be constructed in the Philippines' central and southern Visayas and Mindanao regions.

Eighty percent of the project cost, nearly \$208 million, comes from a loan from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (KEDF) of South Korea, issued through the Export-Import Bank of Korea in 2012.

In 2018, the Philippines' National Irrigation Administration signed a 11.2 billion peso (\$224 million) contract with South Korea's Daewoo Engineering and Construction for the second stage of the Jalaur project.

The project is expected to provide year-round irrigation, bulk water supply, hydroelectric power, and ecotourism opportunities for the communities on Panay Island.



The red marks are the location of the Indigenous barangays or villages that were included in the police raid last Dec. 30, 2020. The nine slain Indigenous leaders came from these areas. The yellow marks are the proposed sites of the Panay High Dam, part of the Panay River Basin Development Project; and the town of Agcalaga, where South Korea's Daewoo Engineering and Construction conducted a ground breaking ceremony for the second phase of the Jalaur River Multi-purpose Project. Image: Location map made via Google Earth.

The fact that those most opposed to the project were killed in a purported operation against communist sympathisers is no coincidence, groups say.

On 11 Dec, the nine Indigenous leaders killed were part of a Human Rights Day rally, in which they protested against the dam projects.

They were accused of being rebels that same day — a practice known as "red-tagging" that is often used to justify a subsequent crackdown by the police or military.

"Their strong resistance against the development projects have made its members become subject of red-tagging by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), and harassment through intensified military presence in their communities," the Panay chapter of the Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI), a network of NGOs and advocacy groups, said in a statement.

An 'excuse' to kill

The deadly raid on Dec. 30 has also sparked political fallout. On 4 Jan, members of Congress filed a joint declaration calling for a deeper probe into the incident.

"This mass killings and arrests of indigenous peoples in Panay, in the middle of a pandemic no less, is highly condemnable, and has no place in society," six representatives from four parties wrote in their declaration.

"The brazen killing of the poor and marginalised indigenous peoples is an indicator of the state of human rights in the country as well as the raging impunity that seems to reign over our land."

The Panay chapter of the National Union of Lawyers of the Philippines (NULP) also condemned the killings, calling them "identical to the killings of farmers in Negros Oriental on March 30, 2019."

In that incident, 14 people were killed in synchronised police raids in three municipalities in Negros Oriental province. Police similarly accused those killed of being armed NPA sympathisers and firing on officers.

"It appears that the service of these warrants was nothing more than an excuse to carry out an operation intended to kill and arrest local leaders of Tumanduk communities that have been actively advocating for the rights and interests of farmers and indigenous peoples," NUPL - Panay said in a statement.



Images of the Indigenous members from the Tumanduk community who were arrested during the Dec. 30, 2020 security raid in Panay Island, Philippines. Image: Police Regional Office-Western Visayas.

The clergy in this staunchly Catholic country has also raised concerns over the killings.

In a joint statement, eight bishops representing dioceses in the Western Visayas region issued a demand for the government to thoroughly investigate the raid.

They also called on the government to listen to the "legitimate cries of the Tumandoks over the Jalaur mega dam issue"; end the militarisation of Indigenous communities in the area; compel the PNP and the military to follow ethical standards in the rules of engagement, and require police officers to use body cameras to protect parties against false accusations.

The government, through its Western Visayas Regional Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (RTF-ELCAC), has responded by calling the bishops misinformed on the issue. Flosemer Chris Gonzales, a lawyer for the task force, said the clergymen may have been deceived by the propaganda from the NPA.

"We caution the bishops from making hasty, false, and presumptuous conclusions," he said.



"We would like to think that you have all been misinformed. As Catholics, we adhere to the teachings of the Church but that does not equally mean that our bishops are not prone to errors in judgment. The individuals who were arrested were subjects of legitimately issued search warrants. You cannot conclude that atrocities were committed. That is simply irresponsible."

This story was published with permission from [Mongabay.com](https://www.mongabay.com).



BFAR: 16 coastal areas in PH still positive for shellfish toxin

Published February 9, 2021, 5:01 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

Sixteen coastal waters in the country are still positive for paralytic shellfish poison, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said Tuesday, February 9.



Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)
(MANILA BULLETIN)

According to the latest laboratory results, shellfishes collected from the coastal waters “are still positive for paralytic shellfish poison that is beyond the regulatory limit.”

The affected areas are Inner Malampaya Sound in Taytay, Palawan; Sorsogon Bay in Sorsogon; coastal waters in Dauis and Tagbilaran City, Bohol; Tambobo Bay in Sianton, Negros Oriental; coastal waters of Daram Island in Zumarraga, San Pedro, and Cambatutay in Western Samar; coastal waters of Calubian in Leyte, Carigara Bay, and Cancabato Bay in Tacloban City; coastal waters of Biliran Islands; coastal waters of Guiuan and Matarimao Bay in Eastern Samar; Dumanquillas Bay in Zamboanga del Sur; Balite Bay in Mati City, Davao Oriental; and Lianga Bay and coastal waters of Hinatuan in Surigao del Sur.

The BFAR reminded the public that all types of shellfish and alamang gathered from these areas are not safe for human consumption.

However, fish, squids, shrimps, and crabs are safe for human consumption provided that they are fresh and washed thoroughly, and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking, BFAR said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/09/bfar-16-coastal-areas-in-ph-still-positive-for-shellfish-toxin/>

Gov't optimistic to reach herd immunity by 2023

February 9, 2021



The Philippine government is optimistic the country will attain herd immunity against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in 2023.

This was confirmed by Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Maria Rosario Veregeire in spite of criticisms against the slow roll-out of government's national vaccination program. She added the Philippines may reach herd immunity even before 2023 once the vaccination of the target population is accomplished sooner.

Herd immunity is a concept where the virus cannot further spread because an adequate number of the population has been vaccinated. Vaccine Czar Carlito Galvez Jr. initially stated that government aims to vaccinate 70% of the country's population to create a herd immunity against COVID-19. - *PTV News*



Aftershocks possible from magnitude 5 quake in Occidental Mindoro

By Ma. Cristina Arayata February 9, 2021, 2:20 pm



(Image grabbed from Phivolcs' website)

MANILA – Aftershocks are expected from the magnitude 5 earthquake that jolted Occidental Mindoro on Tuesday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

The tectonic quake struck 58 kilometers (km) southwest of the municipality of San Jose around 7:24 a.m. It had a depth of 17 km.

Intensity IV was felt in San Jose.

The following instrumental intensities were also recorded:

Intensity III -- San Jose, Occidental Mindoro
Intensity II -- Roxas, Oriental Mindoro; Sebaste, Antique
Intensity I -- Jamindan, Capiz

Instrumental intensity is measured using intensity meter that measures ground acceleration.

Meanwhile, Phivolcs is not expecting damages from the earthquake, as damage starts at Intensity VI based on Phivolcs' scale. (**PNA**)



French submarine patrols South China Sea, likely angering Beijing

posted February 09, 2021 at 11:30 am

by [AFP](#)

A French nuclear attack submarine was among two navy ships that recently conducted a patrol through the South China Sea, its defence minister announced, in a move likely to anger Beijing, which claims most of the strategic waters as its territory.

The SNA Emeraude was accompanied by support ship BSAM Seine for the passage, Defence Minister Florence Parly said on Twitter late Monday.

"This extraordinary patrol has just completed a passage in the South China Sea. A striking proof of the capacity of our French Navy to deploy far away and for a long time together with our Australian, American and Japanese strategic partners," she tweeted along with a picture of the two vessels at sea.

China lays claim to nearly all of the South China Sea while Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all also claim parts of the region, believed to hold valuable oil and gas deposits.

US warships occasionally carry out "freedom of navigation" missions through or close to waters claimed by Beijing to stress Washington's rejection of those claims.

The USS John S. McCain last week sailed near islands in the South China Sea claimed by Beijing and conducted a transit through the Taiwan Strait, prompting a warning from China.

NATO member France has exclusive economic zones in the Pacific around its overseas territories and has stressed the importance of defending freedom of navigation in the region.

"Why such a mission? To enrich our knowledge of this area and affirm that international law is the only rule that is valid, whatever the sea where we sail," Parly tweeted.

The French patrol comes after the inauguration of US President Joe Biden, who has underscored support for Washington's Asian allies after four chaotic years of the Donald Trump administration.

In April 2019, there was a naval incident in the Taiwan Strait when Chinese ships told the French frigate Vendemiaire to leave the waterway that separates the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, another sensitive area claimed by Beijing.

Science suggests possible climate link to Covid-19

Researchers think there could be a climate link to Covid-19. In which case, worse could yet happen.



Pangolins have been suspected of transmitting the virus, but the case is far from proven. Image: [Wildlife Alliance, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0](#)

By Tim Radford, Climate News Network
Feb. 9, 2021

British and US scientists think there may be [a connection between global heating driven by profligate fossil fuel use, and the emergence of the bat-borne virus that has triggered a global pandemic](#) and has so far claimed more than two million lives worldwide – in short, a possible climate link to Covid-19.

The connection is possibly quite simple. Rising average temperatures encouraged a change in the natural vegetation of the forests of Yunnan, the southern Chinese province, close to the forests of Laos and Myanmar.

What had been tropical shrubland shifted to tropical savannah and deciduous woodland: the province became a suitable habitat for many bat species. It is also home to the scaly anteater known as the pangolin, and the masked palm civet: both of these have been also proposed as intermediate carriers of the virus.

And, researchers say, in the last century an additional 40 bat species moved into Yunnan: these may have delivered 100 more types of bat coronavirus to the pool of potential infection.

The fact that climate change can accelerate the transmission of wildlife pathogens to humans should be an urgent wake-up call to reduce global emissions.

Camilo Mora, associate professor, department of geography and environment, University of Hawaii

Magnet for bats

And this “global hotspot” – far from the city where the first human cases were first confirmed – is where all the genetic data suggest that the coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 may have arisen, says a study in the journal [Science of the Total Environment](#).

“Climate change over the last century has made the habitat in Yunnan province suitable for more bat species,” said [Robert Beyer of the University of Cambridge](#), now at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, who led the research.

“Understanding how the global distribution of bat species has shifted as a result of climate change may be an important step in reconstructing the origin of the Covid-19 outbreak.”

That animals carry viruses which can infect other species is well established: the HIV-Aids pandemic, the Ebola outbreaks in Africa and many other infections have all been linked to animal-to-human transmission.

For decades, scientists have been recording new “zoonotic” or animal-borne diseases in humans at the rate of two a year. An estimated 80% of all the viruses linked to human disease are of animal origin, including rabies.

The link between [human disturbance of wilderness and disease outbreak](#) has been made before, and more than once. A study by Cambridge scientists last year [identified 161 steps humankind could take to reduce the ever-growing risks of zoonotic infection](#) that could lead to even more devastating pandemics.

The case for bat transmission of SARS-CoV-2 driven by climate change remains circumstantial. It identifies a suspect and a set of possibly incriminating connections, but does not deliver the evidence for a secure conviction.

Using global records of temperature, rainfall and cloud cover, the scientists behind the latest study mapped global vegetation as it must have been a century ago. Then they used what they knew of the ecology of the world’s bat species to estimate the global distribution of each species 100 years ago. And then they matched this with records of species distribution in the last decade.

“As climate change altered habitats, species left some areas and moved into others – taking their viruses with them. This not only altered the regions where viruses are present, but most likely allowed for new interactions between animals and viruses, causing more harmful viruses to be transmitted or evolve,” Dr Beyer said.

There are [more than 1,400 species of bat worldwide](#): these carry around 3,000 kinds of coronavirus, in ways that are mostly harmless to the host.

Risk increases

If the number of bat species increases, in a region also occupied by humans, then the risk of the infection of a new host, via bat urine, faeces, saliva or other transmission, also increases.

Bat viruses have been linked to Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Cov-1 and CoV-2.

The region of Yunnan identified as now richer in bat species is also [home to the pangolin](#), and one theory is that the virus jumped from bat to pangolin, or bat to [masked palm civet](#), and then to humans when a pangolin was sold at a wildlife market in Wuhan, in Hubei province, more than 1200 kilometres away, where the first cases of Covid-19 were detected..

The implication of such a research finding is that, if human disturbance of the natural world increases the chance of such animal-to-human infection, then it will happen again. And it could happen with even greater potential loss of life.

That is why the discovery of this possible climate link to Covid-19 will now attract the minutest attention not only of scientists but of policymakers across the world.

“The fact that climate change can accelerate the transmission of wildlife pathogens to humans should be an urgent wake-up call to reduce global emissions,” said [Camilo Mora, of the University of Hawaii](#), another of the research team.

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

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/science-suggests-possible-climate-link-to-covid-19/>



Hacker tries poisoning Florida city's water

Published 3 hours ago on February 10, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



W. Commons WATER systems are particularly vulnerable to cyberattacks because their modern control systems are now connected to the Internet.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — An unknown hacker broke into a Florida city's water supply and briefly pushed levels of a potentially dangerous additive up 100-fold, local law enforcement said Monday.

The hack was noticed quickly and reversed immediately, so no one in the Tampa suburb of Oldsmar was ever in danger, Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gaultieri said.

But it underscored the broader threat of cyberattacks to US infrastructure, he added.

A computer operator for the Oldsmar water treatment system noticed Friday afternoon someone remotely accessing the plant's controls, Gaultieri said.

The operator watched the mouse pointer move between various functions for several minutes before opening the controls for adding sodium hydroxide to the water.

The chemical, also known as lye and used in drain cleaners, is added in very small amounts to control acidity and remove metals from the water before it goes to consumers.

But the hacker raised the input level from 100 parts per million to 11,100 parts per million — 100 times normal — before exiting the system, Gaultieri said.

"This is obviously a significant and potentially dangerous increase," he told a press conference.

"Luckily it was caught right away."

Gaultieri said water users were never threatened, because even if the hack had not been spotted immediately, it would have taken at least 24 hours for the water with high sodium hydroxide levels to reach consumers.

In the meantime, he added, safety mechanisms would have alerted officials to the change in water quality.

He said the Federal Bureau of Investigation and US Secret Service were called in to help investigate, but so far there were no suspects.

Investigators did not know if the hack came from within or outside the United States, or why Oldsmar was targeted.

"Water systems, like other public utility systems, are part of the nation's critical infrastructure, and can be vulnerable targets when someone desires to adversely affect public safety," Gaultieri said.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/02/10/hacker-tries-poisoning-florida-citys-water/>



Vehicles using lights travel on a bridge amid heavy smog in Beijing, China, December 8, 2015. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon

Fossil fuel pollution causes one in five premature deaths globally -study

Published February 9, 2021 4:21pm

By MATTHEW GREEN, Reuters

LONDON — Pollution from fossil fuels causes one in five premature deaths globally, suggesting the health impacts of burning coal, oil and natural gas may be far higher than previously thought, according to a study published on Tuesday.

Parts of China, India, Europe and the northeastern United States are among the hardest-hit areas, suffering a disproportionately high share of 8.7 million annual deaths attributed to fossil fuels, the study published in the journal *Environmental Research* found.

The new research gives the most detailed assessment of premature deaths due to fossil-fuel air pollution to date. Another study in 2017 had put the annual number of deaths from all outdoor airborne particulate matter—including dust and smoke from agricultural burns and wildfires—at 4.2 million.

"Our study certainly isn't in isolation in finding a large impact on health due to exposure to air pollution, but we were blown away by just how large the estimate was that we obtained," said Eloise Marais, an expert in atmospheric chemistry at University College London, and a co-author of the study.

Previous research based on satellite data and ground observations had struggled to distinguish pollution caused by burning fossil fuels from other sources of harmful particulates, such as wildfires or dust.

The team from three British universities and Harvard University sought to overcome this problem by using a high-resolution model to give a clearer indication of which kinds of pollutants people were breathing in a particular area.



With concern growing over the role that burning fossil fuels plays in causing climate change, the authors said they hoped the study, based on data from 2018, would provide further impetus for governments to accelerate a shift to cleaner energy.

"We hope that by quantifying the health consequences of fossil fuel combustion, we can send a clear message to policymakers and stakeholders of the benefits of a transition to alternative energy sources," said co-author Joel Schwartz, an environmental epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. —
Reuters

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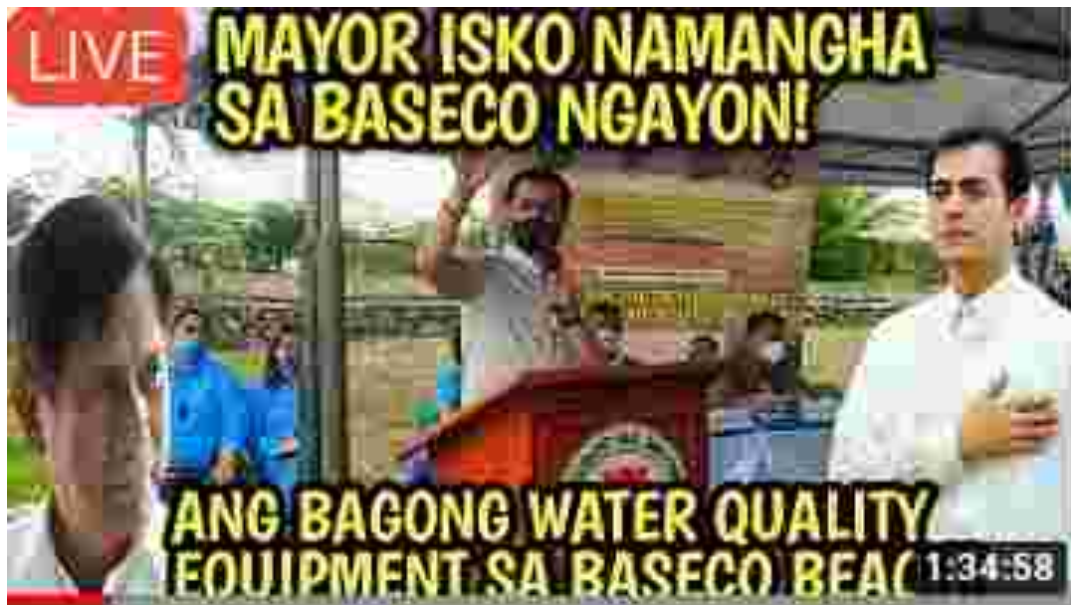


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