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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Cimatu explains importance of upcoming environmental law enforcement summit

Published July 13, 2021, 12:57 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

This year's National Environmental Law Enforcement (NELE) Summit will place a focus on aging environment and natural resources (ENR) laws that need to be revisited, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said Tuesday, July 13.



DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (Photo from DENR Facebook page)

According to Cimatu, holding the NELE summit during the current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is “a good opportunity to revisit the environmental law enforcement (ELE) components to make sure they are updated, and to make sure that the policies are relevant and timely.”

“There could never be a much better time for holding the NELE summit, as it is during this quarantine that we have more challenges in apprehending environmental law violators who are taking advantage of the immobility and lesser resources that we have,” he said.

The 4th iteration of the summit will be held from July 14 to 16.

Cimatu said the NELE Summit 2021 is “especially significant, especially when most [ENR] laws are already 20 years old and older, and during this time that the agency gears up for the creation of an Enforcement Bureau.”

“The previous NELE Action Plan has already expired last 2020. With this summit, we hope to create a new action plan that would serve the needs of the ever-changing and evolving modern society,” added the DENR chief.

With the theme, “Sustaining inter-agency collaborations for intensified ELE towards a better environment amidst pandemic,” the NELE Summit has been a venue for updating the latest developments on ELE, such as new laws and policies, implementing guidelines, programs, and tools and technologies.

It has also been the venue for ensuring continuous coordination and cooperation among the agencies involved and giving recognition to partner-agencies and institutions, as well as individuals.



(Photo from DENR)

During the summit, participants are expected to share their respective agencies' and branches' major highlights or milestones on ELE for the last 15 years; identify the contribution of the agencies in mainstreaming environmental and natural resources protection in the national strategies and policies; and formulate responsive strategies that will expedite actions for urgent ENR concerns in support of Philippine development.

They are also expected to receive information on the state of the environment, that is, state of the forest and protected areas including the caves and wildlife resources; and urban environment and marine and coastal areas including the fishery resources.

They will also review selected ELE technologies and identify needed advancement to cope with the current enforcement needs and changes, and assess the implementation and update the ELE action plan.



Cimatu wants environmental laws updated

JUL 13, 2021, 6:05 PM

Santiago Celario
Writer

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the upcoming 4th National Environmental Law Enforcement (NELE) Summit is a “good opportunity” to revisit and update the country’s environmental law enforcement (ELE) policies.

The summit will be held from July 14 to 16, this year.

It is expected to be a venue for updating the latest developments on ELE, such as new laws and policies, implementing guidelines, programs, tools and technologies.

“There could never be a much better time for holding the NELE summit, as it is during this quarantine that we have more challenges in apprehending environmental law violators who are taking advantage of the immobility and lesser resources that we have,” Cimatu said.

According to Cimatu, holding the NELE Summit is especially significant since most environment and natural resources laws are already more than 20 years old.

They are also gearing up for the creation of an Enforcement Bureau.

“The previous NELE Action Plan has already expired last 2020. With this summit, we hope to create a new Action Plan that would serve the needs of the ever-changing and evolving modern society,” Cimatu said.

With the theme, “Sustaining inter-agency collaborations for intensified ELE towards a better environment amidst pandemic,” the NELE Summit is a venue for ensuring continuous coordination and cooperation among the agencies involved and giving recognition to partner-agencies and institutions, as well as individuals.

During the summit, participants are expected to share their respective agencies’ and branches’ major highlights or milestones on ELE for the last 15 years. (SC)



DENR to lead verification of human waste dumping report in PHL reef



BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA JULY 13, 2021



DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda

AMID outrage over reports of the alleged dumping of human waste by vessels anchored off Union Banks, or Pagkakaisa reefs, which form part of the Kalayaan Island Group within the West Philippine Sea, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official said an interagency effort is under way to verify the report.

“After that we will be seeking . . . the attention of the Chinese government, through our Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). We will also validate if [indeed these are] are Chinese vessels,” Benny D. Antiporda, the DENR’s Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns, told reporters via a Viber group message.

Other agencies that may be tapped to verify the report, he said, will be the Philippine Coast Guard and Department of National Defense.

The statement came amid strong condemnation made by environmental groups on Wednesday.

Ocean conservation advocacy nongovernment organization (NGO) Oceana was first to issue such condemnation.

“This poses a serious risk to the fisheries and rich biodiversity of our ocean from which the Philippines and its neighboring countries depend on for food,” Oceana said in a news statement emailed to the media late Wednesday afternoon.

As a signatory to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) which safeguards against pollution by sewage and garbage from ships, the Philippines should begin an investigation on this deplorable abuse of our territorial waters, Oceana said.

“We call on the Philippine Coast Guard and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) to verify this incident and those in other parts of the country together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, local government units and other agencies. The amended Fisheries Code imposes sanctions on vessels found guilty of aquatic pollution, and the Clean Water Act of 2004 prohibits unauthorized transport or dumping into seawaters of sewage sludge or solid waste.

The alleged dumping was reported Monday by Liz Derr, founder and Chief Executive Officer at Florida-based Similarity, as the Philippines marked the 5th year of its arbitral victory over China in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).



Similarity is a geospatial intelligence company that uses AI to detect important changes on the ground through a variety of data from optical satellites, radar satellites, drones, RF data, multispectral imagery, AIS ship location tracking, and more.

Tracking the progress of about 300 ships parked around a lagoon in the Spratlys, Derr said, “Human activity in the Spratly islands is damaging the coral reefs that supply food for millions of people in the region.”

She said the hundreds of ships anchored in the Spratlys are dumping raw sewage onto reefs they are occupying, and the excess nutrients in sewage are causing elevated concentration of algae, “leading to a cascade of reef damage that can take decades to recover from even with active mitigation.”

She presented satellite photographs taken in June, 2021, adding that the new form of damage to the environment is “in addition to the well-documented reef destruction wrought by China’s giant clam harvesting and artificial island building.”

She said damaging these reefs directly affects the fish stock in the entire South China Sea and can lead to a hunger crisis in coastal regions and a collapse of commercial fishing in the South China Sea. “This is a catastrophe of epic proportions and we are close to the point of no return.” ***With earlier report by Recto L. Mercene***



Pagtatapon ng dumi ng tao ng Chinese vessel sa WPS, sinisilip na ng DENR



July 13, 2021 @ 4:46 PM 14 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Kinukumpirma na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kung mga Chinese vessels ang nagtapon ng mga dumi ng tao sa West Philippine Sea.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, nakikipag-ugnayan na sila ng iba't ibang ahensya ukol sa usapin.

“We will coordinate with PCG (Philippine Coast Guard) and DND (Department of National Defense) first on the authenticity of the allegation...We will also validate if indeed this are Chinese vessels,” saad ni Antiporda.

“After that, we will be seeking the attention of the Chinese government through our DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs),” dagdag niya.

Sa kabilang banda, nauna nang pinasinungalingan ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana ang ulat sa isang text message sa ABS-CBN News.

Ayon kay Lorenzana, ang larawang ipinakikita sa report ay hindi sa West Philippine Sea kundi sa Great Barrier Reef sa Australia.

Nag-tweet din si foreign affairs secretary Teddy Locsin Jr. ng “Report Fake” patungkol sa report.

Kahapon, nang lumabas ang ulat na daan-daang barko na naka-angkla sa Spratly Islands sa WPS ang nagtatapon ng “raw sewage” sa mga bahura na kanilang inookupa, base sa mga satellite images na ibinahagi ni Liz Derr, co-founder at chief executive officer ng US-based geospatial imagery firm na Similarity. *RNT*

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/pagtatapon-ng-dumi-ng-tao-ng-chinese-vessel-sa-wps-sinisilip-na-ng-denr/>



DENR to probe reports of Chinese ships dumping poop in Spratlys

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:42 PM July 13, 2021



Where it allegedly happened.

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Tuesday it would investigate claims that raw sewage or poop spilled by hundreds of ships stationed in the Spratly Islands had caused coral reef damage in the region.

“On the issue of waste disposal in the West Philippine Sea, we will coordinate with [h] the PCG (Philippine Coast Guard) and DND (Department of National Defense) first on the authenticity of the allegation,” DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said in a message to reporters.

“After that, we will b[e] seeking the attention of the Chinese gov’t thru our DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs). We will also validate if indeed [these] are Chinese vessels,” he added.

This developed after reports that Chinese ships near the Spratly Islands allegedly were dumping raw sewage — or poop — in the waters.

According to US geospatial firm Similarity, the damage caused by dumping raw sewage onto reefs in just the last five years is visible from space.

The Co-founder and CEO of Similarity Liza Derr said “hundreds of ships that are anchored there are dumping raw sewage, every day onto the reefs they are occupying.”

Based on satellite images gathered by Similarity, damage to reefs in some parts of the Spratly Islands in the West Philippine Sea in the last five years caused by sewage effluent is “visible and dramatic,” on top of marine destruction caused by China’s artificial island building and illegal harvest of giant clams.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1459225/denr-to-look-into-reports-of-chinese-ships-dumping-poop-in-spratlys-islands>



DENR to look into report of ships dumping waste in West Philippine Sea

(Philstar.com) - July 13, 2021 - 3:46pm



This March 7, 2021 photo shows Chinese maritime militia ships moored in line formation at the Julian Felipe Reef in the West Philippine Sea. NTF-WPS via Philippine Coast Guard

MANILA, Philippines (**Updated 5:12 p.m.**) — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Tuesday said it will look into allegations that raw sewage dumped by hundreds of ships anchored in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, part of which is the West Philippine Sea, has damaged coral reefs in the area.

"On the issue of waste disposal on the West Philippine Sea, [w]e will coordinate [with the Philippine Coast Guard and the Department of National Defense] first on the authenticity of the allegation," DENR Undersecretary Benny Antporda said in a message to reporters.

"[A]fter that we will b[e] seeking for the attention of the Chinese [government through our Department of Foreign Affairs]," he added. "We will also validate if indeed [these] are [C]hinese vessels."

Antiporda was referring to [a report from US-based geospatial imagery and data analysis company Similarity](#) which found that the damage caused by the dumping of raw sewage onto reefs "in just the last five years is visible from space" and will "take decades to recover from."

This damage is "in addition to the well-documented reef destruction wrought by China's giant clam harvesting and artificial island building," reads the report which was presented during an online forum held by the Stratbase ADR Institute on Monday.

Similarity further warned that the damage to the reefs "directly affects the fish stocks of the entire South China Sea and can lead to a hunger crisis in coastal regions and a collapse of commercial fishing" in the critical waterway. "This is a catastrophe of epic proportions and we are close to the point of no return."

There were 236 ships, likely Chinese, spotted in Union Banks as of June 17 as seen in satellite images released by the US firm.

Radio DZRH's Christian Maño on Tuesday posted a screenshot of a message from Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana saying the allegation that Chinese ships are dumping waste in the West Philippine Sea is "not true." He also said one photo used in the report "is from the Great Barrier Reef in Australia" but made no comment on the satellite images presented by Similarity.

Neither the defense department nor Lorenzana have issued an official statement on the Similarity report.



Senators urge gov't to hold China accountable

Earlier Tuesday, Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto and Sen. Risa Hontiveros in separate statements urged the DENR to confirm if the reports were true and to hold the parties responsible accountable.

"Ships are prohibited by domestic and international laws from dumping its refuse and trash into our oceans. Under Philippine laws, such are environmental crimes that carry a jail term and a hefty fine," Recto said. "But even without these laws, decent human behavior commands civilized men not to turn rich fishing grounds into a cesspool of feces."

"DENR should investigate this, and if there is basis, file charges in court. Government cannot fine sidewalk litterers while turning a blind eye to this," he added.

Meanwhile, Hontiveros in a statement written in Filipino pointed out that "there has been no baseline report from the [DENR] on the value of lost and destroyed natural resources in the West Philippine Sea."

The senator in April last year filed a resolution calling on China to pay over P200 billion for the destruction of marine resources in the West Philippine Sea.

She said calculations made by her office based on several reports found that Beijing owes Manila almost P800 billion for the damage caused to coral reef ecosystems and missing fish stock in the West Philippine Sea.

"It would be better if the DENR itself has an official report that calculates the amount of damages China should pay," Hontiveros added. "This can serve as the standard for our charge against China's continued aggression."

Sen. Francis Pangilinan in a statement written in Filipino said that continued destruction of reefs could spell hunger for "the millions who rely on the resources of the West Philippine Sea."

He also underscored the potential of the country's EEZ in the West Philippine Sea as an energy source that could shield Filipinos from oil price spikes.

"This is how China responds to the submissive, tight-lipped, and cowardly. We owe nothing to those who rob us of our seas and oceans [and] insult our fishermen," Pangilinan said.

Meanwhile, Sen. Grace Poe said the "act of dumping wastes in the area clearly shows that the dumper knows the West Philippine Sea is not theirs for otherwise they would have respected the ecological value of the rich fishing ground."

"We can only hope that this comes as a wake up call to the administration on the stinking reality that China gives no respect to international law, whether it be our territorial or environmental rights."

China does not recognize the arbitral ruling that invalidated its expansive claims over the South China Sea which includes the West Philippine Sea.

It continues to deploy ships to the Philippines' exclusive economic zone despite several protests from Manila.

— Bella Perez-Rubio with reports from Patricia Lourdes Viray and Gaea Katreena Cabico

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/07/13/2112224/denr-look-report-ships-dumping-waste-west-philippine-sea/amp/>



DENR to call out China on alleged waste dumping in West Philippine Sea if found true

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

Published July 13, 2021 7:40pm

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday said it will call the attention of the Chinese government once the agency verifies the report on the alleged dumping of human waste and sewage in the West Philippine Sea.

In a message to reporters, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said they will coordinate with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Department of National Defense (DND) to verify the report.

If found true, he said the DENR will try to reach the Chinese government with the help of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

“On the issue of waste disposal on the West Philippine Sea, we will coordinate with PCG and DND first on the authenticity of the allegation,” he said.

“After that, we will be seeking for the attention of the Chinese government thru our DFA. We will also validate if indeed these are Chinese vessels,” he added.

In a [statement](#), Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said they are also verifying the supposed dumping incident and added that “irresponsible acts” like that “will undoubtedly cause grave damage to the marine ecology in the region.”

The [report](#) said Liz Derr, founder and CEO of Similarity, found that hundreds of Chinese vessels have been dumping raw sewage every day for several years on reefs in the resource-rich area, creating harmful Chlorophyll-a blooms in the waters.

The report also included satellite images of the supposed dumping in the South China Sea and parts of the West Philippine Sea.

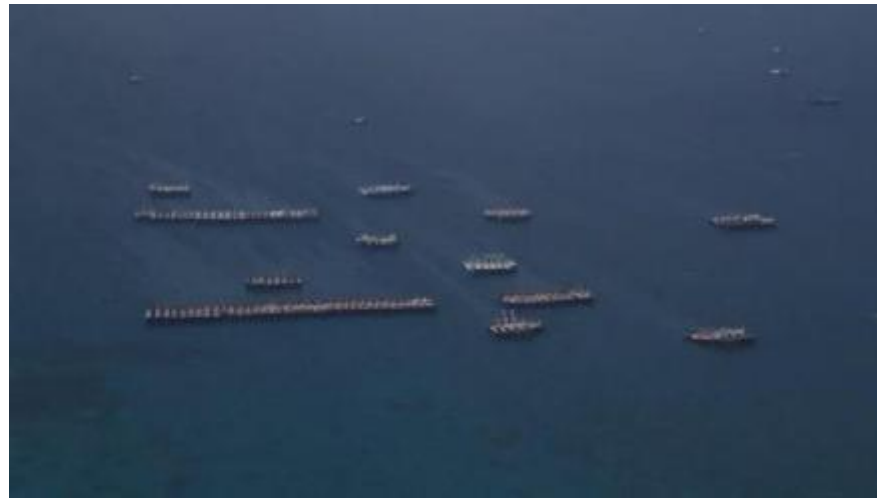
Similarity specializes in geospatial analysis and provides satellite data imagery.

Derr's findings indicated that the damage brought by the dumping of human wastes would “take decades to recover even with active mitigation.” **-MDM, GMA News**



Pamunuan ng DENR, makikipag-ugnayan sa PCG at DND tungkol sa isyu ng pagtatapon ng dumi sa West Philippine Sea

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) Jul. 13, 2021 at 4:24pm



Inihayag ngayon ng Pamunuan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na nakikipag-ugnayan na sila sa Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at Department of National Defense (DND) tungkol sa isyu ng waste disposal sa West Philippine Sea.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, makikipag-ugnayan umano sila sa PCG at DND una para malaman kung may katotohanan ang naturang alegasyon at pagkatapos ay ipararating nila sa atensyon ng Chinese government sa pamamagitan ng Department of Foreign Affairs.

Paliwanag pa ni Antiporda na hindi basta sila kikilos ng walang mga batayan kayat kinakailangan i-validate muna nila kung talaga barko ito ng China ang nagkalat ng basura sa naturang karagatan.

Matatandaan na napabalitang mayroon umanong Chinese vessels ang nagkalat ng basura sa karagatang sakop ng West Philippine Sea.

Source: https://rmn.ph/pamunuan-ng-denr-makikipag-ugnayan-sa-pcg-at-dnd-tungkol-sa-isyu-ng-pagtatapon-ng-dumi-sa-west-philippine-sea/?fbclid=IwAR0gkg0QOyHIOcbVzPfiqmV7CoisyPpghbqvWtQ3AMSk9NK_cS2INWZoC
[XS](#)



DND verifying Chinese ships' waste dumping in WPS

By Priam Nepomuceno July 13, 2021, 8:00 pm



Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana *(File photo)*

MANILA – The Department of National Defense (DND) on Tuesday said it is now looking into reports of alleged human waste dumping by Chinese vessels in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

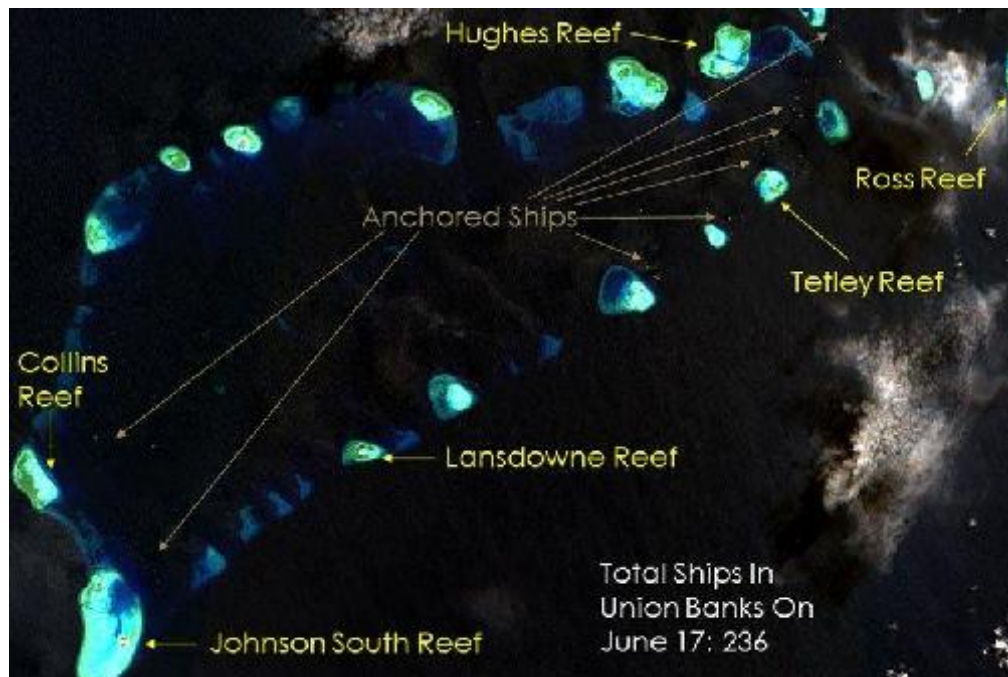
"We have taken note of the news circulating online about the alleged dumping of waste in the South China Sea. Be that as it may, I have directed the Western Command who has jurisdiction over the WPS to verify and investigate," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a statement.

This came after Similarity, a US-based geospatial imagery firm, reported that Chinese ships have been dumping sewage and human waste in the reefs of the disputed waters.

"However, the photo of a ship seen dumping waste accompanying the report was found to have been taken in the Australian Great Barrier Reef in 2014. Therefore, this intent to mislead has cast great doubt on the accurateness of the Similarity report. We also question the conclusion reached by Similarity from just looking at satellite photos," he added.

Lorenzana also said while the Philippines has yet to confirm if these wastes are indeed being dumped in the WPS, he said such irresponsible acts, if proven true, will cause grave damage to marine life in the region.

"Despite conflicting claims and interests by states in the South China Sea, all nations must be responsible stewards of our natural resources and environment," he added. **(PNA)**



This June 17, 2021 photo show anchored ships in Union Banks within the Philippine exclusive economic zone.

Similarity via European Space Agency

Lorenzana questions satellite photos of sewage dumped in West Philippine Sea

(Philstar.com) - July 13, 2021 - 9:11pm

MANILA, Philippines — Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Tuesday questioned a report of anchored ships dumping sewage in the West Philippine Sea.

US-based Similarity earlier [released satellite photos](#) showing increased chlorophyll-a blooms in the Union Banks from anchored ships in the Spratly Islands, damaging coral reefs in the area. DENR to look into report of ships dumping waste in West Philippine Sea
While Similarity co-founder and CEO Liz Derr noted that they were not able to verify if these ships are from China, the Philippine Coast Guard has taken photos of the vessels since March "and they are clearly Chinese."

Lorenzana, meanwhile, questioned the conclusion of Similarity based from satellite photos alone.

"While we are confirming and verifying these wastes being dumped in the WPS, we consider such irresponsible acts, if true, to be gravely detrimental to the marine ecology in the area," Lorenzana said in a statement.

The Defense chief said he has ordered the Western Command to look into the alleged dumping of wastes in the area.

"Despite conflicting claims and interests by states in the South China Sea, all nations must be responsible stewards of our natural resources and environment," he said.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said they will coordinate with the Department of Defense and Philippine Coast Guard on the authenticity of the report.

Antiporda added that they will also call the attention of the Chinese government through the Department of Foreign Affairs while authorities validate if the ships are indeed from China.



Similarity warned that chlorophyll-a concentration in water would lead to a "dead zone."

"Excess phytoplankton that cannot be consumed by the reef inhabitants dies off and sinks to the sea floor, where it consumed by bacteria," the report read.

"These bacteria consume oxygen that would normally be available to the fish, creating a 'dead zone,'" it added. — **Patricia Lourdes Viray**



HUMAN WASTES | Defense chief questions photo of Chinese ships disposing wastes in the Spratly

July 13, 2021 , 05:58 PM By Beatrice Puente, News5 Digital

(July 13, 2021) – The Philippines could not immediately verify reports that hundreds of Chinese vessels anchored in Spratly were dumping wastes in its sovereign waters, the defense chief said on Tuesday, questioning images of the vessels if they were really in the West Philippine Sea.

Delfin Lorenzana said the defense and military establishments have no reports about waste dumping within the disputed waters in the West Philippine Sea but have started verifying the reports after a California satellite image provider showed some data about it.

“Our people are verifying. We have not received any report of waste dumping in the past,” Lorenzana, a retired army general, told journalists.

But he questioned whether the images of the ships, which were reported to be dumping waste in the West Philippine Sea, are accurate.

“The photo accompanying the news, however, is of a ship on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia taken in 2014. That’s my stand, as of this moment, absent any confirmation of the Similarity report.”

He said reports of China vessels dumping wastes in the sovereign waters are “irresponsible acts.”

“If true, (it) will undoubtedly cause grave damage to the marine ecology in the region,” he said in a statement. “Despite overlapping claims and interests by states in the South China Sea, all nations must be responsible stewards of the environment.”

Similarity, an artificial intelligence satellite image analysis company, released a report that hundreds of ships docked within its 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone have been illegally discharging wastewater into the sea, damaging the coral reefs and wildlife underwater.

It used an undated photo on the second page of the report, showing a large ship discharging brown sewer water into the sea.

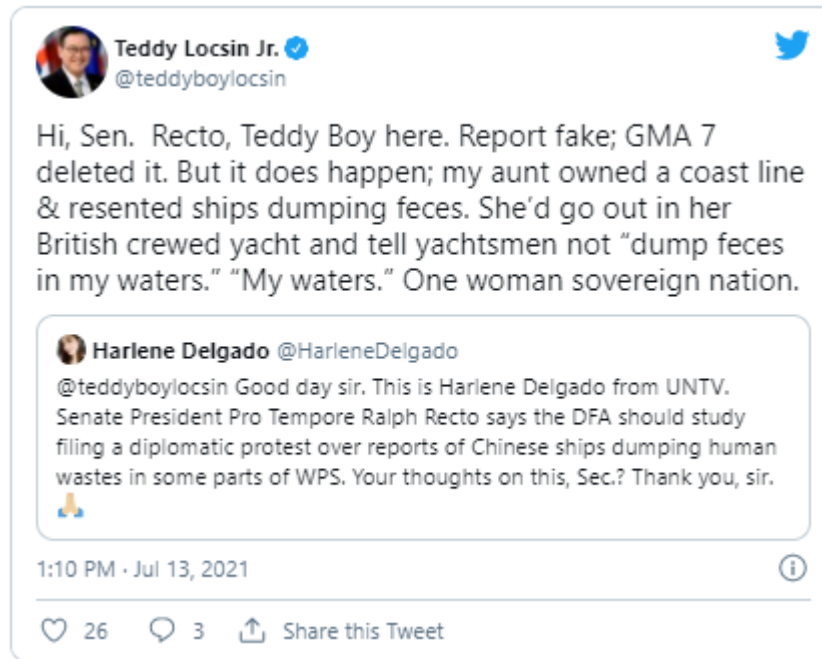
Similarity never said it was among the ships they caught dumping waste near the country for they only used satellite images of the Union Banks to support their claims.

It was later revealed that the photo was taken in 2014 at the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Foreign affairs secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. also said it was fake.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said they have already started verifying the reports through the help of the Philippine Coast Guard and the Department of National Defense, responding positively to calls made by lawmakers who urged them to take action.

“We will coordinate first on the authenticity of the allegation,” Antiporda told reporters in a message. “After that, we will be seeking the attention of the Chinese government. We will also validate if indeed these are Chinese vessels.”



Close to 240 Chinese fishing and militia vessels have remained in the Union Banks as of last month, ignoring repeated demands for their pullout from the country’s sovereign waters. China has largely snubbed the diplomatic protests initiated by the foreign affairs agency by insisting on their “nine-dash line” historical claims.

The wastewater was reported near Collins, Hughes, Johnson South, and Landsdowne reefs, according to Similarity, flagging the large concentration of Chlorophyll-a which can contaminate water quality.

“China, stop shitting on the Spratlys,” said Similarity CEO Liz Derr. “This is a catastrophe of epic proportions and we are close to the point of no return.”

(MM)

Source: https://news.tv5.com.ph/top-stories/read/human-wastes-defense-chief-questions-photo-of-chinese-ships-disposing-wastes-in-the-spratly?fbclid=IwAR3a8DeEilWXDJojOeWvbORMD-Yn00qzOa28X_SwKcgQMmADBjVE91FoI4



Waste-dumping in WPS not true, says Lorenzana

posted July 13, 2021 at 09:40 pm

by [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Tuesday the dumping of waste in the West Philippine Sea as reported by an American think tank is untrue.

“The reported dumping of waste in the WPS is not true. That photo is from the Great Barrier Reef in Australia,” he said in a text message.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. also refuted the report.

“Report fake,” he said in a tweet.

Similarity, a geospatial intelligence firm, earlier said that raw sewage from hundreds of Chinese ships were being dumped on reefs in the Spratly Islands, leading to concentration of unwanted and harmful algae in the maritime area.

It said wastewater is being disposed of in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, based on satellite images taken by the European Space Agency.

Still, Senator Francis Pangilinan condemned the reported dumping of sewage and called on the Chinese government to stop such activities and leave the area.

“The area’s not even yours, yet you’re ruining it. Leave at once,” Pangilinan said in reacting to Similarity’s satellite data imagery showing the dumping.

Senator Risa Hontiveros also strongly deplored the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s assertion that the Philippines’ 2016 The Hague victory on the South China Sea is “a piece of waste paper.”

“I unequivocally condemn Chinese Foreign Ministry Zhao Lijian’s statement that described our 2016 Hague victory as ‘nothing more than a piece of waste paper’ and that it is ‘illegal, null, and void,’ said Hontiveros.

“On what planet does he think China is?” asked the opposition senator, saying the entire world has accepted and honored this landmark legal decision.

Pangilinan said the government must assert its rights over the said waters and protect Filipino fishermen’s freedom to earn a living there.

At the same time, as oil prices continue to increase, Pangilinan underscores the potential of the country’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) as energy source that could shield Filipinos from oil price spikes.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto also said China is not only reclaiming land in the West Philippine Sea, “by its actions, it is also renaming it as the Waste Philippine Sea.”

By turning reefs into toilets, Recto said two man-made things are now visible from space: the Great Wall of China on land, and the Great Wastes of China at sea.

“Ships are prohibited by domestic and international laws from dumping its refuse and trash into our oceans,” he added.



Under Philippine laws, Recto such are environmental crimes that carry a jail term and a hefty fine.

But even without these laws, decent human behavior commands civilized men not to turn rich fishing grounds into a cesspool of feces, he said.

The senator also said the DENR should investigate this, and if there is basis, file charges in court. Government cannot fine sidewalk litterers while turning a blind eye to this.

He said the DFA should also study filing a diplomatic protest.



HEADLINE

Lorenzana: Non-violent WPS resolution

Interested parties must heed the call for a rules-based international order and refrain from acts that may exacerbate the tense situation in the area

Published 8 hours ago on July 14, 2021 12:20 AM

By [Kristina Maralit](#) @tribunephltina



While it welcomes the statements of support from other nations against China's excessive claims in the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea (WPS),

the Philippine government insisted to continue efforts to achieve a non-violent resolution to issues regarding the contested waterway.

"Consistent with Philippine national policy, we shall continue to seek all avenues to achieve peaceful and friendly management of all standing maritime disputes," Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said in a statement late Monday night, 12 July, the fifth anniversary of the country's arbitral win handed down by the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Lorenzana's pronouncement came after several western nations, led by the United States, sent congratulatory messages and expressed support to the Philippines. They also called on Beijing to recognize the ruling as it "has no lawful claim to the area determined by the Arbitral Tribunal to be part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf".

"The Tribunal stated that the PRC (People's Republic of China) has no lawful claim to the area determined by the Arbitral Tribunal to be part of the Philippines's exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. The PRC and the Philippines, pursuant to their treaty obligations under the Law of the Sea Convention, are legally bound to comply with this decision," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement released by US Embassy in Manila over the weekend.

The American official likewise threw caution that it will not hesitate to invoke the decades-long Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) between Washington, D.C. and Manila in any event an armed attack is launched against the Philippines.

"We also reaffirm that an armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the South China Sea would invoke US mutual defense commitments under Article IV of the 1951 US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty," noted Blinken, referring to the 12 July 2020 statement of his predecessor, Mike Pompeo.

The American official likewise noted that the United States, under the administration of President Joe Biden, "reaffirms its 13 July 2020 policy regarding maritime claims in the South China Sea".

This, however, did not sit well with the Chinese government.



China’s envoy to the Philippines, Ambassador Zhao Lilian, said Blinken’s “extremely irresponsible” rhetoric “stokes disputes on territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests” that also “sows discord among regional countries and undermines regional peace and stability”.

Zhao then urged the US government to “stop abusing international law, stop the use of force or the threat of force, and stop making provocations in South China Sea.”

America, the Chinese official further stressed, “should abide by international law underpinned by the United Nations Charter, and respect China’s sovereignty and rights and interests in the South China Sea instead of going further down the wrong path.”

Senator Risa Hontiveros, on the other hand, slammed Zhao for asserting that the 2016 Hague victory is “a piece of waste paper”

“On what planet does he think China is? The entire world has accepted and honored this landmark legal decision.

The Arbitral Award has made it clear that China’s nine-dash-line claim has neither historic nor legal basis as China cannot exceed what nations are entitled to under UNCLOS,” she expressed.

“China is a signatory to the UNCLOS, so she has to play by the same rules as everyone else.

She stands alone against the global consensus on the issue. China is indeed part of the United Nations, and in fact, she is also a permanent member of the UN’s Security Council, so Beijing’s leadership better stop contorting international law, which member-nations should abide by, just because it is not in her favor. Beijing should also stop lying through her teeth,” she added as she likewise called on Malacañang to denounce China’s statement as it is “long overdue”.

Still, Lorenzana, while maintaining that the Philippine government appreciate the “serious concerns over excessive maritime claims in the South China Sea” and insists that the arbitral ruling is “final and executory”, reminded “interested parties” must heed the call for a rules-based international order and “refrain from acts that may exacerbate the tense situation in the area.”

“The Award provided, not only the Philippines but the rest of the world, with a framework for greater cooperation and understanding of complex maritime conflicts,” the Defense chief said.

“Consistent with Philippine national policy, we shall continue to seek all avenues to achieve peaceful and friendly management of all standing maritime disputes,” he concluded.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/07/14/lorenzana-non-violent-wps-resolution/?_cf_chl_jschl_tk_=03cb1253bd56b6c15326f66e711c125256f8d51e-1626220342-0-AXHd54d3C8XaRs-tTMPYKp3k5JVkvRzk0S70xzpWqKR3j50IXPgGTCAL2mezGWSfv47UYh5v9B_2LxvbcD3WSZXX0z-WOAFdr7hwkcYBGkh3wqg1cY2t07lxs8yG9MK6duIDYzv-2GydA3pxoRX4aVDG4IP5dgbYq_K_H4fuG4dIU4QI4EeMUAMeMHxAdGPk2SoafUT3KF D5GANwGu62mqRc73i-BqHB8NZQb2xjkmW2VmpxGoun6JKBs1QBtVC_WDGwoL_6ro1YhBK8UaI-sVXUdBIBhx_9YHI4PIQTdTi-Gb7vCSpsmSzjrwF_yroZOTUmCIYjy-v79a8aae7rTtfnKxHuQmkvURKTWx-87Z_VtqDIQKJETnNHshYZCefE2V67-9KSNnSzkmxXOCs6wNpS7p9OKu5LoYsd83lxIYk51sU7bjsU-2jYNzbnkjauimZ4-EHCEYRBynF5DalX53tj3vcSNEsYN0aYKO1Lt-rXF



Kongreso kakalkalin dagat sa 'Pinas ginawang kubeta ng China

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Jul 14, 2021

NEWS



Photo courtesy of facebook.com/pcoogov



Mariing kinondena ng mga senador ang ulat hinggil sa pagtatapon umano ng mga barko ng China na 'human waste' o dumi ng tao sa West Philippine Sea.

Ayon kay Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto, dapat imbestigahan at kung may sapat na basehan, dapat kasuhan ang mga ito sa korte.

"The Department of Environment and Natural Resources should investigate this, and if there is basis, file charges in court. Government cannot fine sidewalk litterers while turning a blind eye to this," sabi ni Recto sa isang statement

Ayon naman kay Senadora Grace Poe, ang ginawa ng China ay tahasang insulto hindi lamang sa ating soberanya kung hindi maging sa lahat ng umaasa ng kabuhayan mula sa karagatan.



“Hindi ito gagawin ng kahit sinong matinong kapitbahay. This adds insult to injury. We are not the dumping site of any country, let alone by a nation laying claims on our territory,” reaksiyon ni Poe.

“Dapat makumpirma iyan ng sarili nating gobyerno para may sarili din tayong datos sa kung ano na nga ba ang patuloy na sinisira ng Tsina sa ating karagatan. Kalakip dito, dapat patuloy din ang ating panawagang paalisin na ng Tsina ang kanilang mga barko,” ayon naman kay Sen. Risa Hontiveros.

Iginiit naman ni Senador Panfilo Lacson na kumpirmahan muna ng pamahalaan ang nasabing ulat bago aksiyunan.

“Aside from being a serious and sensitive issue to resolve, it involves an Asian neighbor with whom we have at least 5 decades of diplomatic relations,” ani Lacson. (Dindo Matining)



DND: Gov't to look into reported waste dumping in WPS

Published 12 hours ago on July 13, 2021 05:59 PM

By [John Roson](#)



File photo

The government is looking into a report stating that Chinese vessels have been dumping human waste and sewage in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Tuesday.

“Our people are verifying. We have not received any report of waste dumping in the past,” Lorenzana told reporters.

Lorenzana made the remarks in reaction to satellite imaging company Simularity’s report that Chinese ships have been dumping raw sewage for several years on reefs in the Spratly island group.

The dumping, according to Simularity, has created Chlorophyll-a blooms that cause reef damage which could take decades to recover.

In a later statement, Lorenzana expressed doubt over the report but said he ordered an investigation.

“We question the conclusion reached by Simularity from just looking at satellite photos. Be that as it may, I have directed the Western Command who has jurisdiction over the WPS to verify and investigate.”

“While we are confirming and verifying these wastes being dumped in the WPS, we consider such irresponsible acts, if true, to be gravely detrimental to the marine ecology in the area,” Lorenzana said.

The Spratlys are a group of islands, sandbars, reefs, and shoals scattered across the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea, which is nearer to the Philippine archipelago.

China claims most of the South China Sea and has been turning some of the features into artificial islands while also sending a large number of vessels in the waters.

Aside from the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Malaysia also claim part of the waters.

“Despite overlapping claims and interests by states in the South China Sea, all nations must be responsible stewards of the environment,” Lorenzana said.



The defense chief's remarks came as a correction to an earlier statement to the media where he outrightly denied the reported waste dumping.

Lorenzana said he was referring to one photo accompanying the news about Similarity's report.

The photo, according to Lorenzana, is of a ship on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia taken in 2014.

"This intent to mislead has cast great doubt on the accurateness of the Similarity report," he said.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/07/13/dnd-govt-to-look-into-reported-waste-dumping-in-wps/?fbclid=IwAR3-DnoRuNOL_INZqMKNXbEAhWTX9Mj16rn8kBEDvirpMXfJRx7_G2E8BtE&_cf_chl_jschl_tk__=36390fc4e826e14d5abc3f6cc366d5fe868f919d-1626212928-0-AS5VrxojT1rbyEKcSpkYDFqERaaz49hBK-1q-NvMa64Fy_4fhxwMsPRTFGb2FDptt0JtYNI5SMiAihKbr3v66FR2Snl_ozF8zqifR5vc7xd7E0sD4BDkMhxFQtD9BL5UpG2IbWBR1LGCxuNep4cjFhZrhBqfzrQ9_PsM3wMjHbimCLh-4632uS4UGHLbGJ9Gbhs1RmcZjXQqGX-0Exfy4lCmDFohFHXdQZ7Q22EnXBKMEYWo1CyzoneAWJVe_RIRoHSut4tZZb7UPyxGMG5LQPjCFMZLAqysnwf0F2szLxl8hmrkm-rveQAvE6bW9Oa5lrjLh5NRslRTZ3uGh8cdGOJsjcjZ0Dcx12mE4K6X2h1KuohGc7psz1PXS77pBxDBhirOvD_qnZfMtEDA0_Qf_s7mR6oxEXbX0bGYJbjUStIJesa7nfxDOFlixLJjGEdVKF5KHi4Igzr21ZLS_8XfW9KThdpTDtCUmgwq0Dy7c8VvEh_BqyeLXMc5GncPUt2ZtzwPcX_RULE6dvO_ZXzvTRIVOL-MG5xO_OV1vA1aAHzO00pTfzENoPz2LXZAVk1LPR8KI7GsqxsbQ6esjpAW0



Pagtatapon ng human waste ng China sa WPS pinaiimbestigahan



July 13, 2021 @ 1:19 PM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pinaiimbestigahan ng dalawang mambabatas ang pagtatapon ng human waste ng ilang Chinese vessels sa West Philippine Sea.

Ayon kay Gabriela party-list Rep Arlene Brosas, ang aksyon ng China ay malinaw na “most visually brazen mockery of our sovereignty.”

“Is this Beijing’s disgusting toast to Duterte’s ‘piece of paper’ remark on the Hague ruling, by allowing its vessels to dump human waste on West Philippine Sea?” saad ni Brosas.

Nakatakdang maghain ng House resolution si Brosas para sa gagawing House Inquiry in aid of legislation.

Gayundin ang panawagan ni Bayan Muna party-list Rep Eufemia Cullamat,aniya, sisirain ng China ang maritime resources ng bansa.

“Kapuna-puna itong pagtatapon ng dumi ng tao ng malalaking barko ng Tsina sa karagatan ng ating bansa, malaki ang idudulot nitong kapinsalaan sa ating yaman karagatan. Maraming mangingisda ay nahihirapan sa agresyon ng Tsina sa West Philippine Sea, ngayon ginagawa na tayong inodoro ng Tsina,” pahayag ni Cullamat.

Nanawagan si Cullamat sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources na hiwalay na imbestigahan ang insidente.

“Napakalaking sampal ito sa ating pambansang soberanya. Habang naninikluhod ang administrasyong Duterte sa Tsina, tinatambak ng Tsina ang kanilang mga tae at dumi sa ating karagatan,” giit pa nito.

Una nang sinabi ni Liz Derr, founder at CEO ng Similarity na ilang Chinese vessels ang nagtatapon ng human waste araw araw sa loob na ng maraming taon sa WPS.

Ang Similarity ay nagsasagawa ng geospatial analysis at nagbibigay ng data imagery kung saan sinabi n Derr na dahil sa pagtatapon ng human waste sa WPS ay ilang dekada bago maayos ang pinsalang idinudulot nito. **Gail Mendoza**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/pagtatapon-ng-human-waste-ng-china-sa-wps-pinaiimbestigahan/>



Pagtatapon ng barko ng China ng dumi ng tao sa WPS pinaiimbestigahan sa Kamara

By **Bombo Dave Vincent Pasit** - July 13, 2021 | 5:18 PM

Binatikos ng dalawang kongresista ang pagtatapon ng dumi ng tao ng ilang mga barko ng China sa ilang bahagi ng West Philippine Sea.

Sa isang statement, sinabi ni Gabriela party-list Representative Arlene Brosas na malinaw na panunuya sa soberenya ng Pilipinas ang ginawa ng mga Chinese vessels na ito.

Nakakadiri aniya na ganito ang ganti ng Beijing sa Pilipinas matapos na sabihin ni Duterte na “piece of paper” lamang ang ruling ng The Hague na nag-invalidates sa malawakang claims ng China sa pinagtatalunang bahagi ng karagatan.

Ayon kay Brosas, dapat na masusi at kagyat na maimbestigahan ang pagtatapon ng dumi ng tao ng mga barko ng China sa West Philippine Sea dahil nagdudulot ito ng pinsala sa likas na yaman ng bansa.

Kaugnay nito ay maghahain aniya sila ng resolusyon para masilip ang paggawa ng China sa West Philippine Sea bilang kanilang inidoro.

Ganito rin ang pagpuna ni Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Eufemia Cullamat, sa pagsasabi na mapinsala ito sa maritime resources ng Pilipinas.

Nanawagan siya sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources na imbestigahan ang usapin na ito.

Hindi aniya dapat pakupad-kupad ang gobyerno sa issue na ito sapagkat soberenya ng bansa ang nakasalalay din dito.

Kahapon, sinabi ni Liz Derr, founder at CEO ng Similarity, na ilang taon nang nagtatapon ng dumi ng tao ang mga Chinese vessels sa ilang bahagi ng West Philippine Sea, dahilan par



Pagtatapon ng China ng mga dumi ng tao sa WPS, maaaring habulin ng Pilipinas

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Jul. 13, 2021 at 12:57pm



Maaaring habulin ng Pilipinas ang China sa ginagawang pagtatapon ng mga dumi ng tao ng mga barko nito na naka-angkla sa West Philippine Sea.

Sa mga satellite images mula sa European Space Agency, makikita ang pagtatapon ng mga Chinese vessel ng mga dumi sa dagat na araw-araw umanong ginagawa ng mga Tsino sa nakalipas na ilang taon.

Sabi ni maritime expert Prof. Jay Batongbacal, ang ginagawa ng Tsina ay paglabag sa batas ng Pilipinas at sa International Law kung saan bawal gawing basurahan ang karagatan.

Aniya, maaari din itong maging basehan para iprotesta ang patuloy na presensya ng mga barko ng Tsina sa loob ng Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) ng Pilipinas.

"Dahil nga kitang-kita yung nangyayari na may pollution tapos may impact yung pollution dahil nga sa dami ng mga barkong nilalagay nila dyan na wala namang pahintulot natin, so, 'yan po e basehan para iprotesta yung continuing presence ng mga barko nila," ani Batongbacal sa interview ng RMN Manila.

"Pangalawa, para hingan sila ng danyos eventually doon sa damage kapag na-confirm natin through ground verification na talagang nanggagaling nga sa kanila 'yung pinsala sa lugar."

Kasabay nito, binigyang-diin ni Batongbacal ang kahalagahan ng West Philippine Sea sa buhay ng mga Pilipino.

"Una, pagdating sa pangisdaan, 27% ng commercial marine fish catch ang nakukuha natin sa West Philippine Sea. Tapos, yung petrolyo na kailangan din natin e nandyan din sa West Philippine Sea na hanggang ngayon ay hindi natin matunton kung nasa'n kasi pinipigilan tayo sa pag-explore, e dyan po nakasalalay ang economic development ng Pilipinas," aniya pa.

Pero aniya, hindi pa huli ang lahat para igiit ng bansa ang karapatan nito sa West Philippine Sea.

Dapat lang aniyang ipagpatuloy ang paghahain ng mga protesta, pagpapatrolya at pumili ng pinunong hindi uulitin ang polisiya ng kasalukuyang administrasyon.



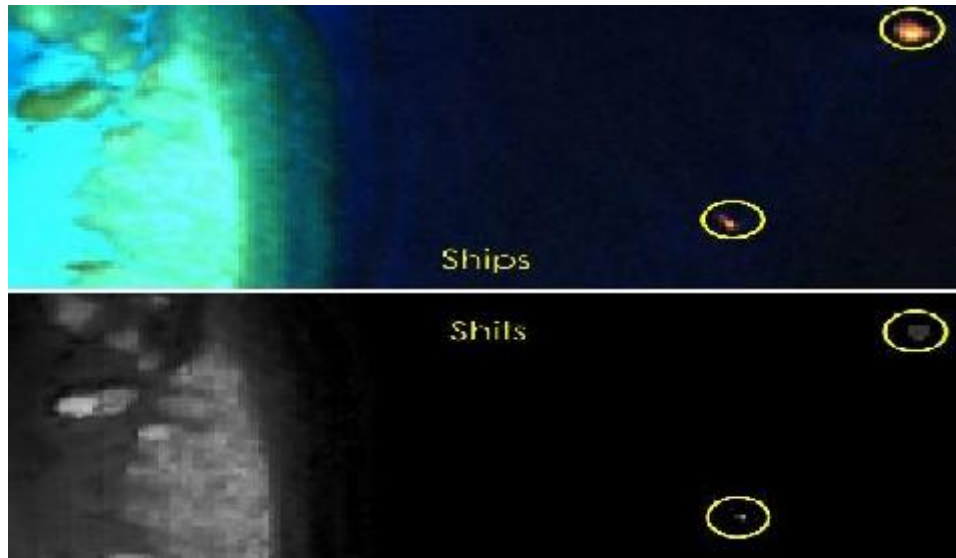
"Dapat isyu talaga yan, kasi nga ang laki nung epekto nitong masyadong naging mapagbigay tayo sa Tsina at nakikita natin na wala tayong nakuhang masyadong ganansya, imbes e mga offshore gambling operations at kawalan ng trabaho at yung mga pangako nila na napako naman, ang kalapit po e yung West Philippine Sea," giit ng maritime expert.

"So, hindi po talaga dapat mangyari uli. Sa susunod na eleksyon, kailangang pumili tayo ng mga lider na hindi ipagpapatuloy yung mga ganyang polisiya."



China may face sanctions for allegedly dumping human waste in WPS, says Batongbacal

Published July 13, 2021 7:26pm



"Yong mga water quality rules natin, puwede nating gamitin at puwede nating sitahin sila na na-violate nila ang laws natin doon," Batongbacal said in an interview on Super Radyo dzBB.

China could face sanctions for dumping human waste and sewage from hundreds of Chinese ships anchored in the South China Sea and parts of the West Philippine Sea, a maritime law expert said Tuesday.

Atty. Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines' Institute of Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said the Philippines could file a case versus China for dumping waste in Philippine waters.

"Yong exclusive economic zone natin, this is subject to our jurisdiction, lalo na pagdating sa environmental regulation. 'Yong mga water quality rules natin, puwede nating gamitin at puwede nating sitahin sila na na-violate nila ang laws natin doon," Batongbacal said in an interview on Super Radyo dzBB.

"Pagdating sa international law, mayroon mga standard din 'yong emission ng ship source pollution. Mayroong mga rules na maaaring ma-invoke natin tapos mayroon ding standing rules sa deliberate dumping of waste in the ocean. Bawal dapat 'yan," he added.

To prove China's illegal activity on Philippine waters, Batongbacal said water quality samples and assessment are needed from the damaged area.

Moreover, he said sovereign vessels have sovereign immunity.

"Hindi sila basta-basta puwedeng i-demanda," he said.

However, private vessels may be sanctioned as they violated the law.

Earlier, a [United States-based expert said China vessels had been dumping](#) human waste in parts of the West Philippine Sea.



Liz Derr, founder and CEO of Similarity, which specializes in geospatial analysis and provides satellite data imagery, revealed that Chinese ships have been dumping raw sewage every day for several years on reefs, creating harmful Chlorophyll-a blooms in the waters.

Showing satellite images in the last five years, Derr said effluent from Chinese ships are causing elevated concentrations of Chlorophyll-a leading to "a cascade of reef damage that will take decades to recover even with active mitigation."

At least 236 ships were spotted in the Union Banks or Pagkakaisa Reefs, which is within the West Philippine Sea as of June 17, she said.

Derr said the marine damage is in addition to the well-documented destruction by China of coral reefs, the harvest of endangered giant clams and artificial island-building. —**Ma. Angelica Garcia/NB, GMA News**



Dumped waste may create 'dead zone' threat to food supply of all SCS coastal areas

By: [Alexander T. Magno](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:14 AM July 14, 2021



Satellite photo shows the position of the ships dumping human waste in the water in some reefs in the Spratly Islands. (Photo from Simularity)

MANILA, Philippines — The dumping of human waste at the Spratly Islands, which has been going on for the last five years at least, may eventually damage coral reefs in the area, creating a “dead zone” that is unsuitable as a breeding place for fish.

This will cut down the food supply not only of the immediate vicinity of the islands but of all the coastal areas of the South China Sea, according to Liz Derr, co-founder and CEO of Simularity, who talked about the issue in an interview on Tuesday with the ABS-CBN News Channel.

Simularity, which specializes in geospatial AI technology for satellite imagery, runs a free service called the South China Sea Rapid Alert Platform, which monitors the much-disputed body of water and publishes reports of unusual activity there.

“Coral reefs are basically habitats for a vast number of species, and it’s where most fish species go to breed and spawn. And if the reef habitat is damaged, the fish won’t go there to spawn anymore. And if it’s overfished, there aren’t many fish to spawn, to begin with. As the coral dies, it becomes less and less friendly as a breeding ground,” Derr said.

“And one might say: ‘Okay, so there’s no fish on the Spratlys. Is that a big deal?’ But it’s actually way worse than that because the fish that breed on the Spratlys their eggs get traveled all around the South China Sea from the summer and winter monsoons that blow those waters around while the eggs are still larvae,” she went on.

“So damaging the Spratlys is actually damaging the future food supply for all the coastal areas and anybody who’s fishing in the South China Sea.”

‘Like dumping fertilizer on weeds’

It was Simularity that reported the dumping of human waste at the Spratly Islands Group. The Philippines claims the northeastern section of the area as the Kalayaan Island Group, along with the Scarborough Shoal, which it calls the Bajo de Masinloc.



Derr explained key points of the report — [“Sewage From Anchored Ships Is Damaging Spratly Reefs”](#) — in her interview.

The dumped waste acts as nutrients, “like fertilizer,” that the microscopic plants in the water consume, she said. The leftover waste will then drop to the bottom of the sea where they are consumed by bacteria that use up oxygen — which results in what is called a “dead zone,” an area without oxygen.

“These nutrients can also to the plants that are on the reef and cause an overgrowth of those plants,” Derr said. “Like if you dumped a bunch of fertilizer on weeds, for example. The weeds would go crazy, and that’s essentially what’s happening. The sewage is essentially fertilizer for the weeds that we don’t necessarily want grow on the reefs.”

The plants and the algae on the coral can eventually kill it by releasing nutrients that will make the water more acidic, which will erode the coral.

Normally, the fish in the area will eat the algae, but because of overfishing, there are fewer fish left to eat the algae.

The plants release chlorophyll-a in the water. Over time, an increased concentration of chlorophyll-a can be detected by satellites and analyzed by AI-driven software — which is what Similarity has been doing.

It’s been going on for five years

Asked about the significance of a high concentration of chlorophyll-a, Derr said: “It means it has been going on for a while, and the imagery that we were able to analyze that has this special wavelength in it was from 2016.”

“And in just those five years — after all that artificial island-building and giant clam harvesting that was every bad for the environment — even after all that, we’ve seen damage to the reefs in the Union Banks where the ships have been anchored, just in the last five years,” she added.

“And we can see that from space, and I’m very happy to say this is something we can monitor, and we’re going to keep monitoring, and we’re going to keep monitoring those ships to see if and when they move or stop dumping sewage into the reefs.”

Asked if Similarity was sure that the ships dumping the waste were from China, she said: “From satellite imagery, we can’t definitively say that those are Chinese ships. But they seem to be the same ships that have been there since March, and they look very similar. So I think that in all probability they are.”

She added that it appeared that the ships were not moving at all, which meant that were still dumping their wastes in the water.

The environmental damage caused by overfishing and waste dumping would not be reversible on its own, she pointed out.

“You have to take active steps to do it,” she said. “Like, for example, reintroducing algae-eating fish into that area that has been overfished to start reducing the algae that are covering the reefs, and obviously, stopping the activity that is contributing to this algae explosion.”

Source: <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/197688/dead-zone-caused-by-dumped-waste-threatens-food-supply-of-all-scs-coastal-areas>



Not 'Waste Philippine Sea': Senators call for action on human waste disposal in WPS

By [Raheema Velasco](#) - July 13, 2021 - 8:22 PM



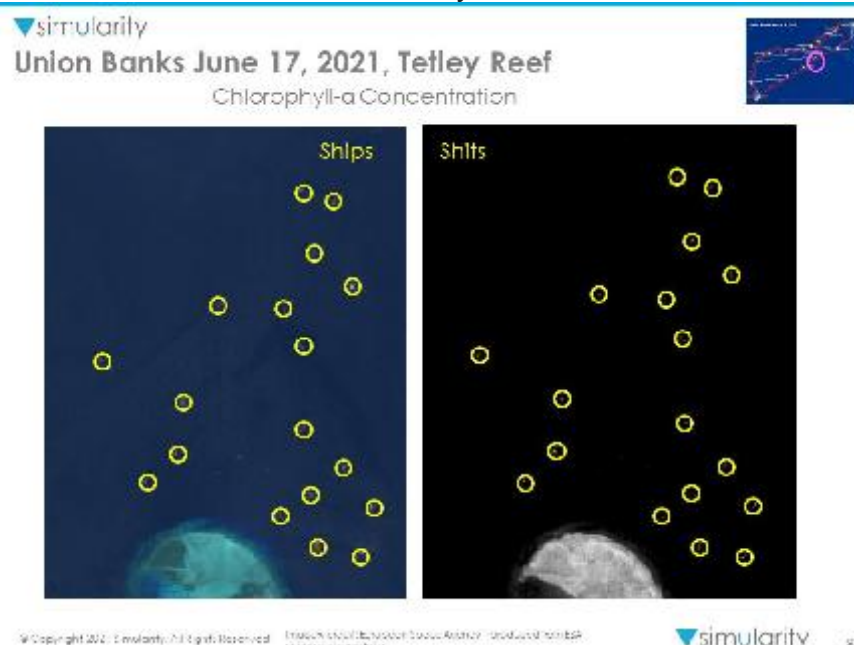
Chinese vessels, believed to be manned by Chinese maritime militia personnel, are seen at Whitsun Reef, South China Sea on March 27, 2021. (Picture taken March 27, 2021. Philippine Coast Guard/National Task Force-West Philippine Sea/Handout via Reuters)

A number of senators on Tuesday denounced the reported human waste disposal in the **West Philippines Sea (WPS)**.

The hundreds of ships that are anchored in the Spratly Islands in the WPS are dumping raw sewage into the reefs they are occupying, according to a [report](#) on July 12.

Similarity, a US-based geospatial imagery and data analysis company, released satellite images over the last five years showing how human waste, sewage, and wastewater have accumulated and created chlorophyll-a blooms in Union Banks, located entirely within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

"Chlorophyll-a concentration is a measure of phytoplankton. Excess phytoplankton that cannot be consumed by the reef inhabitants dies off and sinks to the sea floor, where it is consumed by bacteria that would create a 'dead zone' if they become available to fish," the report said.



"Ships and shits" satellite images of Union Banks as of June 17, 2021. (Similarity/Released)



As of June 17, at least 236 ships were spotted in Union Banks, [said Liz Derr](#), co-founder and chief executive officer of Similarity.

Although Derr [said](#) she was “not able to verify that these ships are from China based on satellite imagery and data,” yet she pointed out that “the Philippine Coast Guard has taken numerous photos of these ships since March, and they are clearly Chinese.”

The report also noted that damaging the reefs can lead to a “catastrophe of epic proportions” that is irreversible. The reefs will also take decades to recover even with active mitigation.

In a statement on Tuesday, Sen. **Ralph Recto** said that the incident means “It is not only reclaiming land in the West Philippine Sea; by its actions, it is also renaming it as the ‘Waste Philippine Sea’.”

“By turning reefs into toilets, two man-made things are now visible from space: the Great Wall of China on land, and the Great Wastes of China at sea,” [the statement read](#).

Opposition Sen. **Francis Pangilinan** also condemned the reported dumping of waste.

He called on the Chinese government to stop such activities and leave the area.

“Hindi na nga sa inyo, sisirain niyo pa. Umalis kayo riyan,” [Pangilinan said](#).

“Tapunan ng basura ang trato sa ating bansa. Ganito ang isinusukli ng China sa mga sunud-sunuran, tikom ang bibig, at kaduwagan. Wala tayong utang na loob sa mga umaagaw sa ating yamang dagat at karagatan, sa mga inaalipusta ang ating mga mangingisda,” he added.

In asserting the Philippines’ rights, Pangilinan stressed the potential of the country’s exclusive economic zone in the WPS as energy source that could shield Filipinos from oil price spikes.

“Hindi lang sa pagkain mayaman ang West Philippine Sea, mayamin din ito sa gas. The West Philippine Sea could be the answer to the attainment of our energy security and sustainability so that our people will no longer have to suffer from high oil prices,” Pangilinan said.

“Kaya naman kailangang igiit ang ating karapatan sa ating exclusive economic zone,” he added.

Like Pangilinan, Sen. **Grace Poe** slammed the act of dumping waste it is “infuriating” and “disgusting.”

“Isa itong tahasang insulto hindi lamang sa ating soberanya kung hindi maging sa lahat ng umaasa ng kabuhayan mula sa karagatan. Hindi ito gagawin ng kahit sinong matinong kapitbahay. This adds insult to injury. We are not the dumping site of any country, let alone by a nation laying claims on our territory,” [Poe said](#).

“China treating us as its toilet is a clear violation of both international and local environmental laws. The Stockholm Declaration requires all states to ‘take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas by substances that are liable to create hazards to human health, to harm living resources and marine life, to damage amenities or to interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea,’” she added.



Poe said the act of dumping wastes in the area clearly shows that the dumper knows the WPS is not theirs, “for otherwise, they would have respected the ecological value of the rich fishing ground.”

She cited the local laws like the Republic Act 9275 or the **Clean Water Act**, and R.A. 9003 or the **Ecological Solid Waste Management Act** of 2000 which impose penalties on such acts.

Other senators urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) [to investigate](#) and file charges against the perpetrators.

Sen. **Risa Hontiveros** cited that until now there is no baseline report from DENR on how much has natural resources has been damaged and lost in the WPS.

“Noong April 2020, naghain ako ng resolusyon na naglalayong magbayad ang Tsina ng higit sa P200 billion dahil sa pagkasira niya ng ating mga marine resources sa WPS. Na-kwenta din ng opisina ko base sa mga iba’t ibang report na halos P800 billion na ang utang ng Tsina dahil sa pagwasak niya sa ating reef ecosystems at pati narin sa mga nawawalang fish stock sa ating karagatan,” [Hontiveros said](#).

“Mas mainam kung ang DENR mismo may opisyal na report na nagkukwenta kung ano na nga ba ang dapat bayarang danyos ng Tsina. Ito ang pwedeng magsilbing pamantayan ng ating pagsingil sa patuloy na pagmamalabis ng Tsina,” he added.

DENR Undersecretary **Benny Antiporda**, on the other hand, said the DENR would still verify the reports.

“On the issue of waste disposal on the West Philippine Sea, we will coordinate with the PCG (Philippine Coast Guard) and DND (Department of National Defense) first on the authenticity of the allegation,” Antiporda told Philstar.com.

After that, Antiporda said the DENR will be seeking for the attention of the Chinese government thru the **Department of Foreign Affairs**.

“We will also validate if indeed these are Chinese vessels,” he said.

In a news update on Tuesday evening, Defense Secretary **Delfin Lorenzana** [slammed Similarity](#) for its report on human waste, saying that its conclusion was only based on satellite photos. —**With Rosette Adel**



Mga barko ng Tsina nagtatapon ng dumi ng tao sa bahagi ng West Philippine Sea

On Jul 13, 2021



SINABI ni Liz Derr, founder and CEO ng Similarity na eksperto sa geospatial analysis at nagbahagi ng satellite data imagery, makikita ang pagtatapon umano ng mga Chinese ship ng mga dumi sa dagat na ginagawa ng mga Tsino araw-araw sa nakalipas na ilang taon.

Pahayag ng isang US-based expert, nagdudulot ng matinding pinsala sa yamang-dagat ang itinatapong dumi ng tao at iba pang nagdudulot ng polusyon na mula sa mga barko ng China na naka-angkla sa South China Sea, at bahagi ng West Philippine Sea.

Dahil sa polusyon na nililikha ng mga itinatapong dumi, kabilang ang dumi ng tao, nagkaroon na umano ng Chlorophyll-a.

Sa satellite images sa nakalipas na limang taon, sinabi ni Derr na ang mga dumi na galing sa mga barko ng China ay lumikha ng makapal na Chlorophyll-a na naging sanhi ng “reef damage that will take decades to recover even with active mitigation.”

Nasa 236 barko ng Tsina ang namataan sa Union Banks o Pagkakaisa Reefs, na pasok sa West Philippine Sea hanggang nitong June 17, ayon kay Derr.

Ang pinsala sa mga yamang-dagat, ayon kay Derr, ay karagdagan sa mga dokumentadong pinsala na ginagawa ng China sa karagatan, kabilang na ang pagkuha sa mga endangered giant clams at magtatayo ng artificial island-building.

Babala ni Derr, ang pinsala sa karagatan ay magdudulot ng gutom dahil maapektuhan nito ang commercial fishing sa South China Sea, na pinagkukunan ng pagkain ng milyong-milyong tao sa rehiyon.

Bukod sa China at Pilipinas, may kaniya-kaniya ring pag-angkin sa bahagi ng South China Sea ang Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam at Taiwan.

Source: https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/07/13/mga-barko-ng-tsina-nagtatapon-ng-dumi-ng-tao-sa-bahagi-ng-west-philippine-sea/?fbclid=IwAR1M2awKpavj8y6_HtF7kxXM3OHYxrXgQIF-PFNHoB0AfzVPlxN2zls5M9s



Gov't urged to act immediately on latest issues concerning West Philippine Sea

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLaluINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:39 AM July 14, 2021



West Philippine Sea: On July 12, 2016, the United Nations-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled in favor of the Philippines, invalidating China's claim of historic rights to resources within the South China Sea within its "nine-dash line." INQUIRER FILE

MANILA, Philippines — The government should act immediately on two developments concerning the West Philippine Sea: It should investigate the reported dumping of human waste by Chinese ships in the area, and it should summon the Chinese ambassador to explain the statement of China's Foreign Ministry spokesman dismissing the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration as "a piece of waster paper."

Bayan Muna Rep. Eufemia Cullamat said on Tuesday that the government should immediately investigate reports that Chinese ships have dumped human waste near the country's reefs at the West Philippine Sea as it may degrade the marine ecosystem in the area.

"This dumping of human waste by big ships from China in our sea is very glaring. This will cause big damage to our sea resources. Many fishermen are already suffering from the aggression of China in the West Philippine Sea. Now, China is turning us into a toilet," Cullamat said in Filipino in a statement.

"The DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] should immediately investigate and resolve the destruction being inflicted by big ships from China," she added.

In a separate statement, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) urged Malacañang to summon the Chinese ambassador to the Philippines, Huang Xilian, to protest the statement of the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, calling the arbitral ruling favoring the Philippines in the maritime dispute as "a piece of waster paper."

"Malacanang should summon the Chinese ambassador to Manila over the utterly disrespectful, crass statements made by the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on the anniversary of the Philippine victory in the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The spokesperson called our legal victory a 'piece of waste paper.' This is totally unacceptable," Bayan Secretary-General Renato Reyes said.



“Our victory in the arbitral tribunal is celebrated widely. China spits in the face of Filipinos when it calls our victory nothing more than a piece of waste paper. The Philippine government should not allow this insult to pass without raising a howl of protest,” he added.

The ruling, which the PCA made on July 12, 2016, recognized the exclusive rights of the Philippines over the West Philippines Sea and pronounced that China’s nine-dash line claim — an imaginary line that claims most of the South China Sea as a part of Chinese — had no legal and historical basis.

Regarding the dumping of human waste over the disputed seas, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that authorities were still verifying whether the information relayed was accurate, noting that the study done by Simularity referred to an incident in Australia’s Great Barrier Reef and not in the West Philippine Sea.

The news about the human waste dumping, which came out on Monday, outraged Filipinos, with senators demanding an investigation. But Lorenzana also questioned how Simularity was able to conclude that human waste was being dumped into the area by merely looking at satellite images.

These two issues are the latest of several incidents in 2021 that kept the tension high between China and the Philippines.

Last March, the Philippines protested the presence of over 220 Chinese maritime militia ships — disguised as fishing vessels — near Julian Felipe Reef, which lies about 260 kilometers west of Bataraza, Palawan — well within the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone.



Environment group condemns alleged West Philippine Sea human waste dumping

By MA. ANGELICA GARCIA, GMA News

Published July 13, 2021 8:31pm



Environment group Oceana Philippines on Tuesday denounced the alleged dumping of human waste by hundreds of vessels anchored in the West Philippine Sea.

In a statement, Oceana said the activity poses a "serious risk" to the fisheries and biodiversity in the ocean, which the Philippines and neighboring countries depend on for food.

Oceana urged the Philippine government to investigate the "deplorable abuse" of the country's territorial waters.

The group also called on the Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to verify the illegal activity.

Under the Clean Water Act of 2004, Oceana said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is mandated to convene the management board in coordination with the National Water Resources Board and designate certain areas as water quality management areas using appropriate physiographic units such as watershed, river basins or water resources regions.

"The amended Fisheries Code imposes sanctions on vessels found guilty of aquatic pollution, while the Clean Water Act of 2004 prohibits unauthorized transport or dumping into sea waters of sewage sludge or solid waste," it said.

Earlier, a United States-based expert said [Chinese vessels have been dumping human waste in parts of the West Philippine Sea](#).

Liz Derr, founder and CEO of Similarity, which specializes in geospatial analysis and provides satellite data imagery, revealed that Chinese ships have been dumping raw sewage every day for several years on reefs, creating harmful Chlorophyll-a blooms in the waters.

Showing satellite images in the last five years, Derr said effluent from Chinese ships is causing elevated concentrations of Chlorophyll-a leading to "a cascade of reef damage that will take decades to recover even with active mitigation."



At least 236 ships were spotted in the Union Banks or Pagkakaisa Reefs, which is within the West Philippine Sea, as of June 17.

Derr said the marine damage is in addition to the well-documented destruction by China of coral reefs, the harvest of endangered giant clams, and artificial island-building. — **DVM, GMA News**



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Dapat panagutin at imbestigahan ng gobyerno ang mga Chinese vessel na nagtatapon umano ng dumi ng tao sa West Philippine Sea, ayon sa grupong Oceana.

Kinukumpirma pa raw ng Defense Department ang ulat pero kung sakaling totoo, malaki raw ang magiging pinsala nito sa ating yamang dagat.



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Dumped human waste from Chinese ships creating 'dead zone' in Spratlys - intelligence firm | ANC

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Rundown: Raw sewage from hundreds of ships is being dumped on reefs in the Spratly Islands amid Chinese maritime activity, leading to concentration of unwanted and harmful algae in the maritime area, a geospatial intelligence firm revealed on Monday.

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Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDcmvZWFDCw>



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Magsasagawa ng imbestigasyon ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources(DENR) tungkol sa nasabing report ng US-based company na Similarity. Ayon sa report nagtatapon ang mga Chinese vessels ng human waste and sewage sa West Philippine Sea(WPS) na nagdudulot ng mga pagkasira sa karagatan.

RAPIDNEWSPHILIPPINES

DENR WILL INVESTIGATE THE REPORTS OF CHINESE VESSELS DUMPING HUMAN WASTE IN WPS

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WASTE PHILIPPINE SEA?

Hinikayat ni Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto ang DENR na mag-imbestiga, at ang DFA na maghain ng diplomatic protest kaugnay ng ulat ng pagtatapon ng Chinese ships ng human waste sa West Philippine Sea.

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“
It is not only reclaiming land in the West Philippine Sea; by its actions, it is also renaming it as the Waste Philippine Sea.
 DENR should investigate this, and if there is basis, file charges in court. Government cannot fine sidewalk litterers while turning a blind eye to this. DFA should also study filing a diplomatic protest.
”

SEN. RALPH RECTO
 SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
 JULY 13, 2021

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Editorial Cartoon July 14, 2021



BY BUSINESSMIRROR EDITORIAL

JULY 13, 2021

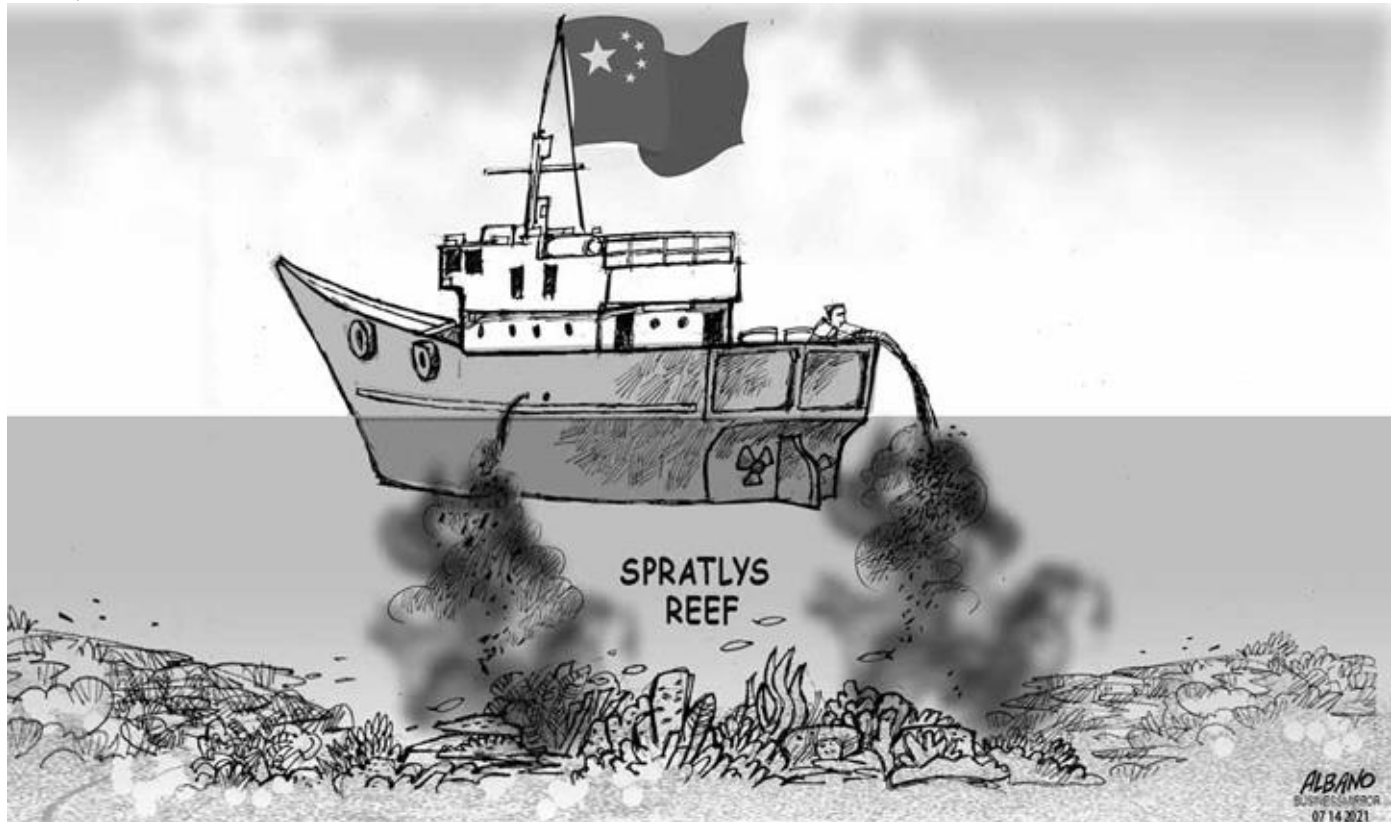


Image courtesy of Jimbo Albano



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#Nakatutok24Oras

Dolphin surprises residents in Samar after showing up in a river | BT

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A dolphin surprised residents in Sta. Rita, Samar after finding its way into a river.

Balitanghali is the daily noontime newscast of GTV anchored by Raffy Tima and Connie Sison. It

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Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=busdcv3n638>



2 endangered species ng pawikan pinakawalan sa Capiz

ABS-CBN News Posted at Jul 13 2021 08:01 PM



Kuha ng Capiz Kabalaka Information Center

ROXAS, Capiz- Dalawang endangered species ng pawikan ang pinakawalan sa dagat sa Roxas City, Martes ng umaga matapos sila matagpuan at masagip sa dalawang bayan sa Capiz.

Bago sila pinakawalan, nilagyan sila ng tag at binigyan ng pangalan.

Ang una ay tinawag na Rosalea alinsunod sa pangalan ng ina ni Capiz Gov. Esteban Evan "Nonoy" Contreras.

Si Rosales ay may habang 89 centimeters at may lapad na 78 cm. Natagpuan ito sa dagat ng Sapián at nai-turn over sa opisyal ng probinsya.

Ang isa naman ay pinangalanang Evalyn, na natagpuan sa bayan ng Ivisan. May haba itong 79 cm at may lapad na 72cm.

Ang pagpapakawala sa mga pawikan sa karagatan ay pinangunahan nina Contreras at ng iba pang opisyal ng lalawigan, kasama ang DENR Capiz.

Ayon kay Contreras, kailangang ipagbigay-alam sa mga awtoridad ng mga residente ang mga mahuhuling pawikan para mabigyan ng sapat na pag-aalaga at maibalik sa karagatan.

—Ulat ni Rolan Escaniel



DENR urged to reject Dumaguete reclamation project

July 13, 2021

THE national fishers' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to deny an environmental permit the roundly opposed Dumaguete reclamation project over its environmental and socio-economic impacts.

In a statement, Pamalakaya said the DENR should seriously take into account the sentiments of scientists, environmentalists, and communities opposed to the 174-hectare reclamation project.

Dumaguete City-based sectors that expressed opposition cited potential devastating impacts of the reclamation project to the marine environment, coastal communities, as well as local fish supply.

"It should be no-brainer for the DENR to reject this reclamation project which has been lamented by scientists and communities as environmentally-destructive. For starters, the DENR should issue a public statement opposing the reclamation and commit itself that no environmental permit would ever be issued to this project," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya national chairperson, said in a statement.

To prove the devastating impacts of reclamation to marine environment, the fishers' group cited Manila Bay for instance, which for years now "has deteriorated courtesy of reclamation projects that destroyed mangrove areas and transformed productive fishing communities into business and commercial districts."

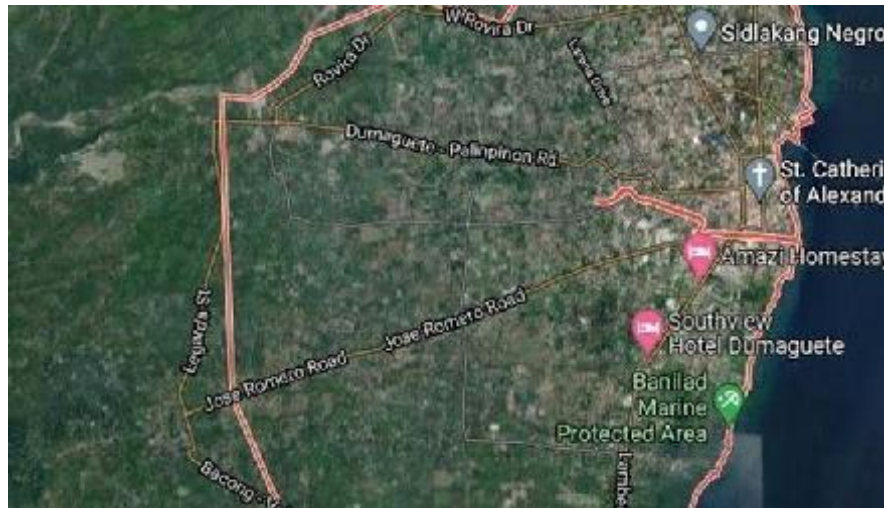
"Reclamation has long been proven to be catastrophic not only to marine environment but also to livelihood of coastal communities. Too many reclamation projects have displaced our fisherfolks, too many fishers' dreams have been shattered to give way for these profit-driven projects. This atrocity among us has to stop," Hicap said.

"We strongly demand the DENR to be true to its mandate on environmental protection by outrightly rejecting this destructive Dumaguete reclamation project, otherwise, it would be a national resistance movement," he added. **(PR)**



Reclamation in Dumaguete seen to pose devastating impacts on environment, communities

By [Gaea Katreena Cabico](#)(Philstar.com) - July 13, 2021 - 1:43pm



Satellite image shows Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental.
[Google Maps](#)

MANILA, Philippines — Scientists and environmental advocates expressed opposition to a massive reclamation project in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, fearing it will bring devastating impacts on the communities and the coastal ecosystems in the area.

In a statement, national scientist and former environment chief Angel Alcala along with the present and former presidents of Silliman University (SU) said the planned P23-billion reclamation along the city's coastline "will directly destroy, literally bury, the few remaining coral reef, seagrass and soft-sediment ecosystems that support small-scale fisheries and gleaning in Dumaguete."

The local government and the developer aim to build a 174-hectare "smart city" on a reclaimed land. According to a [Philippine News Agency report](#), the project will be at no cost to the city government.

Matthew Vincent Tabilog, a member of Mangrove Matters PH, told **Philstar.com** the signing of the joint venture agreement was moved "until further notice."

He added the province's Sangguniang Panlalawigan signed a resolution urging the Dumaguete City council to defer and reevaluate the authority and consent given to Mayor Felipe Remollo to enter into an agreement with the developer, E.M. Cuerpo Inc.

Effects on coastal ecosystems

A map created by the Students Toward Environmental Welfare and Research for Development and Sustainability (STEWARDS), a group of students in SU, showed 62.5% of seagrass beds and 60.5% of coral reefs in the area will be buried should the reclamation project push through.

Both seagrass beds and coral reefs provide important ecosystems for marine life. Seagrass meadows are also highly efficient carbon sinks, sequestering carbon from the atmosphere up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests.

"Dumaguete City lies in the center of Negros Oriental and the city has rich coastal ecosystems that mitigate the effects of climate change and bring ecological and socioeconomic services to the people," Tabilog said.



Photo shows an overlay of the marine habitats along Dumaguete with that of the proposed reclamation.

STEWARDS

A study in 2020 showed that there were over 200 species of fish in one of the areas that will be affected by the reclamation project, and local fishers rely on about 60% of these species for livelihood and subsistence.

The massive reclamation project is also seen to negatively impact four marine protected areas in the city covering 104 hectares.

“Some of these MPAs may even cease to exist. If the project pushes through, Dumaguete City will renege on its commitment to do its part in marine conservation for the province, region and country,” the statement of experts read.

Aside from Alcala, signatories of the statement include SU president Betty McCann, former SU president, Ben Malayang III, and professors Hilconida Calumpong, Rene Abesamis, Enrique Oracion, Janet Estacion and Robert Guinoo.

Coastal communities

In a separate statement, youth organizations said the project can potentially alter the flow of wastewater, which will result in the pollution of multiple municipal waters, and increase flooding impacts on coastal communities.

“Local fishermen have also noticed a decline in catch since the beginning of this project, forcing them to go farther and farther out into the ocean in order to bring back enough fish to support themselves and their families. In furthering this project, more and more of their livelihood would be destroyed,” the groups said.

The youth groups composed of Kabataan Para Sa Karapatan-Negros Oriental, Mangrove Matters PH, Association of Young Environmentalists-Dumaguete Chapter, (STEWARDS) and Lihok NegOr led an [online petition](#). Currently, over 10,000 people have signed the petition.

On Monday, convenors of the #NoTo174Dumaguete sent a letter of objection to the office of the city mayor.



Questions on transparency

The scientists and academics called on the city council to rescind its action in endorsing the project and approving the contract. Dumaguete City Mayor Felipe Remollo should also disclose the history and track record of the developer.

“The mayor and the members of the council [should] publicly disclose their individual and collective reasons why this haste of pushing this huge project knowing that elections are to be held next year and they might not be in office by them,” they said.

Groups opposing the project also questioned the lack of consultation with communities.

In 2019, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu signed the approval of the “area clearance” permit for the project which was valid for five years.

“Our city is at the forefront of scientific research and social development. We have excellent leaders who have rallied for effective and secure development that has made the city what it is today. We beg the same leaders to align their future development plans with the city’s economic and environmental long-term plans and avoid disastrous and unsustainable reclamation projects like this one,” STEWARDS said in a [statement](#).



Catholic church leaders oppose Dumaguete reclamation project

Published July 13, 2021 11:29pm



The reclamation project, dubbed "Smart City" island, would cost P23 billion and will include a coastal wastewater treatment facility, shoreline slope, wave protection, esplanade, a marina, a modern ferry port, and an open area for sports facilities, a hospital, and a city administration hub.

Catholic church leaders in Dumaguete City said the "scientific and environmental implications" of a proposed reclamation project should be considered, according to a post on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) website.

The reclamation project, dubbed "Smart City" island, would cost P23 billion and will include a coastal wastewater treatment facility, shoreline slope, wave protection, esplanade, a marina, a modern ferry port, and an open area for sports facilities, a hospital, and a city administration hub.

In an open letter signed by Dumaguete Bishop Julito Cortes, the leaders expressed their opposition to the 174-hectare reclamation project, which is a joint project between a private company and the local government of Dumaguete City.

They took note of the opinion of scientists who were gathered in a forum to discuss the project together with the academe, environmental groups, leaders of church organizations, representatives of government agencies, and the priests of the diocese.

"As a summary, our invited scientists pointed out the overwhelming environmental threats and damages which the reclamation may cause particularly to the diverse marine life as well as to the local communities in Dumaguete City," the church leaders said.

"This goes without saying that the technical processes have been found wanting (public disclosure and consultation, feasibility study, hydrodynamic study, environmental impact assessment, environmental compliance certificate, etc.) in as far as environmental and public interests are concerned," they added.

Aside from considering economic, social and political development, the leaders said, the proponents should also take into account the scientific and environmental implications of the massive project.

"Finally, we hope for an open public forum to be organized concerning this issue so that more concerned people and institutions could take part in this discussion in order to promote transparency and dialogue," the church leaders said.



A copy of the open letter has been sent to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Dumaguete City Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo, City Councilors, Negros Oriental Governor Roel Degamo, among others.

Meanwhile, Bihsop Cortes, according to the CBCP report, has ordered that the tolling of the bells of St. Catherine of Alexandria Cathedral at 3pm as he also encouraged the people to pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and Pope Francis' "A Prayer for our Earth". -- **BAP, GMA News**



Marine plastic pollution poses threat to food security – Oceana

[Catherine Talavera](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 13, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Marine conservation group Oceana Philippines is urging the country to act against marine plastic pollution due to its potential threats to the country's food security.

In a statement, Oceana vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said the primary source of marine plastic pollution problem is single-use plastic which turns into microplastics that take hundreds or thousands of years to decompose and wreaks havoc on the environment.

“Even larger plastics such as polyethylene plastic bags cause direct threats to whales and turtles as they get inadvertently ingested and cause blockages to the gut,” Ramos said.

In a recent webinar, Australian fishery veterinarian Matt Landos said microplastics and plastics in general contain hazardous chemical additives and can acquire other toxic chemicals from other sources of aquatic pollution.

Some of the toxic chemicals, he said, remain in the environment for decades and build up in the food chain.

Lando, who is the director of the Future Fisheries Veterinary Service based in New South Wales, said microscopic life such as zooplanktons found at the bottom of marine food webs confuse the plastic particles for food, contributing to their malnutrition and exposing the fish and the food chain, including fish eaters, to toxic chemicals.

“Zooplanktons are important in the aquatic food chain as these provide the first meal for the fish in their early life. Those aquatic creatures that rely upon these zooplanktons further up the food chain suffer in a knock-on domino effect of starvation,” Lando said.

Lando said microplastics have already been detected in marine organisms from plankton to whales, in commercial seafood, and even in drinking water, citing a recent report by the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN).

According to the report, most plastic chemicals are toxic, and microplastics attract, concentrate, and magnify other persistent toxic chemicals from the surrounding aquatic environment onto their surfaces.

“The government should act on preventing the impacts of toxic chemicals in plastic production, use, and disposal to also address their effects to the environment and public health,” said Chinkie Peli?o Golle, executive director of IPEN.

Ramos stressed that several countries are already taking action to reduce microplastics in the environment, however, for the Philippines, the efforts towards this initiative remains lacking.

“While the Philippines has a law regarding solid waste management, implementation by the concerned government agencies remains lacking,” Ramos said.

The Oceana official cited data from the Waste Assessment Brand Audit 2019 report of the Global Alliance for Incinerators Alternatives (GAIA) which showed that the country produced daily 164 million pieces of sachets, 48 million shopping bags, 45.2 million pieces of “labo” bags or thin transparent plastic bags.



“We must do our part to help in rapidly reducing the use of plastics to address what is already an escalating problem of pandemic proportions,” Ramos said.

In June, Oceana – along with citizens and other civil society alliances, served notices to sue to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) for failing to address the country’s plastic pollution problem.

“More than two weeks have passed, and we are still waiting for the responses of the government agencies. If they do not provide the necessary mandated action to mitigate this huge problem of plastic pollution, then we will pursue all available legal remedies as provided for by the Constitution and the various laws in the country,” said Ramos.

Under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, the NSWMC is mandated to prepare a list of NEAPP within a year after the law’s effectivity and updates every year thereafter.

The commission is composed of 14 national government agencies and private sector representatives.

Oceana stressed that the manufacture, distribution or use of non-environmentally acceptable packaging materials and the importation of consumer products packaged in non-environmentally acceptable materials are prohibited under Section 48 of RA 9003.



'Green buffer zones' to absorb pollutants in Benguet capital

By Liza Agoot July 13, 2021, 11:14 am



GREEN BUFFER ZONE. The municipal government of La Trinidad, Benguet early this month started to install plant boxes at the two-kilometer strawberry farm diversion road. The green buffer zone aims to address pollution in the area. *(PNA file photo by Liza T. Agoot)*

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet – The local government is planting trees in what it called “green buffer zones” to mitigate the effect of air pollution caused by vehicles especially on busy roads.

Arthur Pedro, municipal environment and natural resources officer said Tuesday a total of 28 Eugenia plants now line up the 100-meter stretch of the town's diversion road.

"We are preparing here because we are seeing that this area will soon be widely used especially by truckers going to the vegetable trading areas," he said.

The diversion road connects part of the Halsema Highway to the Benguet Agripinoy Trading Center, one of the vegetable trading areas here.

Quoting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Pedro said the intersection below the provincial capitol in Kilometer 6, where vehicles from the north and the valley merge, has been identified as the most polluted area.

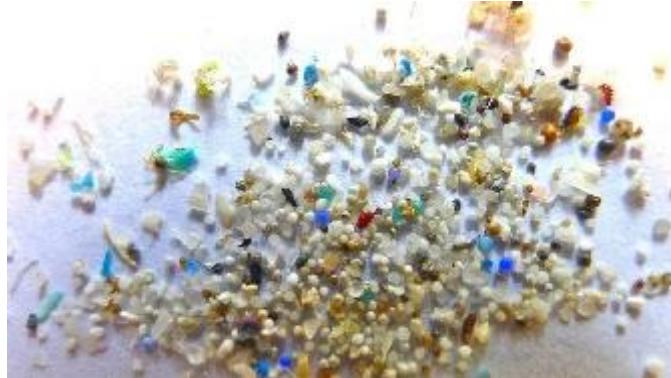
La Trinidad is one of the municipalities in Benguet that is rapidly getting urbanized, its air quality condition is affected by the increasing number of vehicles.

"On top of the waiting shed where the retaining wall protecting the capitol building was constructed, we planted trees which we hope will help absorb more pollutants. The driveway going up the capital are vertical plant boxes, although small, are all aimed at helping address the pollution in the area," Pedro said.

Aside from the planting activities, Pedro said through the “Adopt a Tree” project, government offices partner with schools in La Trinidad to plant and care for a tree along the highway. **(PNA)**



Ocean Microplastic Pollution Can Now Be Tracked By Satellite



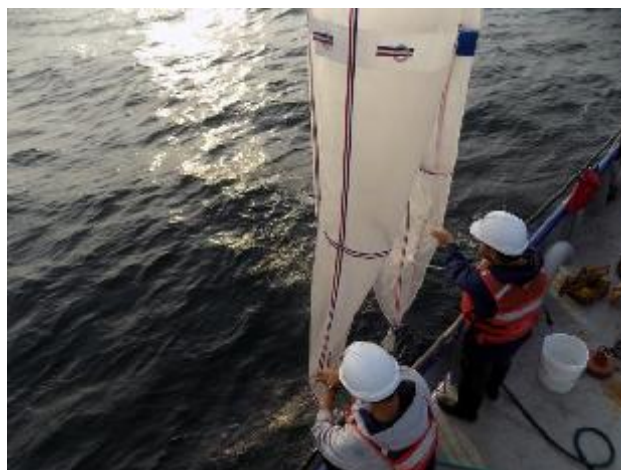
Microplastics (Oregon State University / 5Gyres / CC BY SA 2.0)

PUBLISHED JUL 11, 2021 2:03 PM BY [CHRISTOPHER RUF](#)

Plastic is the most common type of debris floating in the world's oceans. Waves and sunlight break much of it down into smaller particles called microplastics – fragments less than five millimeters across, roughly the size of a sesame seed.

To understand how microplastic pollution is affecting the ocean, scientists need to know how much is there and where it is accumulating. Most data on microplastic concentrations comes from commercial and research ships that tow plankton nets – long, cone-shaped nets with very fine mesh designed for collecting marine microorganisms.

But net trawling can sample only small areas and may be underestimating true plastic concentrations. Except in the North Atlantic and North Pacific gyres – large zones where ocean currents rotate, collecting floating debris – scientists have done very little sampling for microplastics. And there is scant information about how these particles' concentrations vary over time.



Researchers deploy plankton sampling nets in Lake Michigan. NOAA, CC BY-SA

To address these questions, University of Michigan research assistant Madeline Evans and I developed a new way to detect microplastic concentrations from space using NASA's Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System. CYGNSS is a network of eight microsatellites that was launched in 2016 to help scientists predict hurricanes by analyzing tropical wind speeds. They measure how wind roughens the ocean's surface – an indicator that we realized could also be used to detect and track large quantities of microplastics.

Looking for smooth zones

Annual global production of plastic has increased every year since the 1950s, reaching 359 million metric tons in 2018. Much of it ends up in open, uncontrolled landfills, where it can wash into river drainage zones and ultimately into the world's oceans.



Researchers first documented plastic debris in the oceans in the 1970s. Today, it accounts for an estimated 80 to 85 percent of marine litter.

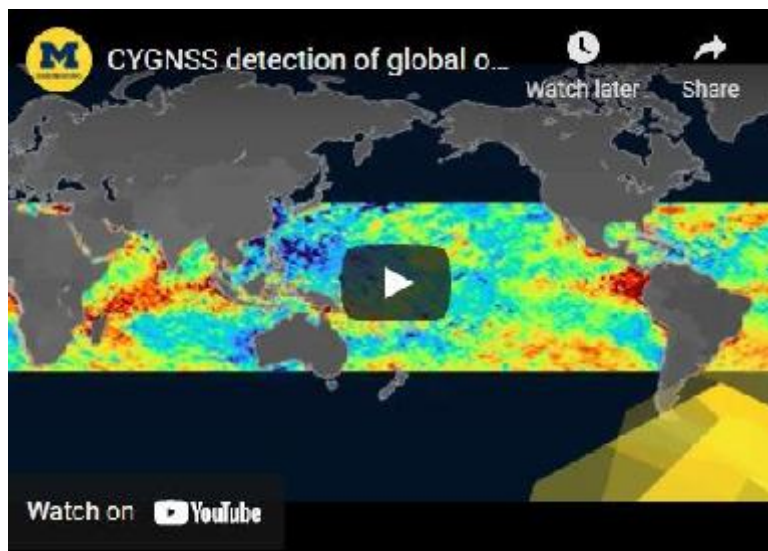
The radars on CYGNSS satellites are designed to measure winds over the ocean indirectly by measuring how they roughen the water's surface. We knew that when there is a lot of material floating in the water, winds don't roughen it as much. So we tried computing how much smoother measurements indicated the surface was than it should have been if winds of the same speed were blowing across clear water.

This anomaly – the “missing roughness” – turns out to be highly correlated with the concentration of microplastics near the ocean surface. Put another way, areas where surface waters appear to be unusually smooth frequently contain high concentrations of microplastics. The smoothness could be caused by the microplastics themselves, or possibly by something else that's associated with them.

By combining all the measurements made by CYGNSS satellites as they orbit around the world, we can create global time-lapse images of ocean microplastic concentrations. Our images readily identify the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and secondary regions of high microplastic concentration in the North Atlantic and the southern oceans.

Tracking microplastic flows over time

Since CYGNSS tracks wind speeds constantly, it lets us see how microplastic concentrations change over time. By animating a year's worth of images, we revealed seasonal variations that were not previously known.

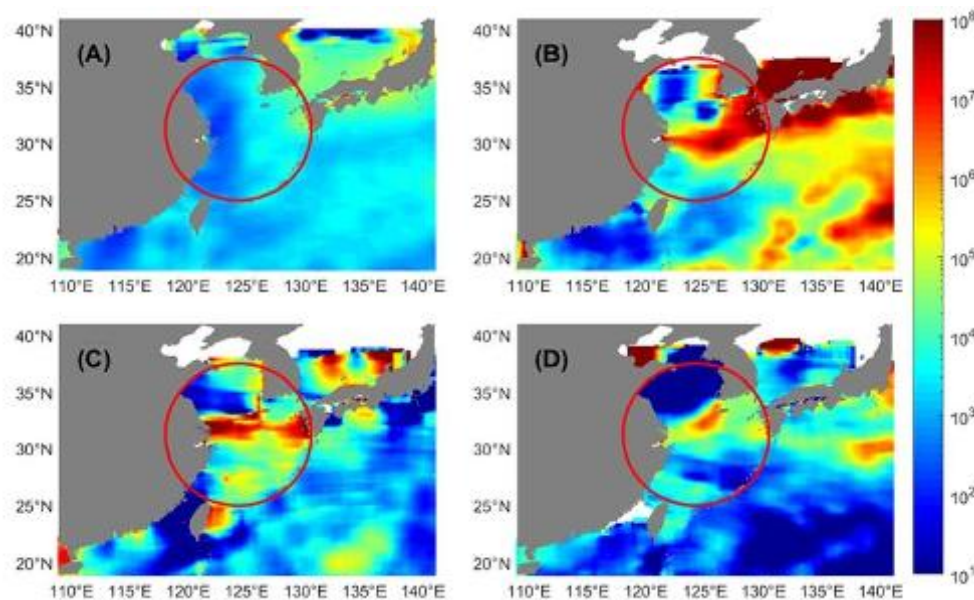


This animation shows how satellite data can be used to track where microplastics enter the water, how they move and where they tend to collect.

We found that global microplastic concentrations tend to peak in the North Atlantic and Pacific during the Northern Hemisphere's summer months. June and July, for example, are the peak months for the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

Concentrations in the Southern Hemisphere peak during its summer months of January and February. Lower concentrations during the winter in both hemispheres are likely due to a combination of stronger currents that break up microplastic plumes and increased vertical mixing – the exchange between surface and deeper water – that transports some of the microplastic down below the surface.

This approach can also target smaller regions over shorter periods of time. For example, we examined episodic outflow events from the mouths of the China's Yangtze and Qiantang rivers where they empty into the East China Sea. These events may have been associated with increases in industrial production activity, or with increases in the rate at which managers allowed the rivers to flow through dams.



These images show microplastic concentrations (number of particles per square kilometer) at the mouths of the Yangtze and Qiantang rivers where they empty into the East China Sea. (A) Average density year-round; (B) short-lived burst of particles from the Qiantang River; (C and D) short-lived bursts from the Yangtze River. Evans and Ruf, 2021., CC BY

Better targeting for cleanups

Our research has several potential uses. Private organizations, such as The Ocean Cleanup, a nonprofit in The Netherlands, and Clewat, a Finnish company specializing in clean technology, use specially outfitted ships to collect, recycle and dispose of marine litter and debris. We have begun conversations with both groups and hope eventually to help them deploy their fleets more effectively.

Our spaceborne imagery may also be used to validate and improve numerical prediction models that attempt to track how microplastics move through the oceans using ocean circulation patterns. Scholars are developing several such models.



A solar-powered barge that filters plastic out of water, designed by Dutch NGO The Ocean Cleanup, deployed in the Rio Ozama, Dominican Republic, in 2020. The Ocean Cleanup, CC BY

While the ocean roughness anomalies that we observed correlate strongly with microplastic concentrations, our estimates of concentration are based on the correlations that we observed, not on a known physical relationship between floating microplastics and ocean roughness. It could be that the roughness anomalies are caused by something else that is also correlated with the presence of microplastics.

One possibility is surfactants on the ocean surface. These liquid chemical compounds, which are widely used in detergents and other products, move through the oceans in ways similar to microplastics, and they also have a damping effect on wind-driven ocean roughening.



Further study is needed to identify how the smooth areas that we identified occur, and if they are caused indirectly by surfactants, to better understand exactly how their transport mechanisms are related to those of microplastics. But I hope this research can be part of a fundamental change in tracking and managing microplastic pollution.

Christopher Ruf is Professor of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering at University of Michigan.

This article appears courtesy of The Conversation and may be found in its original form [here](#).

The opinions expressed herein are the author's and not necessarily those of The Maritime Executive.

14 JULY 2021, WEDNESDAY



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NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Coronavirus cases in the Philippines hit 1.48M with 3,604 new infections

(Philstar.com) - July 13, 2021 - 4:43pm



Quezon City health workers are busy putting tamper-proof security seals into the vaccination cards at the city hall on July 10, 2021.

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health on Tuesday reported 3,604 more COVID-19 infections, bringing the national caseload to 1,481,660.

- **Active cases:** 46,934 or 3.2% of the total
- **Recoveries:** 5,840, pushing total to 1,408,634
- **Deaths:** 77, bringing total to 26,092

Inoculation program: Sinopharm, 'booster shots,' and the long road to herd immunity

- President Rodrigo Duterte last night became the [first elected government official to publicly complete vaccination with the Sinopharm vaccine](#), a jab authorized in the Philippines only for [very specific circumstances](#).
- Rep. Ronaldo Zamora (San Juan) earlier Monday disclosed that he had also received what he called "bootleg" Sinopharm vaccines last December.
- Zamora also said he received "booster shots" even though they have not yet been approved by local authorities and some [74.24 million Filipinos, according to government figures, are still waiting to be fully vaccinated in order for the Philippines to achieve herd immunity](#).
- As it stands, some 3.5 million Filipinos — only 3.2% of the Philippines' total population — have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of July 11, the latest figures from the National Task Force Against COVID-19 show.
- NTF chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr., also vaccine czar, last night told the government's pandemic task force that it would be "a big challenge" to reach herd immunity by the end of the year.

—Bella Perez-Rubio

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/07/13/2112203/coronavirus-cases-philippines-hit-148m-3604-new-infections/amp/>



NCR should remain under GCQ until end of July: OCTA

By Filane Mikee Cervantes July 13, 2021, 4:00 pm



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – The OCTA Research group on Tuesday recommended retaining the general community quarantine (GCQ) status in the National Capital Region (NCR) until the end of July as the growing threat of the infectious Covid-19 Delta variant looms.

In a Laging Handa briefing, OCTA Research Team fellow, Dr. Ranjit Rye, said Metro Manila is "not yet ready" to loosen lockdown restrictions to the least stringent modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) despite its situation improving significantly.

"So sa NCR (So, in the NCR,) I think we should continue with the GCQ... Although *maganda ang sitwasyon ngayon sa NCR, kailangan ho ay tuluy-tuloy, ma-sustain natin 'to habang sinasabayan natin ang pag-increase ng vaccination natin* (Although the situation is currently good in NCR, this should be sustained as we increase our vaccination rates)," Rye said.

Rye, however, noted that the current business restrictions for Covid-19 could be relaxed to allow them to operate at a higher capacity.

Rye said the government should strengthen its monitoring and enforcement of minimum public health standards in order to shift to a less stringent quarantine classification.

"So *para sa akin ha, mukhang* we are not yet ready for MGCQ, definite *na iyon* (So for me, I think we are not yet ready for MGCQ. That is definite.) We do not qualify eh even based on government's criteria for MGCQ, we won't qualify *pa* as of now," Rye said. "*Marami na ho ang nagkukumpiyansa at nagpapabaya po lalo na dito sa minimum public health* (Many people are becoming complacent and lenient when it comes to following minimum public health [protocols])."

The OCTA Monitoring Report as of July 13 showed that the NCR had an average of 634 new Covid-19 cases per day for the period of July 6 to 12.

This was 2 percent lower than the previous week's daily average of 646.

The OCTA report noted that the weekly growth rate has averaged -3 percent over the past three weeks, indicating that the trend is nearly level or flat. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1146900>



Dirty air makes COVID-19 worse, Beta variant deadlier than original

By NANCY LAPID, Reuters

Published July 13, 2021 3:08pm



Buildings are seen covered in thick smog in New Delhi on November 7, 2019. A study recently showed dirty air contributes to COVID-19 severity. Money SHARMA / AFP / File

Here is a roundup of some of the latest scientific studies on the novel coronavirus and efforts to find treatments and vaccines for COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

Air pollution makes severe COVID worse

Dirty air contributes to COVID-19 severity, according to a study from one of America's most polluted cities.

Researchers who studied 2,038 adults hospitalized with COVID-19 in the Detroit area found those who needed intensive care and machines to help them breathe were more likely to live in neighborhoods with higher levels of air pollution and lead paint.

The worse the local air contamination, the higher the odds of needing intensive care and mechanical ventilation.

Dr. Anita Shallal of Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital said long-term exposure to air pollution may impair the immune system and make it more susceptible to viral infections, while fine particles in air pollution may also act as a carrier for the virus and help it spread.

The study "calls attention to the systemic inequalities that may have led to the stark differences in COVID-19 outcomes along racial and ethnic lines," Shallal said in a statement from the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, where she presented the findings on Friday.

"Communities of color are more likely to be located in areas closer to industrial pollution, and to work in businesses that expose them to air pollution."

Beta variant may increase hospitalizations and deaths

The Beta variant of the coronavirus may be deadlier than the original version of the virus, according to researchers in South Africa who studied more than 1.5 million COVID-19 patients.

Although the Delta variant now accounts for the largest percentage of new COVID-19 cases in many countries, Beta is still circulating, with mutations that make it highly contagious and harder to prevent or treat than the original version.



The researchers found that people infected in the second wave of the pandemic, when Beta was dominant, were more likely to require hospitalization than those infected during the first wave, after accounting for patients' risk factors and how over-burdened hospitals were.

Furthermore, hospitalized COVID-19 patients had a 31% higher risk of death in the second wave, according to the report published Friday in *The Lancet Global Health*.

The researchers did not know each patient's infecting variant, so they had to use the first and second wave periods as proxies for the variant type, co-author Dr. Waasila Jassat of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases in Johannesburg told Reuters.

"We hope to repeat the analysis, comparing the third wave in South Africa to the first two waves, to similarly try to understand whether the Delta wave is associated with higher risk of death," she said.

mRNA vaccines work well in "real world" US study

The COVID-19 vaccines most often used in the United States are effective not just in clinical trials but in the "real world," too, according to a nationwide study.

Using data on a sample of US adults hospitalized between March and May 2021, researchers found that the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and from Moderna "prevented about 87% of hospitalizations for COVID-19 that would have occurred if the vaccines had not been given," said Dr. Wesley Self of Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Effectiveness was similar for the two vaccines and was highest — at 97.3% — among adults ages 18 to 49, his team reported in a paper posted Thursday on medRxiv ahead of peer review.

Among immunosuppressed individuals, the vaccines prevented about 59% of COVID-19 hospitalizations that would have otherwise occurred.

That is still a "substantial benefit," Self said, but "because the protection is not as good for people with immunosuppression, we believe (they) still should take precautions to avoid contracting COVID-19 even if they have been vaccinated," Self said. —**Reuters**



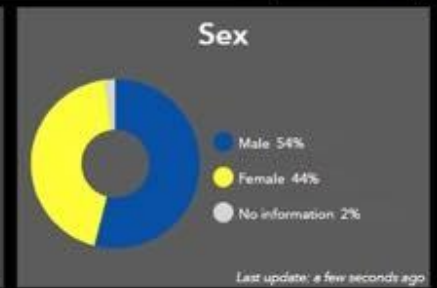
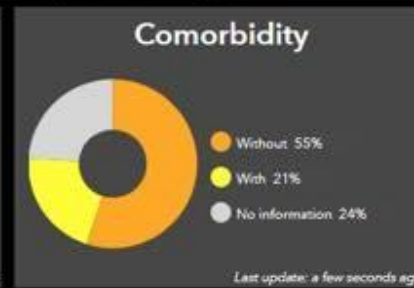
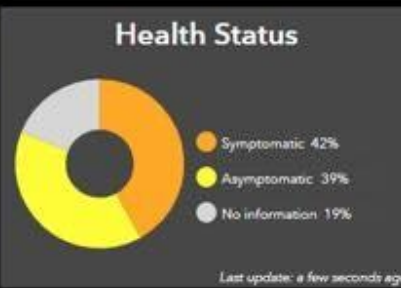
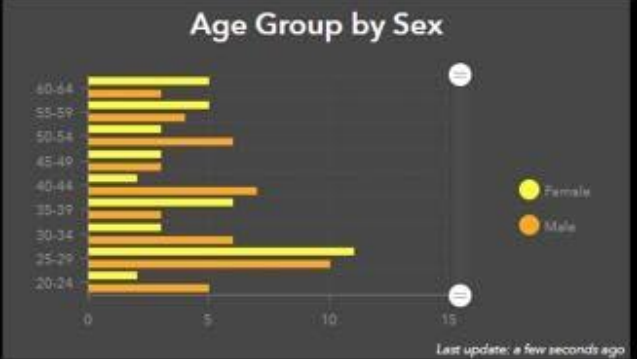
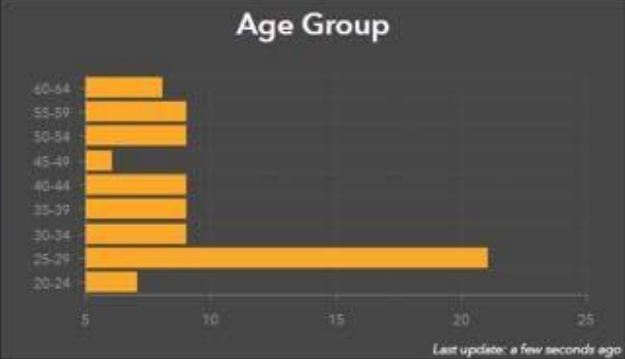
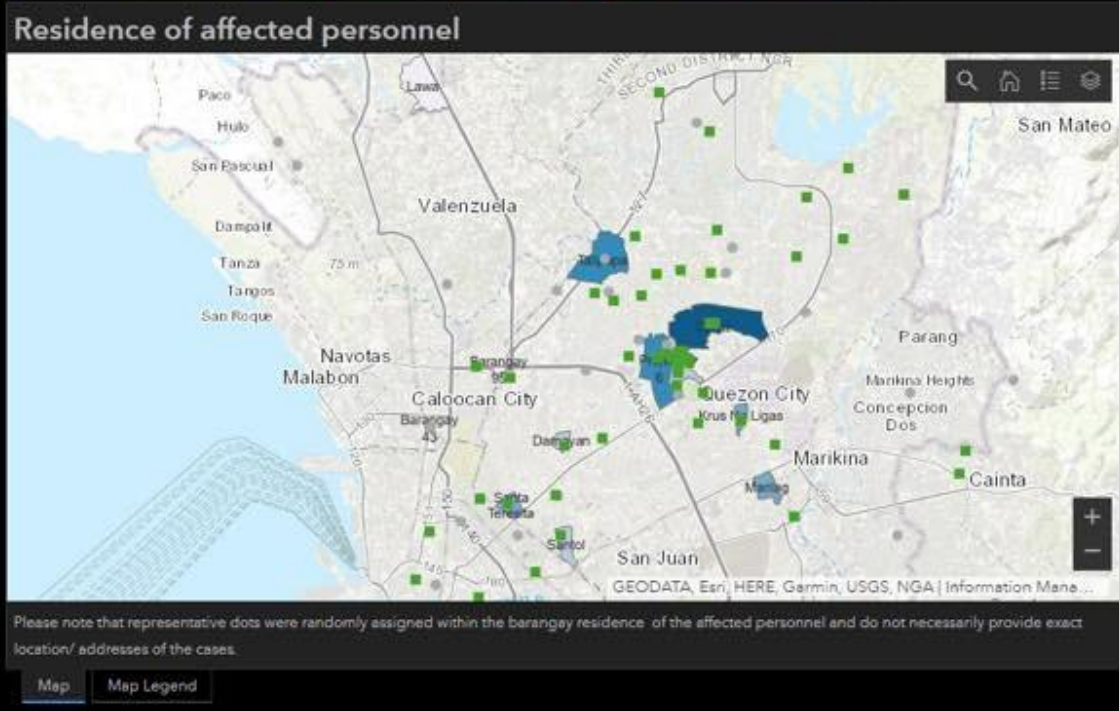
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**Covid-19
Situation and Response**

DENR-CO COVID-19 Monitoring



Data on COVID-19 include reported cases of DENR employees (Permanent, Contract of Service/Job Order, Support Staff (Triumph/Security)) as collected by the Contact Tracing Team of DENR Central Office.

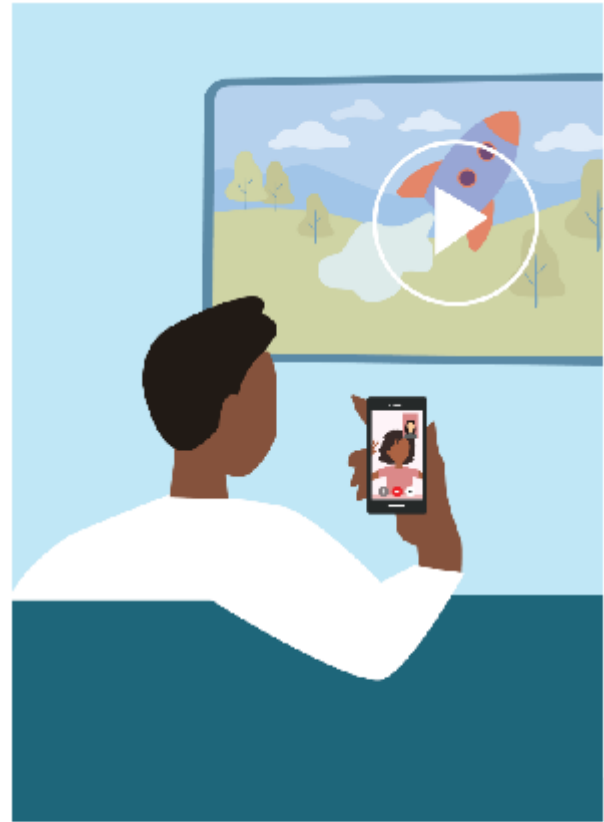


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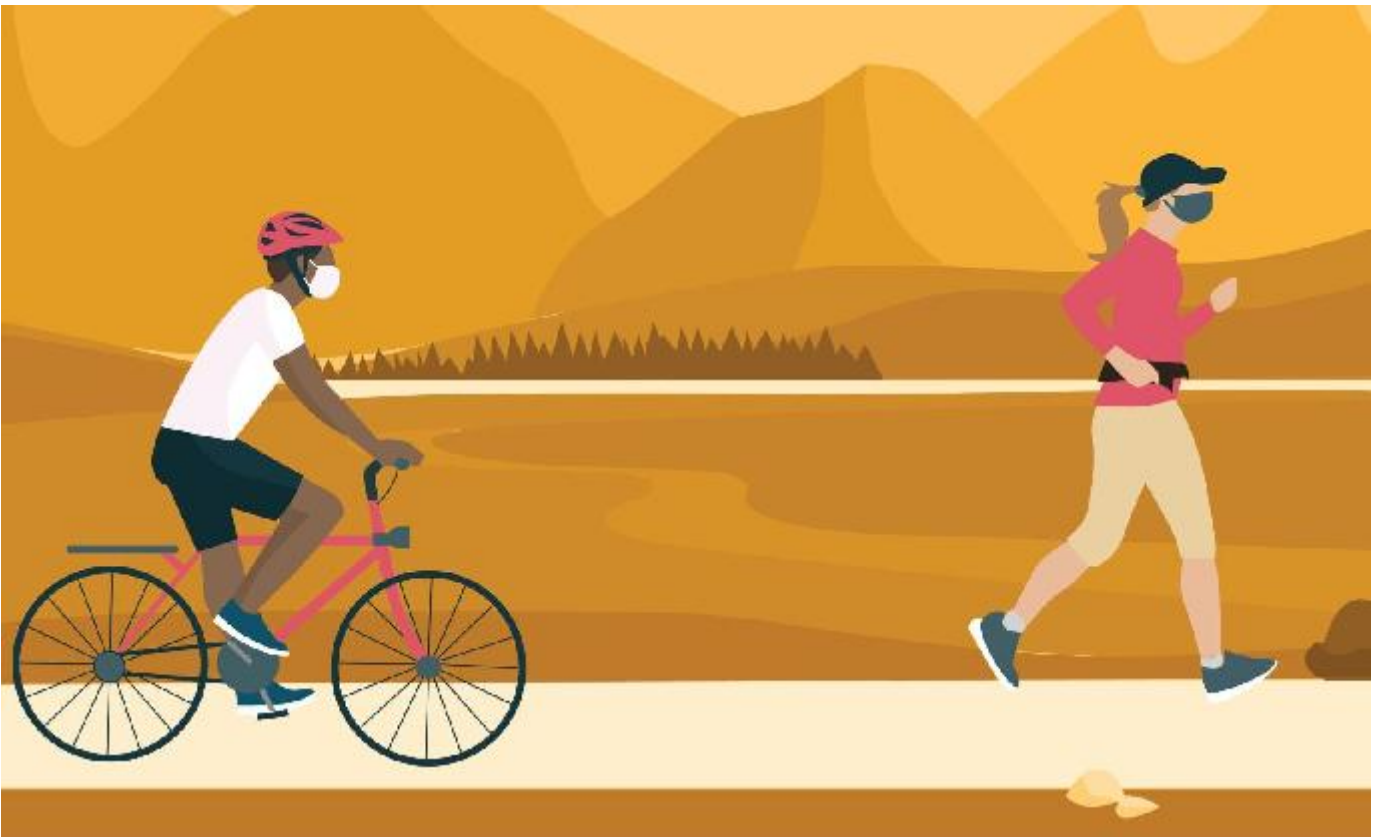


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**Find creative ways to safely spend
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Source: [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)








**Take care of your body and get moving to
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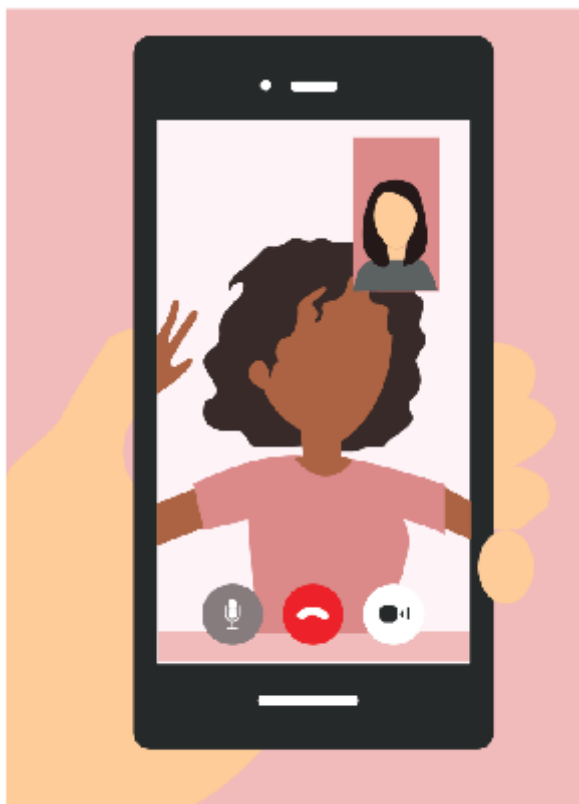


Head outdoors and get moving.

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Remember you're not alone.



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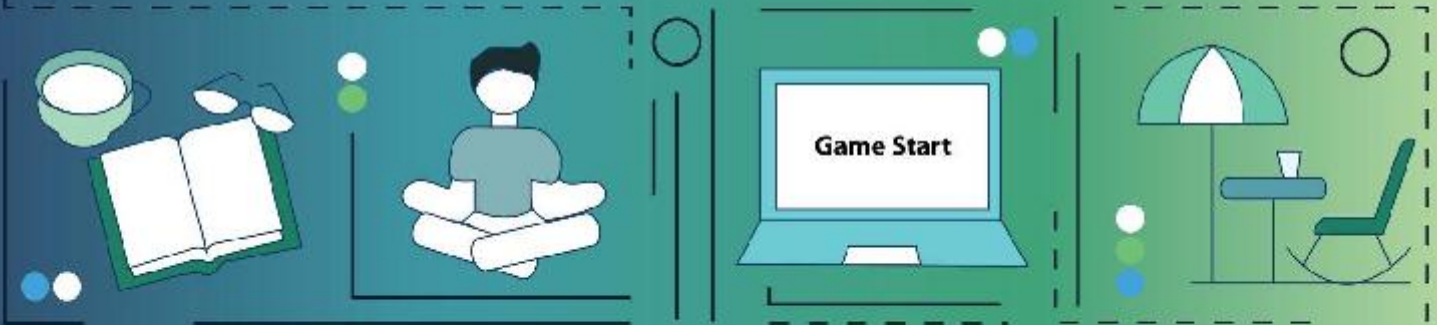


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