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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Sen Cynthia Villar, DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu And DPWH Sec Mark Villar And Rep. Camille Villar inaugurate last stage of Zapote River Drive

The project is designed to ease heavy traffic and avert flooding

ByBMPlus February 13, 2021



PREVENTING HEAVY TRAFFIC AND FLOODINGS. Sen. Cynthia A. Villar led the inauguration of the final stage of the Las Pinas River Drive in Las Pinas City. The Senator was joined by DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu, DPWH Sec. Mark Villar, Las Pinas Rep. Camille Villar, DENR Usec Jonas Leones and DENR Regional Executive Director (NCR) Jacqueline Caangcan. The senator assured they are always finding ways to address heavy traffic and floodings to ease the burden of the Filipino people especially during this time of pandemic.

TRAFFIC gridlock and flooding will be further prevented in Las Pinas City after Sen. Cynthia Villar Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu, DPWH Secretary Mark Villar and Las Piñas Representative Camille Villar led the inauguration of the completed stage 5 of the Zapote River Drive in the city.

With the completion of the new road project along Zapote river, Villar expects a significant reduction in the volume of vehicles plying Alabang-Zapote Road, a major thoroughfare in Las Pinas.

Metro Manila Development Authority has named Alabang-Zapote Road, a four-lane national road, as among the major bottleneck areas in the southern part of Metro Manila.

"The new road project will also lessen travel time by 70% from Cavitex to MCX," according to the senator. Villar said she is fully aware of the terrible traffic affecting Las Pinas residents and all motorists and commuters passing through the Alabang-Zapote Road.

"I understand their anger and frustrations so I am always finding ways to minimize their burden brought about by the heavy traffic," noted Villar.

Aside from faster traffic flow, the senator braced for easier business movements to and from Las Pinas and the adjacent areas.

"I initiated this road project to make travelling easier and less burdensome for our people," said Villar, adding that this will also help lessen flooding in the city which resulted from the massive clean-up of Las Pinas and Zapote River.





Due to the clean-up component of the road project, we have rid the river of tons of garbage and make it free flowing again. "We can help stop flooding in the city," she further stated.

Villar said the completion of the road project involves a 3.2 kilometers road crossing Springvale Heights, Versailles, Enclave, Portofino to Evia at Daang Hari Road connecting to MCX.

She said the new road will also complete the 25 kilometers project from Cavite to MCX connecting Cavite, Las Pinas and Muntinlupa to the Southern Luzon Expressway (SLEX)

The Zapote River Drive starts from C5 Road to Brgy. Longos, Zapote, passing Zapote Underpass, Barangay Pamplona Dos, BF Resort Village, Moonwalk, Soldier Hills, Ayala Southvale, Springville Heights, Versailles. Enclave, Portofino and ends in Evia.

The completed Zapote River Drive is a part of the total 32 kilometers river drive road improvement initiated by Senator Villar that started in 2012. The other projects are the Las Pinas and Molino River drive which are set to be completed this year.

"The Zapote and Las Pinas Riverdrive, as well as the Molino Riverdrive, do not only ease up the traffic woes and flooding, it will also closely maintain the cleanliness of the river, which is considered the artery of the city and nearby areas, since the people along the river cannot throw their wastes anymore because the road is already fenced," the Senator cited. Villar has spent decades in ensuring the cleanliness, maintenance and rehabilitation of Las Pinas-Zapote river, which was previously clogged because of garbage that hindered the flow of water, caused water pollution and massive flooding. She created various livelihood projects out of water hyacinths, waste coconut husks, plastic wastes, kitchen and garden wastes that came from the river, as raw materials. Her "Sagip-Ilog" project was recognized as United Nations' "Best Practices Award" in 2011. An initiative program that was recognized for protecting water resources and providing livelihood to Filipinos.



DENR shuts down illegal dumpsites

By [The Manila Times](#)

February 14, 2021

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has closed down two local government-run open dumpsites in Misamis Oriental as part of its commitment on closing all open dumpsites across the country before the end of March 2021.

“The closure of the two open dumpsites in Misamis Oriental is in compliance with the deadline set by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu to cease the operations of all open dumpsites in the country by March this year,” said Undersecretary Benny Antiporda for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns in a statement on Saturday.

The DENR has stopped the operations of 3,000-square meter and 1-hectare open dumpsites in the municipalities of Talisayan and Salay, respectively, on January 25.

Under Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000,” no open dumps should be established and operated by any person or even local governments.

The full implementation of RA 9003 has been at the top of Cimatu’s priority since he assumed the post in 2017, Antiporda said.

Prior to the closure, Antiporda held a virtual conference with DENR regional directors on how to go about closing down all dumpsites within their respective jurisdictions.

DENR-Environmental Management Bureau Regional Director Reynaldo Digamo said Talisayan Mayor Rommel Maslog and Salay Mayor Angelo Capistrano Jr. have been cooperative with the closure of the dumpsites.

“Both mayors expressed their needs for financial assistance to complete and sustain the implementation of their solid waste management programs,” Digamo said.

There are 200 open dumpsites still operating across the country, according to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), which is chaired by Cimatu.

To date, 38 open dumpsites have been closed down by the DENR, following Cimatu’s directive to close all open dumpsites by end of March.

Antiporda, who serves as the alternate chair of the NSWMC, said the DENR will be adopting a “clustered approach” in the development of sanitary landfills (SLFs) nationwide to enable local governments to implement solid waste management programs.

Data from NSWMC showed that Luzon would require some 140 SLFs to service some 772 local government units (LGUs), Visayas with 32 SLFs for 408 LGUs and Mindanao with 34 SLFs for 337 LGUs.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/02/14/news/regions/denr-shuts-down-illegal-dumpsites/840715/>

DENR, patuloy ang pagtugis sa mga pasaway na dumpsite



February 13, 2021 @ 5:08 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Alinsunod sa kautusan ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ikinandado ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang mga open dumpsite na pinapatakbo ng dalawang lokal na pamahalaan sa Misamis Oriental habang patuloy nitong ipinapatupad ang pangako na ipapasara ang lahat ng mga open dumpsite sa bansa bago matapos ang Marso 2021.

“The closure of the two open dumpsites in Misamis Oriental is in compliance with the deadline set by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to cease the operations of all open dumpsites in the country by March this year,” ani Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

Nabatid na ipinatigil ng DENR ang pagpapatakbo ng isang 3,000-square meter at isang one-hectare open dumpsite sa mga munisipalidad ng Talisayan at Salay noong Jan. 25.

Sa ilalim ng Republic Act (RA) 9003 o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, walang open dumpsite ang puwedeng ipatayo o patakbuhan ng kung sinumang tao o anumang lokal na pamahalaan.

Sinabi ni Antiporda na ang lubusang pagpapatupad ng RA 9003 ay nasa tuktok ng mga prayoridad ni Cimatu magmula nang naupo siya bilang Kalihim noong 2017.

Bago ang sunud-sunod na pagpapatigil-operasyon, tinipon ni Antiporda ang mga DENR regional director sa isang virtual conference upang malaman nila ang mga dapat gawin alinsunod sa pagpapasara ng lahat ng open dumpsite sa kani-kanilang mga nasasakupan.

Naging matulungin naman sina Talisayan Mayor Rommel Maslog at Salay Mayor Angelo Capistrano Jr. sa pagpapasara ng kani-kanilang mga open dumpsite, ayon kay DENR-Environmental Management Bureau Regional Director Reynaldo Digamo.

“Both mayors expressed their needs for financial assistance to complete and sustain the implementation of their solid waste management programs,” ani Digamo.

Ayon sa DENR nasa 200 open dumpsites ang patuloy na tumatakbo sa buong bansa, ayon sa National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) na pinamumunuan ni Cimatu.

Sa ngayon, 38 na mga open dumpsite na ang ipinatigil-operasyon ng DENR alinsunod sa utos ni Cimatu na ipasara ang lahat ng open dumpsite sa katapusan ng Marso.



Ayon kay Antiporda, na siya ring kahalili ni Cimatú sa pamumuno ng NSWMC, na ang DENR ay magkakaroon ng “clustered approach” sa pagpapatayo ng sanitary landfills (SLFs) sa buong bansa upang mapatupad ng mga lokal na pamahalaan ang kanilang mga programa para sa solid waste management.

Nabatid sa datos ng NSWMC, ang Luzon ay mangangailangan ng 140 SLFs para mapagsilbihan ang 772 na local government units (LGUs); ang Visayas, kailangan ng 32 na SLFs para sa 408 LGUs, at ang Mindanao ay kailangan ng 34 SLFs para sa 337 LGUs. (Santi Celario)



DENR closes 2 Misamis dumps

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 14, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has padlocked two local government-operated dumps in Misamis Oriental in line with its commitment to close all dumps in the country by the end of March.

The DENR terminated the operations of the dumps in Talisayan and Salay towns.

Under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, no dumps should be established and operated by any person or local government.

Reynaldo Digamo, DENR-Environmental Management Bureau Northern Mindanao director, said Mayors Rommel Maslog of Talisayan and Angelo Capistrano Jr. of Salay have been cooperative in the closure of the dumps.

“Both mayors expressed their need for financial assistance to complete and sustain the implementation of their solid waste management programs,” Digamo said.

Around 200 open dumps are still operating across the country while 38 have been closed, according to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC).

Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the DENR would adopt a “clustered approach” in the development of sanitary landfills to enable local government units (LGUs) to implement their solid waste management programs.

The NSWMC said 140 sanitary landfills are needed to serve 772 LGUs in Luzon, 32 for 408 LGUs in the Visayas and 34 for 337 LGUs in Mindanao.



DENR PINASARA ANG OPEN DUMPSITE SA PAMPANGA



February 14, 2021 @ 12:15 AM 6 hours ago

KINANDADO ni Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pasukan papunta sa open dumpsite, kung saan pinalalabas bilang materials recovery facility (MRF) ng munisipalidad sa Brgy. San Nicolas, Sta. Ana, Pampanga noong Pebrero 5.

Personal na isinagawa ni Antiporda ang operasyon para maisara ang dumpsite, kasama ang Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) central at regional offices, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, at Sta. Ana Municipal Police.

Binigyang-diin ni Antiporda na ang mga open dumpsite ay nagde-degrade sa kapaligiran at nagdudulot ng panganib sa komunidad lalo na sa mga nakatira malapit sa mga basurahan.

Ang pinasaradong pasilidad ay pag-aari at pinatatakbo ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Sta. Ana at naisyuhan ng notice of violation noon pang 2018.

Gayunman, patuloy pa rin ang operasyon ng munisipalidad nang hindi pa rin itinatama ang kanilang paglabag.

Makikita sa larawan sina (mula kaliwa) Solid Waste Management Section Chief Andresito Cabalar ng EMB-Region 3 at Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service (SCIS) Director Hiro V. Masuda.

BELLO UNVEILS PESO MARKER SA LALAWIGAN NG BULACAN

Tinanggal ni Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III ang takip ng marker ng bagong pinasinayaang tanggapan ng Provincial Public Employment Service Office (PESO) sa lalawigan ng Bulacan sa isang seremonya noong Pebrero 3.

Ang opisina ang kauna-unahang stand-alone building sa buong Central Luzon na maglilingkod at magtuturo sa higit-kumulang 500 hanggang in-house skills trainees para sa iba't ibang NC II certificate courses na ibinigay ng Provincial Livelihood Training Center.

Ang temang ginamit, "Gat Blas F. Ople: Huwaran ng Kabataan, Ama ng Kabuhayan at Kaalaman", sa aktibidad ay kasabay ng ika-94 anibersaryo ni Gat Blas F. Ople na nagmula sa Bulacan.



Kasama ni Kalihim Bello sa panahon ng seremonya sina (mula sa kaliwa): Bulacan Governor Daniel R. Fernando, Mrs. Susana "Nana Saning" V. Ople, Bulacan Vice Governor Wilhelmino M. Sy-Alvarado, Bureau of Local Employment Director Dominique Rubia-Tutay at DOLE Undersecretary Renato L. Ebarle.



PEOPLE'S VIEW

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NAGPULONG NA ANG DENR ANTI-POLLUTION TASK FORCE UPANG MAPABILIS ANG MANILA BAY REHABILITATION

SINIMULAN na nuong Pebrero 3 ng Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (MBAPTF) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kumpletong pamamaraan upang mas mapabilis ang isinasagawang rehabilitation at restoration ng coastal at marine ecosystem ng Manila Bay. Ang unang pulong ng task force ay pinamumunuan ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

Ayon naman kay DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, "We have to get down to business and jumpstart the task force as we mark the second year of the Battle for Manila Bay." Ipinaliwanag ni Antiporda ang kahalagahan ng trabaho ng task force na tumutugon sa mga nagawang aksiyon ni Cimatu bilang chair ng Manila Bay Task Force (MBTF). Ang sentro ng adhikain ay upang masugpo na ang polyusyon sa buong Kalakhang Maynila. Gagawin daw nila ang lahat ng paraan na masugpo na ang mga polluters. Ang MBAPTF ay binubuo ng Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO), River Basin Control Office (RBCO), Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office (PRCMO), National Water Resources Board, Laguna Lake Development Authority at Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) regional offices sa Central Luzon, CALABARZON at National Capital Region.

Inatasan ni Antiporda ang PRCMO na suriin ang riverbanks sa Pasig River para sa illegal drainage pipes at upang matukoy ang pinanggagalingan nito mula sa Laguna de Bay palabas ng Napindan Channel patungo sa Manila Bay dagdag pa ding ulat na ipinadala ng DENR sa inyong lingkod. Ang nag-iisang labasan daw sa Laguna de Bay ay ang Napindan Channel na konektado sa Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng Pasig River. Tinuran din sa ulat na inatasan din nito ang EMB na magbigay ng technical assistance sa pamamagitan ng water quality assessment upang matukoy kung ang tubig ay nagmumula sa floodwater o galing sa residential, commercial at industrial establishments. Ang MBCO naman sa tulong na rin ng EMB ay pinatitignan at pinamomonitor ang water quality sa mga port areas sa pakikipagtulungan na rin ng Philippine Ports Authority and Philippine Fisheries Development Authority. Tutukuyin din daw ng RBCO kung saang mga ilog dapat ilagay ang mga trash trap upang maiwasan na madumihan ng basura ang mga waterways.

Binuo ni Cimatu ang MBAPTF nuong ika-6 ng Enero, 2021 sa pamamagitan na rin ng mandato ng Administrative Order No. 16 na inisyu ng Office of the President para sa rehabilitasyon at restorasyon ng Manila Bay. Layunin na matiyak daw na sumusunod ang lahat ng government facilities at iba pang establisyamento sa Manila Bay region na magkonekta sa kasalukuyang sewerage system o gumawa ng sarili nilang sewerage plant upang mapigilan ang pagdami ng Manila Bay. Tungkulin din daw nito na magkaroon ng "remedial measures" sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng engineering at technological interventions para sa water quality at mahigpit na pagpapatupad ng Republic Act 9275 o ang Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

NLuzon regions to intensify forest protection

By Leander C. Domingo, TMT

February 13, 2021

NORTHERN Luzon's three regions have converged to enhance, unify and streamline efforts and resources for better protection and conservation of environment and natural resources.

Last February 5, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Executive Directors Directors Crizaldy Barcelo of Region 1 (Ilocos Region), Gwendolyn Bambalan of Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) and Ralph Pablo of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) inked a tripartite agreement in San Fernando City in La Union for their joint undertaking.



Lack of forest cover in parts of Cagayan Valley can worsen flooding during heavy rains and storms, like what happened last November in Cagayan province. THE MANILA TIMES FILE PHOTO

The signing of the agreement pushes the effective monitoring of illegal transport of forest products, wildlife, and illegally extracted, removed and transported mineral and mineral by-products.

According to Bambalan, they agreed to establish linkage and close coordination among (DENR) forest products monitoring stations in their regions through the respective provincial environment and natural resources offices (Penros).

Citing the agreement, Bambalan said the team leaders of the monitoring stations shall closely coordinate to monitor any movement of and apprehend illegal forest products, wildlife, and illegally extracted, removed and transported mineral and mineral by-products.

“[We have] also agreed that the Penro officer whose jurisdiction covers the monitoring station shall supervise the action of the checkpoint and shall submit a report to the concerned regional executive director,” she added.

Under the agreement, administrative adjudication of apprehended or seized forest products, wildlife, conveyance used, tools and equipment, including the filing of criminal complaints against the perpetrators, shall be conducted by the community environment and natural resources office concerned.

Bambalan said the agreement is also strategically important and significant for the Region 2, having been hit hard in November last year by massive flooding, particularly the provinces of Isabela and Cagayan.

“This really manifests our commitment to protect our forest and forest resources,” she said emphasizing the much-needed intensified surveillance operations following the directive of Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.



Bambalan said they have been working on strengthening environmental law enforcement in Region 2 through the Regional Environmental Law Enforcement Council, which is an expanded version of the Regional Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force and the Regional Mutisectoral Forest Protection Committee.

“We have made improvements in Region 2 with our forest products monitoring stations in south and north exits located in Aritao town in Nueva Vizcaya and Santa Praxedes town in Cagayan, respectively,” she said.



Distinctly unique PHL wild doves

By Jonathan L. Mayuga
February 14, 2021



Common zebra doves have learned to adapt and inhabit small green spaces in the city, like some parts of the University of the Philippines Diliman campus in Quezon City.

They are almost twice the size of the brown shrike, commonly called tarat. But they are slightly smaller compared to their domesticated cousins, the homing or racing pigeons, which are usually kept by your neighbor's kids.

Unlike their bigger cousins, these elusive doves are definitely wild and free, and are not meant to be domesticated or become household pets.

Philippine wild doves, often brown, if not light brown-feathered, and sometimes grey-feathered birds, are masters of blending with their environment, whether in the dense forest or the city park near you.

Like most often ignored and dismissed as unimportant birds, the wild doves or pigeons, are unique and important to the ecosystems, in their own little ways.

Forest dwellers

According to the wildlife experts at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), most wild dove species prefer primary forests as their habitat.

But some also inhabit lowland forests with mixed primary and secondary growths, forest edges and secondary forests.

There are, however, some small-island specialists, such as the Sulu bleeding-heart.

Philippine doves are distributed in all major islands of the country, some are endemic to certain ranges.

These are the Mindoro bleeding-heart, which is known to exist on the Mindoro Island only; the Tawi tawi brown-dove, which exists exclusively in the Sulu archipelago; the Negros bleeding-heart and Negros fruit-dove, which are known to exist in Panay and Negros only.

But don't be surprised if you see a wild dove perched on a tree in the city. They have learned to adapt and inhabit even city parks or the small green spaces in the urban jungle.

Diverse species

Many of the wild doves are known to occur in the Philippines, each with distinctive mark and some occurring in highly restricted range where the species is only known to occur and nowhere else in the world.

Sometimes, they are called Philippine fruit doves because of their diet, or feeding habit.

The Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the DENR said there are currently 36 species of wild doves and pigeons in the country.

Of these, 17 are endemic, or can only be found in the Philippines.



Unique birds

Wild pigeons or wild fruit doves are unique from other birds, according DENR-BMB Director Amelita D.J. Ortiz.

“Bird species of the Family *Columbidae* [to which wild doves belong] are incredibly complex and intelligent animals and are renowned for their outstanding navigational abilities,” she told the BusinessMirror via e-mail.

Responding to an e-mail query, Ortiz said wild doves use a range of skills, such as using the sun as a guide and an internal “magnetic compass,” like the home or racing pigeon.

“Pigeons for example, were used in both World War I and II as messengers and served as the sole source of the earliest large-scale communication network,” she said.

Unique characteristics

But there are also other characteristics that set the wild pigeons apart from other family of birds. These include a bilobed crop that produces a sort of “milk” that is fed to the chicks. The “crop” is the pocket-like space near the bird’s throat.

It also has a monogamous mating behavior, which is attributed to the single pairing of a male with a female.

The pigeon species has the ability to drink by sucking or pumping, and it has thick feathers set close to the skin.

Wild doves possess stocky bodies with small heads bills, and feet.

Threatened species

Of the 36 species of wild doves in the Philippines, 19 are classified as threatened based on the DENR’s Department Administrative Order 2019-09.

According to the DENR-BMB, seven species of the wild doves are now critically endangered or in the brink of extinction.

They are the Mindoro bleeding-heart, the Negros bleeding-heart, Sulu bleeding-heart, Amethyst brown dove, the Tawi tawi brown-dove, Negros fruit dove and the pink-bellied imperial pigeon—all are endemic to the Philippines.

Six others are “endangered and six more are vulnerable.”

Habitat loss

According to Ortiz, the main culprit for the possible extinction of these species is the destruction of their natural habitat due to encroaching shifting cultivation and selective logging in many areas in the country.

For instance, the destruction of primary forests in Negros has contributed to the near extinction of the Negros fruit dove.

“Secondary forest appears to be unsuitable for the species as it is not found in one of the only remaining areas of secondary forest in Negros,” she said.

Other threats to the bird are hunting and trapping for food, and collection for pet trade.

Seed eaters

Wild doves feed on fruits as seeds form the major component of the diet of doves and pigeons, but it varies greatly according to species.



Some ground feeding species eat fruit and take insects and worms.

The birds, being part of the food chain, are prey to snakes and raptors, or birds of prey, such as falcons, kites, eagles, owls and hawks.

In urban areas, there are reports that they are also attacked and eaten by cats.

Luzon bleeding -hearts

Recently, nine Luzon bleeding-heart pigeons—progenies of two pairs loaned to the Wildlife Reserves Singapore by the DENR—was freed in Norzagaray, Bulacan, with the hope that they will help increase the population of the unique doves in the area.

The Luzon bleeding-heart pigeon, named as such because of the reddish color extending from its breast to its belly, depicting blood running down from the heart, is a near-threatened species.

However, it was picked for conservation-breeding program outside the Philippines in order to ensure its breeding.

Global patrimony

At the moment, the DENR-BMB chief said there is no immediate plan to extend a similar arrangement for other wild dove species.

However, she said that a local captive breeding program for the Negros bleeding-heart is being undertaken by a conservation group, the Talarak Foundation, and is being supported by the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation.

Ortiz said there are plans for future re-introductions in Negros.

According to the DENR-BMB, as the DENR promotes open partnership or collaboration with capable institutions, both local and abroad, for the conservation of Philippine wildlife, especially the conservation of threatened species, it is open to the idea of entering into a wildlife loan agreement in the future. It said the arrangement “provides an opportunity for global participation in the conservation of biological resources which is part of global patrimony.”

“Engaging various institutions for conservation breeding is also part of ex-situ conservation approach, which allows certain individuals of highly threatened [birds] to be maintained in separate facilities as assurance population in case of a catastrophe which befall natural populations,” she said.

Seed dispersers

Fruit doves, she said, are seed dispersers, a reason why like other birds and bats, it should be protected. As such, having them around is of tremendous benefit to the environment, in particular, the forest.

“They are seed dispersers. They expand vegetation naturally,” Theresa Mundi ta S. Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) told the BusinessMirror.

“In this Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, we should not focus only on tree planting to restore ecosystems, but also on the role of wild birds, such as doves and pigeons that can do the tree planting for us, and reach areas that would be difficult for human tree planters to access,” Lim said via Messenger on January 25.

Regional importance

Wild pigeons or wild fruit doves are also known to occur in other Southeast Asian countries, and like other wildlife they play very important roles in the ecosystem.



Wild doves and pigeons occur in Southeast Asia, but the Philippines has the most unique—the bleeding heart species.

Imperial pigeons and turtle doves, which are commonly found in Southeast Asia, Lim said, are tree planters that help nurse degraded forests.

A former director of the DENR-BMB, Lim said that while wild doves and pigeons are not known as long-distance travelers, it doesn't mean that some species cannot cross borders in mainland Asia.

In fact, records show that more than one or two Asean member-states have common wild dove species in their forests, proof that these short-distance flyers are able to travel and thrive anywhere in the forest of Southeast Asia.

"Based on our records, at least 35 species of wild doves and pigeons are known to occur in more than one Asean member-states," Lim said, a clear indication that these birds move and expand territories, hence, also extend their reach and benefit to the environment.

Image credits: [Gregg Yan](#)



Palawan's Bulalacao marine ecosystem is best community-managed MPA

By Lorenz S. Marasigan

February 14, 2021



For actively helping the coastal and marine ecosystems recover and regenerate, the Palawan government named the Bulalacao marine protected area in Coron as the province's Best Community-Managed MPA.

Established in 2014, the 3,297-hectare area has two strict protection zones and two sustainable use zones.

Malampaya Foundation assisted the community in the Bulalacao MPA's creation and management. Malampaya Executive Director Karen Agabin attributed the award to its "collaborative partnership" with the Bulalacao indigenous peoples group, the Coron local government, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the Philippine Coast Guard, the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, and of Energy, and the Philippine National Police-Maritime.

She noted that since its rehabilitation started two years ago, the area is now thriving and is abundant with various species of fish.

"When we first mapped and surveyed Bulalacao back in 2012, the surrounding ocean was in a horrible state, with reefs and the fishing grounds heavily damaged from decades of dynamite and other unsustainable fishing methods," Agabin said.

"You would hardly see any fish, any marine life, that time. Now, through the collaborative effort of all stakeholders, we have observed a 100-fold increase in fish abundance, along with the return of long-absent endangered species like the napoleon wrasse," she added.

Agabin said the establishment and launch of Bulalacao MPA was the culmination of about two years of social preparation, collaboration, and cooperation among the barangay and Tagbanua leaders, community members, the Coron municipal government, NICIP, BFAR, the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, and the Malampaya Foundation.

Agabin explained: "In the next few years, what we hope to see is continuous coral regeneration. A large component of that is addressing the coastal communities, making them our partners, and getting their leaders to contribute in the overall marine conservation effort."

And with the active participation of all stakeholders, "we are very optimistic to see a sustainable development in coral regeneration," she noted.

She noted that her group will also start getting more legislative support for the MPA.

"Now, we are in the process of helping them expand the Bulalacao MPA. After a few years, when the community realized and saw the benefits of a properly and effectively managed MPA, they initiated to expand the MPA. We have done an initial mapping and now we are undergoing another social and legal process," she said.



She added: "To have the MPA supported by legislation through ordinances, there will be a series of consultations and consents from various stakeholders. We are hopeful that we will have it expanded by next year."

As of 2019, Malampaya Foundation's marine conservation program area spans 329,627 hectares under 31 conservation agreements with 30 barangays and 14 municipalities.

Several of its MPAs are used as models by other municipalities in the Philippines that are aiming to improve coastal and marine conservation efforts in their respective areas.



BY IVY MARIE
MANGADLAO

Siargao Island, dubbed as one of the best islands in the world for 2020 by a leisure and travel publication, is more than just a tropical island paradise popular for surfing and pristine beaches.

It is also home to hundreds of species of flora and fauna.

A study by the Department of Science and Technology (DoST), through the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) members of Division V (Biological Sciences), unveiled the rich biodiversity of the teardrop-shaped island in the Pacific.

Spearheaded by Dr. Cecilia Banag-Moran, the team found remarkable plant and beach forest species and possible new species of frog, rat, tarsier, insects, marine fish and decapod crustaceans in the municipality of Del Carmen alone.

Siargao was voted the best island in the world in 2020 by Conde Nast Traveler readers, who were in awe of its white beaches, excellent surfing conditions, and peaceful, tropical atmosphere.

"The identified species of animals are 11 amphibians, 11 mammals, 23 reptiles, 52 birds and 81 marine fish. It was found that nine species of plants and 34 species of terrestrial vertebrates are endemic to the Philippines," NRCP's website stated.

The study is still ongoing as 45 species of plants and 17 species of terrestrial vertebrates are not yet assessed for their conservation status.

"A remarkable record of new 90 species of marine flora, thus the need for continuance of correct and diversified mangrove planting," NRCP added.

Siargao was voted the best island in the world in 2020 by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers, who were in awe of its white beaches, excellent surfing conditions, and peaceful, tropical atmosphere.

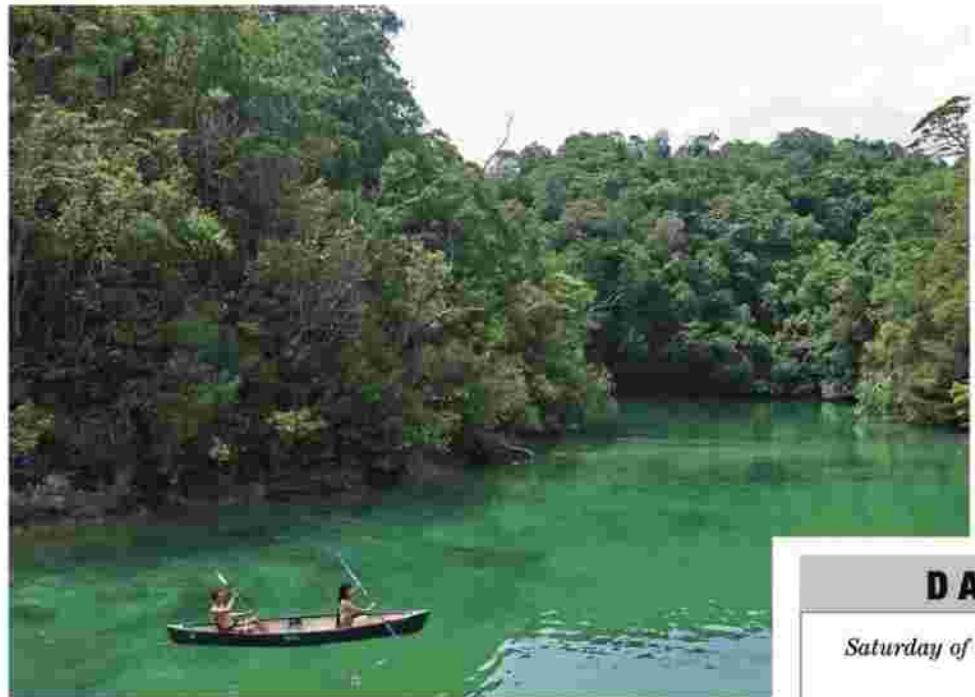
The study also recommended that protection measures must be put in place in the mangrove area after it was discovered that the amphibians and reptiles in mangroves and surrounding habitats are in "excellent condition."

"With this rich diversity, a move for the global importance of Del Carmen, Siargao should be considered for its conservation and sustainability," NRCP pointed out.

The study was conducted under the Saklola sa Lawa-Sustainable Communities of the National Integrated Basic Research Agenda led by the NRCP in response to Siargao's request for scientific evidence to support their bid for

The identified species of animals are 11 amphibians, 11 mammals, 23 reptiles, 52 birds and 81 marine fish.

Siargao Island: Flora and fauna haven



PHOTOGRAPH BY IVY MARIE MANGADLAO FOR DAILY TRIBUNE

SIARGAO, the surf capital of the Philippines, is famous for adventure spots, white-sand beaches and laidback way of living.

Ramsar.

"The presence of a threatened and endemic flora and fauna and possible new species, aside from the high diversity in the area is sufficient support for the Del Carmen Mangrove Forest to be listed under Ramsar for its long-term conservation and sustainable utilization," NRCP said.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, signed in 1971 in Iran's city of Ramsar, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The Ramsar Site Information Service website said there are currently eight wetland

habitats in the Philippines that have been designated as Ramsar wetlands of international importance.

Vice Mayor Alfredo M. Coro II, who started the town's mangrove conservation in 2010 stated that Del Carmen will present their proposal next week to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Siargao Islands Protected Landscape and Seascape and endorse their bid for the listing in the Ramsar.

"This is the first LGU-led move and hopefully, our work will encourage more to also look into their ecosystem and environment that if they see the potential to really protect it then we have to protect it with the international standards," he said.

DA

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Still he asked ti many loaves do y "Seven," they replie

He ordered the c down on the grou taking the seven



EMB-7: Proper waste management starts at home

By Hazel Gloria Published on February 13, 2021

CEBU CITY, Feb. 12 (PIA) --- The Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 7 emphasized that proper waste management should start at home.

Engr. Cindylyn Ochea, chief of Environmental Education and Information Unit (EEIU) of DENR-7, said during the recent Kapihan sa PIA that "we should not forget to integrate in our system especially in the household level to implement the proper waste management."

"Comprehensive solid waste management should be strictly implemented at home since most of the people are now staying in their houses due to the pandemic. Solid waste management is everybody's concern," said Ochea.

With the pandemic, one of the concerns is the delivery services through online sellers since more than 50 percent are using plastic although there are some also using sustainable packaging, she said.

EMB-7 is requesting the public to support solid waste management by creating an environment which is conducive to healing process against this pandemic.

Ochea added that one best practice they noticed is that people are now into planting by using recyclable materials as their plant box or pots which is good for the environment and help improve air quality.

Meanwhile, EMB-7 will continue to provide technical assistance to the local government units (LGUs) as they will try to manage their waste comprehensively and properly adhering to DENR's standards.

According to Ochea, not more than 80 percent of the LGUs in Central Visayas have started initiatives in the solid waste management program by installing material recovery facilities and establishing "No Segregation, No Collection" policy in their areas.

A series of education campaigns through seminars and webinars will be conducted to encourage cooperation from the public on proper waste segregation at the household level.

Meanwhile, in celebration of the Zero Waste Month in January, DENR-7 conducted the "HomEnvi Vid Contest" showcasing the different environmental practices in their homes, including solid, liquid, gaseous, and special waste management. (hfg/PIA7)

Congress moves closer to ban single-use plastics; address waste, flooding

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on February 13, 2021



Contributed photo of single-use plastics

QUEZON CITY, Feb. 13 (PIA) -- Sixty one bills in the House of Representatives seeking to phase-out or regulate single-use plastics were tackled recently in a technical working group chaired by Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez under the House of Representatives Committee on Ecology..

"This legislation is a critical, concrete step towards a circular economy. There are products that we can immediately ban. But for products that are not easily replaceable, we must give manufacturers time to produce alternatives and diversify," Benitez said.

The lawmaker emphasized the need to consult all stakeholders from the sectors that will be affected, in view of the wide range of products to be covered by the bills such as plastic straws for drinks, plastic coffee stirrers, plastic bags of thickness below 50 microns, plastic cups and cutlery, containers of polystyrene, balloons and candy sticks, buntings, and confetti.

Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda, for her part as co-author, also expressed strong support for the immediate passage of the legislative measure regulating and prohibiting single-use plastics.

"We have seen with our own eyes and we have known for some time that single-use plastics have a negative impact on the environment. This is even more problematic in our flood-prone areas, where plastic wastes clog our sewerage systems. The issue isn't just that plastic bags take forever to disintegrate, it is the massive number of plastics Filipinos use and quickly throw away. These plastics are choking the life out of our oceans and forests and polluting our communities," Legarda said.

Legarda, a three-term Senator and representative of the Lone District of Antique, said that the complete eradication of single-use plastics, a term commonly referring to disposable plastic items that are thrown after one-time use, must be supported as an environmentally-conscious solution to the plastic crisis.

Among the principal authors of various House bills that seek to regulate the use of plastics are House Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco, Deputy Speakers Legarda and Rufus Rodriguez, Representatives Bernadette Herrera-Dy, Bienvenido Abante Jr., Lorenz Defensor, Ria Christian Fariñas, Rudys Caesar Fariñas Farinas I, Kristine Alexie Tutor, Manuel Cabochan III, Lawrence Fortun, Geraldine Roman, Robert Ace Barbers, Rozzano Rufino Biazon, Greg Gasataya, Luis Raymond Villafuerte Jr., Estrellita Suansing, Horacio Suansing Jr., Jumel Anthony Espino, Precious Castelo, Joy Myra Tambunting, Angelo Marcos Barba, Jose Teves Jr., Florencio Noel, Rodrigo Abellanosa, Eric Yap, Paolo Z. Duterte, Josefina Tallado, Ramon Guico III, Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado, Alberto Pacquiao, Francisco Jose Matugas II, John Marvin Nieto, Aleta Suarez, Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez, Frederick Siao, and Mark Go.



As the principal author of Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Law of 2000, Legarda suggested that instead of "disposable" plastics, ready alternatives can be in the form of reusable ecobags, bamboo or wood utensils, or glass-based containers in homes. She added that companies must change their economic mindset, wasteful production processes and packaging methods, from the use of seemingly cost-effective plastics into investing in reusable and recyclable products which are more sustainable in the long run.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), led by its Chairperson-designate Department of Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez, supports the nationwide ban on single-use plastics as a vital component of a low-carbon economy and to advance sustainability, promote biodiversity, ensure food security, and curb pollution.

The climate body stressed that the passage of a legislative measure on this subject matter will further push policymakers to proactively review the implementation of existing environmental laws, such as the Clean Air Act (Republic Act or RA No. 8749), Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003), Clean Water Act (RA 9275), and the Climate Change Act (9729) to ensure a more holistic, sustainable, and inclusive recovery of our communities and the environment. (PIA NCR)



Ban on single-use plastics in QC resumes on March

Published February 13, 2021, 4:18 PM

by [Joseph Pedrajas](#)

Single-use plastics will not be allowed in Quezon City again starting March in compliance with City Ordinance No. 2868-2019, the local government announced Saturday.



(PIXABAY / MANILA BULLETIN)

In May 2020, the implementation of the ban on single-use plastics was temporarily lifted following the imposition of the community quarantine.

In announcing the resumption of the crackdown, Mayor Joy Belmonte pointed out that “there is a pressing need to strengthen the city’s efforts in response” to reduce plastic wastes.

Belmonte said the city’s re-implementation of the ban on single-use plastics “is also in fulfillment of the city’s international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience.”

“We hope to promote sustainable practices in the city,” she said.

Under the mayor’s memorandum, all shopping malls, supermarkets, fast-food chains, drug stores, and other retailers registered under the Business Permits and Licensing Department must stop the distribution or provision of plastic bags to their customers.

Even retailers will not be allowed, Belmonte added.

“Kailangan nang magdala ng mamimili ng sarili nilang reusable bags (Customers must also bring their own reusable bags),” she said.

Restaurants and hotels are also not exempted. Starting July, single-use plastics for dine-in transactions will no longer be allowed. Food delivery services are encouraged to do the same.

As such, they must submit to the local government their transition plans, including health and safety protocols, on or before May 31.

In the meantime, establishments can use paper bags as a substitute for plastic. Use of paper bags however will only be allowed until 2022.

Violators of the ban shall be meted with a fine ranging from P1,000 to P5,000, or cease and desist order and revocation of business permit.



QC to resume ban on plastic bags, single-use plastics beginning March 1

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:23 PM February 13, 2021



Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte. INQUIRER.net photo / Ryan Leagogo

MANILA, Philippines — Starting March 1, plastic bags and single-use plastics will once again be banned in Quezon City, its local government announced Saturday.

In a statement, the local government of Quezon City said that it will resume implementing City Ordinance 2868-2019.

The use of brown paper bags in groceries and other retail stores will only be allowed this year. But starting 2022, it will also be prohibited as part of the full implementation of the ordinance. As plastic bags and paper bags will soon be banned, Quezon City residents are now encouraged to bring their own reusable bags.

[Quezon City started implementing the ban](#) in January 2020, but was temporarily lifted in May the same year through the city's localized guidelines for Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) and its succeeding versions.

In a memorandum issued by city Mayor Joy Belmonte, all shopping malls, supermarkets, fast-food chains, drug stores and other retailers registered under the Business Permits and Licensing Department "should cease the distribution and/or provision of plastic bags to their customers."

Aside from this, Quezon City will also be enforcing the ban on the distribution of disposable and single-use plastics in restaurants and hotels for dine-in transactions beginning July 1, 2021, the LGU said.

This is in line with City Ordinance 2876-2019, where restaurants are prohibited from "distributing single-use plastic/ disposable materials to their dine-in customers such as plastic spoon and fork, knives, plastic/paper cups, plates, plastic/paper straws, coffee stirrers and other disposable materials and styrofoam.

"Hotels, on the other hand, are also not allowed to distribute soap, shampoo, shower gels, liquid soap, conditioners, and other items used for hygienic purposes in sachets and single-use containers," the LGU said of the second ordinance.

The implementation of this ordinance, the Quezon City LGU added, was also deferred through the MECQ guidelines.

"There is a pressing need to strengthen the city's efforts in response to the global movement to reduce plastic wastes. Our call to action is also in fulfillment of the city's international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. With the re-implementation of the plastic bag ban, we hope to promote sustainable practices in the city," Belmonte said.

JPV

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1395399/qc-to-resume-ban-on-plastic-bags-single-use-plastics-on-march-1>



Starting July 1, the city government said it will also proceed with the enforcement of another ordinance that bans the distribution of disposable and single-use plastics in restaurants and hotels for dine-in transactions.

CC By 2.0

Quezon City to resume ban on plastic bags, single-use plastics

[Janvic Mateo](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 14, 2021 - 12:00am

Quezon City, Philippines — The Quezon City government will resume the full implementation of the city-wide ban on plastic bags starting March 1.

The policy, which was initially implemented in January 2020, was temporarily lifted last May due to the imposition of the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila due to the pandemic.

Starting July 1, the city government said it will also proceed with the enforcement of another ordinance that bans the distribution of disposable and single-use plastics in restaurants and hotels for dine-in transactions.

“There is a pressing need to strengthen the city’s efforts in response to the global movement to reduce plastic wastes,” said Mayor Joy Belmonte.

“Our call to action is also in fulfillment of the city’s international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. With the re-implementation of the plastic bag ban, we hope to promote sustainable practices in the city,” she added.

Once the plastic ban policy is reimplemented, all shopping malls, supermarkets, fast food chains, drug stores and other retailers in the city are no longer allowed to distribute or provide plastic bags to their customers.

The use of brown paper bags in groceries and other retail stores will only be allowed until the end year, with customers required to bring their own reusable bags starting 2022.

On the ban on single-use plastics, restaurants will be prohibited from distributing disposable materials to their dine-in customers, such as plastic spoons, forks and knives; plastic or paper cups; plates; plastic or paper straws; coffee stirrers; and other disposable materials such as Styrofoam.

Hotels, on the other hand, are also not allowed to distribute soap, shampoo, shower gels, liquid soap, conditioners and other items used for hygienic purposes in sachets and single-use containers.



Restaurants and hotels should also submit their transition plans, including health and safety protocols, to the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD) on or before May 31.

For food delivery and take-away orders, establishments are also encouraged to adopt a “by-request protocol” by asking customers if they need single-use plastic utensils and condiment sachets before providing it to them.

Food delivery applications such as Grab Food and Food Panda were also requested to consider incorporating the protocol to positively contribute in the plastic waste reduction program of the city.

“We would also like to remind the public that eco bags or reusable bags should be properly disinfected before and after use in groceries and markets,” said EPWMD head Andrea Villaroman.

“We are also encouraging the public to use their own eating utensils in their homes and offices as they consume their take away food,” she added.

The city said it will deputize enforcers to check the compliance of establishments to both ordinances.



QC resumes ban on plastic bags

posted February 14, 2021 at 12:00 am

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

The Quezon City government will strictly enforce a stricter ban on plastic bags and single-use plastics, Mayor Joy Belmonte said Saturday.

She said beginning March 1, the Quezon City government through its Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD) would resume the full implementation of the city-wide plastic bag ban under City Ordinance 2868-2019.

The city already implemented the ban in January 2020, but was temporarily lifted in May 2020 through the issuance of the city's Localized Guidelines for Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) and its succeeding versions.

"There is a pressing need to strengthen the City's efforts in response to the global movement to reduce plastic wastes. Our call to action is also in fulfillment of the City's international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. With the re-implementation of the plastic bag ban, we hope to promote sustainable practices in the city," Belmonte said.

Belmonte's memorandum provides that all shopping malls, supermarkets, fast food chains, drug stores and other retailers registered under the Business Permits and Licensing Department should cease the distribution and/or provision of plastic bags to their customers.

"We will not allow the retailers to use plastic bags anymore at the check out counters," Belmonte added.

The use of brown paper bags in groceries and other retail stores will only be allowed this year. Starting 2022, it will also be prohibited as part of the full implementation of the ordinance.

Further, the city will also be enforcing the ban on the distribution of disposable and single use plastics in restaurants and hotels for dine in transactions starting July 1, 2021. Its implementation was also deferred through the MECQ guidelines.

As stated in City Ordinance 2876-2019, restaurants are prohibited from distributing single-use plastic/ disposable materials to their dine-in customers such as plastic spoon and fork, knives, plastic/ paper cups, plates, plastic/ paper straws, coffee stirrers and other disposable materials and styrofoam.

Hotels, on the other hand, are also not allowed to distribute soap, shampoo, shower gels, liquid soap, conditioners, and other items used for hygienic purposes in sachets and single-use containers.

Restaurants and hotels should also submit their transition plans, including health and safety protocols, to the EPWMD on or before May 31, 2021.

For food delivery and take away orders, Food establishments are also encouraged to adopt a "By-request protocol", where they ask their customers if they need single-use plastic utensils and condiment sachets before providing it to them.

Food delivery applications such as Grab Food and Food Panda are also requested to consider incorporating the protocol to positively contribute in the plastic waste reduction program of the city.

EPWMD Head Andrea Villaroman also stressed health and safety protocols.

"We would also like to remind the public that eco bags or reusable bags should be properly disinfected before and after use in groceries and markets. We are also encouraging the public to use their own eating utensils in their homes and offices as they consume their take away food," Villaroman said.

The city will also be deputizing enforcers that will check each establishment's compliance to the ordinances.

Based on both ordinances, that were authored by Councilor Dorothy Delarmente, businesses who fail to implement the law will be penalized; a fine of P1,000 for first offense; P3,000 fine and revocation of environmental clearance and issuance of cease and desist order by the BPLD for second offense; and a fine of P5,000 and revocation of the Business Permit and issuance of closure order for the third offense.



Plastic bags, single use plastics ban sa QC simula March 1



February 13, 2021 @ 4:33 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Inanunsyo ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Quezon City na muli nilang ipagbabawal ang plastic bags at single use plastics simula sa Marso 1.

Una itong ipinatupad noong January 2020 ngunit agad inalis noong Mayo dahil sa umiiral na modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

“There is a pressing need to strengthen the City’s efforts in response to the global movement to reduce plastic wastes. Our call to action is also in fulfillment of the City’s international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. With the re-implementation of the plastic bag ban, we hope to promote sustainable practices in the city,” lahad ni Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte.

“We will not allow the retailers to use plastic bags anymore at the check out counters. Kailangan nang magdala ng mamimili ng sarili nilang reusable bags.”

Papayagan pa rin namang gamitin ang brown paper bags sa groceries at iba pang retail stores.

Simula naman sa July 1, hindi na papayagan ang restaurants at hotels na gumamit ng dine-in customers disposable at single use plastics tulad ng plastic spoon at fork, kutsilyo, plastic/paper cups, plates, plastic/paper straws, coffee stirrers, at iba pa.

Ang mga lalabag naman ay may pananagutan na:

- P1,000 multa sa first offense;
- P3,000 fine at revocation ng environmental clearance at bibigyan ng cease and desist order mula sa Business Permits and Licensing Department (BPLD) para sa second offense; at
- P5,000 multa at revocation ng business permit at pagpapasara sa third offense.

RNT/FGDC



QC to ban plastic bags, single use plastics again starting March 1

Published February 13, 2021 2:09pm

The Quezon City government announced on Saturday it will again ban plastic bags and single use plastics beginning March 1.

The ban was first implemented in January 2020 but this was lifted in May during the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

The plastics ban is covered by City Ordinance 2868-2019.

"There is a pressing need to strengthen the City's efforts in response to the global movement to reduce plastic wastes. Our call to action is also in fulfillment of the City's international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. With the re-implementation of the plastic bag ban, we hope to promote sustainable practices in the city," Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte said.

Belmonte issued a memo directing shopping malls, supermarkets, fast food chains, drug stores and other retailers to stop distributing and providing plastic bags to their customers starting March.

"We will not allow the retailers to use plastic bags anymore at the check out counters. Kailangan nang magdala ng mamimili ng sarili nilang reusable bags," she said.

Brown paper bags will still be allowed to be used in groceries and other retail stores this year. However, starting 2022, these will also be prohibited.

Plastics in hotels, restaurants

Beginning July 1, restaurants and hotels will also be prohibited again from distributing to dine-in customers disposable and single use plastics such as plastic spoon and fork, knives, plastic/paper cups, plates, plastic/paper straws, coffee stirrers and other disposable materials and styrofoam. This prohibition was lifted during the MECQ last year.

The distribution of disposable and single use plastics in restaurants was banned as per City Ordinance 2876-2019.

Meanwhile, hotels are prohibited as well from distributing toiletries packed in sachets and single-use containers.

Food establishments are encouraged to give customers ordering for delivery and take away single-use plastic utensils and condiment sachets only if requested.

The local government unit also reminded the public to disinfect eco bags before and after use.



It also encouraged the public to use their own utensils.

Those businesses found violating the city ordinances will be penalized with:

- a fine of P1,000 for the first offense;
- P3,000 fine and revocation of environmental clearance and issuance of cease and desist order by the Business Permits and Licensing Department (BPLD) for the second offense; and
- a fine of P5,000 and revocation of the business permit and issuance of closure order for the third offense.

Earlier this month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said plastic soft drink straws and coffee stirrers [will be banned soon](#) in the country. —KG, GMA News



QC MULING IPAGBABAWAL ANG PAGGAMIT NG PLASTIC SA MARSO

written by **Ace Cruz** February 13, 2021



Inihayag ng Quezon City LGU na muli nilang i-ba-ban ang paggamit ng plastic bags at single use plastics simula sa Marso 1.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi ni QC Mayor Joy Belmonte na napapanahon nang palakasin ng lungsod ang kanilang pagbabawal sa plastic para makatulong aniya sa inang kalikasan makapagbigay ambag sa papapababa ng mga plastic waste sa bansa.

Sang-ayon sa city ordinance 2868-2019, inatasan ng QC LGU ang mga establisyimento sa Lungsod na itigil ang pagbibigay ng mga single use plastic sa kanilang mga customer simula sa unang araw ng marso.

Mababatid na ang kautusang nagbabawal sa paggamit ng iba't-ibang uri ng single use plastic ay pansamantalang inihinto ang pagpapatupad matapos na isailalim ang lungsod sa mahigpit na quarantine status bunsod ng COVID-19 pandemic.



EcoWaste's Valentine's Day advice: Break up with single-use plastics

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:31 PM February 13, 2021

MANILA, Philippines — With Valentine's Day around the corner, environmental watchdog group EcoWaste Coalition on Saturday urged the public to "break up" with single-use plastics as this "toxic relationship" is threatening the ecosystems, especially the marine environment.

"We can live without single-use plastics, but we cannot live sans clean oceans where a big chunk of these disposable plastics, along with their chemical additives, gets dumped every minute," Patricia Nicdao, policy advocacy officer for EcoWaste Coalition said in a statement.

"Better quit this toxic relationship before the oceans completely turn into a plastic cesspool," she added. "For the love of Mother Earth, break up with single-use plastics and fall in love with ecological alternatives."

Citing studies, the group said that around 50 percent of the 380 million tons of plastic produced per year are for single-use, or used for a few minutes and then thrown away like plastic bags, drinking bottles, cups, sachets, wrappers, cutlery, [straws](#), [stirrers](#), among others.

EcoWaste Coalition added that some eight to 10 million tons of plastic and their chemical additives are dumped into the oceans. Because of this, one million aquatic animals are killed due to plastic pollution and 100 percent of mussels tested are contaminated with microplastics. By 2050, experts warn there will be more plastics than fish in the oceans, the group added.

As the group encouraged the public to "break up" with single-use plastics, it then encouraged to use such alternatives instead:

1. "Bayong," fabric bags and other reusable bags instead of plastic carry or grocery bags.
2. Tiffin carriers, stainless steel lunch boxes and repurposed bottle jars instead of polystyrene food containers.
3. Water canteens, jugs or flasks, with no lead coatings, in place of plastic water bottles.
4. Washable glasses, tumblers or mason jars in lieu of plastic cups.
5. Glass, porcelain and other lead-free dishware instead of disposable plates.
6. Reusable bamboo and metal straws or, better still, go straw-free and drink straight from the glass or bottle.

JPV

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1395390/ecowastes-valentines-day-advice-break-up-with-single-use-plastics>

Climate leaders support 75% GHG reduction target in draft PHL plan

By [BusinessMirror](#)

February 14, 2021



Strong waves hit the wharf of Dinahican fish port during Supertyphoon Rolly (international code Goni) in November 2020. Destructive strong typhoons have been occurring in the recent years, which experts say are among the signs of climate change.

Climate Reality Leaders (CRL) in the Philippine welcomed the government's commitment to a projected greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction and avoidance of 75 percent below business-as-usual levels by 2030.

The GHG mitigation target is enshrined in the draft Philippine Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement, which was presented at the second National Multi-Stakeholder Consultation early this month and at the meeting of the House of Representatives Committee on Climate Change, a CRL news release said.

According to the government's Climate Change Commission, 2.33 percent of the mitigation target will be implemented unconditionally with nationally mobilized resources while 72.67 percent will require support or means of implementation provided under the Paris Agreement.

The Climate Reality Project Philippines Branch Manager Nazrin Castro said this ambitious mitigation target conveys the readiness of the Philippine sectors to leapfrog to a greener and more sustainable development pathway.

"We are ready to mobilize our roster of Climate Reality Leaders from the different sectors of society to provide technical support, advocate for ambitious action, and create more awareness of the NDC at the community level," she said during the consultation.

CRL Paco Pangalangan and Jonas Marie Dumdum also delivered statements of support to the ambition set by the Philippine government during the consultation.

Pangalangan, the executive director of international research organization and consulting firm Stratbase ADR Institute, lauded the inclusion of an unconditional target, which was lacking in the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) submitted by the country in 2015.

"I think we could still enhance our unconditional target of our NDC by reflecting the actions and ambition from the private sector and all stakeholders," he said as he emphasized the need to unlock the immense potential for renewable energy and to modernize energy grids to safeguard its systems and technologies to weather climate impacts, the news release said.

Dumdum, an associate consultant at the Gaia Corporate Sustainability Services Inc., echoed Pangalangan's statement on the critical role of the private sector in achieving the country's NDC ambition.

"The private sector is yearning for guidance from our government on how they too could align themselves with the NDC. The need for well-defined, predictable, and transparent policies from our government has never been more pronounced," he said.



CRL Dr. Mydah Kablingue and Keith Ancheta, meanwhile, delivered interventions on the draft Philippine NDC during the meeting of the House Representatives, chaired by Rep. Edgar Chatto.

Kablingue, academic chairman of the College of Arts and Sciences of the Cebu Technological University, said the academe wishes to be more engaged in the NDC process.

“There are many universities that are already undertaking efforts consistent with the goals and aspirations of our NDC. There are many more, especially those who conduct research in climate-resilient crops and technologies for our agriculture sector,” she said.

Ancheta, a graduate student from the University of the Philippines Diliman, said the youth is willing to work with the government to help achieve the targets and implement the policies and measures in the country’s NDC.

“We also hope to be continuously included in policy and decision-making alongside other marginalized sectors, such as the farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, and others to ensure an inclusive consultative process,” he said.

Highlighting the need to empower the youth to contribute to the implementation of the NDC, Ancheta pushed for the inclusion of the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in the NDC process, and for these departments to integrate climate change education in school curricula.

The Philippine NDC is set to be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat by the end of the month.

As of December 2020, the Philippines remains to be the only party to the Paris Agreement that has not submitted its first NDC.

The Climate Reality Project Philippines expressed its support to the call of its host organization, the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), for the government to deliver both first and second NDCs in one submission.

According to ICSC Executive Director Red Constantino, this can be done by declaring the INDC submitted in 2015 as the country’s first NDC, the news release said.

“We can and must avoid unnecessarily doubling the effort of our agencies, considering that the next round of enhancement is aimed at 2025. If we deliver—in one submission—both first and enhanced NDCs, our agencies can focus on one single process of improvements aimed at delivering another credible 2025 NDC ratchet with similar ambition,” he added.

Image credits: [Bernard Testa](#)



‘Laguna de Bay as potable water source’

posted February 14, 2021 at 12:10 am

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

A lawmaker from Metro Manila wants the government to use Laguna de Bay as one of the sources of potable water for Metro Manila.

Makati City Rep. Luis Campos Jr. said “we have to take full advantage of Laguna Lake’s largely untapped water resources. There are modern technologies available to rigorously clean the vast amounts of water that may be sustainably recycled from the lake.”

The 2.2 billion cubic meters of water naturally deposited in the 90,000-hectare lake is a mix of water from dozens of rivers and streams, rainwater, stormwater runoff and sewage.

Campos cited the need to diversify the national capital region’s water sources amid rapid consumption growth and recurring dry spells due to harsh climate change.

“The reprocessing of Laguna Lake’s water supply will also help lessen flooding, which is a persistent problem in surrounding communities,” Campos, a member of the House committee on Metro Manila development, said.

The lake tends to overflow during heavy rains, causing floods in parts of Laguna, Rizal and eastern Metro Manila.

“By reusing water from the lake, Metro Manila’s private water concessionaires will also achieve in one action their dual obligations to deliver round-the-clock water supply to consumers and to provide wastewater treatment facilities,” Campos said, referring to Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc.

For years, the two concessionaires have been relying on Angat Dam in Bulacan to supply 96 percent of Metro Manila’s water demand.

“We recognize that decontaminating water from Laguna Lake is more costly than treating water from Angat, but the concessionaires really have no choice but to expand their sources if we are to avoid another water crisis,” Campos said.

In the 2019 Metro Manila water crisis, consumers reeled from prolonged daily water service interruptions after a severe dry spell caused Angat’s water level to plunge 52 meters below its 210-meter normal high elevation.

“We need multiple water treatment facilities drawing off Laguna Lake,” Campos said.

Manila Water only began harvesting 50 million liters of water per day from the lake in 2019 after building the Cardona Water Treatment Plant in Rizal.



Caritas PHL fears dividing Palawan could adversely affect biodiversity, IPs

By [BusinessMirror](#)

February 14, 2021



File photo: A tourist guide does a balancing act as their motorized boat loaded with passengers approach the mouth of the Big Lagoon in El Nido, Palawan. El Nido's tourism is managed by coastal communities that also act as the ocean's protectors.

The division of Palawan into three separate provinces could have adverse effects to its biodiversity, indigenous peoples' communities and the general economic movement of Palaweños, the national social action arm of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines raised as it expressed its strong concern.

It added that the ecological protection and human development should be the primary consideration in the conduct of the plebiscite, Caritas Philippines said in a news release.

According to Bishop Gerry Alminaza, vice chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Social Action, Justice and Peace, "We are one with the civil society organizations, the local Catholic Churches in Taytay and Puerto Princesa and the people of Palawan in the call to re-examine the scientific, cultural and moral foundations of the law, above all economic and political gains of the proponents and their business allies."

The bishop added: "So that what happened at least 20 years ago when we opened Palawan forests to extractive industries, will not happen again in the globally significant island ecosystem."

The move to divide the province started in 2017. The Republic Act 11259, or An Act Dividing the Province of Palawan into Three Provinces, namely: Palawan del Norte, Palawan Oriental, and Palawan del Sur, was signed into law on April 5, 2019.

As a requirement, a plebiscite was scheduled on March 13.

According to Save Palawan Movement's Atty. Gerthie Anda, "The process, which did not include inclusive consultations, was clearly a political agenda, which will benefit mainly local political leaders and will entail huge economic costs to the people of Palawan."

According to Fr. Antonio E. Labiao, Caritas Philippines executive secretary, "While we question the true intent of the law, we would like to respect the political process."

However, he said, "We would like to urge the government, especially IATF [Inter-Agency Task Force], Comelec [Commission on Elections], the police and the military and the present political leaders in Palawan to make all necessary measures possible so voters are able to exercise their constitutional right to suffrage despite the limitations brought about by Covid-19 pandemic."

He added: "We urge the government to ensure integrity, fairness, transparency, utmost observance of health protocols in the conduct of the plebiscite and that electoral violations will be avoided."

Fr. Rey Aguanta, apostolic administrator of the Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay, said in a statement that "the separation will only be putting Palaweños, especially the indigenous communities, further from the doors of government service as the law was mostly due to personal and vested political interests, and not to pave the way for genuine human development."



He added that “spending millions of pesos for the election is not cost-efficient when the province still needs to provide for the Covid-19 vaccines and other basic social services for its constituents.”

Bishop Socrates Mesiona of the Apostolic Vicariate of Palawan also encouraged a “fair presentation of the issues concerning the plebiscite from the government through the news media, so the public will be able to have informed and principled decision on the matter.”

Palawan, known as the last ecological frontier of the Philippines, is a first-class province with stable annual revenues from tourism, rich marine and forest resources, and mineral reserves.

When separated into three provinces, each of the provinces’ share of the national wealth will considerably become smaller—not a good start for a province with 50 percent population already living in poverty, the news release said.

Image credits: [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)



Endangered giant clams poacher falls in NegOr

By Christopher Lloyd Caliwan February 13, 2021, 6:02 pm



(Photo courtesy of PNP)

MANILA – A man yielded PHP50 million worth of giant clams (taklobo) in an operation in Negros Oriental, the Philippine National Police (PNP) reported on Saturday.

In a statement, PNP chief Gen. Debold Sinas said suspect Ricardo dela Cruz Jr. was arrested by joint police and environment protection operatives after selling 1,000 kilograms of giant clams to a poseur buyer in Barangay Pagatban, Bayawan City on Friday.

Meanwhile, another suspect Yan Hu Liang alias "Sunny", the alleged owner of the giant clams, remains at large.

Seized from the suspect were marked money, giant clams, a .45 caliber pistol, and live ammunition.

Dela Cruz is temporarily detained at Bayawan City Police Station and would be charged with the violation of the country's fisheries laws which provides for the conservation of "rare, threatened and endangered fishery species".

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources earlier declared the catching of giant clams as illegal as these are considered as among endangered marine species, as listed by the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and set in the Fisheries Administrative Order 208.

"This accomplishment ensures that the sustainable conservation and protection of fishery and aquatic resources law is being implemented by our local authorities," Sinas said. (PNA)

Police seize 50-M endangered giant clam shells in Negros Oriental

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Feb 13, 2021 11:52:12 PM

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, February 13) — An estimated 50-million worth of endangered giant clam shells up for "unlawful selling" were confiscated in an entrapment operation in Negros Oriental, the Philippine National Police said in a report on Saturday.

The police said it found an inventory of clams or "taklobo" weighing more or less 10,000 kilograms. A certain Ricarido Santiana Dela Cruz, Jr. was arrested for selling a portion of the bundle for 5 million. Police also identified the owner of the endangered sea creatures to be Yan Hu Liang, alias "Sunny", who is still at large.

Both alleged suspects will be charged with a violation of the Fisheries Code under Administrative Order 208 or "Conservation of rare, threatened and endangered fishery species".

Representatives of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources were also present during the arrest.



Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/2/13/PNP-clams-unlawful-selling.html>



Go green to save the blue: Protect the environment against the threat of disposable face masks' nilunsad

February 12, 2021 1 min read

Nagsama-samang pinagtatapon nila Ms. Denise Cornejo, Earth Saver Philippines Ambassador, Dr. Alvin Sahagun, Advocate Change Club Founder, Cong. Jose "Bong" Teves Jr., TGP Party-list Rep., Earth Saver Philippines 2019 Queens at Edwin Dela Torre, Makakalikasang Pinoy ang gamit na nilang facemask sa plastic trash Garbage Container na pagpapakita ng kanilang suporta sa malinis na kalikasan kahapon ng umaga sa 3rd Floor ng Aberdeen Great Eastern Hotel, Quezon City na ang tema ay "Go green to save the blue: Protect the environment against the threat of disposable face masks." (Kuha ni Peter M. Lacang/AI/MTVN)

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2021/02/12/go-green-to-save-the-blue-protect-the-environment-against-the-threat-of-disposable-face-masks-nilunsad/?fbclid=IwAR2Me1pOn9pJ8iBxcZRBHXTG1LNcZeHmGf-pBTCahkejzplx_-1YY_joXhM



There are now 44 UK variant cases of the coronavirus disease nationwide since it was first detected in the country last Jan. 7.

AFP/Anthony Wallace

DOH confirms 19 more cases of UK variant

[Sheila Crisostomo](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 14, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Nineteen more cases of B117 or the United Kingdom variant of COVID-19 – one of them a 10-year-old boy in the Davao region – have been detected in the country, the Department of Health (DOH) said yesterday.

There are now 44 UK variant cases of the coronavirus disease nationwide since it was first detected in the country last Jan. 7.

Still, the DOH said there is no community transmission of the UK variant in the country.

“There is no sufficient evidence to say that it is spreading or that there is community transmission. We have to continuously monitor,” DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said.

The DOH reported that the 19 additional cases of the UK variant were detected in the sixth batch of 718 swab samples sequenced by the University of the Philippines-Philippine Genome Center last Feb. 8.

“The sixth batch of samples was sourced from all regions, except Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), and were selected to ensure representation of each region as well as areas where spikes in cases have been reported,” it said last Friday night.

“We were trying to get from BARMM, but they have not submitted any positive specimen. But of course this is continuous and this coming week, maybe we can get samples from that area,” Vergeire said.

Based on the report, three of the 19 cases have indicated current addresses in Davao Region.

They are a 10-year-old boy, a 54-year-old female and a 33-year-old male. All of them currently do not have any known link to one another and have exhibited mild symptoms.



Two other cases declared their residence as CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon or Region 4-A).

“One is a recovered 20-year-old female who was swabbed last Dec. 22 and has unknown exposure. The other case is a 76-year-old female with exposure to a positive case last Jan. 21 and is currently experiencing mild symptoms,” the DOH said.

Eight are returning overseas Filipinos (ROF) who were tested at different ROF catchment laboratories. The four males and four females are aged between 28 and 53.

Six of the additional ROF cases are currently being managed in ROF isolation facilities, while two cases have been tagged as recovered.

On the other hand, six cases are currently being verified if they are local cases or ROFs.

“Case investigation and contact tracing have been initiated to verify reported information and trace possible sources of infection,” the DOH said.



Airline ground staff (L) wearing protective gear work at the counter at the airport in Manila on Aug. 4, 2020.

AFP/Ted Aljibe

Philippines detects 19 more cases of new COVID-19 variant, total now at 44

(Philstar.com) - February 13, 2021 - 9:29am

MANILA, Philippines — Health authorities in the Philippines announced late Friday night that they have detected 19 more cases of the new coronavirus variant, called B.1.1.7, bringing the total number of patients with the total number of cases of the more infectious variant to 44.

The Department of Health said it is still verifying whether six of the 19 are local cases or returning overseas Filipinos. It said that it has started case investigation and contact tracing to verify reported information and trace possible sources of infection.

Eight of the 19 new cases are returning overseas Filipinos, the DOH said. Four of them are men and the four others are women, all of whom are aged between 28 and 53 years old. Six are still being managed in isolation facilities, while two have already recovered.

Three more of the new B.1.1.7 cases hail from the Davao region and all of them have no known links to each other, the DOH said. The 10-year-old boy, 54-year-old woman and 33-year-old man who are infected with the new variant still have mild symptoms of COVID-19.

Two of the new cases come from Calabarzon, according to the DOH. One of them, a 20-year-old woman who was tested last Dec. 22, 2020, has no known history of exposure to someone with COVID-19. The other patient is a 76-year-old woman who was exposed to a COVID-19 patient last January 21; she is currently experiencing mild symptoms.

The DOH said that the 19 new cases were part of the sixth batch of 718 samples sequenced on February 8 by the University of the Philippines – Philippine Genome Center.

It added that this batch of samples were sourced from all regions, except the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, and were selected to ensure representation of each region as well as areas where spikes in cases have been reported.



No new deaths among patients with the B.1.1.7 variant was reported, keeping the death toll among patients infected with the variant at one.

While the DOH reported the country's first B.1.1.7 case on January 13, it admitted that the new variant had been in the country nearly a month before their announcement, as a sample collected on December 10 tested positive for the mutated virus.

Despite the lingering threat of the new variants, the government has relaxed travel restrictions on foreigners and has refused to impose a new travel ban.

The DOH said that apart from the B.1.1.7 variant, no other variant of concern has been detected in the Philippines.

Preliminary estimates find the B.1.1.7 variant between 30% and 70% more contagious than other forms of the virus. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said there is "some evidence" that it could be deadlier, but local experts affiliated with the DOH said it is still premature to conclude this.

Experts warned that an increase in the transmission of the new variant will lead to more people getting infected and sick, which can overwhelm the country's health system anew. — **Xave Gregorio**



Scientists: Trump's environmental policies killed thousands of people in U.S.

By [Bloomberg News](#)

February 14, 2021



About 40 percent of US deaths during 2020 from Covid-19 would have been avoided if the country's death rate had been closer to that of its G7 peers.

The Trump administration deliberately harnessed racism and class animosity to push policies that caused hundreds of thousands of US deaths, according to a scathing new report in the British medical journal *The Lancet*.

After undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the health and environment impacts of Donald Trump's presidency, the 33 scientists who co-authored the article estimated that rollbacks of environmental and workplace protections led to 22,000 excess deaths in 2019 alone. They also found that 40 percent of US deaths during 2020 from Covid-19 would have been avoided if the country's death rate had been closer to that of its G7 peers, and blamed Trump for eschewing the advice of public health agencies and politicizing common sense responses to the pandemic such as mask-wearing.

The findings rely on comparisons with previous US norms and those in other countries to make statistical assumptions about what mortality rates might have been if Trump hadn't swerved away from the global scientific consensus. Philip Landrigan, a pediatrician and epidemiologist at Boston College who was one of the report's co-authors, argued that it was fair to make the linkage.

"Basically, the Trump administration stopped enforcing Clean Air Act," Landrigan said, referring to the landmark legislation signed by President Richard Nixon in 1970 and used by President Barack Obama to regulate carbon emissions. Under the aegis of ending the "war on coal," Trump's Environmental Protection Agency reversed the Obama administration's emissions rule and stopped trying to control fine particulate matter air pollution. As a result, *The Lancet* report said, concentrations of such pollution have increased after having declined steadily for decades before he took office.

Fine particulate pollution is closely linked to all sorts of lethal diseases, including childhood asthma, heart disease, lung cancer, and diabetes among adults.

"We see trend lines for deaths from environmental and occupational exposure start going up in 2017, reversing 50 years of decline," Landrigan concluded. "It is hard to walk away from cause and effect."

Trump's last EPA Administrator, Scott Wheeler, repeatedly cited cost benefit analysis as a rationale for regulatory changes that undermined Obama-era attempts to curb pollution. On the campaign trail last year, the former president pledged to ensure that the US had the "cleanest air and water in the planet," even as his administration reversed policies created to achieve those goals. Representatives for Trump didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The *Lancet's* willingness to wade into the politics behind health policy is highly unusual among scientific journals. Richard Horton, the journal's editor, is no stranger to controversy, however. Under his leadership, the magazine has come under fire for one-sided critiques of Israel, for assigning greatly inflated death figures to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and for publishing a now widely discredited study linking vaccinations to autism. In April, *The Lancet* criticized Trump for pulling out of the World Health Organization, calling his decision a "crime against humanity."



But the fact that so many scientists were willing to break from their traditional political neutrality to put their names on this assessment is “a signal of a changing time,” according to Gretchen Goldman, a research director at the Union of Concerned Scientists. While the Lancet has been more outspoken than others, she said, it’s not alone among science magazines in publicly criticizing Trump. Scientific American shocked many when it broke 175 years of tradition and gave its first ever presidential endorsement to Joe Biden, largely because it argued that Trump was such an awful alternative.

“If you told me four years ago that scientific journals would be speaking out against Trump, I wouldn’t have believed you,” Goldman said. “But since then, there has been quite a shift, reflecting both the severity of what Trump did as well as the changing willingness of the scientific community to engage in policy conversations.”

This report has its roots in the spring of 2017, when The Lancet formed a commission of experts with backgrounds in a wide range of topics such as clinical medicine, public health, and epidemiology to track the public health effects of the Trump administration.

On environmental policy, the report noted that Trump rolled back 84 vital regulations covering everything from toxins in water to the way scientific research gets used by the federal government, with 20 more rule changes still in progress by the end of his term. The resulting increase in airborne particulate matter was the primary cause of the excess deaths, the authors concluded. But they also proposed that Trump’s climate change denialism would be the most enduring stain on his environmental legacy.

While the commission excoriated Trump, it also acknowledged that deep-seated problem in America’s health system predated him by decades. The authors note, for example, that American life expectancy rates have been declining compared to other high-income nations since the 1980s.

But instead of moving to solve this decline, the report argues that the former president specifically exploited low- and middle-income White people’s anger over their deteriorating prospects to mobilize the racial animus and xenophobia that propelled his political success. The people who supported Trump were in fact among the worst affected by his policies, the commission found. The 22,000 additional 2019 deaths occurred largely in states that voted for Trump, while Democratic states such as California and New York had their own laws that acted as a safety net.

The report also emphasizes the racial disparities in health that grew under Trump, including the fact that most of the 2.3 million Americans who lost health insurance while he was in office were minorities. It also underscored the fact that Covid-19 has much more heavily impacted Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people.

As Mary T. Bassett, a former health commissioner for New York City and a member of The Lancet’s expert panel, wrote in a statement released with the report: “The disastrous, bungled response to the pandemic made clear how existing, longstanding racial inequities simply have not been addressed.” *Bloomberg News*

Image credits: [Bloomberg photo](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/02/14/scientists-trumps-environmental-policies-killed-thousands-of-people-in-u-s/>



World's Most Endangered Animals

BY VILLAGE CONNECT ON FEBRUARY 13, 2021



Endangered Species Day – a day to learn about animals that are at risk and to recognize national efforts to protect our endangered species and their habitats. Here's what you need to know about some of the animals that are considered [endangered species](#) protected by the World Wildlife Fund.

For some species, time on planet Earth is running out. Human beings are the greatest threat to the survival of endangered species with poaching, habitat destruction and the effects of climate change causing a lot of the problems. Read on to learn about some of the beautiful creatures most in need of our help, protection and conservation.



AMUR LEOPARD

Endemic to the far east of Russia, the Amur Leopard has a population of around 84 and is critically endangered. Here follows every species that the WWF lists as critically endangered.



SUMATRAN ELEPHANT

The Sumatran elephant population now stands at only 2400-2800 Thousand



YANGTZE FINLESS PORPOISE

Endemic to China's Yangtze River, the Yangtze finless porpoise has an estimated population of 1000-1800



SOUTH CHINA TIGER

When discovered in the 1950s, the South China tiger population was estimated to be 4000, by 1996 it was estimated to be only 30-80. Scientists consider the tiger to be "functionally extinct" as one has not been sighted for over 25 years



SUMATRAN ORANGUTAN

The Sumatran orangutan was once found across the island of Sumatra and even further south on Java. Today it is found only in the island's north and its population stands at 14,613 (Photo by Getty)



WESTERN LOWLAND GORILLA

Though it is the most populous of all gorilla subspecies, the western lowland gorilla is still critically endangered and its population has declined by 60% in the last quarter-century. (Photo by Getty)



SUMATRAN RHINOCEROS

The Sumatran rhinoceros is the smallest of the surviving rhinoceros species. Only 80 are known to be living today. The last male Sumatran rhino in Malaysia died on 28 May 2019. (Photo: Willem V Strien)



SUMATRAN TIGER

There are fewer than 400 Sumatran tigers left today. They are severely threatened by deforestation and poaching. (Photo by Getty)



EASTERN LOWLAND GORILLA

Half of the rainforest of the Democratic Republic of Congo in which these gorillas live has been destroyed the past 50 years. There were 17,000 Eastern Lowland gorillas in the 1990s but scientists estimate their population has declined by over 50% since then. (Photo by Getty)



VAQUITA

The world's rarest marine animal has a population of only 30. They were discovered in 1958 and are endemic to Mexico's Gulf of California.



JAVAN RHINO

The most threatened of all rhino species, there are only an estimated 58-68 Javan rhinos left.



SAOLA

The saola was first sighted in 1992, being the first large mammal to be discovered in over 50 years. Scientists have only sighted saola in the wild four times and it is considered critically endangered



MALAYAN TIGER

The Malayan Tiger population now stands at only 250-300. (Photo by Getty)



HAWKSBILL TURTLE

The population of the Hawksbill Turtle has declined by more than 80% in the last century. They are threatened by black market poachers who kill them for their shell



BLACK RHINO

The population of the black rhino dropped by 98% in the years 1960-1995 due to poaching, it stands today at around 5000. (Photo by Getty)



CROSS RIVER GORILLA

The population of the Cross River gorilla has been damaged by deforestation and poaching, it now stands at 200-300. (Photo by Julie Langford)



BORNEAN ORANGUTAN

The population of the Bornean orangutan has been reduced by over 50% in the past 60 years, now standing at around 104,700. Their habitat has been reduced by at least 50% in the 21st century. (Photo by Getty)

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