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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR records further decrease in Manila Bay coliform level

February 18, 2021, 2:29 pm



Manila Bay (File photo)

MANILA – Inspired by the significant decline in the level of fecal coliform in Manila Bay, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has promised to continue the government's "gainful campaign" to clean the waters of the historic bay.

Cimatu said water samples taken last Feb. 8 from 21 stations surrounding the Manila Bay have shown significantly lower fecal coliform from the annual average of 7.16 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml) in 2020 to only 4.87 million mpn/100ml at present.

He also noted that fecal coliform level in the waters near the beach nourishment project has dropped from 2.2 million mpn/100ml on Jan. 4 to 523,000 mpn/100 ml on Feb. 8, based on the average count from three monitoring stations.

Despite time constraints due to other pressing commitments and the coronavirus 2019 pandemic, Cimatu said the agency still persevered to address the issues in Manila Bay, particularly its water quality.

"Amidst the other tasks that we are also seriously taking on and the restrictions brought about by the pandemic, we assure the Filipino people that our focus to clean Manila Bay is crystal clear," Cimatu said in a news release on Thursday. "We have doubled, if not tripled, our efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay, especially in bringing down the water's fecal coliform."

He reiterated his commitment to lowering down the fecal coliform of the Manila Bay to Class SB to be safe for recreational activities and fishing.

"We will make sure that we continue to clean the waters of Manila Bay until it becomes safe again for contact activities," he said.

Cimatu, who is also the chair of the Manila Bay Task Force, said they will continue to implement necessary interventions to address the water quality of Manila Bay.

He pointed out that additional water quality monitoring stations have been installed along the Manila Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard, apart from the regular stations used in 2019 and 2020, to monitor the fecal coliform level of the waters within the major outfalls.

The DENR chief also cited that the sewage treatment plant constructed along the Manila Yacht Club has sustained its operation, which also notably contributed in lowering down fecal coliform in the outfall that drains into the Manila Bay. (PR)



DENR findings show 'cleaner' Manila Bay with lowered fecal coliform level

Published February 18, 2021, 11:20 AM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

The water in Manila Bay is a lot "cleaner" now than last year based on its reduced fecal coliform level.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

In a statement Thursday, February 18, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said that the present fecal coliform level at Manila Bay is 4.87 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml). This was based on samples taken last Feb. 8 from 21 stations surrounding the Manila Bay.

In comparison, the annual average for 2020 was 7.16 million mpn/100ml, meaning that fecal coliform level has "significantly lowered" according to Cimatu.

Moreover, Cimatu noted that fecal coliform level in the waters near the beach nourishment project has dropped from 2.2 million mpn/100ml last Jan. 4 to 523,000 mpn/100 ml on Feb. 8, based on the average count from three monitoring stations.

"We have doubled, if not tripled, our efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay, especially in bringing down the water's fecal coliform," stressed the Manila Bay Task Force chairman.

The DENR statement came a few days after House Deputy Speaker and former Manila mayor Lito Atienza said that Manila Bay waters were "filthier than before," particularly during his time as local chief executive.

Whether it's a fair comparison or not, Atienza said that fecal coliform count at the bay was just "50,000 to 80,000 most probable number per milliliter" in 1999, or over 20 years ago.

Cimatu reiterated his commitment to further lowering the fecal coliform of the Manila Bay to Class SB in order to be safe for recreational activities and fishing.

"We will make sure that we continue to clean the waters of Manila Bay until it becomes safe again for contact activities," he said.

According to Wikipedia, fecal coliform is a "facultatively anaerobic, rod-shaped, gram-negative, non-sporulating bacterium" that originates in the intestines of warm-blooded animals.

It adds that the presence of fecal coliforms in water may not be directly harmful, and does not necessarily indicate the presence of feces.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/18/denr-findings-show-cleaner-manila-bay-with-lowered-fecal-coliform-level/>



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said water samples taken on Feb. 8 from 21 monitoring stations showed that fecal coliform levels in Manila Bay dropped to 4.87 million most probable number per 100 milliliters from the annual average of 7.16 million mpn/100 ml in 2020.

Edd Gumban, file

DENR: Manila Bay's coliform levels drop

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 19, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the waters of Manila Bay have significantly dropped, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported yesterday.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said water samples taken on Feb. 8 from 21 monitoring stations showed that fecal coliform levels in Manila Bay dropped to 4.87 million most probable number per 100 milliliters from the annual average of 7.16 million mpn/100 ml in 2020.

Cimatu noted that fecal coliform levels in the waters near the controversial white sand project decreased to 523,000 mpn/100 ml from 2.2 million mpn/100ml on Jan. 4 based on the average count from three monitoring stations.

He said improving the water quality in Manila Bay is among the DENR's priorities, in compliance with the Supreme Court's 2008 mandamus directing various government agencies to clean the bay.

Cimatu attributed the drop in fecal coliform levels to the operation of additional sewage treatment plants (STPs), particularly the one at the Manila Yacht Club along Roxas Boulevard, which can treat up to 500,000 liters of wastewater per day.

Three additional STPs were recently installed along the major river systems leading to Manila Bay: Libertad outfall in Parañaque River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River and Las Piñas-Zapote River.

DENR records lower fecal coliform count in Manila Bay

By Jed Macapagal

-February 19, 2021



PNA PHOTO

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that a significant decline in the level of fecal coliform in Manila Bay has been recorded this month.

Environmental Secretary Roy Cimatu said that water samples taken on February 8 from 21 stations surrounding the Manila Bay recorded 4.87 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn per 100ml), down from the annual average of 7.16 million mpn per 100 ml.

Cimatu added that fecal coliform level in the waters near the beach nourishment project also dropped to 523,000 mpn/100 ml from 2.2 million mpn/100ml last January 4, based on the average count from three monitoring stations.

He said that the ultimate goal is to lower down the fecal coliform of Manila Bay to a level that is safe for recreational activities and fishing.

The DENR said that the installation of additional water quality monitoring stations to improve the monitoring of fecal coliform level of the waters within the major outfalls has also been planned. The additional monitoring stations will help sustain the operations of the sewage treatment plant constructed along the Manila Yacht Club. -J. Macapagal

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news_special_feature/denr-records-lower-fecal-coliform-count-in-manila-bay/



Manila Bay cleaner – DENR

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

February 19, 2021

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday announced that the Manila Bay was cleaner as fecal coliform levels dropped in early February.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said water samples taken last February 8 from 21 monitoring stations surrounding the Manila Bay had shown significantly lower fecal coliform levels.

From the annual average of 7.16 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100 ml) in 2020, the level has dropped to 4.87 million mpn/100 ml.

Cimatu added that the fecal coliform level in the waters near the beach nourishment project beside the United States Embassy had also dropped from 2.2 million mpn/100 ml recorded on January 4 to 523,000 mpn/100 ml on February 8. The figures were based on the average count from three monitoring stations.

“We have doubled, if not tripled, our efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay, especially in bringing down the water’s fecal coliform,” he said.

In 2008, the Supreme Court in a landmark decision issued a writ of mandamus directing 13 government agencies, including the DENR, “to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters to Class SB Level to make them fit for swimming, skin-diving and other forms of contact recreation.”

Cimatu reiterated his agency’s commitment to lower the Bay’s fecal coliform level to Class SB status. “We will make sure that we continue to clean the waters of Manila Bay until it becomes safe again for contact activities,” he said.

The DENR statement came days after Buhay party-list Rep. Jose Atienza — who was environment secretary from 2007 to 2009 — issued a statement claiming that the waters of Manila Bay are now “several times filthier” compared to 22 years ago.

He said Manila Bay was much cleaner when concerned residents filed a civil suit that prompted the Supreme Court to order government agencies to clean up Manila Bay.

“We checked court records. Water samples taken from Manila Bay way back in 1999 showed fecal coliform counts of 50,000 to 80,000 most probable number per milliliter,” he said in a statement.

“In contrast, based on the most recent water samples taken from major outfalls along Roxas Boulevard, fecal coliform counts now range anywhere from 11 million to 54 million mpn per ml,” he added. A very high fecal coliform count suggests the heavy presence of bacteria or viruses in the water that may cause diseases, such as typhoid fever, viral and bacterial gastroenteritis, and hepatitis A.

“This is really not surprising because up to now, of the 16.3 million water-served population in Metro Manila, only 15 percent or 2.4 million are connected to a sewerage system,” the lawmaker said.

“The bulk of Metro Manila’s household toilet waste continues to drain into waterways, including the Pasig River, that all empty out into the bay every day,” he added.

The uncontrolled outflow of human sewage should be stopped to decontaminate Manila Bay, he said. The Supreme Court in 2019 issued an order penalizing Metro Manila’s two private water concessionaires as well as the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System with 1.84 billion pesos in combined fines due to their failure to connect households to a sewerage system and their lack of wastewater treatment facilities.



Cimatu noted that additional water quality monitoring stations have been installed along the baywalk area.

He said the sewage treatment plant constructed beside the Manila Yacht Club notably contributed in lowering fecal coliform in the outfall that drains into the Manila Bay.

The Manila Bay rehabilitation is a top priority of the government until 2022, with P42.95-billion fund allotted for the implementation of the project.

The Manila Bay area covers eight provinces and 178 local governments in three regions, namely the National Capital Region, Central Luzon and Calabarzon. It includes the coastal waters of Metro Manila, Bataan, Bulacan, Cavite and Pampanga.

DENR says fecal coliform level in Manila Bay further decreases

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Feb 18 2021 03:27 PM



MANILA - The level of fecal coliform in the waters of Manila Bay have further decreased, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources insisted Thursday, days after a government official [said otherwise](#).

Tests carried out on Feb. 8 from 21 stations surrounding Manila Bay registered a fecal coliform count of 4.87 million most probable number (mpn) per 100 milliliters, the agency said. This was a decrease from last year's average of 7.16 million mpn/100ml, it added.

Fecal coliform are bacteria associated with fecal material from humans and other animals. They enter bodies of water from sources such as direct defecation or sewage overflow.

In the waters near the beach nourishment project, DENR said the level of fecal coliform had dropped to 523,000 mpn/100ml from 2.2 million mpn/100ml recorded on Jan. 4. The data is based on the average count from 3 monitoring stations.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the agency is working to further lower the fecal coliform count in Manila Bay to Class SB to make it safer for recreational activities and fishing.

"We will make sure that we continue to clean the waters of Manila Bay until it becomes safe again for contact activities," he said in a statement Thursday.

Class SB level classifies coastal and marine waters as safe for regular use by the public for activities such as bathing, and swimming, and as spawning areas for bangus and other similar species of fish.

The standard coliform level for coastal waters, which is safe for recreational activities, is at only 100 mpn/100ml. The coliform level in Manila Bay had reached as much as 330 million mpn/100ml, which is 3.3 million times above the standard.

Cimatu said additional water quality monitoring stations had been installed along the Manila Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard to monitor the fecal coliform level of the waters within the major outfalls.

The DENR chief also said the sewage treatment plant constructed along the Manila Yacht Club has sustained its operation, which contributed to the decrease of fecal coliform in the outfall that drains into the Manila Bay.

The agency started rehabilitating Manila Bay in 2019, months after Boracay Island underwent a 6-month rehabilitation.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/18/21/denr-says-fecal-coliform-level-in-manila-bay-further-decreases>

DENR, nakapagtala ng mas mababang coliform level sa Manila Bay

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Feb. 18, 2021 at 11:23am



Naitala ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang mas mababang fecal coliform level sa Manila Bay.

Ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, base sa water samples na nakuha noong Pebrero 8 mula sa 21 stations na nakapaligid sa Manila Bay, mas bumaba ang fecal coliform mula sa average na 7.16 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml) noong 2020 ay naging 4.87 million mpn/100ml ito sa kasalukuyan.

Ayon pa sa kalihim, bumaba ng 523,000 mpn/100ml nitong Pebrero 8 mula sa 2.2 million mpn/100ml noong Enero 4 ang fecal coliform level sa tubig malapit sa beach nourishment project.

Aniya, sa kabila ng mga hadlang dahil na rin sa iba pang obligasyon at ng Coronavirus 2019 pandemic, nagpupursige ang ahensya upang mabigyan ng solusyon ang mga problema sa Manila Bay, partikular na ang water quality.

Target ng DENR chief na maibaba ang fecal coliform ng Manila Bay sa Class SB upang maging ligtas na ito para sa recreational activities at fishing.



A reminder on the problem of pollution in Manila Bay

Published February 18, 2021, 12:19 AM
by [Manila Bulletin](#)



Two decades after the Supreme Court ordered 13 government agencies led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to clean up Manila Bay, its waters remain unfit for human contact, filled with viruses and bacteria coming from the rivers and sewage outlets flowing into it from the cities and towns around, but mostly from the Pasig River.

Manila Bay was in the news again this weekend as former Manila Mayor, now Deputy Speaker and Buhay party-list Rep. Lito Atienza called on the government to act on a problem that has long hounded the bay.

In 2008, the Supreme Court, acting on a civil action filed by a group of Concerned Residents of Manila Bay, ordered the DENR, the Metro Manila Development Commission, and 11 other agencies to clean up the historic bay. They were given ten years to do it.

But the problem worsened as a succession of national administrations followed. President Duterte, after cleaning up Boracay in 2018, ordered Secretary Cimatú to clean up Manila Bay next and the secretary after an assessment of the huge problem said it would take more than 10 years to do it.

The fecal coliform levels in the bay had reached as high as 330 MPN (most probable number) per 100 millimeters. The worst polluting establishments included hotels and restaurants, along with pigpens and factories along the Pasig River and its hundreds of tributaries. But the biggest source of pollution were millions of homes in Metro Manila spewing their household garbage and human wastes directly into the streams flowing into the Pasig, on to Manila Bay.

"We checked court records," Congressman Atienza said this week. "Water samples taken from Manila Bay in 1999 showed fecal counts of 50,000 to 80,000 MPN (most probable number) per millimeter... In contrast, the recent water samples now range from 11 million to 54 million per millimeter."

"This is really not surprising because up to now, of the 16.3 million water-served population in Metro Manila, only 15 percent or 2.4 million are connected to a sewerage system. Clearly the bulk of Metro Manila's household toilets continue to drain into waterways, including the Pasig River, that all empty out into the bay every day," Atienza said.

The cause of all the pollution of Manila Bay has long been established – human waste flowing directly into hundreds of streams, some joining the Pasig River but many flowing directly into the bay. And there are other rivers and streams pouring into the bay from the surrounding provinces of Bataan, Zambales, Pampanga, and Bulacan in the north, to Cavite in the south.



No wonder, Manila Bay is “several times filthier” today than when the Supreme Court issued its order to clean it up in 1999, 22 years ago. “We have to stop the uncontrolled outflow of human sewage if we truly want to decontaminate Manila Bay,” Atienza said.

As Secretary Cimatú pointed out in 2018, it will take many years to clean up Manila Bay. It will take considerable funds which Congress has to approve. And it will take the coordinated efforts of many agencies, national and local, government and private business and civic organizations.

We laud Congressman Atienza for raising the issue once again, when everyone else seems to have given it up, for it is indeed such a formidable and seemingly insoluble problem. The Duterte administration has now turned to more urgent tasks related to recovering from the pandemic. The Manila Bay problem may have to be taken over by the next administration, but there is still time to take the basic steps now to solve it.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF PNA

WORKERS place tiles along the sidewalk of Roxas Boulevard in Manila, as part of the government's effort to rehabilitate the Manila Bay area.



DENR moves to save PH deer, warty pig, duck from extinction

Published February 18, 2021, 3:24 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

A forest in Pangasinan that serves as home to threatened animals such as the Philippine deer and Philippine warty pig has been declared as a “critical habitat” by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).



(DENR / MANILA BULLETIN)

Under the DENR Administrative Order (DAO) recently signed by Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, the forest area in Mangatarem town, Pangasinan will be called the Mangatarem Critical Habitat. It is located in barangays Cacaoiten, Cabaluyan II, Calomboyan Sur, Lawak Langka, Catarataran, Pacalat, and Malabobo.

“In doing this, we at the DENR can save habitats which are critical for the survival of threatened species or species at risk of extinction, including other associated wildlife, and at the same time provide this land area a legal framework to protect it from destructive uses,” Cimatu said.

Mangatarem Critical Habitat is a 4,422.80-hectare forest that serves as home to several threatened and endemic fauna species including Philippine deer (*Rusa marianna*), Philippine warty pig (*Sus philippensis*), Philippine duck (*Anas luzonica*), Flame-breasted fruit dove (*Ptilinopus marchei*), Philippine eagle owl (*Bubo philippensis*), Luzon scops owl (*Otus longicornis*), and Rufous hornbill (*Buceros hydrocorax*).

Flora species also include the threatened oi-oi (*Diospyros philippinensis*), kalíngag (*Cinnamomum mercadoi*), malabayábas (*Tristaniaopsis decorticata*), among others.

Cimatu said the DAO will help the DENR work hand-in-hand with the local government, communities and other stakeholders involved in accomplishing the locally-driven ecosystems management approach.

“We need to sustainably manage this certain area, as this is one of the most important and few remaining forest blocks in Pangasinan. Through this, we can both protect the endemic and threatened flora and fauna living in it, while sustaining the ecosystem services and community livelihood dependent on the forest,” he explained.

The management of the newly-designated critical habitat shall be shared by DENR-Region I (Ilocos Region) with the local government of Mangatarem and stakeholders.

Mangatarem Critical Habitat is the ninth area to be included on the list of declared critical habitats across the country.

The others are *Rafflesia schadenbergiana* Critical Habitat, Cabusao Wetland Critical Habitat, Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary Critical Habitat, Carmen Critical Habitat, Adams Wildlife Critical Habitat, Magsaysay Critical Habitat for Hawksbill Turtles, Cleopatra’s Needle Critical Habitat, and Dumarán Critical Habitat.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/18/denr-moves-to-save-ph-deer-warty-pig-duck-from-extinction/>



Mangatarem forest declared protected area in DENR order

posted February 18, 2021 at 11:00 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has declared a 4,422.8-hectare forest in Mangatarem, Pangasinan, as part of its national efforts to conserve threatened and endemic wild animals and plants in the country.

Secretary Roy Cimatu issued a DENR administrative order citing the forest area will be called as the Mangatarem Critical Habitat in barangays Cacaoiten, Cabaluyan II, Calomboyan Sur, Lawak Langka, Catarataran, Pacalat and Malabobo.

“In doing this, we at the DENR can save habitats which are critical for the survival of threatened species or species at risk of extinction, including other associated wildlife, and at the same time provide this land area a legal framework to protect it from destructive uses,” he said.

The habitat is a 4,422.80-hectare forest that serves as home to several threatened and endemic fauna species, including the Philippine deer, Philippine warty pig, Philippine duck, flame-breasted fruit dove, Philippine eagle owl, Luzon scops owl and Rufous hornbill.

Some of the flora species included the threatened oi-ói, kalingag and malabayabas.

The DENR chief said the order would help the DENR work hand-in-hand with the local government, communities and other stakeholders involved in accomplishing the locally driven ecosystems management approach.

“We need to sustainably manage this certain area, as this is one of the most important and few remaining forest blocks in Pangasinan. Through this, we can both protect the endemic and threatened flora and fauna living in it, while sustaining the ecosystem services and community livelihood dependent on the forest,” he said.

DENR, idineklarang critical habitat ang Pangasinan forest



February 18, 2021 @ 7:20 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang maprotektahan ang kalikasan, itinalaga ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang 4,422.8-hectares forest sa Mangatarem, Pangasinan bilang bahagi ng “national efforts” upang maprotektahan ang mga nanganganib at endemic na wild animals at halaman sa bansa.

Base sa DENR Administrative Order na nilagdaan kamakailan ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, ang forest area ay tatawaging Mangatarem Critical Habitat.

Ito ay matatagpuan sa mga barangay ng Cacaoiten, Cabaluyan II, Calomboyan Sur, Lawak Langka, Catarataran, Pacalat at Malabobo.

“In doing this, we at the DENR can save habitats which are critical for the survival of threatened species or species at risk of extinction, including other associated wildlife, and at the same time provide this land area a legal framework to protect it from destructive uses,” ayon kay Cimatu.

Ayon sa DENR ang Mangatarem Critical Habitat ay may sukat na 4,422.80-hectares na kagubatan na nagsisilbing tirahan ng mga nanganganib at endemic na fauna species tulad ng Philippine deer (*Rusa marianna*), Philippine warty pig (*Sus philippensis*), Philippine duck (*Anas luzonica*), Flame-breasted fruit dove (*Ptilinopus marchei*), Philippine eagle owl (*Bubo philippensis*), Luzon scops owl (*Otus longicornis*), at Rufous hornbill (*Buceros hydrocorax*).

Sinabi pa ng DENR na kabilang naman sa flora species na matatagpuan sa naturang kagubatan ay ang oi-ói (*Diospyros philippinensis*), kalíngag (*Cinnamomum mercadoi*), malabayábas (*Tristaniopsis decorticata*) at iba pang endemic species.

Ipinaliwanag ni Cimatu na sa pamamagitan ng DAO ay magkakatulungan ang DENR, local government, komunidad at iba pang stakeholders na kasama sa “locally-driven ecosystems management approach.”

“We need to sustainably manage this certain area, as this is one of the most important and few remaining forest blocks in Pangasinan. Through this, we can both protect the endemic and threatened flora and fauna living in it, while sustaining the ecosystem services and community livelihood dependent on the forest,” sabi pa ni Cimatu.

Sa ilalim ng DAO, ang pangangasiwa ng Mangatarem Critical Habitat ay hahawakan ng DENR-Region 1 (Ilocos Region) katuwang ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Mangatarem at stakeholders.



Dagdag pa dito, responsibilidad din ng mga ito ang paghahanda ng Critical Habitat Management Plan upang matiyak na mapepreserba ang “existing ecosystems” sa critical habitat.

Mahigpit ding ipagbabawal ang mga sumusunod: Dumping of waste products detrimental to wildlife; squatting and/or occupying any portion of the critical habitat; mineral exploration and/or extraction; burning; logging; and quarrying, ito ay base na rin sa nakasaad sa Republic Act 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

Ang Mangatarem Critical Habitat ay ang pang-siyam na isinama sa listahan ng mga idineklarang critical habitats sa buong bansa.

Kabilang dito ang *Rafflesia schadenbergiana* Critical Habitat, Cabusao Wetland Critical Habitat, Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary Critical Habitat, Carmen Critical Habitat, Adams Wildlife Critical Habitat, Magsaysay Critical Habitat for Hawksbill Turtles, Cleopatra’s Needle Critical Habitat, at Dumaran Critical Habitat. **(Santi Celario)**



Whale shark rescued in Pangasinan town

By Ahikam Pasion February 18, 2021, 3:45 pm



FREED. A whale shark was stranded as it got caught in a fishing net off the shores of Binmaley Beach in Pangasinan on Wednesday (Feb. 17, 2021). The sea creature was later freed by the residents and authorities. (Photo courtesy of Virgilio Benitez)

BINMALEY, Pangasinan – A "butanding" (whale shark) was rescued after being trapped in a fishing net off the waters of this town on Tuesday.

The Binmaley Police Station said several concerned citizens rushed to their office to inform them of the incident.

Authorities and residents helped remove the netted marine creature until it got free and returned to the depths of the sea.

Fishermen who saw the butanding up close said it has no injuries despite being trapped in the fishing net.

Mang Rufo, a local fisherman, in an interview, said it is fairly normal to see marine animals such as butanding and dolphins along the coast of the Lingayen Gulf because of its abundance of fish.

The butanding is a slow-moving shark and is one of the largest fish species.



SAVE THE WILDLIFE. Marsamrose Aquino (right), surrenders to a Department of Environment and Natural Resources officer (left), a monitor lizard on Monday (Feb. 15, 2021). Aquino's uncle purchased the lizard so they could surrender it to DENR. (Photo courtesy of Marsamrose Aquino)

Meanwhile, a resident also turned over a monitor lizard to authorities here on Monday.

Marsamrose Aquino, a resident of Barangay San Isidro Norte, said her uncle, Arc Bautista, purchased the monitor lizard from a friend who originally caught it while walking along the fishpond in the area.

"Hindi po inaasahang mahuli yung bayawak, kaya binili ni tito ko from the US (United States) para isurrender po sa DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), para maalagaan siya (They accidentally caught the monitor lizard, so my uncle who is from the US purchased it so he could surrender it to DENR for proper care)," Aquino said.



Bautista sent Aquino PHP1,500 through wire transfer to purchase the monitor lizard and she immediately called the DENR afterwards.

Aquino said the lizard weighs around seven kilos and has a length of five feet.

Officials who retrieved the lizard said they will release it into the wild after making records.

Meanwhile, authorities reminded the public that it is illegal to hunt and trade wildlife without a permit from the DENR.

Republic Act 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, approved in 2001, protects all wildlife, not only those considered as endangered. (PNA)



Task Force created to restore Marikina River

By Christopher Lloyd Caliwan [February 18, 2021, 9:52 am](#)



PILOT DREDGING. Marikina City Mayor Marcy Teodoro leads the inspection of the pilot dredging activity along the Marikina River on Wednesday (Feb. 17, 2021). He was joined by Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu and MMDA chairman Benhur Abalos, Jr. (Photo courtesy of Marikina LGU)

MANILA – A task force has been created to attain long-term and effective solutions to the perennial problem of flooding in Marikina City.

The Task Force Build Back Better, composed of the city government of Marikina, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), on Wednesday started the pilot dredging activities in the initially identified as illegally-reclaimed portions of Marikina River.

Through the Task Force, Marikina Mayor Marcy Teodoro said the goal is to restore the natural topography of the Marikina River.

“Being a downstream river, a catch basin, a valley, it is natural that Marikina will be flooded, but the idea really is to mitigate through this activity by widening and deepening the water channel,” Teodoro said.

Teodoro said they will also further strengthen the city’s disaster response.

“At higit sa lahat naniniwala ang Marikina na ang pagtutulongan ay mahalaga (And most of all, Marikina believes that cooperation is important), a whole-of-government approach and a whole of society approach is imperative,” he said.

Based on existing land records, the DENR found out that 25 lot parcels with a total area of 27 hectares were reclaimed without necessary permits, either partially or completely encroaching into the Marikina River.

The portions of the river, the DENR noted, have been illegally reclaimed, reducing drastically the ability of the waterway to hold excess rainwater during typhoons.

It added that the illegal structures have been found violating Presidential Decree 1067 or the Philippine Water Code.

Teodoro joined DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, MMDA Chairman Benhur Abalos Jr., and a representative from the Department of Public Works and Highway in overseeing the dredging in one of the identified areas in Barangay Olandes.

“As what we have been emphasizing, this is not simply a dredging activity on the part of the DPWH, but this is a Marikina River restoration activity, which will not only be done today or in the next 65 days but will be a sustainable activity,” Teodoro said.

He said they are also embarking on a joint undertaking in planting bamboos which is suitable slope protection for the embankment of the river.

With this, Teodoro said the city will build a one-hectare bamboo nursery to ensure a steady supply of bamboos they could plant near the river to prevent soil erosion.



“It is not something that we need to buy that will cost the government so much money, but something that we could cultivate together in a nursery and in the proper time we could plant together,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Thursday said that it will commit its 51st Engineering Brigade, Naval Combat Engineering Brigade (Seabees) and the 355th Engineering Wing as engineering and technical support in the dredging and widening projects.

Earlier, the Task Force Build Back Better (TFBBB) started pilot dredging activities in illegally reclaimed portions of the Marikina River

“We commit our full support and will make all available assets and personnel to the initiatives of the Task Force Build Back Better,” AFP chief Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana said in a statement.

Also, the AFP through the 5th Infantry Division also provided security and engineering support to the TFBBB-led rehabilitation of the Cagayan River.

“Together, we can work to mitigate the damage caused by typhoons and help keep our people safe as we brace for stronger weather disturbances due to climate change,” he added.

President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order No. 120 that created the task force for the post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation of typhoon-hit areas.

It is co-chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways with 22 heads of national government agencies, including the Department of National Defense, as original members.

“The Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine Coast Guard, and other uniformed personnel are hereby directed to provide logistical and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and rehabilitation efforts,” the order said. (with reports from Priam Nepomuceno/PNA)



Marikina City starts dredging, restoration of Marikina River

Published February 18, 2021, 11:08 AM

by [Patrick Garcia](#)

The Marikina City government, in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) initiated on Wednesday the pilot dredging activities in Marikina River to avoid the constant flooding in the city.



Marikina PIO / MANILA BULLETIN

Marikina City Mayor Marcelino “Marcy” Teodoro, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Benhur Abalos Jr., and DPWH officials oversaw the dredging in one of the identified illegally-reclaimed parts of the river in Barangay Olandes.

According to the DENR’s research and mapping, they said 25 lot parcels with a total area of 27 hectares (271, 625 square meters) were reclaimed without the necessary permits, either partially or completely encroaching into the Marikina River.

These areas reduced the waterway’s ability to contain rainwater during storms and typhoons, resulting in immense flooding in Marikina City.

The structures are also in violation of Presidential Decree 1067, the Philippine Water Code.

“As what we have been emphasizing, this is not simply a dredging activity on the part of the DPWH, but this is a Marikina River restoration activity, which will not be done only today or in the next 65 days but will be a sustainable activity,” Teodoro said.

“The local government is also acquiring some heavy equipment, dredgers that can be used to continue the dredging activity.” he added.

Based on the data from DPWH, at least four meters per second of water velocity for Marikina River is the aim in order to avoid flooding in low-lying areas in the city.

“Dredging will be done to widen the river, to deepen it, to get the correct ratio of the widening and the deepening of the river in order to improve the water carrying capacity of the Marikina River, and thus improving its water current velocity,” Teodoro said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/18/marikina-city-starts-dredging-restoration-of-marikina-river/>



Marikina LGU plans to plant bamboo trees along Marikina River banks to help lessen flooding

Published February 18, 2021, 11:53 AM

by [Patrick Garcia](#)

To help mitigate the perennial problem of flooding in the city of Marikina, Mayor Marcy Teodoro announced on Wednesday the city government's plan to plant bamboo trees along the banks of Marikina River.



Marikina PIO / MANILA BULLETIN

During the pilot dredging of the initially identified illegally-reclaimed portions of the waterway, Teodoro said the planting of bamboo trees is a suitable slope protection for the river's embankment to improve its capability to contain excess rainwater during storms and typhoons.

Teodoro added that in order for the city to not purchase bamboo trees for the project, the city government is eyeing to create a one-hectare bamboo nursery.

"It is not something that we need to buy that will cost the government so much money but something that we could cultivate together in a nursery, and at the proper time, we could plant together," he said.

"Being a downstream river, a catch basin, a valley, it is natural that Marikina will be flooded. But the idea really is to mitigate, through this activity, by widening and deepening the water channel," he added.

Teodoro also promised to improve the city's disaster response capabilities.

"At higit sa lahat naniniwala ang Marikina na ang pagtutulongan ay mahalaga. A whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-society approach are imperative (Marikina City believes that teamwork is essential, a whole-of-government approach and a whole-of-society approach are imperative," he said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/18/marikina-lgu-plans-to-plant-bamboo-trees-along-marikina-river-banks-to-help-lessen-flooding/>



Marikina allots P500M to mitigate flooding

Published 4 hours ago on February 19, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Neil Alcober](#)



The Marikina City government will be setting aside funds for the improvement of the city's drainage network system in order to mitigate flooding in the city.

"Marikina City will allocate at least P500 million from its current funds for the purpose of constructing and rehabilitating the existing drainage system to improve its water carrying capacity and constructing a new drainage outfall with a correct elevation under the 'new normal' (of rain)," city mayor Marcelino "Marcy" Teodoro told the Daily Tribune in an exclusive interview two days before the dredging activity.

"So, we're hoping that all of these improvements will entice investors for Marikina in order the economy to be improved," the mayor added.

Prior to this, the mayor has objected the alignment of the dredging project as he wanted the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to follow proper alignment.

However, the scheduled kick off of dredging activity on Wednesday in Olandes, Barangay Industrial Valley Complex, was pushed through after his meeting with DENR secretary Roy Cimatu.

In the press conference during the simultaneous launch of dredging and bamboo tree planting activities on Wednesday, Teodoro said the local government will also acquire several heavy equipment and dredgers that can be used to continue the dredging activity.

Teodoro underscored the need to dredge Marikina River due to the natural siltation that happened in the river, saying "being a downstream river, of course, what is happening upstream will also affect downstream."

"This is not simply a dredging activity on the part of the DPWH, but this is a Marikina River restoration activity, which will not be done only today or in the next 65 days but will be a sustainable activity," the mayor emphasized.

Teodoro said they want to achieve at least four meters per second of water velocity for Marikina River in order to avoid flooding in low-lying communities in the city.

"Dredging will be done to widen the river, to deepen it, to get the correct ratio of the widening and the deepening of the river in order to improve the water carrying capacity of the Marikina River, and thus improving its water current velocity," he said.

According to the Marikina mayor, they are likewise embarking on a joint undertaking in planting bamboos which is a suitable slope protection for the embankment of the river.



Marikina, he said, will build a one-hectare bamboo nursery in order for the city not to purchase bamboos anymore, and have a steady supply of bamboos they could plant near the river to prevent soil erosion.

“It is not something that we need to buy that will cost the government so much money, but something that we could cultivate together in a nursery and in the proper time we could plant together,” he said.

Teodoro said they are not only dredging but also restoring the Marikina River to its natural topography.

“Being a downstream river, a catch basin, a valley, it is natural that Marikina will be flooded, but the idea really is to mitigate through this activity by widening and deepening the water channel,” he said.

The mayor also noted they will further strengthen the city’s disaster response to avoid heavy flooding from occurring again in the future.

“A whole-of-government approach and a whole of society approach is imperative,” he said.

Teodoro also said that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority will restore a dike at the Provident Village in Barangay Tañong, which was damaged by typhoons.



Sustaining the environment

[ROSES AND THORNS](#) - [Pia Roces Morato](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 19, 2021 - 12:00am

In a recent show over dzRJ, the panelists and I had a very interesting discussion with Secretary Sal Panelo on how this pandemic is teaching us to be both conscious and appreciative of our environment. In the middle of fear and uncertainty, people were, on the other hand, also noticing how the skies were much bluer and the waters cleaner. Nonetheless, and again, still in the middle of a pandemic, nature has its ways and acts of god are unavoidable. Our climate goes through specific changes and every year it is routine that we brace for floods and storms.

In November of 2020, for example, the Philippine Coast Guard were part of an extremely rigorous rescue that trapped residents in chest-deep floods in Marikina. It is not the first time that Marikina went through such a devastating experience, which is why Task Force Build Back Better began its dredging activities in Marikina River on Feb. 17. Under the leadership and TF BBB chair Secretary Roy Cimatu of the DENR, the pilot dredging took place in the portion of the river near Marcos Highway in Barangay Kalumpang, with a simultaneous bamboo planting activity in the banks of Barangay Industrial Valley complex, both located in Marikina City.

In an initial report, Secretary Cimatu explained that portions of the river have been illegally reclaimed, causing the inability of the waterway to contain excess rainwater during typhoon season. Using as basis official land records which dated as far as 1914 and 1961, as well as historical maps and satellite photos, and in a news release, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources NCR conducted aerial and ground verification surveys which confirmed encroachments made in the river as well as the designated legal easements. It is no surprise therefore to find how some have explicitly constructed permanent structures, violating Article 51 of PD 1067 which prohibits such acts along three meters of the banks of rivers and streams and shores of seas and lakes in urban areas such as Metro Manila, as these areas have been reserved for public use.

It is also good to note that, based on existing land records, 25 lot parcels with a total area reaching 27 hectares were reclaimed without necessary permits, either partially or completely encroaching into the Marikina River. A crisis has indeed caused to develop so much awareness to a point that when we are hit hard, we realize why we have also got to recover back harder by doing our homework. If you were part of those who have suffered such horrific events, information on the why and how we ever got here should inspire us to do our due diligence.

Participating in reforms headed by agencies such as the DENR is a way to ensure that this will never happen again, especially to the generations that ought to benefit from their communities as well as its natural resources. It is therefore not enough for us to simply appreciate the beauty of nature but also how nature responds to us when we do not become accountable for its sustainability.

Sustaining the environment is also everybody's business. Now that the DENR has done its part and started yet another massive program to save our environment, sustaining all this becomes also the job of each and every inhabitant of their city. This again is what we mean when we talk about The Whole of Nation Approach. Government cannot do it alone. Civic society must respond.



Marikina folks ditch road dike with tombs

Published 1 day ago on February 18, 2021 12:20 AM

By [Neil Alcober](#)



Residents of Marikina are up in arms not only against the planned dredging of the city's river but also against yet another proposed project to put up road dikes with tombs for the dead along the waterway.

While they have succeeded in stopping yesterday's start of dredging activities — with help coming from City Mayor Marcelino Teodoro — the protesting Marikina folks are also rushing to halt the dike project which the residents claimed would pose hazards to their health and safety.

In the middle of both projects is Marikina 1st District Representative Bayani Fernando, formerly the city mayor.

Teodoro halted the dredging project as he insisted on the city's "understanding" with Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu that the activity should widen and not reduce further the river's width.

He charged that the project is tainted with "conflict of interest" as Fernando, as chairperson of the House Public Works Committee, holds influence over the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways).

His decision to put the project on hold was spurred by the residents' opposition to reducing the river's ideal width of 100 meters to 70-80 meters, saying doing so would aggravate flooding in the area and its fringes.

"It's just that we were flooded and there's a need to rectify the alignment done to the river. We simply want to regain the natural topography of the area," Teodoro said.

The City Mayor said the 70-to 80-meter proposed width of the dredged river would ensure that the reclamation project in Fernando's BF City would be spared.

"There's a conflict of interest (in the proposed project)," Teodoro said. The City wants the river widened further to help stem the yearly flooding that affects its residents during the annual typhoon season.

A dike as a resting place for the dead is also meeting the same opposition. It's going to be funded at P700 million, constructed at the stretch of the river park in Barangay Jesus Dela Peña, again on Fernando's initiative and implemented by the DPWH.

"Our people are objecting to the construction of a road dike along the river with a cemetery on the side," Teodoro told Daily Tribune in an interview. "It's unnatural, inappropriate, and unsanitary."

The City has required Fernando to secure an environmental compliance certificate for the project.



Marikina City, Teodoro said, has an existing public cemetery that can be improved. It is far from the waterways, but Fernando reportedly insisted that a dike should be constructed with a cemetery.

“If the dike/cemetery will be constructed, he (Fernando) will deprive the use of an open area along the river,” Teodoro said.

Fernando, meanwhile, admitted that the local government has put the project on hold.

“It was stopped by the Mayor (Teodoro),” Fernando said. “The money for that project has been readied, all requirements have been met and the bidding has been held.”

Fernando also assured that the proposed road dike project will not be vulnerable to floodwaters and that the tombs will not leak.

“The tombs will have a honeycomb structure. It’s strong and will use reinforced concrete. It’s will be used by the people. It’s not going to crumble. It won’t even leak,” he said.



Pena: Plastic straws and stirrers to be banned

[ROX.PENA](#)

February 18, 2021

REPUBLIC Act 9003, or The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, is now 20 years old. After two decades, a lot still needs to be done to reduce waste and manage residuals. Some provisions of the law, like the controversial prohibition of "non-environmentally acceptable products" or NEAP, have not been implemented.

Section 29 of RA 9003 states that: "Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission shall, after public notice and hearing, prepare a list of non-environmentally acceptable products as defined in this Act that shall be prohibited according to a schedule that shall be prepared by the Commission."

The "Commission" refers to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), the highest body that oversees the implementation of RA 9003. It is composed of Secretaries or alternate representatives of several government agencies, the different leagues of local government units, as well as three private representatives from the recycling industry, manufacturing industry and non-government organization.

Many years back, the NSWMC formed a technical committee for NEAP but up to now no list has been prepared. Now, 20 years after, there are two products that might be banned soon. The NSWMC has recently approved the first two NEAPs - plastic softdrink straw and plastic coffee stirrer.

The NSWMC made their deliberations through a virtual en banc meeting on February 02, 2021, which was presided by DENR Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda. The resolution declaring plastic straw and stirrer as NEAP was approved with 11 affirmative votes and three negative votes. The resolution was passed despite heavy resistance from some members of the Commission, such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the manufacturing and recycling industries.

Section 5, Rule XII, of the DENR DAO 2001-34, the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 9003, provides very strict conditions in determining NEAP. Votation by the members of the Commission should only be a done as a last resort if no consensus was reached.

Are the 11 votes sufficient to approve the resolution? The IRR says that a resolution must be approved by at least two thirds of the members of the Commission. Since the IRR did not say two thirds of those present in the meeting, then it may mean two thirds of all 17 members which is 11.33 or rounded to 12. If this is the case, the resolution lacks the required number of votes. However, if the Chairman is not allowed to vote like in the case of local government legislative councils, then there will only be 16 votes on the floor and two thirds is 10.66 or 11. This is however not clear in the IRR. If challenged, it might even reach the Supreme Court.

Anyway, if the NSWMC Resolution is final, there will surely be a gradual phase-out to allow various stakeholders to comply. This is a step in the right direction. Some countries have already banned these single-use plastic items.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1886336>

PUBLIKO BINALAAN LABAN SA HUWAD NA EMPLEADO

MARANAWAN Igo po na madalubha ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na may grupo ng tao sa Surigao del Sur ang nagpapanggap na empleyado ng ahensya at nag-ambag sa operasyon ng logging at mining companies sa rehiyong probinsya sa binalaan nito ang publiko hanggi (lit).

"We do not condone the use of the name of our department in any transaction without prior knowledge and consent of any DENR official," sabi ni Cimatu. "We want to warn the general public to be more cautious in dealing with people who claim to be employees of this Department" ayon ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Binalaan ni Cimatu ang mga grupo ng gumagamit ng pangalan ng DENR para sa kanilang legal na operasyon na masam silang nakasukat base sa IHA sa rehiyong probinsya.

"We will make sure that these people will face the legal repercussions of committing such misconduct," paghahati ni Cimatu.

Base sa ulat ng DENR sa Caraga region, ayon na karami na nagpapanggap niyembro ng DENR task force ang ahensya ng Caraga Municipal Police sa Surigao del Sur sa mga logging at mining companies sa Surigao del Sur kung saan ay nagpakita pa ang mga ito ng IHA na may logo ng DENR at pinamato ng tao sa mga ito na nagpapanggap ng grupo.

Ayon sa ulat, nagpapanggap ng operasyon ang mga hanapuhin sa logging at mining companies sa Surigao del Sur kung saan ay nagpakita pa ang mga ito ng IHA na may logo ng DENR at pinamato ng tao sa mga ito na nagpapanggap ng grupo.

May damit din ang mga ito sa may logo ng DENR at pangalang identification card ng DENR officials kabilang na si Cimatu.

Nagkita ang mga hanapuhin sa sina Francisco Dagobay, Ariel Amigo, Roberto Dio, Jr., Jose Dum, Marlon Pasi, Rogelio Limones, Ben

Avila, Joaquin Lumaguid at Elma Talig.

Ayon sa Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) ng Caraga, nakapunta sila ng dokumento sa mga hanapuhin ang mga ito sa pagtatag ng Mineral Advancement and Community Environment Advocacy na itinatag grupo na kamalitan sa gabi at corrupt activities.

Sinipi pa ni CENRO Marlon Pasi, hindi nito itinatag ang mga ito pang-partipad ang environmental fees.

NAGTAMAN FLYOVER ISASARA SA MGA TRUCK AT TRAILER

MAHALAGANG mataman ng mga komunidad na hindi ito po papayagang dumagan sa Nagtatam Flyover sa Maynila ang mga truck at trailer simula sa Pebrero 20.

Ito ang opisyo ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) kung ng itinatag ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) na binigyan na ang lahat ng truck dahil sa mga crack sa aspalto, sa concrete pavement ng steel beams at concrete joint, jacking.

Magiging masaman ng rehiyong ahensya sa hindi normal-kasama ang flyover at masam pa sa pang-dalihan ng mga motorist o hindi-legal vehicles na payo sa mga truckers na pahinto ng mga abersalibong ruta.

Yan ping southbound heavy vehicles ay maaaring dumagan sa Esmail Street, Lupa Street, Ayala Street, P. Burgos Street, pakikipag sa Rizal Boulevard.

Sa northbound heavy vehicles nanaman ay manaman sa Quevedo Avenue, pakikipag sa Roxas Boulevard, Quevedo Avenue Extension, pakikipag sa United Nations Avenue, pakikipag sa Rizal Boulevard.

**Ang
MANUNURI**

Andy Verde

Para magkarin ang itat magandang pagkakataon ng sulay na pabilang magpapang-dalihan ng hindi magandang manggagap.

Kasama ang Nagtatam Flyover sa itatam ng DPWH sa Maynila, Manila na kasalungat sa pagpapang.

SAMANTALA nagpapang ito po ang Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) sa pakikipag kasalungat ng pagpapang sa operasyon ng Consular Offices sa Luzon, rehiyong ahensya.

Ayon sa DFA ang pagpapang ng operasyon ay para bigyan idaan ang pagpapang sa naturang kasalungat ito pakikipag ang ito pang mga kasalungat pang kasalungat ang pangpapang ito ng COFC-13. Sa Pebrero 15 ito ang Luzon ay magpapang kasalungat ang operasyon nito.

Pangpapang ang mga kasalungat ang aplikante na may confirmed appointment na kasalungat ng pangpapang appointment sa kasalungat ng pagpapang sa kasalungat ang mga kasalungat ang mga kasalungat ang mga kasalungat.



DENR condemns murder of employee in Eastern Visayas

Published February 18, 2021, 2:34 PM

by [Marie Tonette Marticio](#)

TACLOBAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region 8 (Eastern Visayas) strongly condemned the killing of a 59-year-old DENR employee here last Tuesday.

The victim, Rodolfo Concillo, a Forest Technician II, was shot dead in Barangay 92, Apitong. Concillo was assigned to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Palo, Leyte and was the driver of Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Edilberto Caidlang.

“As we extend sympathies to the bereaved family of the victim, we ask the government authorities for a speedy resolution of the case and for the perpetrator to be brought to justice,” DENR 8 Regional Executive Director Tirso Parian said.

Parian has directed their lawyers to coordinate with authorities in the investigation so that necessary charges can be filed against the gunmen.

Initial investigation disclosed that Concillo had just left his house onboard his motorcycle for a medical examination downtown when the still unidentified suspects appeared and shot the victim multiple times using a firearm of unknown caliber.

The victim sustained multiple bullet wound, killing him on the spot. Police recovered over 20 empty shells at the crime scene. Police have yet to ascertain the motive of the shooting.

Concillo was the second DENR Region employee killed in less than a year. Last May 28, a DENR 8 member was shot dead inside their eco-lodge in Burauen, Leyte by unknown assailants.



DENR employee killed in ambush

By NESTOR L. ABREMATEA

February 17, 2021

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte: An employee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was killed in an ambush by still unidentified suspects on Wednesday morning in this city.

The Tacloban City Police Office identified the victim as Rodolfo Concillo ,59, and assigned to the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Palo based at Barangay Candahug.

Concillo was on his way to the office aboard his single motorcycle when waylaid by unidentified suspects at Barangay 92, Apitong. He died on the spot from several gunshot wounds.

Police investigators found 20 bullets at the crime scene.

DENR 8 Regional Executive Director Tirso Parian Jr. told The Manila Times that his office is set to come out with a statement on the killing of Concillo.



DENR goes on bamboo-planting frenzy in Bicol; here's why

Published February 18, 2021, 12:03 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has planted nearly 50,000 bamboo culms (stems) in a span of just four days in the Bicol region, demonstrating just how serious it is in its various ongoing river rehabilitation efforts.



(PIXABAY / MANILA BULLETIN)

A statement from the agency Wednesday, Feb. 17, said that a total of 49,509 bamboo culms have been planted in an area covering an accumulated 173 hectares between February 9 and 12.

The bamboo culms were planted on the river banks of Albay (8,500 culms), Camarines Sur (30,000), Camarines Norte (10,000), and Catanduanes (1,009), DENR said.

The river bank stabilization activity was a program of the regional Task Force Build Back Better (TF BBB) led by the DENR, in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu chairs TF BBB.

The agency said that a total of 151,381 bamboo seedlings are being prepared at the DENR Bicol field offices in time for the planting season this May. The bamboos are used to address stream bank erosion and instability at the river banks.

Some 815 beneficiaries of DSWD's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program were tapped for the planting activity. The beneficiaries received family food packs through DSWD's food-for-work program on the last day of the planting.

The Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of the Interior and Local Government, National Irrigation Administration, National Housing Authority, Bureau of Fire Protection, Philippine National Police, Philippine Army, and the local government units concerned also participated in the bamboo planting.

Cimatu attributed these initiatives to the "whole-of-society approach" pursuant to Executive Order (EO) No. 120 signed by President Duterte on November 18, 2020.

"Beyond restoring these areas to their pre-disaster state, our marching order from President Duterte is to enable affected families and communities to spring back stronger and better than ever," Cimatu said.

President Duterte signed EO 120 creating the TF BBB to ensure post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery efforts of typhoon-hit areas.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/18/denr-goes-on-bamboo-planting-frenzy-in-bicol-heres-why/>



Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Wilfredo Moncano told The Star 26 new mining projects have complied with the documentary requirements, allowing them to proceed with development.

Philstar.com/stock

26 new mining projects ready to break ground

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 19, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — At least 26 new mining projects will start development this year even as several stumbling blocks have yet to be resolved.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) director Wilfredo Moncano told The Star 26 new mining projects have complied with the documentary requirements, allowing them to proceed with development.

“These are MPSAs (mineral production sharing agreements) that had waited for a long time to develop and commercially operate and think now is the right time because of the high demand for aggregates, sand and gravel, limestone as cement feed, and other construction industry raw materials,” he said.

The government has been scrambling to get additional sources of revenues to keep the economy going.

It is of the belief that the mining industry has the potential to contribute to the growth of the economy through increased exports, taxes and employment.

The sector is enjoying favorable prices for most minerals, supported by a broader global economic recovery as COVID-19 vaccines become more widely available.

Moncano did not disclose the names of the 26 mining firms involved, but these include eight metallic mines and 18 non-metallic mines.

“Although most of them are in the non-metallic category, these new mining projects support the Build Build Build program of the government,” Moncano said.

“The metallic mines have a longer development period even up to three years but, yes, within the year, all these companies will start development works,” he said.

Larry Heradez, Mining Tenements Management Division chief of MGB, said the \$750-million Silangan copper and gold project in Surigao del Norte of Pangilinan-led Philex Mining Corp. is one of the 26 firms expected to start rolling this year.



The government's move to greenlight projects is also in response to the rising demand in China as consumption remains strong.

About 90 percent of the country's nickel exports goes to China.

Demand for some metals used in renewable infrastructure and electric-vehicle batteries including copper, nickel and aluminum is also robust.

Metro Clark invests P300M for waste facilities expansion

By JIM PILAPIL

February 19, 2021

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE, PAMPANGA: Metro Clark Waste Management (MCWM) has announced that it would invest P300 million in the expansion of its facilities to ensure continued service for the growing waste management needs of its local government units and corporate clients, while maintaining stricter protocols for the safety of its employees and partners.



The Metro Clark Waste Management's facility in Sitio Kalangitan, Clark Special Economic Zone is gearing for expansion on Feb. 18, 2021. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Situated in Sitio Kalangitan, Clark Special Economic Zone, MCWM will expand its engineered sanitary landfill by another seven hectares set to be completed this year.

MCWM is accelerating investment; building an additional leachate treatment plant to ensure proper treatment of waste by-products, as well as a separate disposal cell for industrial waste, said Vicky Gaetos, MCWM's Executive Vice President and General Manager.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently reported its aim to close all open dumpsites, which are considered illegal, this year.

“At a time when many of our countrymen are facing so many challenges due to the pandemic, it is very gratifying to us that we can continue to provide such an essential service to our clients; and that they don't need to worry about the proper disposal of their waste,” Gaetos said.

MCWM also continues to implement stricter on-site protocols to maintain regular operations and ensure its employees' safety.

These measures include regular and frequent disinfection of its waste collection trucks and official company vehicles; deployment of personal protective equipment for all staff, including hospital-grade gear for trained personnel inspecting medical waste; use of only company-provided footwear inside the premises; and implementation of comprehensive protocols for suspected, confirmed and recovering cases.

Moreover, MCWM continues to support the DENR ongoing thrust to ensure the strict compliance to the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 of waste disposal sites in the Philippines.

MCWM, as part of a consortium with partners from Germany and the United Arab Emirates.

The system will employ proven globally proven technologies involving waste sorting, and the construction of a 35MW waste-to-energy plant, all of which will effectively expand the landfill's capacity for another 50 years.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/02/19/news/regions/metro-clark-invests-p300m-for-waste-facilities-expansion/842714/>



Mountaineers turn Mount Apo into garbage dump

Published February 18, 2021, 12:26 PM

by Ivy Tejano

DAVAO CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Region 11 (Davao region) observed several violations committed by mountaineers on Mount Apo, the country's highest mountain.



(Photos courtesy of DENR Davao/ MANILA BULLETIN FILE)

The DENR-Davao region, during a trail and camp assessment to strengthen preservation and conservation mechanisms on Mount Apo Natural Park and its surroundings led by regional director Bagani Fidel Evasco, along with other sectors and groups, from Feb. 11 to 14, observed many trekkers climbing Mount Apo despite the rains and strenuous trails.

However, violations were noticed on Sitio Paradise in Digos City to Camp Gudi-Gudi to peak such as the non-observance of IATF guidelines on social distancing and limiting the number of trekkers from 50 which is the regular capacity to 25 mountaineers climbing daily and proper waste disposal on the trails and campsites, sanitation and health protocols and vandalism along trails, campsite, in the boulders, peak, and even at the crater.

“There was also unregulated noise along the trails and camps, which disturbs the wildlife and disrupts the serenity of the trekking experience,” Evasco said.

The presence of alarming cultivation beyond the strict protection zone and possible use of prohibited substances due to presence of marijuana found at 87-degree trail going to the crater and peak was also noted.

In line with these observations, Evasco ordered DENR Region 11 officials to intensify the enforcement of environmental laws on Mount Apo.

“If left unabated, the closure of Mount Apo might be possible in the coming days, if necessary, to pave the way for the immediate rehabilitation of the park's trails and campsites,” Evasco said.



Editorial: Irresponsible trekkers haunt Mt. Apo

February 18, 2021

VANDALISMS, trash, liquors, and traces of drug substances were just among the things discovered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Davao Region (DENR-Davao) during its assessment of one of the trails of Mt. Apo on February 11 to 14, 2021.

In a statement posted on its official Facebook page on February 17, DENR-Davao said "vandalism were observed along trails, campsites, engraved in the boulders, peak and even at the crater."

It also noted the "non-observance of proper waste disposal along the trails and campsites, sanitation and health protocols." Some of the trash it found included empty soda bottles, water bottles, and face masks.

The agency also said they found the "Possible use of prohibited substances due to presence of Marijuana found at the 87-degree trail going to the crater and peak."

The monitoring team, which is composed of DENR and officials and personnel from Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental, also discovered the non-observance of IATF guidelines in terms of social distancing limiting the number of trekkers from 50, which is the regular capacity, to 25 climbers per climb per day."

Irresponsible trekkers have been a problem to Mt. Apo for quite some time now. These kinds of trekkers are slowly killing Mt. Apo.

One infamous incident at Mt. Apo was the 2016 fire that razed around 115 hectares of forests and grasslands. No one was charged because authorities were not able to pinpoint a suspect. However, the fire was believed to have been caused after trekkers left a campfire unattended. Rehabilitation efforts have been implemented to restore the affected areas.

It is just right for DENR and the Mt. Apo Protected Area Management Board (Pamb) to intensify its enforcement of environmental laws for those going up to the country's highest peak.

Whether someone is watching the trekkers or not, it should be common sense to these trekkers to keep the environment of Mt. Apo or any other ecotourism site's clean. Don't call yourself a nature lover if you will be vandalizing or leaving trash at Mt. Apo.

Likewise, concerned government agencies and local government units should also be more stringent in implementing rules and guidelines to ensure the protection and conservation of Mt. Apo. A more sustainable strategy could also be put in place to ensure the mountain's environmental protection. Maybe, it could require a stricter process for those who wish to climb the mountain like having them register at DENR-Davao or at the local government unit.

"If left unabated, the closure of Mt. Apo might be possible in the coming days, when necessary, in order to pave the way for the immediate rehabilitation of the Natural Park's Trails and Campsites," DENR-Davao said in a statement.

Mt. Apo shared its beauty with us by allowing us to explore it. What it only asks of us is to protect it. A simple task that we can all do together.



Step up water resources management, agencies told

posted February 18, 2021 at 11:30 pm

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

A committee in the House of Representatives has asked the Department of Public Works and Highways and the National Water Resources Board to step up their efforts in addressing the flooding and water resources problem in the National Capital Region.

The panel's head, Rep. Manuel Luis of Manila, made the statement during a congressional hearing on the flood control projects being undertaken by the department in coordination with several agencies of the government.

"I think you are required to step up because as head of the flood control situation in Metro Manila, it is unacceptable that we would not have drastic [measures to be implemented] So, [to be fair] to the 15 million residents of the National Capital Region, we ask you to step up [your efforts]. You [should] think out of the box," Lopez told DPWH during the hearing on Wednesday.

The lawmaker from Tondo lamented their situation last year when Tondo was flooded due to Typhoon Ulysses and experienced water service interruption at the same time. Lopez also cited Marikina Rep. Stella Quimbo's complaint about the unsolved flooding in Marikina and nearby cities.

In response, Lydia Aguilar, DPWH flood control engineer, said the agency had been working on 11 large-scale priority projects under the 2012 flood management master plan to address the frequent flooding in parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Among these projects, Aguilar said, were the construction of a dam upstream, river channel and drainage improvements, construction of pumping stations and rehabilitation of existing ones, and dredging and other river improvement projects. Also in the pipeline was the Paranaque Spillway project, the feasibility project of which was now ongoing with the technical assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

"These projects are also in line with the [Typhoon] Ondoy that we experienced in 2009. Basically, the [master plan] has been the roadmap or guide of DPWH to implement its flood control projects up to the present," Aguilar said.

A 2018 news report quoted Aguilar as saying that only 14 percent of the P352-billion flood master plan had been completed due to a lack of funding. It is set to be finished by 2035.

Deputy Speaker and Valenzuela City Rep. Eric Martinez, meanwhile, lamented the NWRB's apparent "calculated mistake" of releasing volumes of water from Angat dam months before Metro Manila suffered from a water crisis in 2019.

NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr. could not provide an exact answer but assured there would be sufficient supply of water for the coming hot dry season this year.

Lopez asked the NWRB to submit to the committee pertinent documents to answer Martinez's concerns, as well as the other reports the panel had been requesting. The committee, the Manila lawmaker says, also plans to hold an inspection on the water facilities to further ensure the country's preparation for summer.

"It seems that our only hope for a regular water supply is an abundance of rainfall. We cannot rely on luck. Government's duty is to ensure constant and regular supply of water to our people. We need to have the infrastructure to ensure this," Lopez said.

"We also expect the various government agencies tasked with ensuring this most basic of human needs to provide this committee with your plans to ensure that we can finally solve this seemingly basic problem."



Marilao River polluters get away with small fines

The Clean Water Act of 2004 orders plants to pay discharge fees based on the volume of wastewater and pollutants that they release into water bodies. A self-monitoring mechanism in place allows polluters to report unreliable laboratory results, however.

BY ANNIE RUTH SABANGAN, ROBERT JA BASILIO JR., BERNARD TESTA AND RIC PUODFebruary 18, 2021 | 12:00:00 PM

Part 3 of 4

Part 1: [*The Bulacan town where chickens are slaughtered and the river is dead*](#)

Part 2: [*'The wastewater looked like mud': EMB goes after Vitarich Corp.*](#)

What you need to know about Part 3:

- Many pollutive business establishments, including chicken dressing plants releasing their wastewater into the Meycauayan-Marilao-Obando River System (MMORS), pay the government paltry wastewater discharge fees ranging from P5 to P500.
- From February 2016 to August 2018, the DENR collected only P1.4 million worth of wastewater discharge fees from these establishments for the rehabilitation of the MMORS, a drop in the ocean compared with the P11.5-billion fund needed to help revive the long-dead river system.
- Regulators have identified 49 mostly toxic substances dumped by polluters into the river system. But environment officers admit they're unable to detect the presence of these pollutants in water bodies, let alone make erring establishments pay fines.
- The Environmental Management Bureau in Region 3 lacks the manpower to check the accuracy of the environmental self-monitoring reports (SMR) being submitted to it by business establishments in Central Luzon.
- A review of the SMRs submitted by seven poultry and meat processing and livestock establishments operating in Marilao, Bulacan showed that these had many glaring errors and inconsistencies -- a proof of the bureau's failure to vet the SMRs.

In 2019, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued violation notices to all but one of Marilao's 11 chicken processing plants. They were punished not for polluting the Marilao River, however, but for technical violations related to their permits or failure to submit various reports.

Four plants in barangays Santa Rosa I, Santa Rosa II, and Patubig — including two operating inside the compound of Vitarich Corporation — had no wastewater discharge permits.

The other plants in Brgy. Loma De Gato either didn't have Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECC), violated their ECCs, expanded operations without permits, were late in renewing permits, or failed to submit wastewater lab results.

This was how the regional environment office was able to get around its lack of capability to catch and punish which plants were responsible for polluting the Marilao River, part of a river system in Bulacan province that dumps wastes into the Manila Bay.

"Ang ginagawa ho namin is bina-violate namin sila sa mga permit nila. Tapos...pagka hindi pa rin po sila nakakapasa...sa mga permit nila na 'yon, tuloy-tuloy po 'yong violation...nila (What we do is charge them with violations through their permits. If they fail to secure permits, their violations continue)," said Glenn Aguilar, a staff member of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 3.



Chicken processing plants in Marilao issued with violation notices, 2019

| Name | Location (Barangay) | Date of Notice of Violation | EMB Findings |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vitarich Corporation/PSP Aqua Rendering Plant | Sta. Rosa I | January 24, 2019 | No wastewater discharge permit in violation of RA 9275 |
| Vitarich Corporation/ALT Trading Dressing Plant | Sta. Rosa I | January 24, 2019 | No wastewater discharge permit in violation of RA 9275 |
| Kaizen Food Enterprises c/o Marilao Bulacan Processing Plant, Inc. | Patubig | April 25, 2019 | No wastewater discharge permit in violation of RA 9275 |
| R.G. Dressed Chicken Processing Plant | Loma de Gato | March 27, 2019 | Violations in environmental compliance certificate (ECC) related to PD 1586 (Philippine Environmental Impact System Law) |
| Rospin Chicken Dressing Plant | Loma de Gato | No complete date NOV issued in 2019 | No ECC in violation of PD 1586 |
| Central Luzon Poultry Growers Marketing Cooperative | Loma de Gato | No complete date NOV issued in 2019 | Violations in ECC related to PD 1586 |
| RM Prime Processing Plant, Inc. | Sta. Rosa II | January 14, 2019 | Violation of PD 1586; no laboratory results of wastewater; no hazardous waste generator ID; no expansion permit |
| Mersant Poultry Processing Corporation | Sta. Rosa II | June 14, 2019 | Violation of PD 1586; no wastewater discharge permit; no permit to operate air pollution installation; no self-monitoring report; no expansion permit |
| | | August 27, 2019 | Violations of PD 1586; no hazardous waste generator ID |
| RGRS Foods | Patubig | No complete date NOV issued in 2019 | Violation of PD 1586; late renewal of permit for air pollution source and control installations and wastewater discharge permit |
| Sentro Alaga Growers Corporation | Lambakin | July 17, 2019 | Violations in ECC related to PD 1586, including lack of quarterly effluent sampling |

Source: Source: Environmental Management Bureau - Region 3 • Created with Datawrapper

Infographic: Annie Ruth Sabangan and Angelica Carballo Pago

Environmental regulators said it had been a challenge to get water samples. “*Yung possible na ma-sampling-an, doon lang kami nagsa-sampling* (We only conduct sampling in establishments where it’s possible to get wastewater samples),” Aguilar said.

The chicken dressing plant of Vitarich Corp. was one of the few that EMB was able to inspect, and it was because its waste outfall was accessible, said Aguilar. “*Sila* (Vitarich) *ang visible, talagang sila lang ang na-implicate* (They’re the ones visible, thus they’re the only ones that got implicated),” he said.

Aguilar also accused the plants of making it hard for pollution inspectors to do their jobs. He said they would secretly turn off wastewater discharge when the inspectors arrived to inspect, preventing them from getting effluent samples in real time. It was also difficult for them to locate sewer pipes and waste outfalls especially inside residential compounds.

“*Minsan hindi talaga umaamoy. Hindi sila nag-o-operate pagka napapadaan kami* (They don’t smell [when inspectors go to check] because they make sure to shut down their operations when they know we are dropping by),” Aguilar said.

Lara Ibañez, Philippine country director of international non-profit environmental watchdog Pure Earth, said it’s not enough to punish polluters over permits and other technicalities.

She called for the strict enforcement of the 2004 Clean Water Act, passed by Congress to make sure that a thorough accounting of industrial wastewater pollutants and their toll on the environment is conducted regularly.

She said it’s important to be able to assess direct contributions of pollutive establishments and make them pay for the environmental and economic impacts of their discharges.

“We don’t see how much it (polluting water bodies) is really costing us,” Ibanez said in an interview in August 2019. She said the government should realize that implementing the Clean Water Act makes for sound economic policy because it will prevent environmental issues that have actually been costing the local government more.

Pure Earth is the new name of Blacksmith Institute, the watchdog that has put a spotlight on the pollution of the Meycauayan-Marilao-Obando River System (MMORS). In 2007, the watchdog named Marilao in its list of 30 “dirtiest” places on earth.



Poultry farms such as this one in Barangay Loma de Gato in Marilao, Bulacan are required to treat their wastewater to curb water pollution in rivers. But several have been known to ignore regulations. Image taken on Sept. 14, 2019. Photograph: Bernard Testa

P5 to P500 wastewater discharge fees

The Clean Water Act imposes wastewater discharge fees, a fund intended to pay for the costs of government efforts to manage and clean up water bodies that absorb wastewater from industrial and commercial establishments.

However, Ibañez said the fee turned out to be “self-defeating” and the amounts that establishments had been paying did not reflect the true cost of the pollution that they had caused.

From February 2016 to August 2018, EMB Region 3 only collected P1.4 million of wastewater discharge fees from 388 establishments along the entire MMORS, based on documents that EMB Region 3’s senior environmental management specialist Ramjay Dizon showed to PCIJ.

It’s not commensurate with the P11.5 billion needed to rehabilitate the MMORS, based on experts’ estimates.

PCIJ’s analysis of the payments showed that almost half of them — 167 establishments — only paid between P5 and P500 in wastewater discharge fees. Only one establishment paid more than P50,000.



Wastewater Discharge Fees (WDF) for the cleanup of Meycauayan-Marilao-Obando River System

| Wastewater discharge fee range | No. of establishments that paid within a WDF range |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| P5 to P500 | 167 |
| Over P500 to P2000 | 98 |
| Over P2,000 to P5,000 | 63 |
| Over P5,000 to P10,000 | 31 |
| Over P10,000 to P15,000 | 13 |
| Over P15,000 to P20,000 | 3 |
| Over P20,000 to P30,000 | 4 |
| Over P30,000 to P50,000 | 8 |
| Over P50,000 | 1 |

Total no. of sample commercial establishments that paid WDF: 388 | WDF payment period: February 2016 to August 2018
Source: Source: DENR-EMB Region 3 • Created with Datawrapper

Infographic: Annie Ruth Sabangan and Angelica Carballo-Pago

The wastewater discharge fees are computed based on the volume and the pollution levels of wastewater that plants release. Each establishment is made to pay P5 for every kilo of pollutants multiplied by its annual net biological oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended fluids (TSS) waste loads in kilos, or the difference between waste load in the untreated water and the final effluent.

Ibañez said the formula is problematic. It only takes into account two out of 49 water quality parameters set by the EMB — which include ammonia, boron, and chloride, arsenic, lead, and fecal coliform among others.

The wastewater discharge fee was intended to be a disincentive that would encourage the plants to modify their production practices and invest in pollution control technologies. The paltry fees accomplished the opposite, said Ibañez.

“Isipin mo, it’s even more profitable to just pay. I can just pollute and pay kasi mas affordable ‘yon, kaysa maglagay ako ng pollution control (Come to think of it, it’s even more profitable to just pay. I can just pollute and pay because that’s more affordable than putting up pollution control facilities),” she said.

In Marilao, four chicken dressing plants paid wastewater discharge fees during the time period.

Central Luzon Poultry Growers Marketing Cooperative in Brgy. Loma de Gato paid P7,540 in November 2016, P10,675 in March 2017, and P9,486 in March 2018.

Kaizen Food Enterprises, which operates under or with the Marilao Bulacan Processing Plant in Brgy. Patubig, paid P3,220 in July 2016. RG Dressed Chicken Processing Plant in Brgy. Loma de Gato shelled out P3,577 in the same month.

Vitarich Corp. and Alt Trading in Brgy. Sta Rosa I paid P39,715 in March 2017.

Self-monitoring reports

The problem is more than the formula, however. Computations for wastewater discharge fees are based on the plants’ declarations in Self-Monitoring Reports (SMRs) that they are required to submit quarterly under the law.

These SMRs have proven to be unreliable at best and manipulated at worst, according to regulators.

Wilma Uyaco, chief of the Clearance Permitting Division of the EMB’s National Capital Region (NCR) office, said the SMRs were intended to ease the burden of environmental regulators. *“Yung SMR, ‘yan ‘yung self-regulation na tinatawag. Kung ‘yan ay magagampanan ng tama ng industries, e ‘yun sana ang pinakamaganda kasi ang gobyerno hindi mahihirapan (That SMR is what is called self-regulation. It would be best if industries carried it out correctly so the government would no longer be burdened),”* she said in an interview in October 2019.

However, enforcement has been far from effective, Uyaco said. *“E kaso ‘yong self-regulation, hindi pa ready. Kino-comply pero tingin namin hindi 100% totoo (But they’re not ready yet in terms of self-regulation. It is being complied with but compliance is not 100% truthful).”*

The EMB’s NCR office co-chairs the governing board of the MMORS Water Quality Management Area with EMB Region 3.



Enforced since 2004, the SMR system has two objectives under DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2003-27: (1) allow establishments to demonstrate compliance with environmental laws; and (2) allow the EMB to confirm or validate that these firms comply with these laws.

Submitted every quarter, the SMRs are filled up by pollution control officers accredited by the DENR to report production capacities, actual outputs, number of operating hours in a day, number of workdays in a week, and quarterly water and electricity consumption.

It also reports the volume, types, and names of industry-specific wastes generated, emitted, or discharged, and how establishments dealt with the environmental impacts of their byproducts.

For poultry processing plants, this means disclosing the total number of chickens dressed, volume of water consumed per day and per quarter, chemical wastes generated from processing chicken, and how these wastes were stored, transported, treated or recycled, and disposed of.

The report also includes the cost of treating wastewater, investments made in the water treatment plant, the location of the facility's wastewater discharge, and the water body where the wastewater was discharged.

Establishments must have their wastewater tested quarterly by a DENR-accredited third-party laboratory and report in their SMRs the concentrations of BOD, TSS, phosphate, acidity or pH, oil and grease, and nitrate, among others.

The image shows two pages of a form from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Environmental Management Bureau (EMB). The left page is titled 'GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET' and contains various fields for identifying the establishment, including name, address, contact information, and business details. The right page is titled 'QUARTERLY SELF-MONITORING REPORT' and includes a section for 'MODULE 1: GENERAL INFORMATION' and a table for 'DENR Permits/Licenses/Clearances'.

Sample copy of the first two pages of the 16-page SMR. Source: Department of Environment and Natural Resources

| MODULE 3: P.D. 984 (Water Pollution) | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Water Pollution Data THIS IS AN ENUMERATION OF THE SOURCES OF WASTEWATER OF THE PLANT | | | |
| Domestic wastewater (cubic meters/day) | 2.61 | Process wastewater (cubic meters/day) | 0.1 (recycled) |
| Cooling water (cubic meters/day) | N/A | Others: (cubic meters/day) | N/A |
| Wash water, equipment (m ³ /day) | N/A | Wash water, floor (cubic meters/day) | N/A |
| Record of Cost of Treatment (Separate entries for separate facilities) | | | |
| | Month 1 | Month 2 | Month 3 |
| Person employed, (# of employees) | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Person employed, (cost) | P 115,000 | P 115,000 | P 115,000 |
| Cost of Chemicals used by WTP | Incorporated with the contractors/third party fees | | |
| Utility Costs of WTP (electricity & water) | P 12,200 | P 12,200 | P 12,200 |
| Administrative and | none | none | none |

Sample copy of the portion of the 16-page SMR that asks establishments to provide data about the sources and treatment of their wastewater. Source: Department of Environment and Natural Resources



Wrong math, old lab tests, expired discharge permits

Uyaco said plants have cited unreliable lab tests in their SMRs, however, showing low oxygen demand in effluents to show that the treatment facilities of the establishments were effective in cleansing their wastewater.

“[S]ino ba naman ang maniniwala, septic tank lamang ang treatment facility nila pero ang result ng analysis na sina-submit sa SMR super mababa ‘yung BOD?...Hindi ganoon katotoo ang result (Who would believe the results of the lab analysis in the SMR showing a very low BOD in wastewater, when an establishment’s treatment facility is just a septic tank? The results are not reliable),” she said.

About 50% of the submissions were inaccurate, said Mario Bangloy of the EMB-NCR’s Water and Air Quality Management Section in an interview with PCIJ in October 2019.

“(K)ung ‘yung sinasabi mo na hindi tama itong nire-report...medyo malayo sa (katotohanan), siguro kalahati (If you’re asking about incorrect reports... those that are a bit far from the truth, maybe it’s half),” said Bangloy.

The PCIJ requested Uyaco to review 2018 SMRs of seven poultry and meat processing and livestock establishments operating in Marilao. She found at least three glaring errors — wrong math, old lab tests, and expired discharge permits.

She found discrepancies between per quarter declarations of total water consumption and the breakdown of water usage in six SMRs. Uyaco cited at least one chicken dressing facility declaring to have consumed a total of 25,000 cubic meters (m³) of water during the third quarter of 2018, but the sum of its reported daily consumption of domestic water, cooling water, and process water showed it consumed more. Its total water usage for one quarter was 28,440 m³ or 3,440 m³ more than what it declared.

“Saan nanggaling ang ibang tubig nila (Where did the rest of the water come from)?” Uyaco asked.

While Uyaco didn’t want to second-guess the reasons behind the discrepancy, she said the mathematical errors resulted in lower fees for the plants. *“(B)ababa ‘yong masisingil sa kanilang bayarin, ‘yung wastewater charges... kasi hindi nare-report ng tama (Collections from their wastewater charges would decrease because it’s not being reported correctly),”* she said.

Establishments have submitted old laboratory tests results, too. Uyaco spotted one chicken dressing establishment that used lab test results dated March 2018 for its SMR submitted for the third quarter.

“Mali na itong date ng (lab) analysis n’ya...Dapat hahanapan ‘yan o dapat hindi ‘yan tinanggap. Bakit ‘yan ang report mo? (The date of the lab analysis is already wrong...They should have asked for a new lab test result or they should not have accepted the SMR. They should have asked the establishment why its report was like that),” said Uyaco, irked by her discovery.

Like Vitarich Corp., many establishments were found to be using expired wastewater discharge permits.

The establishments are required to write on the first page of their SMRs the wastewater discharge permit reference numbers, date the permit was issued, and the date it will expire. One poultry processing facility used a 2016 permit for its third-quarter filing in 2018.

Of the seven Marilao-based poultry and meat processing and livestock establishments that Uyaco reviewed, six had expired wastewater discharge permits. Three had permits that expired as early as 2015 and 2016.

Clearly, Uyaco said, these establishments must not only be compelled to correct their SMRs but also be made answerable for their violations.

A “substantive evaluation” of the SMRs as mandated under DAO 2003-27 should have been done before the issuance of notices of deficiency against the erring establishments, she said.

If they were given time to address their deficiencies but were unable to solve the problem, the establishments should have been slapped with notices of violation, said Uyaco.

Poultry processors tampering with wastewater samples?

There are allegations that plants have been tampering with their wastewater samples.

“Kung ang treatment facility mo ay ganito tapos magsa-submit ng result ng analysis na ganoon kalinis, na ganoon kababa ang BOD, so makakapag-isip ka na something is wrong, or something has happened di ba? Ganoon ‘yun (So if your treatment facility is like this and then you submit results of water analysis as clean as that, with a very low BOD, then you make one think that something is wrong, or something has happened, isn’t it? It’s like that),” said Uyaco.

She said several cases have been reported to her by pollution inspectors.



“(M)ay nagsasabi rin sa amin pag nag-i-inspect na ganito raw ang ginagawa ng third-party laboratory, dinadagdagan na ng chemicals ‘yung container...kaya pagdating doon mababa ang result (There were those who told us that upon inspection they would find out that this was what third-party laboratories do, they put chemicals into the container...that’s why when it reaches the lab, the result is low),” the EMB official said.

“Dinadaya talaga kasi intentional ‘yung ganoon. Kaya ‘yun kung may mga info silang nakukuha, inilalagay ko ‘yan sa reports (It’s being tampered with because those things are intentional. That’s why when they get pieces of information like that, I include them in the reports),” she added, referring to reports she writes in relation to the evaluation of SMRs.

A DENR-accredited third-party laboratory housed at Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City also confirmed the allegations. “It can [be tampered with]. That’s true,” Armando Guidote, director of the Philippine Institute of Pure and Applied Chemistry (Pipac), told the PCIJ in 2019.

Guidote, professor at the Ateneo’s Department of Chemistry, was quick to add that while tampering was possible, it did not necessarily mean that it was the result of collusion between a business establishment and a third-party lab, especially when the latter did not know where and how the wastewater samples were taken.

“Our analysis is based on the samples that they (establishments) bring,” Guidote said.

At the EMB office in Region 3, Elisa Dimaliwat, chief of the bureau’s Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division at the time of her interview with PCIJ in 2019, said she would rather trust in the capability of establishments to do honest-to-goodness self-monitoring with the assistance of accredited third-party testing firms.

She said the laboratories that analyzed the effluent samples of establishments went through screening by the DENR. “Naka-accredit ‘yan... kasi ang third-party lab hindi n’ya p’wedeng lokohin ‘yong resulta n’ya, masisira s’ya, ‘di ba po? (They’re accredited...Third-party labs can’t tamper with the results or they would ruin themselves, won’t they?)” Dimaliwat told the PCIJ.

It would also be hard for companies to fabricate information in their SMRs as they would risk being shut down, she said.

Bangloy said not all inaccuracies were a result of deliberate moves to fake SMRs and cover up pollution.

SMRs require 200 pieces of information spread over six modules, he said. Incompetent pollution control officers or PCOs may be responsible for the errors.

“The [SMR] is so technical. *Saan ka makakakita ng engineer [na PCO] sa isang gasolinahan? Mga cashier lang, mga ganoon...* (The SMR is so technical. Where can you find an engineer working as a PCO in a gasoline station? Usually, cashiers and the like act as PCOs in these kinds of establishments),” he said.

DENR guidelines require establishments classified as big generators of pollution to hire licensed engineers or chemists with at least two years of relevant experience in environmental management. Small generators of pollution may hire graduates of technical courses related to the job, or they must have reached at least third-year college.

The PCOs may also be a professional in the fields of engineering or physical and natural sciences, with at least three years of relevant experience in environmental management, or a different field but with at least five years of experience.

Too many reports, too few people, too little time

The EMB is supposed to exercise oversight of the self-monitoring process, validating their declarations and checking that they have complied with environmental requirements.

SMRs found to be incomplete are supposed to be returned to the companies, which would have 30 days to revise and correct their reports.

But the bureau rarely returned incorrect SMRs. “*Hindi madalas* (Not often),” said Dizon of the EMB Region 3’s Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division, when the PCIJ asked him in late 2019.

“*Hindi nare-review lahat ng SMRs...* Additional burden sa amin. Sa dami ng firms baka di namin kayanin (Not all SMRs can be reviewed...It’s an additional burden to us. We may not be able to review everything because there are so many firms),” added Vicente dela Cruz, chief of the division’s Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management Section, in a phone interview in early 2019.

In 2018, a total of 3,816 business establishments from seven provinces submitted SMRs to the EMB office in Central Luzon, based on data culled by the PCIJ from the bureau’s Management Information System Unit.



If each establishment submitted four 16-page SMRs in a year, that meant that in 2018, a total of 15,264 SMRs consisting of 244,224 pages needed to be reviewed.

The Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement Division only had 15 staffers, according to Dizon. Each staffer would have needed to evaluate 1,018 reports — nearly 16,300 pages — if they were to review all of the reports.

What makes the work harder, said Dizon, is the limited time allowed under DAO 2003-27 — only 30 days — to act on problematic SMRs. The division also has other responsibilities.

After the 30-day period, the incorrect reports can no longer be reviewed and the deficiencies cited in the documents can no longer become the basis for the issuance of violation notices.

The establishments can then go scot-free.

Next: *PCIJ brings water samples from Marilao River to a laboratory for testing*

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— **PCIJ**



76 baby turtles released in Tayabas Bay

By: [Delfin T. Mallari Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@dtmallarijrINO](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 05:13 PM February 18, 2021

LUCENA CITY -- Local officials, environmentalists, and concerned citizens set free 76 Olive Ridley sea turtle ("pawikan") hatchlings to their natural habitat in Tayabas Bay in Sariaya town, Quezon province on Thursday, Feb. 18.

"Around 400 to 500 baby turtles will be released (in batches) in the coming days once the eggs are hatched," said Sherwin Rosales, fishery technician at the municipal government's agriculture office.

The baby turtles were released on the seashore of Paraiso Beach Resort in Barangay Guisguis around 7 a.m.

The event was witnessed by Mayor Marcelo Gayeta and his wife Marivic, members of Task Force Kalikasan, local fishery officials, villagers, and Paraiso Beach Resort owner Rene Panganiban.



Local government and fishery officials lead the release of 76 Olive Ridley sea turtle hatchlings on the shores of Tayabas Bay in Sariaya town in Quezon province on Thursday, Feb. 18. PHOTO FROM SHERWIN ROSALES

Campaign

In 2012, Panganiban initiated a campaign to protect sea turtles waiting for their eggs to hatch along the coast. He received technical help from the local government.

Last year, more than 1,000 baby sea turtles were also freed in Tayabas Bay, while another 70 hatchlings were released in the same area in January.

The hatchlings of different sea turtle species were cared for by fishermen, fish wardens, and the local government in four nesting sites in the villages of Castañas, San Roque, Guisguis, and Bignay 2.

Sanctuary

The Sariaya coastline, host to many beach resorts and other tourist-oriented businesses, serves as a sanctuary to turtles that usually come to lay and hatch their eggs from October to December.



Tayabas bay stretches from San Juan town in Batangas province to the towns of Sariaya, Pagbilao, Padre Burgos, Agdangan, Unisan, Pitogo, Macalelon, General Luna, Catanauan, Mulanay and San Francisco, and Lucena City in Quezon.

The presence of the pawikan indicates a balanced marine ecosystem. To fishermen, it also meant a school of fish in the vicinity, officials said.

The pawikan is listed as an endangered species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and in the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

LZB

This fish helps 'save' the environment so please stop buying and eating them

Published February 19, 2021, 12:41 AM

by [Johannes Chua](#)

It can be eaten, but why would you want to eat a parrot fish?

This is the season of Lent, when fish is all you need for sustenance, but (again) why parrot fish? Aside from its relatively affordable meat (it costs P280 per kilo inside a QC market), it is good for stew and curry dishes, according to the *aling tindera* whose stall was filled with trays of dead parrot fish. I asked her if she was aware of the multiple “environmental benefits” that the parrot fish provides our waters. She gave me a blank look, conveying to me that she wasn’t interested in talking to a weirdo. She just needed to sell her stuff. She seemed to say: “If you’re not buying, better sashay away!”

I assume that these trays of parrot fish are available in that market because there is a huge demand for them. Sadly, Filipino consumers are not aware of the contributions of the parrot fish in maintaining the balance of our waters.



On sale at the market: A tray of dead parrot fish (All photos by Johannes L. Chua)

So, how could I convince *aling tindera* next time to stop selling the parrot fish?

According to *nature.org*, the parrot fish are “colorful, tropical creatures that spend about 90 percent of their day eating algae off coral reefs.”

“This almost-constant eating performs the essential task of cleaning the reefs, which helps the corals stay healthy and thriving,” the site said. “The parrot fishes’ digestive system, which includes more teeth inside their throats, breaks down coral bits into white sands. Known as bio-erosion, this process helps control algae populations and create new surfaces for baby corals to attach to and grow.”

Scientists estimate that a single parrot fish can “poop out more than 2,000 pounds of sand each year!”



A single parrot fish can 'poop 2,000 pounds of sand annually' contributing to the health of our waters.



Parrot fish are also essential to the survival of coral as they act as “natural cleaners” of parasites that grow on it.

According to a 2012 study cited by *wannaboats.com*, the loss of parrot fish “disturbs the delicate balance of coral ecosystems and allows algae, on which they feed, to smother the reefs.”

The study also found that “Caribbean corals have declined by more than 50 percent since the ‘70s and may disappear in the next 20 years as a direct result of the loss of parrot fish and sea urchins — the area’s two main grazers.”

The study further added that “some of the healthiest Caribbean coral reefs are those in areas where governments have restricted or banned fishing practices that harm parrot fish, such as fish traps and spearfishing.”

In short, if there are no parrot fish, corals would simply die. If corals die, then sea life would drastically suffer. Eventually, millions of people would lose their food and income sources. *Aling tintera* would have nothing to sell, except perhaps some aquarium-grown fish.



Due to massive fishing, parrot fish is now extinct in Guam and heavily depleted in Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, and others parts of the Solomon Islands. Let’s hope that it is not yet too late for our country to lose our parrot fish. When we lose them, it is a massive loss for our ecosystem.



Heads of parrot fish are sold at P100 a kilo.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/19/this-fish-helps-save-the-environment%e4%b8%80so-please-stop-buying-and-eating-them/>



Glimpses of the birds of Hamilo Coast

Published 2 hours ago on February 19, 2021 04:00 AM

By [Edu Jarque](#)



Rufous-crowned Bee-eater.

A chirp here. A rustle of feathers there. At a distance, quick flashes of colors fly into the sky. This is the daily milieu of Wesley Caballa, bird watcher par excellence.

“I didn’t know anything about birds. In fact, I could only identify the maya,” Caballa confessed.

This all changed when he became the senior manager for Sports, Recreation and Sustainability at the hideaway resort town of Costa del Hamilo. As part of the sustainability program, he began to identify the flora and fauna of the area, to build up the database provided by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

“Birds were the most obvious creatures, for we heard their songs and calls every single day. It was not easy to spot them. However, the more I observed, the more I appreciated this task-turned-hobby,” he said. “Eventually, I bought a camera with a modest telephoto lens and joined the Wild Bird Photographers of the Philippines (WBPP), an organization with environmental conservation at its core.

A graduate of the University of the Philippines, Caballa has documented 110 species so far. But he suspects there are 150 variants — 80 percent resident and the other 20 migrants — he just needs to see them at the right moment.

Discouraged whenever his target avian fails to show up, a clear camera shot of the subject more than makes up for it.

This is what he had to say on his favorite feathered friends:

Philippine Pitta (*Erythropitta erythrogaster*)

Extremely colorful with a unique mating call, they are active at the onset of the wet season — ideal to forage for food or for mating.



PHILIPPINE Pitta.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF WESLEY CABALLA



Hooded Pitta (*Pitta sordid*)

The only Pitta in the Philippines with a black head, I love them for their bright green color. This is easier to spot as they always fly out in the open.



HOODED Piita

Philippine Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus philippensis*)

It is the smallest parrot found in the country. Resembling the colorful make-up of a mistress, the red on the bird's head and rump is true to its Tagalog name kulasisi.

Rufous-crowned Bee-eater (*Merops americanus*)

They feed on bees and other insects as they catch their food in flight — such precision to target small flying critters. Observing these birds always amazes me.

Olive-backed Sunbird (*Cinnyris jugularis*)

With its powerful wings, it hovers back and forth to reach the nectar at the center of the flower like a hummingbird. It is definitely a sight to see in action.



Olive-backed Sunbird.

Black-naped Monarch (*Hypothymis azurea*)

The sexes dictate the colors — the male brighter blue, a black spot on the head and a black half collar around its neck, while the female is duller with olive brown wings, without the black marks. Due to its blue shine, it is my favorite.



BLACK-NAPED Monarch.

Rough-crested Malkoha (*Phaenicophaeus superciliosus*)

A species of cuckoo endemic to our islands, it is a large bird, predominantly black with bluish green gloss. Its unique red crest and bulging round eyes are what attracts most.



Rough-crested Malkoha.

White-browed Shama (*Copsychus luzoniensis*)

Endemic to our nation, it is a shy bird, only conspicuous by its beautiful song. Initially, I thought it was a large bird. I was wrong — it is only about six to seven inches in length.



White-browed Shama.

Buff-banded Rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*)

The tikling, which this bird belongs to, seems like it walks between grass stems. The name is a reference to our folk dance Tinikling.



Buff-banded Rail.

Philippine Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis holospilus*)

Endemic to our archipelago, it eats snakes and other reptiles and amphibians. It possesses a distinctive whistling call, while soaring high above the forests. It is considered as the most conspicuous of all Philippine raptors.



Philippine Serpent Eagle.



Lake Lanao 'remains pristine, clean' but now under threat from degradation —DOST-NRCP

Published February 18, 2021, 6:16 PM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

While the 10-million-year-old Lake Lanao remains “pristine and clean,” the local government units around the area have to step up efforts to conserve and protect the ancient lake from degradation according to the study conducted by the Department of Science and Technology-National Research Council of the Philippines (DOST-NRCP).



Lake Lanao

The results of the three-year study was presented by Dr. Fema M. Abamo, a professor of Mindanao State University in Marawi City, during a webinar presentation for the regional basic research caravan for Bicol.

“Our Lake Lanao from all sampling sites is still pristine; our water is still clean,” she said.

For two years, Abamo’s team monitored the water quality of Lake Lanao in five sampling sites. These included Marawi City, Ramin, Balindong, Taraka, and Binidayan.

The researchers used the abundance of one-celled protozoan ciliates as bio-indicators of organic pollution to monitor the site.

The highest ciliate abundance was observed in the littoral zone of Balindong at 0.0061cells/mL during the dry season, they noted.

Abamo’s group cited a previous study in 1989, which categorized lakes as ultra-oligotrophic when their ciliate abundance is equal to or lower than 2.4cells/mL.

“Lake Lanao, therefore, is ultra-oligotrophic having ciliate abundance below the set range in all sampling sites. Such lake category has very low nutrients, scarce growth of plants and algae, and high dissolved oxygen indicative of a clean, healthy, good water quality and not organically polluted lake,” they said.

The researchers got their water samples from 50 to 100 meters away from the lakeshore in the shallower littoral zone and towards the deeper open water in the pelagic zone.

The DOST noted that the results of the team’s study were affirmed by another group in the same program conducting the physical and chemical characterization of the lake. They found the same findings that the lake is not polluted but still healthy and has good water quality, The DOST-NCRP study was temporarily suspended and eventually allowed to resume after the 2017 Marawi siege.

“The lake was reportedly deteriorating due to increased human population and activities around the lake,” Abamo said.



Her team proposed that since people have resettled back near the lake after the Marawi siege, the local governments which have jurisdiction over the area should strengthen their policies to maintain the healthy condition of the lake.

“We have recommended to the local government to create and implement stricter policies and ordinances to conserve the lake, and regulate and check both the residential and business establishments around the lake,” said Abamo, a member of DOST-NRCP’s 4,944 research pool involved in various scientific disciplines.

The DOST cited that Lake Lanao is listed as one of the 17 ancient lakes of the world with a tectonic-volcanic origin.

It is the second largest lake in the Philippines and the largest one in Mindanao, home to 18 endemic cyprinids or freshwater fishes related to the carps and minnows that are found nowhere else in the world, it said.

“For generations, Lanao Lake has been a potent natural resource that breathes life to the Maranaws, as a source of their food and water, livelihood, religious practices, transportation and sports. But more than anything, the lake has shaped the Maranaw culture and tradition to what it is now and it has become imperative for the Maranaws to preserve its pristine beauty for a better and sustainable future,” it said.



Photo from Pixabay shows plastic bottles.

Image by Matthew Gollop from Pixabay

Ditch harmful single-use products and systems, green groups urge

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - February 18, 2021 - 6:15pm

MANILA, Philippines — Nearly 200 environmental groups called for an end to single-use paper and plastic products and a change in the systems that support the production of disposables, saying these harm the environment.

In a position paper released ahead of the UN Environment Assembly, 188 organizations from around the world stressed that single use, disposable products have “negative environmental impacts that humanity and the earth’s resources can simply not afford.”

Citing the Sensenseo Global Waste Index 2019, the groups said single-use products are a key contributor to the two billion tons of waste that humans produce annually. The figure is projected to increase by 70% by 2050.

“Doing away with disposables will not only reduce waste but help address climate change, protect forests and stop microplastics from poisoning marine life,” said Tamara Stark, campaigns director of Canopy.

The groups also pointed out that the production and disposal of disposables are “disproportionately harming” indigenous communities, people of color and vulnerable sectors whose homes are often situated close to production plants or waste sites of extractive industries.

“Too often, it is the most vulnerable people in our society that bear the brunt of these polluting products—which contaminate local food supplies, clog landfills, and poison water and soil with toxic chemicals,” said Von Hernandez, global coordinator of Break Free From Plastic Movement.

Transformational change needed

Aside from ditching throwaway commodities, the organizations also said these single-use products should be replaced with circular systems that promote reuse and reduction.

“We therefore call for an end to single use, throwaway commodities, and call for transformational change to our production, consumption and end-of-use systems to enable a truly circular economy,” they said.



To achieve this, public and private funds must back the start-up and scale-up of systems that support reusable products and circularity and disincentivize the continuation of single use commodities. Governments, businesses and the civil society must also ensure that producers take responsibility for the impacts of their products and redesign and innovate better products.

“We need to see radical change in how products are delivered to people, without the use of harmful and polluting packaging,” Hernandez said.

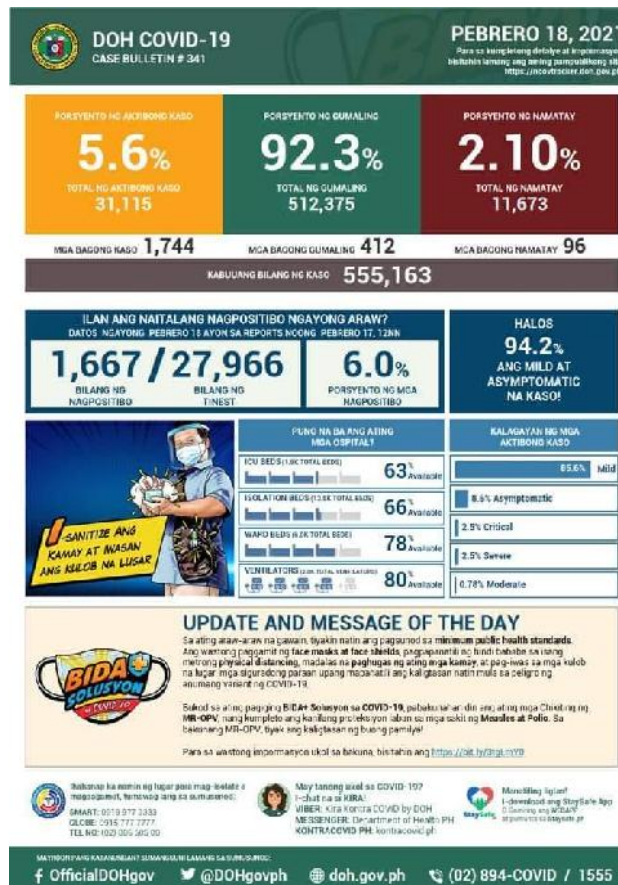
In the Philippines, plastic soft drink straws and coffee stirrers have been recently included in the list of non-environmentally acceptable products (NEAP), which means these products may be banned soon.

Environmental groups welcomed the move that was “long overdue” but said it was not enough to solve the country’s plastic pollution problem.

Among the plastic items that must be included in the list of NEAP are labo bags, cutleries, bottles, cups and plates, take-out containers and styrofoam or polystyrene food containers, local groups said.

BREAKING: Kaso ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, pumalo na sa 555,000

By Angellic Jordan February 18, 2021 - 04:10 PM



Mahigit 1,700 ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Huwebes (February 18), umabot na sa 555,163 confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 31,115 o 5.6 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,744 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

85.6 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 8.6 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.78 porsyento ang moderate; 2.5 porsyento ang severe habang 2.5 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 96 naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 11,673 o 2.10 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 412 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 512,375 o 92.3 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Source: <https://radio.inquirer.net/285327/breaking-kaso-ng-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-pumalo-na-sa-555000>



Thousands of 'cold-stunned' sea turtles rescued off coast of Texas

Reuters / 04:45 PM February 18, 2021



Rescued turtles stunned by cold weather at an evacuation center in South Padre Island, Texas, U.S., in this still image from video, February 17, 2021. Ed Caum – City Of South Padre Island Convention And Visitors Bureau/ via REUTERS

The brutal cold snap that has frozen Texas hasn't only numbed unprepared people to the bone – thousands of turtles have been caught off-guard too.

Thousands of sea turtles unused to the plunge in temperatures have been washing up on the beaches of South Padre Island, off the southern coast of Texas. Volunteers have brought some 4,700 of them to a convention center, where they are being kept in tubs and enclosures before they can be released when the water is warmer.

“It’s an unprecedented event,” said Wendy Knight, executive director of research and conservation center Sea Turtle Inc, which has been helping the effort. Knight said normally only 100-500 turtles wash up on the beaches in south Texas each winter.

Millions of Texans have been left without heat due to energy blackouts in the state triggered by a cold spell in which both air and water temperatures have dropped well below typical levels.

Video shot by Ed Caum, executive director of the South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau, shows volunteers carefully placing the animals on a trolley, and then the convention center floor covered in turtles of all shapes and sizes.



People place rescued turtles stunned by cold weather in an evacuation center in South Padre Island, Texas, U.S., in this still image from video, February 15, 2021. Ed Caum – City Of South Padre Island Convention And Visitors Bureau/ via REUTERS

Caum refers to the turtles as being “cold-stunned” – a condition where cold-blooded animals suddenly exhibit hypothermic reactions such as lethargy and an inability to move when the temperature in the environment around them drops.



“We’ve brought them to the convention center to get their core temperatures back up,” said Caum, narrating one of the videos.

In the latest video posted on Facebook on Wednesday, Caum related how the center’s power and water supplies were restored overnight.



Air pollution kills thousands in megacities despite COVID lockdowns

February 18, 2021 | 12:34 pm



In the five most-populated cities—Delhi, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Shanghai (pictured), and Tokyo—air pollution caused about 160,000 deaths and economic losses totaling about \$85 billion.

KUALA LUMPUR — Air pollution caused tens of thousands of deaths in the world’s five most populous cities last year despite coronavirus lockdowns, researchers said on Thursday, urging governments to ditch fossil fuels and invest in a green recovery.

Environmental campaign group Greenpeace Southeast Asia and air quality technology company IQAir measured pollution levels across 28 cities—chosen according to where data was available and with a geographical spread.

In the five most-populated cities—Delhi, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, and Tokyo—air pollution caused about 160,000 deaths and economic losses totaling about \$85 billion.

“A few months of lockdown hasn’t really dented that long-term average of air pollution that people have been exposed to,” said Aidan Farrow, an air pollution scientist at Greenpeace Research Laboratories at Britain’s University of Exeter.

“It is a little shocking to see how much upheaval there has been—and we still have work to do to improve air pollution,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Air pollution is the single largest environmental risk to human health globally, and kills an estimated 7 million people every year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO says nine out of 10 people breathe polluted air, which is linked to strokes, lung cancer, and heart disease—and now equals the effects of smoking tobacco, health experts say.

The problem affects more cities in Asia than anywhere else in the world. Major causes include vehicle emissions, coal power plants, construction, festival fireworks, forest clearing, and burning of crops, firewood, and waste.

Delhi had the highest death toll among the five biggest cities, with some 54,000 deaths—or one per 500 people—due to high levels of tiny pollution particles, known as PM2.5, which can cause lung and heart diseases, the study said.



Japan's capital Tokyo suffered the highest financial cost with approximately 40,000 deaths and economic losses of \$43 billion, it added.

Lockdowns to stem the spread of the new coronavirus in major cities have forced millions to work from home, while slowing economies have slashed carbon dioxide emissions.

"We have seen changes in road traffic, aviation as well ... but the major (air pollution) sources have continued to operate largely as before," Mr. Farrow said,

"The problem is vast and needs a big, multi-industry effort to address it," he added, calling for more investment in cleaner technologies, renewable energy, and electrified public transport.

— **Michael Taylor/Thomson Reuters Foundation**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/air-pollution-kills-thousands-in-megacities-despite-covid-lockdowns/?fbclid=IwAR37yqfecb9tYD03bCIsUcp-j0QkaUyrE7fVkJZPW8CFirUEgmo7Q13eVRe8>

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