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**DENR**

# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DENR gives Christmas cheers to indigent PCMC patients

December 19, 2021, 8:33 pm



**MANILA** – In line with its ComPassion Project and continuing stakeholder partnership, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently conducted a gift-giving activity for the indigent patients of the Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC).

The DENR ComPassion Project was launched on May 11, 2020, as a community outreach initiative that initially aimed to support the government's fight against COVID-19 and ensure the welfare and protection of DENR employees.

"The ComPassion Project now goes beyond its initial cause to help those affected by the pandemic. We want the project to also extend a helping hand to those in need not only because of this health crisis. That is the true essence of compassion," DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said in a statement on Sunday.

DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs and DENR's Association of Career Executives (ACE) president Jonas R. Leones, Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Analiza Rebueta-Teh, Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service director Hiro V. Masuda led the turnover of Christmas gift bags for the children at the PCMC ward to PCMC Ancillary Department Manager Neonita Benafin.

The gift bags included an environmental craft book, DENR-produced books on biodiversity and climate change and toys from McDonald's Philippines.

"The DENR ACE joins this activity as a way of advocating programs for the community in pursuit of the DENR mission and vision. Through these children's books, the youth will learn about caring for the environment and natural resources, and climate change in a colorful and interesting way," Leones said.

"Christmas, as they say, is for children. And this year, though we may have not personally greeted them because of the restrictions of the pandemic, we hope that we can spread joy and cheer to them through this simple gift-giving activity," Masuda said.

The activity was conducted in coordination with PCMC OIC Executive Director Sonia B. Gonzalez.



DENR and PCMC have been long-time partners in various initiatives, such as the annual bloodletting activity.

In July 2021, DENR employees donated blood as part of the agency's coronavirus disease (Covid-19) response efforts.

The DENR also provided free transportation to medical front-liners using its fleet of buses. **(PR)**



## DENR sets automation of permit issuance for trading of flora, fauna

BY BUSINESSMIRROR DECEMBER 19, 2021



Authorities seized a poached endangered hornbill that was about to be illegally traded.

The Philippine government adopted the automated permit issuance system for the trading of flora and fauna to enhance global trade transparency and to prevent the illegal trade and sustainably develop the country's biodiversity, said Growth Features.com in a news release.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has started issuing permits for the trading of flora and fauna electronically in compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites).

The electronic platform will be through the eCitesPH.com.

The information can be accessible anywhere, thereby facilitating trade. The electronic permitting system will be integrated into the country's national single window system.

Through the process, international trade of threatened animals and plants will easily be monitored and controlled.

"The system will improve the control of international trade in endangered species. Automation of Cites processes will help enforce regulations, increase transparency and facilitate processing and electronic data exchange with customs and other agencies," said Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Assistant Director Amelita Ortiz.

"Electronic information exchange will reduce opportunities for corruption and the use of fraudulent documents in the trading of endangered species," Ortiz added.

The DENR has been tapping information technology to enhance its capability building to produce experts in wildlife trade.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the addition of two online learning platforms "enables the DENR to uphold its mandate of educating the people about the country's wildlife resources despite the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic."

The BMB has introduced the eTraining Course on Basic Wildlife Law Enforcement (BWLE) and the Wildlife Philippines Podcast.

This project is under the DENR-Asian Development Bank/Global Environment Facility Project on Combating Environmental Organized Crime in the Philippines.

The project also involves aid from the United States Department of the Interior International Technical Assistance Program-Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Project 3.



Modules under this e-learning project include Wildlife Law Enforcement in the Philippines; Species Commonly Involved in Wildlife Crimes; Substantive Laws on Wildlife Resources Protection; Other Crimes against Wildlife; Roles and Responsibilities of Government Agencies in Wildlife Law Enforcement; and Procedural Laws on Wildlife Resources Protection.

Each year, the BMB issues more than 1,500 permits on a tedious manual basis.

But the new automated permit issuance system eases the burden of manual work. This is aligned with Republic Act 11032 of 2018, or Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery.

More than 38,700 species, including 5,900 species of animals and 32,800 species of plants, are protected under the Cites, an international treaty signed by Philippines. It was entered into force in 1975.

Each species is under any of three appendices depending on the degree of protection they need.

Image courtesy of File



## Back to Mother Nature

Barring any resurgence of Covid-19 cases, DENR readies reopening of more Protected Areas, National Parks for visitors

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA DECEMBER 18, 2021



Kayakers navigate the limestone cliffs of El Nido, Palawan, part of the El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area, which covers over 36,000 hectares of land and 54,000 hectares of marine waters.

AS the Philippine economy gradually reopens with the continuing decline in Covid-19 cases logged on a daily basis by health authorities, ecotourism in Protected Areas (PA) is slowly reclaiming its luster for pandemic-weary Filipinos in need of a much-deserved break from months of on-and-off community lockdowns.

Ecotourism in PAs, or areas set aside for conservation, offers people an opportunity to commune with nature, while avoiding crowded areas in the face of the continuing threat of new Covid-19 variants.

The good news is more PAs are expected to resume ecotourism operation soon, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

So far, 55 of the 93 PAs that offer ecotourism in various parts of the country have reopened. More of these ecotourism sites will soon start accepting visitors on the assumption that, hopefully, the current national trend in Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations maintains its present course amid the looming Omicron variant threat.

Meriden E. Maranan, chief of the National Parks Division of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), said with the issuance of Executive Order 151 "Approving the Nationwide Implementation of the Alert Level System for Covid-19 Response" in November 2021, tourist attractions are already open in areas under Alert Levels 1 to 4.

As such, she said, more PAs opening to visitors is expected as long as concerned local government units (LGUs) where ecotourism activities will take place will not raise any objection.

### Jobs provider

VIA e-mail, Maranan said ecotourism activities in PAs were severely affected due to the quarantine restrictions during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Prior to the pandemic, an average of 4,367 jobs were supported annually through ecotourism development in protected areas, which decreased drastically by 32 percent [2,948 jobs] during the pandemic," she said.

Nevertheless, Maranan said, patrolling and protection activities of "Bantay Gubat" and "Bantay Dagat" volunteers were continuously conducted during the closure of the PAs to the public.

Tour guides, transportation and catering services providers were the sectors most affected by the closures of PAs, she said.



“With the reopening of the parks, we are optimistic that tour guides and other service providers that are relying on ecotourism in Protected Areas would soon resume operations. Further, partnership with communities is vital as we recover from the pandemic. At the DENR, we continuously build their capacity in managing our resources as well as in exploring other alternative livelihood activities,” Maranan said.

#### Adherence to protocols

HOWEVER, she pointed out that further health and safety protocols that may be issued, especially with the emergence of the Omicron variant, will be followed strictly in our PAs to avoid the spread of the virus in the country. The first two cases of the more transmissible Omicron variant in the Philippines were logged by the Department of Health on Thursday afternoon.

According to Maranan, from the total income generated by PAs and National Parks (NPs), 64 percent is derived from ecotourism activities. The reopening of ecotourism sites, she said, will help PAs and NPs to recover from financial losses and serve as additional sources of funds for their operations.

Aside from the income generated in the operation of ecotourism in PAs and NPs, Maranan said, the practice instills conservation education and awareness among the visitors and reinforces ecosystem services through a number of benefits while providing livelihood to communities.

“Before the Covid-19 pandemic, Protected Areas receive roughly 4.5 million visits annually, and generated approximately P225 million per year from entrance fees and use of facilities. During the pandemic, Protected Areas have received a total of 1.2 million visitors only and generated approximately P59.6 million,” she noted.

According to Maranan, the number of visitors and income generated has decreased drastically by 72 percent and 73 percent, respectively.

“With the reopening of Protected Areas and easing of travel restrictions, we are expecting that the number of visitors and income from ecotourism in Protected Areas will increase,” she said.

Maranan noted that while the nationwide Alert Level System has already been adopted, park managers or Protected Area superintendents are bound to adhere to local guidelines and ordinances issued by various LGUs, explaining why many PAs and NPs are still closed to visitors.

“Meantime, we take this as an opportunity to enhance the skills of our PA staff and the communities through various relevant training. Further, this is also a chance for our biodiversity to recover from the impacts caused by some activities in the area.

The DENR-BMB is currently strengthening its partnerships with the Department of Tourism, the Department of the Interior and Local Government and other development partners through the National Ecotourism Steering Committee and Ecotourism Technical Working Group.

Maranan said among the areas for collaboration with concerned national government agencies are the updating of the National Ecotourism Strategy and Action Plan, operationalization of the Reformulated National Tourism Development Plan, and adoption of guidelines on the operation of ecotourism under the new normal to be anchored on the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases’ guidelines and issuances of various relevant agencies.

“These plans will serve as guides for our park managers in the operation of Protected Areas under the new normal,” she said.



In the meantime, as to securing clearance from LGUs to resume operation, Maranan said that since each LGU has specific protocols and guidelines in terms of managing the pandemic, the Protected Area Management Board, where LGUs sit as members, is the most appropriate venue to discuss the necessary clearance for the resumption of PA operation and opening.

Image courtesy of Wirestock | Dreamstime.com





## DPWH-LLDA tie up for Marikina River improvement

Published December 19, 2021, 10:53 AM

by [Waylon Galvez](#)

Officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) have partnered with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) for the improvement of both the lower and middle portions of the Marikina River.

The agreement, signed by DPWH Undersecretary Emil K. Sadain, also the Chief Implementer of the Build Build Build program of the government, LLDA General Manager Jaime C. Medina, and Toyo Construction Co. Ltd. Project Manager Ryuta A. Ariyoshi, will allow the DPWH to use a parcel of land along shore land of Laguna de Bay in Taytay, Rizal as a backfilling site as the department starts working on Marikina River.

The area is a 30.04-hectare property in Barangay Sta. Ana, Taytay, Rizal.

It will be used as a disposal area for materials taken from the dredging and excavation of waterways covered by Marikina River Improvement Works of the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (PMRCIP), Phase IV.

The PMRCIP Phase 4 is also included in the list of government's infrastructure flagship projects that is funded by a loan agreement with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to further mitigate flooding due to overflow of Pasig and Marikina Rivers.

DPWH Acting Secretary Roger G. Mercado, Sadain, Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines Kazuhiko Koshikawa, JICA chief representative Eigo Azukizawa, and other officials and representatives of local government units and partners in the national government agencies officially launched the project last Nov. 16 during a groundbreaking ceremony.

According to Sadain, the MOA with LLDA – having the regulatory function and jurisdiction over the entire Laguna de Bay – is intended to support the department's project requirement for proper disposal within the period of four years.

The area in Barangay Sta. Ana was identified as an ideal backfilling site for materials taken from the dredging and excavation of the river bank and waterway, which in turn would benefit LLDA as the offered land would be improved and mitigate inundation

As contractor, Toyo Construction, upon securing the required permits and clearances from LLDA and other appropriate government agencies and LGUs, is expected to follow the strict environmental compliance in handling the operation of hauling and disposal of the dredged material to the disposal site.

PMRCIP Phase 4 will cover structural and non-structural measures, which will mitigate flood damages in Metro Manila caused by channel overflow of the Pasig and Marikina rivers.

Scopes of work under this phase include channel improvement works for 7.95-kilometer stretch of Lower and Middle Marikina River, including the construction of Manggahan Control Gate Structure (MCGS), and construction of one floodgate and one sluiceway at the joining sections of Cainta and Taytay rivers to Manggahan Floodway, respectively.

The river improvement works will require excavation and dredging works of about two million cubic meters, steel sheet pile revetment stretching 11.6 kilometers, and reinforced concrete flood wall along its 6.1-kilometer section.



Drainage improvement will also be undertaken which covers the construction of reinforced concrete pipe in 116 locations, manhole in 253 locations, collector pipes, and flap gates in 102 locations.

The Manggahan Control Gate Structure will be constructed 600 meters downstream from diversion point of Manggahan Floodway while the Cainta Floodgate and Taytay Sluiceway will be at the joining sections of Cainta and Taytay Rivers to the Manggahan Floodway Roller Gate.

Also present during the agreement signing were DPWH Unified Project Management Office (UPMO) Flood Control Management Cluster Project Director Ramon A. Arriola III, LLDA Assistant General Manager Generoso M. Dungo, and Toyo Construction Site Manager Takao Hayase.



## DPWH Signed Agreement with LLDA for Backfilling Site of Marikina River Improvement Project

Saturday, December 18, 2021 Journal Online



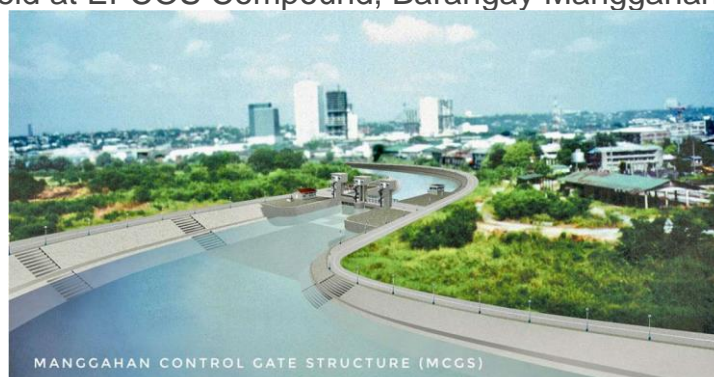
The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has entered an agreement with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) to use a parcel of land along shoreland of Laguna de Bay in Taytay, Rizal as backfilling site for the river improvement works at lower/middle Marikina River.

Under a tripartite memorandum of agreement signed on December 14, 2021 by DPWH Undersecretary and Build Build Build Chief Implementer Emil K. Sadain, LLDA General Manager Jaime C. Medina, and Toyo Construction Co. Ltd. Project Manager Ryuta A. Ariyoshi, a 30.04 hectare property in Barangay Sta. Ana, Municipality of Taytay, Province of Rizal will be used as disposal area for materials taken from the dredging and excavation of waterways covered by Marikina River Improvement Works (Sta. 6+700 – Sta. 9+300) of the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (PMRCIP), Phase IV.

The agreement signing was also witnessed by DPWH Unified Project Management Office (UPMO) Flood Control Management Cluster Project Director Ramon A. Arriola III, LLDA Assistant General Manager Generoso M. Dungo, and Toyo Construction Site Manager Tákao Hayase.

PMRCIP Phase 4, included in the list of government's infrastructure flagship projects, is funded by a loan agreement with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to further mitigate flooding due to overflow of Pasig and Marikina Rivers.

The project was officially launched by DPWH Acting Secretary Roger G. Mercado with Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines Kazuhiko Koshikawa, JICA Chief Representative Eigo Azukizawa, Undersecretary Sadain and other officials and representatives of local government units and partner national government agencies with a groundbreaking ceremony last November 16, 2021 held at EFCOS Compound, Barangay Manggahan, Pasig City.

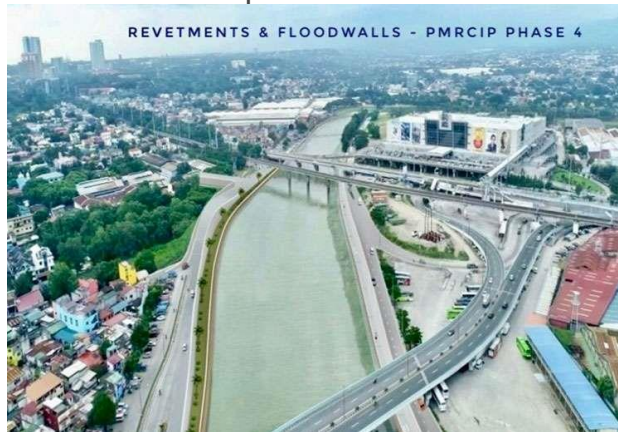




Undersecretary Sadain said that the MOA with LLDA, having the regulatory function and jurisdiction over the entire Laguna de Bay, is intended to support DPWH project requirement for proper disposal within the period of four (4) years.

The area was identified as suitable and ideal backfilling site for materials taken from the DPWH dredging and excavation of the river bank and waterway, which in turn would benefit LLDA as the offered land would be improved and mitigate inundation.

As contractor of this DPWH project, Toyo Construction upon securing the required permits and clearances from LLDA/other appropriate government agencies and local government units and with the condition of strict environmental compliance, will handle the operation of hauling and disposal of the dredged material to the disposal site.



PMRCIP Phase 4 will cover structural and non-structural measures that will mitigate flood damages in Metro Manila caused by channel overflow of the Pasig-Marikina River, thereby facilitating urban development and enhancing the sustainable environment along the river.

Scopes of work under this phase include channel improvement works for 7.95-kilometer stretch of Lower/Middle Marikina River, including the construction of Manggahan Control Gate Structure (MCGS), and construction of one (1) floodgate and one (1) sluiceway at the joining sections of Cainta and Taytay rivers to Manggahan Floodway, respectively.

The river improvement works will require excavation/dredging works of about 2 Million cubic meters, steel sheet pile revetment stretching 11.6 kilometers, and reinforced concrete flood wall along its 6.1-kilometer section. Drainage improvement will also be undertaken which covers the construction of reinforced concrete pipe in 116 locations, manhole in 253 locations, collector pipes, and flap gates in 102 locations.

The Manggahan Control Gate Structure will be constructed 600 meters downstream from diversion point of Manggahan Floodway while the Cainta Floodgate and Taytay Sluiceway will be at the joining sections of Cainta and Taytay Rivers to the Manggahan Floodway Roller Gate.



Source: <https://journal.com.ph/dpwh-signed-agreement-with-llda-for-backfilling-site-of-marikina-river-improvement-project/>



# Prov'l gov't halts pebble picking in Ilocos Norte coastal town

By Leilanie Adriano December 19, 2021, 1:19 pm



**PEBBLES FOR SALE.** Pebbles of seven different colors are available for sale along the national highway in Barangay Caruan, Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte. To avoid illegal pebble picking in the area, the Ilocos Norte government has ordered pebble pickers to sell all their stockpiles by Jan. 21, 2022, otherwise, these would be forfeited by the government. *(File photo by Leilanie Adriano)*

**LAOAG CITY** – The province of Ilocos Norte is bent on temporarily suspending pebble picking in the coastal village of Caruan in Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte to ensure that not only a few benefits from it.

With a recurring problem on illegal pebble picking in the area, Governor Matthew Joseph Manotoc has announced that pebble pickers are given a month or until Jan. 21 next year to sell their remaining stockpile and stop operation for the meantime.

On Saturday, provincial administrator Yvette Convento-Leynes said the Provincial Quarry Office has been conducting an inventory of the existing stockpile of pebbles since Dec. 15 in coordination with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office and the Ilocos Norte police.

These are all exhibited along the national highway for sale until the Jan. 21, 2022 deadline.

“All stockpiles must be declared, otherwise, these will not be given special clearance for the disposal of pebbles,” Manotoc said on Friday as he ordered the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office led by its director, Col. Christopher Abrahanano to ensure the implementation of the law.

All pebbles that will remain unsold after the deadline will be forfeited.

Leynes said a public consultation would be conducted on Dec. 21 to hear the side of the affected pebble pickers.

The governor assured that the Ilocos Norte government is willing to provide whatever alternative livelihood assistance that they may ask for.

He likewise appealed to the mayor of Pasuquin to extend assistance to the affected pebble pickers as he pinned the responsibility on the town's officials to resolve once and for all the illegal pebble picking in the area which he said merely benefits a chosen few.



The governor is referring to a local cooperative in the area which has been stormed by a series of complaints due to alleged abusive leadership and unjust treatment among the pebble picking community.

For his part, Abrahano on Saturday said his men would establish an integrated checkpoint not only on crime prevention but also to check the illegal transport of pebbles and other environmental law violations in the area. **(PNA)**



## ‘Boracay rehab completion seen by mid-2022’

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) - The Philippine Star December 20, 2021 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force is on track to complete the rehabilitation of Boracay Island by the first half of 2022, Environment Secretary and BIATF chair Roy Cimatu said over the weekend.

“With the leadership of all the task force member-agencies and the provincial government of Aklan as well as the cooperation of the locals and all stakeholders, we are close to finishing our major tasks so we can turn over a better Boracay to the next management team,” Cimatu said in a statement.

The BIATF – co-chaired by the departments of tourism and interior and local government – was created on May 8, 2018 through Executive Order 83.

“To reverse the degradation of the island, we have to work on all issues that caused its deterioration. These include recovering the beach areas and cleaning its waters, regaining the wetlands, restoring the ecosystem, and clearing and paving roads that are designated for public transport,” Cimatu said.

He said the enforcement of the 25+5- meter beach easement rule is expected to be completed by April 2022.

The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB)-Western Visayas regularly monitors the water quality of the island as part of the rehabilitation’s pollution control and prevention aspect.

The EMB will inspect the Lugutan and Tulubhan Bay areas due to reports of illegal water discharges coming from households that have yet to be connected to the sewer system.  
– **Rhodina Villanueva**



## Caloocan's Manila Bay drive recognized

Caloocan was cited for its cooperation with the task force and the DILG in realizing the mission and ideals of the MBCRPP

Published 1 day ago on December 19, 2021 04:15 AM

By **Cherk Balagtas**



For the third consecutive year, the Caloocan City government under Mayor Oca Malapitan was adjudged as the top performing local government unit in the annual assessment conducted in relation to the Manila Bay Clean-Up Rehabilitation and Preservation Program (MBCRPP).

The city was found to be fully compliant with the measures under MBCRPP, including in the management of informal settlers at Manila Bay.

The award from the Manila Bay Task Force and the Department of the Interior and Local Government was accepted by city assessor and housing and resettlement office chief Engr. Maria Numenia Obina.

Also present during the awarding at Manila Hotel Friday was Marda Alina Dumaoang of the DILG-Caloocan field office.

Caloocan was cited for its cooperation with the task force and the DILG in realizing the mission and ideals of the MBCRPP.

About 88 barangays in the city are taking part in the local government's efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

Source: [https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/12/19/caloocons-manila-bay-drive-recognized/?fbclid=IwAR1fmShqnFaYNG7jMeU8F2EKJxaTEuUly0nZJPs0W9X\\_GR9SiQwaenIqR2c](https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/12/19/caloocons-manila-bay-drive-recognized/?fbclid=IwAR1fmShqnFaYNG7jMeU8F2EKJxaTEuUly0nZJPs0W9X_GR9SiQwaenIqR2c)





# Pawikan hatchlings dash to freedom

BY HENRY EMPEÑO DECEMBER 19, 2021



Pawikan hatchlings released to the sea.

Olive ridley hatchlings dash to the open sea when they were released by animal care technicians of Ocean Adventure Park at the Camayan Beach Resort in the Subic Bay Freeport on December 12.

The olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), the smallest and the most abundant of sea turtles, is just one of the five sea turtles, or pawikan species found in the Philippines and among the only seven species in the world.



Subic Bay is among the known nesting sites of the pawikan. Subic beach resorts care for the eggs deposited in the sand by sea turtles until they hatch and are ready for release into the sea.

Image courtesy of Henry Empeño



# PHL's Expo 2020 Dubai pavilion is tribute to nature and Filipinos

BY BUSINESSMIRROR DECEMBER 19, 2021



An image of the rafflesia flower projected on the 67.5-meter tall Al Wasi dome. It is part of the Expo 2020 Dubai, dubbed as the "World's Greatest Show," as part of the celebrations of the Asean Honour Day on December 13.

Produced by the ACB, with the support of the European Union through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas Project, the 360-degree video projection titled, "Experience Asean," featured the region's natural treasures premiered at the Al Wasl Plaza of the Expo.

DUBAI—Asean's biodiversity and its contribution to daily lives were spotlighted on December 12 at the Philippines's pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai called *Bangkóta*, an ancient word for coral reefs.

The Embassy of the Philippines in the United Arab Emirates, in cooperation with the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, held the second Embassy *Bangkóta* Apex Speaker Series called, "Ugnayan: Connected by seas, sharing one vision for people and nature," on December 12, an ACB news release said.

The 30-minute talk of ACB executive director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, highlighted the interconnectivity of marine ecosystems and biodiversity in the Asean region and the Philippines' key role being at the centre of the center of global marine biodiversity.

## **A region connected by seas**

The Asean—composed of the 10 countries of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—boasts of abundant marine resources, 30 percent of the world's coral reefs, 35 percent of mangroves and at least 33 percent of all seagrass habitats.

The Asean region is home to vast coral reefs, mangroves, estuaries, sandy and rocky beaches, seagrass and seaweed beds and other soft-bottom habitats.

These ecosystems account for a third of the world's coastal and marine environments and provide breeding, nursing and feeding grounds for marine plants and animals, as well as food and resources vital to coastal populations' livelihoods.

Fisheries, coastline protection, tourism, recreation and aesthetic aspects are estimated to provide total potential yearly economic net benefits per square kilometer of healthy coral reefs alone in the region, ranging from \$23,100 to \$270,000, the news release said.

"This sector employs approximately 80 million people. The processing, marketing, distribution, and supply industries associated with fishing and aquaculture employ up to another 10 million people," Lim said.



The Asean's coastline and marine areas are expected to house close to 500 million people by 2050. The region also accounts for 17 percent of the world's fish production.

"While the seas may physically separate us, these bodies of water also help connect our islands, our lives and our cultures. People depend on these coastal and marine ecosystems for food, livelihood, and transportation, among others," Lim said.

She explained that islands are linked by the waters due to larval dispersal brought by ocean currents. Ocean currents can transport coral and fish larvae over great distances. The term "connectivity" refers to how this type of movement connects habitats.

The region's interconnectedness is also demonstrated by the movement of migratory birds traversing across the seas, and thereby connecting nations and regions.

This connectivity is exemplified by the Bangkóta design of the Philippines's Pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai. As explained by the visionary architect behind the Bangkóta, Royal Pineda and designer Budji Layug, it "is a living coral reef, pulsating with people, movement, activities, flora and water features; all functioning as one global ecosystem."

The Bangkóta is a representation of our deep connection with nature that dates back to prehistoric times, ACB said.

According to the Philippine Ambassador to the UAE Hjayceelyn M. Quintana, who opened the lecture, the Bangkóta is a metaphor for sustainability and is also a tribute to Filipinos all over the world, who manage to thrive wherever they are, despite the circumstances.

### **PHL as the center of the center of global marine biodiversity**

Endowed with two-thirds of the world's biodiversity, or 70 percent to 80 percent of plant and animal species, the Philippines is a treasure trove of the Asean region's marine biodiversity.

The Philippines, along with Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, make up the Coral Triangle, which has most of the world's coral reefs.

The Coral Triangle is a vital part of the region's marine environment and is the core of the worldwide distribution of reef-building corals, as it contains more than 75 percent of the world's coral reefs.

As the center of the Coral Triangle, the Philippines serves as an abode to 18 of the world's more than 67 species of seagrass, and to over 500 coral species, 2,500 reef fishes, and other marine biodiversity, the ACB news release said.

Part of the Coral Triangle is the Tubbataha Reef Natural Park (TRNP) in the Philippines. Tubbataha is the country's last remaining pristine seabird habitat where more than 30,000 seabirds breed. It also has the highest density of the world's whitetip reef sharks.

The TRNP was designated as a Unesco World Heritage Site; a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance; an East Asian-Australasian Flyway site; a Blue Park and Particularly Sensitive Sea Area; and an Asean Heritage Park.

### **Biodiversity conservation, a shared responsibility**

The most visible response in Asean to the need to safeguard marine biodiversity has been the creation of marine protected areas.

The Asean Heritage Parks (AHP) program is Asean's flagship initiative for promoting effective protected area management and contributing to the conservation of ecosystems and resources.

It recognizes the region's national parks and reserves for their uniqueness, ecological diversity and conservation values.



As the secretariat of the program, the ACB supports the AHPs by providing capacity enhancement activities, monitoring equipment, and law enforcement support to these outstanding protected areas in the region.

The ACB, the only Asean center hosted by the Philippines, was created by the Asean member-states to facilitate the conservation and protection of biodiversity and ecosystems that are connected to the lives of the Asean people.

Currently, there are 50 AHPs—nine of which are in the Philippines.

The AHPs in the Philippines are Mts. Iglit Baco National Park in Mindoro, Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park in Bukidnon, Mt. Malindang Natural Park in Misamis Occidental, Mt. Makiling Forest Reserve in Laguna, Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in Palawan, Mt. Hamiguitan Range Natural Park in Davao Oriental, Mt. Timpoong-Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument in Camiguin, and Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary in Agusan del Sur, the ACB news release said.

“Like what the BangkÓta says, man is nature. Nature and our rich biodiversity are part of our origin, our voyage, and our destination,” Lim said.

She added that the important connection between biodiversity and its contribution to our daily lives is a reminder of our role to protect it.

Image courtesy of ACB photo



# 'Government should include MSMEs in its climate-change agenda'

BYRIZAL RAOUL REYES DECEMBER 19, 2021

To help the country's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) confront the challenges of climate-change, the government must develop a bigger perspective of the total picture on the threats posed by unpredictable climate patterns.

Renato Redentor Constantino, executive director of the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), said MSMEs would have a hard time getting the assistance and resources of government agencies until they realize that the aspect of climate-change does not only involve disasters or the environment.

"Slow onset effects, such as rising seas, ocean acidification and the steady decline or increase of rainfall across decades, take place without the drama of calamities and body counts. But they are likely to bring the economy to its knees in the long run if we don't act fast," Constantino told the BusinessMirror in a recent interview on his views about the just concluded United Nations 26th Conference of the Parties conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

On the macroeconomic level, Constantino said resilience must be put on top of planning and must be urgently integrated into long-term development strategies.

He lamented that the economy is limited in using GDP as the sole yardstick of progress. Just like a lot of countries around the world, the Philippine economy has shown itself to be incapable of responding to non-financial external shocks, he said.

Moreover, he urged the Philippine scientific community to draw out plans to avoid future disruptions to the supply chain and enable the MSMEs to continue their operations despite the pandemic.

"Certainly this will not be the last pandemic we will encounter and in addition to pandemics more climate impacts should be anticipated," he said.

Constantino urged national agencies to cascade scientific climate research outcomes and analysis to provincial planners and local government units who can help craft strategies that channel MSME-tailored interventions.

Constantino said the MSMEs must also be included in the climate-change agenda because they are a vital cog in the economy, making up over 99 percent of the registered businesses in the Philippines.

Moreover, MSMEs also contributed close to 36 percent of the country's 2018 GDP, generating 5.7 million jobs, or 63.2 percent of the year's total employment.

"This needs to change, and we need to steadily measure our ability to enhance the country's protection against the impacts of the climate crisis while increasing productivity despite the constraints of climate-change by its positive impacts on MSMEs," Constantino said in an earlier conference.

Constantino lamented that the country is giving little opportunity to MSMEs develop low-carbon development products and services for the sector.

He said supporting MSMEs to develop green products will result in boosting the growth of the private sector, cooperatives and households.

Moreover, he added that retooling of labor in the MSME sector will benefit the workers as more job opportunities will be available to them.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/12/19/government-should-include-msmes-in-its-climate-change-agenda/>



# Protecting our biodiversity: A right step in the battle vs climate change

Published December 20, 2021, 12:05 AM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)



Editorial

The effects of climate change couldn't be more glaring as the country woke up with the ravages of Typhoon Odette. In some parts of Visayas and Mindanao, communication lines were cut, roads were destroyed, houses tumbled down like sandcastles. And again, calls for help resonated and Filipinos responded with volunteerism, especially as Christmas Day approaches.

The might of Typhoon Odette may not be as powerful as Yolanda, but something is alarming. The frequency and severity of typhoons such as this one is becoming a "regular" occurrence. How does this connect to climate change? In a study by William Holden and Shawn Marshall called "Climate Change and Typhoons in the Philippines," they wrote that there is a "strong scientific consensus that greenhouse gas emissions are causing climate change and that this is contributing to stronger typhoons due to higher sea surface temperatures and higher subsurface sea temperatures."

Stronger typhoons, such as what we witnessed with Odette, carry "more moisture, track differently, move faster, and will be aggravated by sea level rise." The Philippines, the authors noted, with its large and rapidly growing population, is "vulnerable to stronger typhoons and this vulnerability is exacerbated by localized environmental degradation." In short, we would face more Odette-type typhoons in the years to come.

But this scenario should not be faced with a defeatist attitude. The battle against climate change can't be won in one swoop. It takes a holistic approach that starts with looking after our environmental assets. If we protect our environment – the trees, mangroves, our flora and fauna, or in short, our biodiversity – it also protects us from the effects of climate change.

One of the notable efforts for the environment came out of the Senate recently when Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, sought for a revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act to strengthen this two-decade law in order to "address the growing scale and sophistication of wildlife crimes."

In the explanatory note of proposed bill, she said: "Strengthening wildlife protection is crucial to the Philippines, which is considered as one of the world's 17 mega-diverse or biodiversity-rich countries, and collectively hosts two-thirds of the earth's biodiversity and contain about 70 to 80 percent of the world's plant and animal species."



Villar related that the Philippines harbors one of the highest concentrations of unique wildlife species in the world. “We are a biodiversity hotspot with high levels of threats from habitat loss, invasive alien species, climate change, pollution, and overexploitation. Thus, this calls for us to take action on the protection of our wildlife because any damage or loss will cost too much for us.”

The proposed bill will have more “teeth” to combat illegal wildlife trade, which has become more rampant due to globalization. Villar noted that open borders and better transport infrastructure also permitted access of illegal wildlife trade syndicates to previously remote areas, while the internet gave unprecedented access to new markets.

So what’s the connection of protecting our biodiversity with climate change? This is just one of the many explanations: Once we protect the “homes” of our wildlife, we ensure that there are enough trees to absorb rainwater in the mountains, so that water wouldn’t need to flow in the lowlands. That lessens the destruction of property, and prevents the loss of lives.

We need all efforts to battle this catastrophe called climate change, and if a bill to save our wildlife and biodiversity is necessary to ensure that the next generation would be more protected, then all of us need to rally behind this right now.



# No to commercial fishing in municipal waters

By [Marit Stinus-Cabugon](#) December 20, 2021

THE [Philippines](#) has one of the longest coastlines in the world and, as a coastal nation, the country depends heavily on the sea as a source of food, livelihood and business opportunity. Alas, fish catch has been stagnating, if not declining, for decades. We have failed to take care of our marine environment with unsustainable fishing practices, degradation and destruction of fishing grounds and marine life habitat, indiscriminate land reclamation, ocean pollution and climate change impact on marine life everywhere, even beyond national borders and contested lines.

Officially, an estimated 1.36 million Filipinos were employed in fishing and aquaculture as of October 2021 but many more families likely depend on fishing as a source of food and as a means to augment meager incomes. Depletion of fish stock due to overfishing and marine environmental degradation have led to an increase in poverty in coastal communities, particularly among small fisherfolk who count among the poorest of the poor.

A measure of protection is afforded small-scale fishermen through the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998: municipal waters, extending up to 15 kilometers from the shore line, are for their exclusive use. Vessels bigger than 3 gross tons are barred from fishing within municipal waters while restrictions on the type of fishing gear are imposed as well.

However, last October, Rep. [Pablo John](#) "PJ" Garcia, of [Cebu](#)'s third district, filed House Bill 7853 amending the Fisheries Code's Section 18. The amendment, if passed, would grant local government units (LGUs) the authority to permit "small and medium commercial fishing vessels to operate within the [10.1-] to [15-] kilometer area from the shoreline in municipal waters" and even within 10.1 kilometers from the shoreline" (HB 7853).

The proposed bill would open municipal waters — until now reserved for fishing vessels less than 3 gross tons and using passive gear — to commercial fishing boats up to 150 gross tons and using active gear. Congressman Garcia believes that opening municipal waters to commercial fishing vessels "ensures that the various economic gains brought about by fishing may be experienced by more local government units, fishers and families nationwide" (HB 7853 explanatory note).

It is difficult to see what are the economic gains referred to considering the impoverished state of fisherfolk and laborers on fishing vessels and knowing about the sorry state of the marine environment. Sure, the value of the catch has increased but this may be due to factors, such as the widening gap between demand and supply, and increasing cost of fishing.

Then there is illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Some 50 experts gathered by the [Bureau of Fisheries](#) and Aquatic Resources and the [United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAid) got together in order to attempt to quantify IUU fishing in the Philippines. They estimated that catches from illegal fishing range from 516,000 to 766,000 metric tons annually. Catch from unreported fishing was harder to determine — the estimates ranged from 274,000 to 422,000 metric tons ([MT](#)) a year. For perspective, the [total](#) reported, registered volume of marine catch (fisheries, excluding aquaculture and inland municipal catch) in 2019 was 1,900,000 MT. Total IUU catch is estimated to comprise the equivalent of 40 to 60 percent of what municipal and commercial fishers net legally from the sea.





In other words, IUU fishing in the Philippines is big business. Economic gains for some. But for the rest of the nation, it means worse overfishing and faster depletion of the already dwindling fish stock. That's exactly why some practices have been banned by law and restrictions imposed on who can fish where, how, when and what. Fish stock must have time to replenish, marine life needs time to reproduce and recover. This is a matter of food security and therefore national security.

"IUU fishing has replaced piracy as the leading global maritime security threat," Admiral [Karl L. Schulz](#), the commandant of the [US Coast Guard](#) said at the Indo-[Pacific](#) Maritime Security Exchange (Sept. 8 to 9, 2021). There might not be much that the Philippines can do about large-scale fishing — legal or illegal — by foreign fishing vessels in international waters but we can do more to protect the fishing grounds closer to home. The gathering of experts to determine the extent of IUU fishing was an important step. Congressman Garcia was ill-advised when he filed HB 7853. While fish catch in Central [Visayas](#) may have shown an upward trend recently, we need to stop overfishing, ocean pollution, IUU fishing and destruction of marine life habitat to ensure abundant fish catch for future generations.

We also need to prepare for the effects of climate change on coastal communities and the marine environment. These are the areas where the good congressman must focus his attention, urgently. It is a matter of long-term economic viability of coastal communities and the fisheries sector — and it is a matter of national security.



# From the Siau scops-owl to the Cuban kite: A global hunt aims to find 10 birds long feared extinct

By Jeevan Ravindran, CNN  
Updated 1626 GMT (0026 HKT) December 19, 2021



The top 10 "most wanted" bird species.

**(CNN)** If you've never heard of the Siau scops-owl, there's a good reason why -- and it's not because your knowledge of [birds](#) isn't quite up to scratch. Nobody has seen the elusive [owl](#) since 1866, and it's not the only such missing species.

Researchers, conservationists and birdwatchers all over the world are being called upon for a new effort to find the top 10 "most wanted" bird species, which haven't been spotted in over a decade but still haven't been classed as extinct.

A joint effort by conservationist group Re:wild, the American Bird Conservancy and BirdLife International, with data support from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and its birdwatching platform eBird, the "Search for Lost Birds" hopes to locate these apparently vanished creatures.

The birds in question were last seen and documented at a number of different times, ranging from the Siau scops-owl last glimpsed in 1866 in Indonesia, to the Cuban kite last observed in 2010 in Cuba.

They also span five continents, with four hailing from Asia, two from Africa, two from South America, one from North America and one from Oceania. India is the only country with more than one bird on the list, with the Himalayan quail, last sighted in 1877, and the Jerdon's courser, which was witnessed much more recently in 2009.

"We really want to find these species, which are completely overlooked and ignored, and turn them into species that are a focus for conservation efforts," Barney Long, Re:wild's senior director for conservation strategies, told CNN.



The Siau scops-owl was last spotted in 1866 in Indonesia.



"Obviously, for these 10, we really hope they'll all be found," he added. "That might not be the case -- we might be too late for some of them, but we really hope we'll find them all."

The search will begin with two expeditions in the next year focusing on the Siau scops-owl, which has only ever been documented once, and the Madagascan dusky tetraka, which was last documented in 1999. The organizations' efforts will also be aided by the eBird platform, which has over 700,000 registered users who can submit sightings.

Although all of the species are classified as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN), the team is optimistic, especially as the Indonesian black-browed babbler, which had not been documented since 1848, was [found again](#) in February this year.

The "Search for Lost Birds" is an extension of re:wild's "[Search for Lost Species](#)" program, which has rediscovered eight of its 25 most wanted species since its launch in 2017.



# Families affected by 'Odette' climb to 181.5K: NDRRMC

By Priam Nepomuceno December 19, 2021, 12:55 pm



**DESTRUCTION.** The devastation left by Typhoon Odette in Surigao del Norte in this aerial shot taken by the Philippine Coast Guard Aviation Force on Friday (Dec. 17, 2021). The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Sunday said "Odette" has affected 181,500 families in 2,209 barangays hit by the typhoon. *(Photo courtesy of PCG)*

**MANILA** – The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Sunday said 181,500 families residing in 2,209 barangays were affected by the onslaught of Typhoon Odette (international name Rai).

In its 10 a.m. update, the NDRRMC said these barangays are located in Mimaropa, Regions 5 (Bicol), 6 (Western Visayas), 8 (Eastern Visayas), 10 (Northern Mindanao), 11 (Davao), 12 (Soccsksargen), 13 (Caraga), and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

It said 2,861 evacuation centers are now aiding 107,816 families or 427,903 individuals with the remainder being sheltered by relatives and friends.

As of Sunday, the NDRRMC reported four confirmed deaths due to "Odette" while another 27 are still being validated.

The national council is also confirming reports of three injured and one missing.

The NDRRMC also said 135 areas in Mimaropa, Regions 7, 8, 10, and the BARMM are still experiencing communication outages.

"Odette" has left 3,612 partially damaged and 171 totally damaged houses in Mimaropa, Western Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, Caraga, and the BARMM, it added.

## Donation drive

In a Facebook post on Sunday, the Office of Civil Defense said it started a donation campaign as part of ongoing efforts to help communities and families severely affected by "Odette".

"Bilang pagtugon sa mga tawag at pagpapahayag ng kagustuhan ng mga kababayan natin na magbigay at magpadala ng tulong sa mga nasalanta ng Bagyong Odette, activated na uli ang ating mga donation line(s) (at) focal persons(s). (In response to calls and pledges of support from our countrymen who expressed willingness to send help to those affected by Odette's onslaught, we have activated our donation lines and focal persons)," the OCD said.



For in-kind donations, interested parties are advised to call the OCD at 0917-825-57-43 or email at the [ndrrmc.donations@ocd.gov.ph](mailto:ndrrmc.donations@ocd.gov.ph) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development at the 0927-436-10-39.

Priority needs, it said, are the following supplies: food, hygiene materials, shelter materials, shelter repair materials, and water.

Those interested in making cash donations are advised to deposit them through the Development Bank of the Philippine branch in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City (Philippine pesos deposits: 000-00149-435-3 and US dollar donations: 01-5-00047-435-4)

"Paalala lang po, mag-iingat sa mga bogus solicitation (Reminder, please be careful versus bogus solicitation)," the OCD said.

In its 5 a.m. weather bulletin Sunday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said "Odette" is already outside the Philippines area of responsibility.

It is located 320 kilometers northwest of Pag-asa Island in West Philippine Sea (WPS) with maximum sustained winds of 195 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of up to 240 kph. **(PNA)**



# NegOcc to declare state of calamity after 'Odette' onslaught

By Nanette Guadalquiver December 18, 2021, 6:38 pm



**RESCUE.** Personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard in Negros Occidental rescue residents in some areas of Kabankalan City and Ilog town in the southern part of the province after they were stranded by floods brought by heavy rains during the onslaught of Typhoon Odette, on Friday (Dec. 17, 2021). On Saturday, Governor Eugenio Jose Lacson said he is set to declare a state of calamity in the entire province, with the approval of the Provincial Board during its regular session on (Dec. 21). *(Photo courtesy of PCG-Negros Occidental)*

**BACOLOD CITY** – Negros Occidental Governor Eugenio Jose Lacson said on Saturday he is set to declare a state of calamity in the entire province, following the onslaught of Typhoon Odette that claimed the lives of at least eight Negrenses and displaced more than 93,000 others in the past two days.

“We will be declaring a state of calamity for the whole province. This will be approved (by the Provincial Board) on Tuesday (December 21). What does this mean is, we can use the Quick Response Fund that the local government units can use to address the situation we are facing,” Lacson said in a radio interview.

Among the eight casualties, three have been reported in Moises Padilla town while one each in the municipalities of Manapla, Isabela, Binalbagan as well as in cities of La Carlota and San Carlos.

“Those that I mentioned are only the ones that I can confirm. The rest are not yet confirmed,” the governor said when asked regarding reports that several casualties have also been recorded in Sibalay City.

As of 6 a.m. on Saturday, Lacson said some 93,696 individuals across the province have been evacuated, the majority of whom are in southern Negros, particularly in the sixth district, including areas in Kabankalan City and Ilog town.

“Some of the evacuees have returned home especially those in the north, but in the south, there are still many left in evacuation centers,” he said.

He added that food packs from the Department of Social Welfare and Development have been distributed to affected residents in La Castellana, Isabela, Moises Padilla, and Ilog towns; and Kabankalan City.

Power restoration activities are ongoing across Negros Occidental, which has been plunged into darkness after electrical lines were toppled by strong winds brought by "Odette" from Thursday night to early Friday morning.



In a statement, the Central Negros Electric Cooperative said the typhoon caused damage to its power lines and its workers are doing their best to restore power in all areas.

The power supply was restored in several areas in the municipality of Murcia and the cities of Talisay, Silay, and Bago on Friday.

The Northern Negros Electric Cooperative said in a Facebook post its personnel are working round-the-clock to fast-track the repair of damaged lines and resume power supply as soon as possible.

As of Saturday, portions of Manapla town and Victorias City are partially energized while the neighboring E.B. Magalona town's Feeder 2 is also partially restored.

In southern Negros, the hardest-hit in the province, teams of the Negros Occidental Electric Cooperative are assessing the damage and will prioritize the repair of 69kv lines to energize the substations, its Director Rolito Espinosa said in a Facebook post on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Binalbagan Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office has confirmed that the two missing fishermen from the town's Barangay Enclaro were rescued off Cauayan town in the afternoon of December 16.

Joevel Tipon, 29; and Noel De la Cruz, 19, who ventured at sea on Dec. 14 were picked up by responders from Binalbagan after receiving information that they were already safe. **(PNA)**

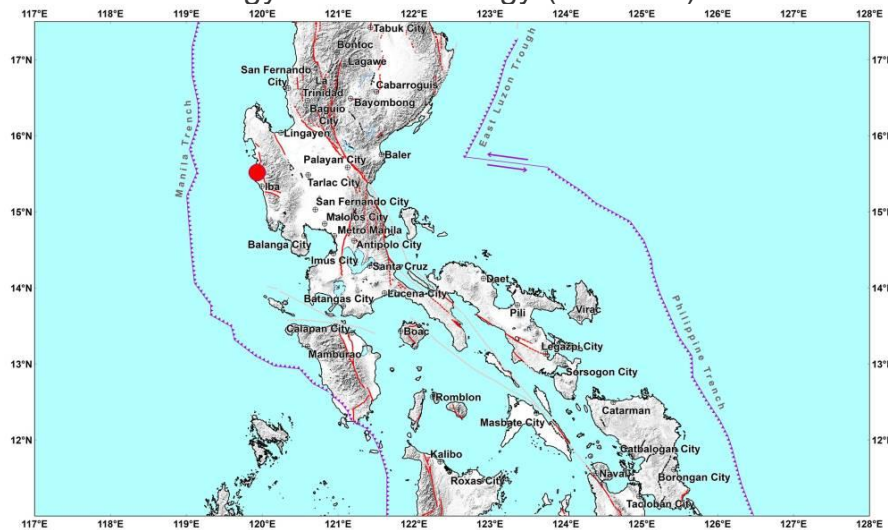


# Magnitude 4.7 quake hits Zambales; Intensity II felt in parts of Metro Manila – Phivolcs

Published December 19, 2021, 3:24 PM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)

A 4.7-magnitude earthquake hit Zambales at around 2:27 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 19, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).



The epicenter of the earthquake was traced 9 kilometers (km) northwest of Masinloc, Zambales at a shallow depth of 29 km.

Phivolcs said it was felt as a “moderately strong” tremor at Intensity IV in Masinloc, Zambales

Meanwhile, it was weak at Intensity III in Iba, Zambales; Angeles City; and Mabalacat City, Pampanga.

The quake was “slightly felt” at Intensity II in Palauig, and Olongapo City, Zambales; Quezon City; Makati City, Malabon City; and Mandaluyong City.

Phivolcs’ instruments also measured the quake at Intensity II in Olongapo City, Zambales, and Intensity I in Marikina City; Plaridel, Bulacan; Guagua, Pampanga; Dagupan City, Pangasinan; Gapan City, Nueva Ecija.

Phivolcs said the earthquake was tectonic in origin, which means it was caused by the movement of an active fault near the area.

It said damage to property or aftershocks due to this earthquake was not expected.(Charie Mae F. Abarca)

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/12/19/magnitude-4-6-quake-hits-zambales-intensity-ii-in-quezon-city-makati-city-olongapo-city-phivolcs/>



20 DECEMBER 2021, MONDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **PUBLICATIONS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, 1100 Quezon City  
Tel. Nos. (632) 8929-6626 to 98; (632) 8755-3300/8755-3330  
Website: www.denr.gov.ph

**DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**  
No. 2021-32

DEC 15 2021

**SUBJECT: CREATION OF THE METROPOLITAN ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICES OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION (NCR)**

Pursuant to the good governance principle of bringing the government closer to the people, this Department Administrative Order (DAO) is hereby issued.

**SECTION 1. Legal Bases.** This DAO is being issued pursuant to the provisions of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1152, series of 1977, or the Philippine Environment Code; Republic Act (RA) 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004; RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999; RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000; Executive Order (EO) No. 192, Series of 1987 or the Reorganization Act of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); Title III, Book IV Ch. 1er 3 Section 12 of E.O. No. 292 of the Administrative Code of 1987; and E.O. No. 316, Series of 2004 re Directing a Strategic Review of the Operations and Organizations of the Executive Branch and Providing Options and Incentives for Government Employees Who May be Affected by the Rationalization of the Functions and Agencies of the Executive Branch.

**SECTION 2. Basic Policy.** It is the policy of the State to ensure the effective implementation of environmental laws in urban areas particularly in the NCR to protect the health and safety of the people therein.

**SECTION 3. Objectives.** This DAO is being issued to:

- Intensify the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations in the NCR;
- Strengthen implementation of solid waste management in the NCR by providing necessary technical assistance to Local Government Units (LGUs);
- Strengthen the implementation of the rehabilitation and restoration programs, projects and activities, in compliance with the Writ of Continuing Mandamus for Manila Bay issued by the Supreme Court on December 18, 2008.

**SECTION 4. Scope and Coverage.** This Order only covers enforcement and coordinating functions and does not include regulatory or permitting functions nor quasi-judicial functions, such as administrative adjudication. The DENR-NCR Regional Office shall continue to exercise all the functions enumerated under Section 21 of EO 192 and EO 292, including all quasi-judicial functions such as administrative adjudication; while the EMB-NCR shall continue to exercise its functions under RA 9275 or the Clean Water Act, RA 8749 or the Clean Air Act, RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, RA 8999 or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes Act, and PD 1586 or the Environmental Impact Statement System.

The Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) shall continue to exercise its functions under RA 4850, as amended.

**SECTION 5. Definition of Terms.**

- Implementation** - The process of putting a legal provision, decision or plan into effect; execution.
- Enforcement** - The act of compelling observance of or compliance with a law, rule, or obligation (as defined in Section 4.8 of DAO 2021-28). It includes surveillance and intelligence gathering, the initial measure called apprehension as defined under Section 1 of DAO 1997-32 and other relevant regulations, valid warrantless arrests and searches, and the seizure of evidence as defined under Section 4.11 of DAO 2021-28 done by virtue of a search warrant issued by the court or on the occasion of a valid warrantless arrest or warrantless search. It is a type of implementation which is not a quasi-judicial function.
- Surveillance** - close watch kept over someone or something (as by a detective); close observation, especially of a suspected criminal, either physical or virtual (through the Internet).
- Quasi-judicial function** - the action of public administrative officers or bodies, who are required to investigate facts, or ascertain the existence of facts, hold hearings, and draw conclusions from them, as a basis for their official action and to exercise discretion of a judicial nature (as defined in *Monetary Board et al vs. Philippine Veterans Bank*, G.R. No. 189571, January 21, 2015). It includes administrative adjudication through seizure and confiscation, proceedings under DAO 1997-32 and other relevant regulations.
- Monitoring** - Observing and checking progress or quality over a period of time.

**SECTION 6. Metropolitan Environmental Offices (MEOs).** Hereby created are four (4) MEOs in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that shall operate within the NCR divided into four (4) zones: North, South, East, and West, as indicated in the enclosed map (Annex A).

**6.1 Organizational Structure.** The organizational structure shall be according to the enclosed chart (Annex B).

**6.1.1 Supervising Officials.** The Secretary shall designate a supervising Undersecretary for the four (4) MEOs, One (1) Assistant Secretary for each MEO and one (1) Director II for each MEO.

**6.1.2 Staff Composition.** Each MEO shall be composed of sufficient number of staff for its operations pursuant to the Organizational Structure as approved by the Secretary.

**6.2 Powers and Functions of the MEOs.**

**A. Enforcement**

- The MEOs shall serve as the frontline units for the enforcement of ENR laws, rules, and regulations in NCR and shall coordinate with Environmental Law Enforcement Protection Service in accordance with Section 5.1.2 of DAO 2021-28.
- Present evidence to officers or bodies exercising quasi-judicial functions as defined herein and turn over relevant documents to the appropriate authorities while maintaining proper chain of custody.

**B. Coordination and Capacity Building**

- Coordinate with DILG, LGUs, MMDA, and private adopters/partners for:
  - the sustained clean-up of rivers, creeks, and other water bodies; and
  - prevention and closure of open dump sites.
- Initiate means, programs, and projects to capacitate LGUs in order for the latter to:
  - Properly dispose solid wastes and exercise the functions of the DENR enumerated in Section 8, paragraph (c) to (h) of RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, concurrently and in coordination with the EMB-NCR
  - Monitor water quality of creeks, rivers, esteros, and other water bodies within their jurisdiction pursuant to Section 20 of RA 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act. In the meantime, shall coordinate with the EMB-NCR and LLDA for the transition

of water quality monitoring functions through the MEOs.

- Coordinate with the DOH, MWSS, the Concessionaires, MMDA, and LGUs to facilitate the completion of the sewerage system of the NCR and achieve international standards of sanitation in the entire region;
  - Provide technical assistance to the MMDA and LGUs for the conceptualization of a plan for the long-term solution of pollution of rivers and esteros in Metro Manila within the context of the regional development plan, and to coordinate with experts, NGOs, and funding agencies for the said purpose;
  - Institutionalize the existing mechanisms of the implementation of the Writ of Continuing Mandamus for Manila Bay;
  - Carry out the directions of the Manila Bay Task Force;
  - Provide the LGUs with technical assistance, trainings and a continuing capability-building program to prepare them to undertake full administration of the air quality management and regulation within their territorial jurisdiction pursuant to Section 36 of RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act after proper orientation from the EMB-NCR.
- C. Others.**
- Perform other functions as may be directed.

**SECTION 7. Funding.** Budgetary requirements for the initial operationalization of the MEOs shall be sourced from Central Office Funds, to be augmented with funds allocated for the DENR NCR and EMB-NCR pertinent to the operationalization of the MEOs, subject to the submission and approval of a Work and Financial Plan (WFP) and to budgeting, accounting and auditing rules and regulations. For subsequent years, additional funding shall be allocated.

**SECTION 8. Transitory Provision**

- All real and personal properties, documents, records and other papers which are kept and/or managed by the existing DENR-NCR, North, South, East, and West Field Offices, shall be turned over to the MEOs.
- All fulltime personnel currently assigned and/or designated to the existing DENR-NCR, North, South, East, and West Field Offices shall continue to serve as staff of the MEOs.
- Any other personnel of DENR offices, bureaus and attached agencies may be detailed or transferred with the MEOs through the issuance of a Special Order.
- The Directors and Assistant Secretaries of the MEOs, in consultation with the Human Resources and Development Services, shall formulate a proposed staffing pattern of the MEOs, for submission to the Department of Budget and Management for approval within three (3) months upon approval of this Order.

**SECTION 9. Separability Clause.** If any provision of this Order shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the other portions or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

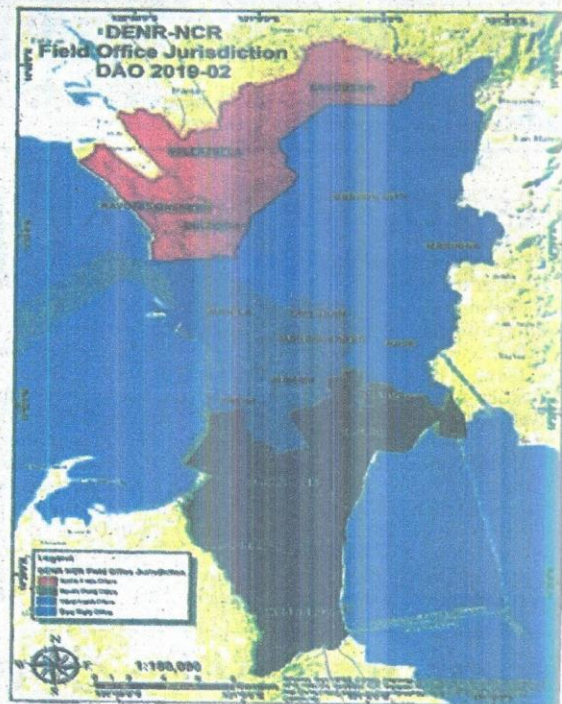
**SECTION 10. Repealing Clause.** All Orders, and other similar issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 11. Effectivity.** This Order takes effect fifteen days (15) after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgement of receipt of a copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR), UP Law Center.

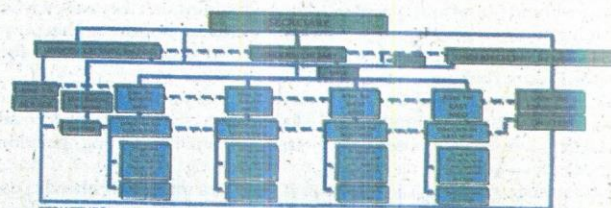
ROY A. CIMATU  
Secretary



ANNEX A



ANNEX B



Metropolitan Environmental Offices (MEOs)

20 DECEMBER 2021, MONDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DOH logs 203 new Covid-19 cases, lowest since May 2020

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor [December 19, 2021, 5:29 pm](#)



(File photo)

**MANILA** – The Department of Health (DOH) on Sunday logged 203 new Covid-19 cases, the country's lowest single-day infection since May 2020 due to the failure of 41 laboratories to submit data.

The DOH said the figure pushed the total case tally to 2,837,577.

"The low case report is due to the suspension of the operations four laboratories on Dec. 17, 2021 and failure to submit data from 41 laboratories to the Covid-19 Document Repository System (CDRS) because of Typhoon Odette," the DOH said.

Based on data in the last 14 days, the 45 laboratories contribute, on average, 15.4 percent of samples tested and 1.8 percent of positive individuals.

Meanwhile, the active cases declined further to 9,729 after the DOH reported 395 new recoveries. The country now has 2,777,109 recoveries.

About 3,379 of the active cases are mild, 485 are asymptomatic, 380 are critical, 1,800 are severe, and 3,379 are moderate.

"Of the 203 reported cases today, 186 or 92 percent occurred within the recent 14 days -- December 6 to 19, 2021. The top regions with cases in the recent two weeks were NCR (National Capital Region) with 48 or 26 percent, Region 4-A (Calabarzon) with 37 or 20 percent, and Region 6 (Western Visayas) with 22 or 12 percent," the DOH said.

The department also recorded 64 new deaths, pushing the country's Covid-19 fatalities to 50,739.

"Of the 64 reported deaths, only two or 3 percent occurred in December 2021, 18 or 28 percent in November 2021, 29 or 45 percent in October 2021, 10 or 16 percent in September 2021, four or 6 percent in August 2021, and one or 2 percent in April 2021 due to late encoding of death information to COVIDKaya," it said.

The DOH said this issue is being coordinated with the epidemiology and surveillance units to ensure information is up to date.

According to DOH data on Dec. 12, only 0.9 percent of 24,120 who were tested turned out positive for Covid-19.



"About two duplicates were removed from the total case count, and one of this is a recovery. Also, there were 179 cases that have tested negative and have been removed from the total case count as they are recoveries," it said. "Moreover, 62 cases that were previously tagged as recoveries were reclassified as deaths after final validation."

To date, 22 percent of 3,600 intensive care unit beds, 23 percent of 19,400 isolation beds, 11 percent of 12,400 ward beds, and 11 percent of 2,000 ventilators are utilized by patients with Covid-19 nationwide.

Meanwhile, 23 percent of 1,300 intensive care unit beds, 21 percent of 4,500 isolation beds, 16 percent of 3,700 ward beds, and 13 percent of 1,000 ventilators dedicated to patients with Covid-19 are in use in the NCR. **(PNA)**



## 203 cases recorded as Odette downs 41 COVID-19 labs

[Mayen Jaymalin](#) - The Philippine Star December 20, 2021 | 12:00am



The DOH attributed the decline in the number of daily cases to the suspension of operations of four laboratories and the failure of 41 laboratories to submit data to the COVID-19 Document Repository System as a result of the onslaught of Typhoon Odette.

Release / Chinese Embassy in Manila

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) recorded 203 new COVID-19 cases yesterday, bringing to 2,837,577 the total number of confirmed cases nationwide since the start of the pandemic in March last year.

The DOH attributed the decline in the number of daily cases to the suspension of operations of four laboratories and the failure of 41 laboratories to submit data to the COVID-19 Document Repository System as a result of the onslaught of Typhoon Odette.

The 45 laboratories contribute to 15.4 percent of samples tested and 1.8 percent of positive individuals.

The new daily caseload figure also brought the number of active cases nationwide down to less than 10,000.

Active cases stand at 9,729, while the number of those who recovered from the infection jumped to 2,777,109 with the inclusion of 395 newly recorded recoveries.

Additional 64 deaths pushed to 50,739 the total number of COVID-related fatalities.

Only two of the 64 deaths occurred this month.



**#OneDENR**

**Covid-19  
Situation and Response**



# DOH COVID-19 CASE BULLETIN # 645

## DISYEMBRE 19, 2021

Para sa kumpletong detalye at impormasyon, bisitahin lamang ang aming pampublikong site: <https://ncovtracker.doh.gov.ph/>

PORSYENTO NG AKTIBONG KASO

# 0.3%

TOTAL NG AKTIBONG KASO  
9,729

PORSYENTO NG GUMALING

# 97.9%

TOTAL NG GUMALING  
2,777,109

PORSYENTO NG NAMATAY

# 1.79%

TOTAL NG NAMATAY  
50,739

MGA BAGONG KASO **203**

MGA BAGONG GUMALING **395**

MGA BAGONG NAMATAY **64**

KABUANG BILANG NG KASO **2,837,577**

### MGA NAGPOSITIBO HULING DISYEMBRE 17

DATOS NGAYONG DISYEMBRE 19  
AYON SA REPORTS NOONG DISYEMBRE 17

# 0.8%

PORSYENTO NG MGA  
NAGPOSITIBO

# 28,823

BILANG NG  
TINEST

HALOS  
**42.9%**  
ANG MILD AT  
ASYMPTOMATIC  
NA KASO!

**SANITIZE ANG  
KAMAY AT IWASAN  
ANG KULOB NA LUGAR**

### KABUANG PILIPINAS

PUNO NA BA ANG ATING MGA OSPITAL?

ICU BEDS (3.6K TOTAL BEDS)  
 **22%** Utilized

ISOLATION BEDS (19.4K TOTAL BEDS)  
 **23%** Utilized

WARD BEDS (12.4K TOTAL BEDS)  
 **11%** Utilized

VENTILATORS (3.0K TOTAL VENTILATORS)  
 **11%** Utilized

### NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

PUNO NA BA ANG ATING MGA OSPITAL?

ICU BEDS (1.3K TOTAL BEDS)  
 **23%** Utilized

ISOLATION BEDS (4.6K TOTAL BEDS)  
 **21%** Utilized

WARD BEDS (3.7K TOTAL BEDS)  
 **16%** Utilized

VENTILATORS (1.0K TOTAL VENTILATORS)  
 **13%** Utilized

### KALAGAYAN NG MGA AKTIBONG KASO

485 Asymptomatic

3,685 Mild

3,379 Moderate

1,800 Severe

380 Critical



## UPDATE AND MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Mahalaga na kung lalabas man sa inyong mga tahanan ay **laging nakasuot ng maayos ang face masks**, at may dalang alcohol. Kung maaari, umiwas din sa mga matataong lugar, o kaya ay panatilihin ang physical distancing. Kasabay nito ang ating pagiging alisto sa mga sintomas. Sa oras na makaramdam ay agad makipag-ugnayan sa **BHERTS** o sa **One COVID Referral Center** na maabot sa **1555, (02)886-505-00, 0915-777-7777, o sa 0919-977-3333**, para sa karampatang gabay.

Para sa iba pang pangangailangang medikal, puntahan ang <http://bit.ly/DOHTelemedicine> upang malaman kung papaano maabot ang serbisyo ng ating **Telemedicine Service Providers**, at ang <http://bit.ly/DOHHospitalHotlines> para maabot ang ating mga ospital sa lalong mabilis na panahon.



Ihahanap ka namin ng lugar para mag-isolate o magpagamot, tumawag lang sa sumusunod:

SMART: 0919 977 3333  
GLOBE: 0915 777 7777  
TEL NO: (02) 886 505 00



May tanong ukol sa COVID-19?

I-chat na si KIRA!

VIBER: Kira Kontra COVID by DOH

MESSANGER: Department of Health PH

KONTRACOVID PH: [kontracovid.ph](https://kontracovid.ph)



Manatiling ligtas!

I-download ang StaySafe App

O Gamiting ang WEBAPP  
at pumunta sa [Staysafe.ph](https://Staysafe.ph)

MAYROON PANG KATANUNGAN? SUMANGGUNI LAMANG SA SUMUSUNOD:

OfficialDOHgov

@DOHgovph

[doh.gov.ph](https://doh.gov.ph)

(02) 894-COVID / 1555



20 DECEMBER 2021, MONDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# VLOGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Please click this link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1rCisC7EJQ&ab\\_channel=enr.berto](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1rCisC7EJQ&ab_channel=enr.berto)

#ManilaBayUpdate #DolomiteBeach #BattleForManilaBay

BUMUBULWAK NG MALAKAS! PANIBAGONG TAGAS?

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maraming salamat po, keep safe everyone  
[#SaveManilaBay](#)

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[#SaveManilaBay](#)

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MANILA

LIVE HAPPENING NOW MANILA BAY TIDAY 12-19-2021

3,531 views • Streamed live 15 hours ago

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