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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Biodiversity protection highlighted in forum

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

April 24, 2021

BIODIVERSITY protection and conservation were the highlights of the online forum hosted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Saturday, April 24, 2021, in support of the annual celebration of Earth Day.

The online forum underscored the importance of biodiversity protection and conservation and the benefits of responsible mining.

DENR Central Luzon deputy director for management service Arturo Fadriquela said more than being an environmental event, Earth Day's celebration was fundamental in establishing a local movement to combat biodiversity loss, climate change and other environmental problems.

"Biodiversity loss, climate change, air and water pollution, plastic pollution, and forest degradation have broken our natural systems, leading to new and fatal diseases. These painfully remind us of the harm we've caused to our environment, and challenge us at the same time to bring back the integrity of our environment," Moreno said.

Earth Day is commemorated every April 22 of each year to promote clean living and a healthy and sustainable habitat for people and wildlife.

This year, the theme, "Doing our Fair Share to Restore the Earth," centers on promoting natural processes, emerging green technologies and innovative thinking that can restore the world's ecosystems. It also calls for our collective responsibility to protect and save this only livable planet in the solar system.

Fadriquela noted that restoring and replenishing the environment into its healthy state is a necessity.

He challenged participants, particularly Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Ambassadors in Central Luzon, to spread awareness in schools and local communities and to motivate people to adopt ways for sustainable living.

"Plant trees, conserve water and energy, reduce, reuse and recycle your wastes are some simple and practical ways we can do to restore our planet, after all the earth is our collective responsibility," Fadriquela added.

The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970 in the United States, where more than 20 million people gathered together to push government institutions to legislate laws that promote a clean and safe living environment, thus protecting the Earth on local, state and national levels.

Apart from this virtual forum, the DENR has also put up a booth dubbed as "Community Plantree" in its regional office, where 130 seedlings of avocado, sampaloc, duhat, mangga, rambutan, guyabano, bignai, narra, fire tree, molave and bitaog seedlings were given free to residents of nearby community to promote urban greening and environmental stability and address issue of food security amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project is inspired by the famous "community pantry" movement all over the country, where people are allowed to donate and get food for free.

Climate Reality PH joins DOF, CCC in Earth Day call to stop plastic pollution

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on April 24, 2021



Climate Change Commission Facebook video screengrab

QUEZON CITY, April 24 (PIA) -- The Climate Reality Project Philippines joined the Department of Finance, Climate Change Commission, and other partners in celebrating Earth Day 2021 through the webcast "PINASiglang Mundo," which highlighted the country's campaign against single-use plastics.

The Earth Day webcast featured Climate Reality Leaders and their initiatives and commitments to help restore the Earth through waste management solutions.

Climate Reality Leader and House Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda hosted a special episode of "Stories for a Better Normal: Pandemic and Climate Change Pathways," where she talked with several lawmakers on current discussions on the bill pending at the House of Representatives to ban single-use plastics nationwide.

During the webcast, Legarda emphasized that the lessons from pandemic recovery must be aligned with how climate action must be pursued, noting the important role of local stakeholders.

"The response must address underlying inequities in society affecting the capacity of local actors to adapt even as they stand on the frontlines of climate change, including marginalized communities, indigenous peoples, women and children, and youth. Local planning and investments can help ensure that the best information is shared, resources are made available, and the best policies are enacted," she said.

Featured on the segment #WalangPlastikan Challenge, Climate Reality Leader Aimee Oliveros shared how her zero-waste store called Re-Store MNL has accepted the challenge of eliminating plastic waste into its store operations.

Oliveros said that the re-fill system of Re-Store MNL was borne out of her advocacy to help address plastic pollution in the country, noting that the rising demand for products like alcohol, hand soaps, and other cleaning products during the pandemic has led to more plastics ending up in landfills and the oceans.

"Since we started last year, more than 1,458 plastic containers were diverted away from the landfills and the oceans," Oliveros proudly shared, noting that there should be more stores in the country implementing the re-fill system.

Aside from the re-fill system, Oliveros said she also spearheads a monthly plastic collection drive in her community in Parañaque. All the plastic items collected are donated to recycling facilities.

Climate Reality Leaders Janice Dugan, Ma. Adavieve Mella Lasam, Joshua Toquero, Marco Andrew Silveron, Vincent Cotoron, Noralene Uy, Kiko Velhagen, and Andrea Go, meanwhile, were featured in the My Earth Day Pledge segment of the webcast.

Dugan, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager of First Gen Corporation, said she commits to forge collaborative pathways to a decarbonized and regenerative country. "Through our Create for the Climate Program, we commit to educating our stakeholders to the impacts of plastics to our environment and encourage them to take climate actions and support initiatives to address these problems," she added.

Lasam, Founder of Upcycle Philippines, joined the call to end plastic pollution. "Upcycle Philippines fosters awareness on upcycling as a system for circularity in keeping with the principles of cradle to cradle, which secures material health, material re-utilization, social fairness, and water and carbon management," she said as she explains the thrusts of her organization.

Uy, Trans-Disciplinary Action Research Project Manager at the National Resilience said that her organization commits to strengthening partnerships with local government units, national government, academe and scientific institutions, CSOs, and communities to address climate and disaster risks and build resilience.

Silveron and Cotoron, both working at the regional offices of the Environmental Management Bureau, pledged to be more deliberate in manifesting and sharing their mission to "protect, restore, and enhance environmental quality" in the country.

Toquero, Program Supervisor of Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines, on other hand, said he is working with different organizations such as Lions Club and Kalikasan Leadership and Social Support in raising awareness on the significance of environmental protection and waste management.

Velhagen and Go, representing the Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Inc., pledged to promote sustainable living by eating a more plant-based diet, consuming energy efficiently, and avoiding single-use plastics.

The painstaking work of the government, private business sector, and civil society in addressing plastic pollution in the country will continue after the webcast, according to Nazrin Castro, Branch Manager of the Climate Reality Project Philippines.

"I am counting on everyone, especially on the ability of the youth, to continue, cultivate, and promote more initiatives that will help restore the Earth," she told the participants during her closing remarks for the event. (PIA NCR)



DENR sets up 'community plantree'



COMMUNITY PLANTREE. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Central Luzon has put up a seedling booth dubbed as 'Community Plantree' in front of its regional office in support of the International Earth Day 2021 celebration on Thursday and Friday. (DENR)

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

April 24, 2021

TAKING inspiration from community pantries springing up all over the country, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Luzon has put up a seedling booth dubbed as "Community Plantree" in front of its regional office.

Instead of goods, the DENR is giving away free seedlings in support of the International Earth Day 2021 celebration on Thursday, April 22, 2021.

Some 130 seedlings of avocado, sampaloc, duhat, mangga, rambutan, guyabano, bignai, narra, fire tree, molave and bitaog were given free to residents of nearby community in Pampanga to promote urban greening and environmental stability and address issue of food security amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project is inspired by the famous "community pantry" movement all over the country, where people are allowed to donate and get food for free. The DENR hopes that with the renewed interest in community gardening amidst the pandemic, people can find time planting more trees aside from ornamental plants.



EO 130 seen leading to lifting of open-pit mining ban

By: [Karl R. Ocampo](#) - Reporter / [@kocampoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:05 AM April 24, 2021

(Conclusion)

When President Duterte, through an executive order (EO), instructed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to review all the country's existing mineral agreements, did he also give the agency the green light to finally lift the ban on open-pit mines?

“It’s a separate interpretation to be provided by the DENR chief,” said Wilfredo Moncano, director of the Mines and Geoscience Bureau. “While the EO covered all [mining] operations... the secretary must still issue an administrative order to address [the ban on open pit mining].”

As it stands, the weeks ahead are especially crucial for miners. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu is set to gather his team to interpret the President’s directive through the issuance of the EO 130’s implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

Thereafter, the environment chief may or may not issue an administrative order that would lift the ban on open-pit mines based on meetings among members of the technical working group. The ban on open-pit mining has been in place for four years now.

Environmental concerns

Open-pit or surface mining has been a contentious issue among miners and environmental advocates. The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said it is a globally accepted mining method. Alyansa Tigil Mina and Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment insist this mining technique has caused extensive environmental damage.

Currently, there are mining companies employing the open-pit method.

The Chamber said the government must put in place stable policies if it wanted the industry to move forward and decide where it stands on the issue of open-pit mining as well as the suspension orders issued during the term of the late former DENR chief, Regina Paz Lopez.

Both industry players and the environmentalists are also looking at how the government would define “responsible mining,” which should be made clear in the IRR of EO 130.

Leon Dulce, national coordinator for Kalikasan, believes the People’s Mining Bill “provides us with an earnest attempt” to do mineral extraction sustainably. The bill includes raising the industry’s taxation regime to 10 percent from the current average of 4 percent (9 percent for those that pay royalties), and further raising the royalties imposed to 10 percent from 5 percent.

Stringent mining laws

According to COMP officials Gerard Brimo and Rocky Dimaculangan, the Philippines already has one of the most stringent mining laws in the world.

“We are one of the few mining countries that require setting aside funds for social development programs ... We are also one of the few mining countries that require every large-scale metallic operator to secure ISO certifications on environmental management,” they said.



“When the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Mineral Awards was launched in 2017, the best metallic mine and processing plant was adjudged to be in the Philippines, as voted no less than by the various Asean mining ministers, surely an evidence, if it was ever needed, that responsible mining does exist in our country,” they added.

One thing is clear: both sides of the spectrum recognize that consumers depend on metals and minerals for just about everything—from building houses and vehicles to gadgets and appliances.

“Mining can provide a meaningful opportunity for economic expansion by encouraging both foreign and domestic firms to expand. We do have to highlight that any expansion must still be governed by standards designed to protect our environment and ensure responsible and sustainable mining practices,” said Nicholas Mapa, senior economist at ING Bank Manila.

“Given that the government has cited this EO as a move to bolster increasingly empty coffers, authorities should look to increase royalties on windfall or super-profits to maximize the impact on the fiscal position ... [they] may also relax some tariffs on imported machinery given the high capital requirements for the industry while still ensuring that local labor is employed with proper safety and guidelines enforced,” he added. INQ



INDUSTRIYALISASYON NASAAN NA?

April 23, 2021 | jake

DPA ni BERNARD TAGUINOD



ISA sa pangako ng gobyernong Duterte ay ang magtayo ng sariling industriya sa Pilipinas dahil marami naman tayong mga raw materials na makukuha mula sa ating mga likas na yaman o natural resources.

Walang bansa kasi ang yumaman na hindi isang industrial country o walang sariling industriya at umaasa lang sa mga supply mula sa ibang bansa, kasama na ang Pilipinas dyan.

Wala tayong maipagmamalaking produkto at kung meron man kayong mabiling mga bagay sa ibang bansa na “made in the Philippines” ay karaniwang mga produkto na dito lang ginawa pero ang may-ari ay mga multinational company na nakabase sa Pilipinas at ang mga materyales ay galing sa ibang bansa.

Mayaman ang Pilipinas sa metal, raw materials sa magnet at kung ano-ano pang precious metal na nahuhukay ng mga mining companies sa kabundukan sa ating bansa.

Pero ang mga raw materials na yan ay ini-export sa mga industrial countries at pagbalik sa ating bansa ay isa ng bagay na kapag binili natin ay mahal, tulad ng bakal.

Kaya noong magsimula sa panunungkulan ang kasalukuyang administrasyon ay nangako sila na kailangan magkaroon tayo ng mga industriya upang ang mga raw materials ay hindi na kailangang iexport sa ibang bansa.

Isa ako sa natuwa noon dahil kung meron mang dapat unang makinabang sa mga yaman ng ating bansa ay mga Filipino dapat at hindi ang mga industrial countries na siyang nakikinabang sa ating mga likas na yaman.

Natuwa ako dahil kapag naging industrial country na tayo, marami ng trabaho ang mapapasukan ng mga - Filipino at hindi na kailangang mangibang bansa para mabuhay at magkaroon ng disenteng pamumuhay ang kanilang pamilya.

Pero mukhang malabo na matupad ang pangakong ito ng administrasyon dahil kahit isang poste ng pagawaan ay hindi pa naitatayo at patapos na ang kanilang pamumuno sa ating gobyerno.

Magbibigay na naman ng mga bagong mining contract ang gobyerno matapos ang 9 na taong moratorium na nangangahulugan na madadagdagan ang mga mining operations sa bansa dahil sa pag-iral ng Executive Order (EO) 130 na inilabas ng mahal na pangulo.

Ibig sabihin mas maraming bundok ang huhukayin para kunin ang mga metal na nakatago sa ilalim ng lupa. Ibig sabihin mas maraming raw materials ang makukuha pero hindi yan direktang pakikinabangan ng lahing kayumanggi.

Ang makinabang lang dyan sigurado ay ang mga mining companies at mga industrial countries dahil mas marami silang materials na magagamit sa kanilang mga produkto.

Nakakatakot na magaya tayo sa mga bansa sa Africa na naghihirap pa rin kahit mayaman sila sa likas na yaman. Inubos ng mga bansang nanakop sa kanila ang kanilang likas na yaman pero kahit isang industriya mula sa kanilang raw materials ay walang naitayo.

Sana ang susunod na administrasyon ay seryosohin ang pagtatayo ng sariling industriya gamit ang mga raw materials para umangat naman ang ating bansa sa pagiging third world country.



Isa din sa dapat tutukan ng susunod na gobyerno ay magkaroon ng sariling industriya ng gamot upang kapag nagkaroon muli ng pandemya tulad nitong COVID-19 ay hindi tayo nagmamakaawa sa ibang bansa na bigyan tayo ng bakuna.

Noong 1939 tayo ang nagbibigay ng libreng gamot sa China. Baliktad na ang situwasyon, tayo ngayon ang namamalimos ng bakuna sa China. Anong nangyari?

Source: http://saksingayon.com/opinyon/industriyalisasyon-nasaan-na/?utm_source=ReviveOldPost&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ReviveOldPost&fbclid=IwAR0gzYWD4zJhdDIQyskJRZYQbcC5ZRu3AFN66JkYnWDkRtlnMiU7LCIzXNM

The True Value Of Wildlife



BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA APRIL 25, 2021



A green marine turtle, one of five marine turtle species in the Philippines, is photographed by underwater photography expert Danny Ocampo.

At a local carinderia (eatery) that serves exotic dishes in Cebu City, an order of “power” is P80 to P120. This is almost twice the cost of ordinary viand available at the carinderia.

Interestingly, “power” is not on the menu and is offered discreetly to select customers.



A Hawksbill turtle glides gently atop corals.

It turns out “power” is a soup with marine turtle meat as the main ingredient. It is popular among male customers of the carinderia because it is widely believed to be an aphrodisiac.

Meanwhile, at local pet shops, a blue-naped parrot is sold at P3,000 to P5,000, depending on its age. The younger they are, the expensive they get.

Endangered Species

Like the marine turtles that are hunted for their eggs, meat and other parts, the blue-naped parrot, a popular pet because of the belief it brings good fortune, is being pushed to the brink of extinction by the illegal trade in wildlife.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2019-09, the updated list of Philippine threatened fauna and their categories, classifies the hawksbill turtle and leatherback turtle as „critically endangered,“ while the loggerhead turtle, green turtle and olive ridley turtle as “endangered”.

The list also classifies the blue-naped parrot as “critically endangered.”

Marine turtles and the blue-naped parrot are also listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Appendices, affording different levels of protection from over-exploitation.

Both species are also on the Red List of Threatened Species of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.



A blue-naped parrot

IWT Targets

While marine turtles are being slaughtered for their meat, shell, and other body parts, the blue-naped parrots are hunted for illicit pet trade targeting unique Philippine species.

Because of their behavior like singing and dancing while mimicking humans as they talk, parrots are high in demand by so-called “pet lovers.”

Even in Palawan, the country’s ecological frontier where these amazing birds used to thrive, the population of the blue-naped parrot is decreasing.

In illegal wildlife trade activities, Republic Act 9147, the Philippine Wildlife Resources Protection and Conservation Act or the Wildlife Act, the law that provides protection to essentially all wild animals in the Philippines, is violated.

Economic Value Of Wildlife

Last month, the DENR released a study placing high economic use value to the endangered marine turtles and blue-naped parrots.

Based on the study, one marine turtle is projected to have an economic use value of P4.8 million throughout its 57-year lifetime.

Its economic use-value was based on its ecological role in the coastal and marine ecosystem, approximately P900,000 per turtle and on the tourism value it generates, pegged at P3.9 million per turtle.

The annual use value of the entire population of the Philippine marine turtle, which is conservatively estimated at 7,294 individuals by the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ranged between P2.89 billion and P3.19 billion.

Meanwhile, the study also showed that the blue-naped parrot, more commonly known as “pikoy,” is estimated to have an economic use value of P186,000 throughout its six-year lifetime.

The estimated cost of one blue-naped parrot is based on its trade value and tourism value (P5,000 per blue-naped parrot when combined) and its ecological role in forest ecosystems at P181,000 per blue-naped parrot.

The entire Philippine parrot population was estimated at 8,500 individuals, according to wildlife conservation group Katala Foundation. With that, its annual use value range between P36.23 million and P295.19 million a year.

Important Ecosystem Functions

While parrots, like other birds, are efficient seed dispersers and help make the forest healthy with the all-important bird poop that fertilizes the soil, marine turtles are known to feed on algae, nibbling them from corals, allowing corals to “breathe” and stay healthy.



Some marine turtle species are also known to feed on jellyfish, thus, acting as biological control agents in their natural habitats.

Marine turtles are also known to feed on seagrass, acting like nature's lawnmower that cuts and maintain seagrass bed, a special ecosystem where small fish play and feed, in good health.

As they feed on seaweeds and seagrass, marine turtles prune them, thus, making them grow faster, in the process, benefiting other species dependent on the same ecosystem.

'About Time'

Grace Diamante, executive director of the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc. (MBCFI), said it is about time that the DENR give attention to the economic valuation of these species and of all significant species in the Philippines.

More than the economic value of species, Diamante said the valuation per square meter of key biodiversity areas, especially the protected areas, should also be considered by the government.

"The Build Build Build Program of the administration is beneficial to our economy and to Filipinos, but they should also weigh the long-term impact of these developments to the environment," she told the BusinessMirror via Messenger on March 30.

About The Study

Conducted through the DENR-Asian Development Bank (ADB)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Project on Combating Environmental Organized Crime in the Philippines, the study aims "to recognize the bigger picture as the protection of wildlife not only keeps ecosystems balanced, but eventually benefits human well-being."

In a statement released by the DENR with the study results, environmental economist Dr. Agustin Arcenas underscored the importance of economic valuation of resources in monitoring whether the steps to protect these resources are effective.

Moreover, he believes that the economic valuation of resources also helps evaluate the efficiency of projects and programs geared toward managing the resources, especially in situations where no other feasible metric currently exists.

In the same statement, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu expressed hope the result of the study will allow "more people to be inspired in conserving and protecting our wildlife."

"We hope that in popularizing the findings, we can entice more Filipinos to think about the long-term benefits of our wildlife, such as marine turtles and blue-naped parrots, and not just short-time gains," Cimatu said.

A Good Way To Communicate 'Value'

Emerson Y. Sy, a wildlife trafficking specialist at Traffic agreed with Cimatu, saying that economic valuation is a good way to communicate the "value" of wildlife to the public since money is a universal language.

"I agree that it will help in IEC [information, education and communication] to make people appreciate wildlife," he told the BusinessMirror via Messenger on April 7.

However, Sy said that to deter poachers and illegal wildlife traders, the chance of being caught should be very likely and equates to better law enforcement.



Preemptive Action

He added that preemptive actions have more impact to conservation than law enforcement, and that the proposal to impose higher penalties may end up strong only on paper.

“The highest penalty on the current Wildlife Act is already P1.5 million for killing a critically endangered species, but it has never been utilized. Secondly, the inclusion of administrative adjudication might embolden wildlife traffickers since they can just pay a fine,” he said.

Sy suggested that the law should be clear when administrative adjudication is appropriate, citing for instance first-time offender with less than 20 animals involved in the crime.

“Unless it is very clear cut, it will be abused,” he lamented, citing what is happening in the fisheries sector.

Sy was referring to the apprehension of foreign nationals with dried seahorses worth P1.7 million in 2019. The foreigners were given a slap-in-the-wrist penalty when fined with P15,000, and were released from detention.

“Besides the supposed higher fine than the market value, they [should have] underwent deportation proceeding as specified by the law,” he said.

Commendable Exercise

Theresa Mundita S. Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), commended the DENR-BMB for the exercise in valuing nature, specifically wildlife, to include nonuse values. Lim has been pushing for the economic valuation of natural resources during her 15-year stint as a former DENR top biodiversity official.

“We thought that total economic valuation of nature would be a good tool to help decision-makers in resolving conflicting proposals on land use (eg. mining and protected area),” Lim told the BusinessMirror via Messenger on April 7.

Attracting Investment In Nature, Biodiversity

“Translating the value of wildlife into monetary amount will create a different kind of appreciation, hopefully attracting the attention of the finance and economic sector to invest in nature and biodiversity,” she added.

Moreover, she said the economic valuation study which estimates the true value of wildlife is a good basis for estimating penalties for violations of wildlife laws, such as poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Lim pointed out that there is no science behind the current estimates for the fines and penalties in the current law, “except that we knew we had to have higher penalties and fines for violations vs critically endangered species” as compared to those of lower conservation status.

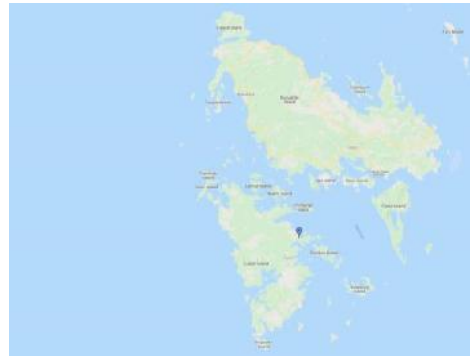
With the study, she said this time the valuation can provide a good rationale for the estimation of fines. Images courtesy of Daniel M. Ocampo,



DPWH Halts Controversial Bridge Project In Palawan



BYMA. STELLA F. ARNALDO APRIL 23, 2021



THE Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has suspended the controversial P4.2-billion Coron-Culion Inter-Island Bridges project, as it seeks to secure the necessary permits and environmental clearance required by several laws.

In a roundtable discussion hosted by the environmental group Oceana Philippines on Thursday, DPWH Officer-in-Charge for Region 4B [Mimaropa] Yolanda Tangco admitted she had no idea how the project was conceived, only that the project was included in the General Appropriations Act of 2019. “Sorry, I really don’t know who really is the [project] proponent,” adding that she was only transferred to the region in the latter part of 2019.

She added, “The funds were released in 2020. We have also the consultancy for the FS [feasibility study] — the funds were released at the same time. On the part of the DPWH, because we had a release of P250 million and based on the ruling of the DBM [Department of Budget and Management] and targets of the DPWH, we had to obligate the amount. We were forced to bid this out, so if we obligate this, we still had two years to implement the project,” she said in Taglish.

While construction had already started for the 21-kilometer bridge’s access road, a work-suspension order was issued by Tangco to contractor JH Pahara Construction Corp. after environmentalists launched a petition to stop the project. Effective April 8, construction on the access road was to be stopped “until all the required clearances from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR], Environment Management Bureau, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, and other requirements have been complied/approved,” as per Tangco’s work-suspension order dated April 7, 2021.

Feasibility Study Forthcoming

The official apologized for the furor caused by the bridge project. “DPWH did not have the intention not to follow all regulations. We apologize for that; we didn’t realize that we would not be able to comply with the FS because of the ongoing pandemic,” she said. The FS is scheduled to be completed by July, “and only then can we determine if the project is indeed feasible,” she added.

Tangco explained that the bridge project is “part of the LIP [Local Infrastructure Projects]” under the DPWH’s budget in 2019. As per DBM sources, LIPs are usually proposed by legislators, and is a basically a set of funds which legislators divvy up among themselves for use in their pet projects.

She added, “mitigating measures” will be adopted if some critical areas were already impacted by the initial construction work. If the project is no longer deemed feasible, Tangco said “no more additional releases will be made. We will remove the project. We will revert the funding and terminate



For her part, DPWH’s consultant for the feasibility study, Architect Cathy Saldaña of PDP Architects, assured the roundtable participants, “We are focusing on sustainability and environment.” With advanced technologies and the use of the correct materials, she said the project “will conform with non-toxicity as well as provide a future habitat now for the marine life.”

She added, “We are also cognizant of the fact that when you design footings for a bridge, you can find a way to avoid those areas that are really sensitive,” underscoring that many bridges around the world have been able to keep intact the marine resources and economic benefits these provide. She said, part of her firm’s work as FS consultant is to consult with the stakeholders regarding the project.

Permits From DENR Needed

DENR Regional Director Ma. Lourdes Ferrer told the forum that even before the media picked up the issue, “We already had initial plans to discuss this with the DPWH because there still was no feasibility study. And after the FS, there should be a detailed design. We want an ECC [environment clearance certificate]. They have to get these permits from us but [we noticed] roads were already being constructed, which will have pass through a mountain.”

Aside from the FS, she said, the DENR requires an environment impact assessment study...this is a huge project. “While Coron-Culion is not a protected area, we were instructed by the Secretary [Roy A. Cimatu] that there must be consultations [with stakeholders]; so the concerns on biodiversity, the heritage value in the area, chances are these will come into that. In the EIA, if we see there are sensitive areas that will be hit by this project, we will have to tell them they can’t push through with those aspects. We will look for remediation measures.”

She also underscored, “All government projects pass through ECC [process].”

Rethinking the value of biodiversity to restore the Earth

By ACB Published on April 24, 2021



LAGUNA, Apr. 24 -- The recent launch of the global report *Economics of Biodiversity: Dasgupta Review* has revived discussions around the question: "How does one live a sustainable life and help restore the Earth?" These conversations come at a timely opportunity in the recent 22 April celebration of Earth Day. With the report asserting that "our economies are embedded within nature, not external to it," economic and environmental experts alike are now compelled to think about sustainable ways forward for people, the planet, and profit. In line with this, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) has initiated a webinar series on Conservation Financing. The first session of the webinar series, *Introduction to Economics of Biodiversity and Conservation Finance*, was held virtually on 7 April.

ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim, in her welcome remarks, pressed that essential services, such as water, clean air, flood mitigation and food supply, are provided by healthy ecosystems. "Being able to value these contributions will present an even better case why one should pay closer attention to our high biodiversity areas such as our protected areas and ASEAN Heritage Parks, and invest in them," she said.

The region's protected areas, especially the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs), play a vital role in sustaining natural capital and the accompanying ecosystem services that provide the needed raw materials for most industries that drive the region's economy. However, the sustainable management of these critical areas is hindered by insufficient financing.

Executive Director of the Conservation Finance Alliance David Meyers discussed the different funding tools available for conservation, defining conservation finance as "mechanisms and strategies that generate, manage, and deploy financial resources and align incentives to achieve nature conservation outcomes." To increase capital for conservation and bridge the USD 316 billion annual biodiversity finance gap, Meyers shared seven finance mechanisms: Return-Based Investments, Economic Instruments, Grants and Other Transfers, Business and Markets, Public Financial Management, Risk Management and Financial Efficiency.

The Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP) Project of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and the European Union supports the ASEAN Member States (AMS) in reducing biodiversity loss.



This persistent gap in financing for the protection and management of protected areas led to the ongoing study on Conservation Financing for five AHPs under the BCAMP funding support. Two of the researchers on conservation financing shared preliminary results for the Eastern Forest Complex (EFCOM) in Thailand and the Virachey National Park in Cambodia.

In Cambodia, Virachey National Park, at its current area of 332,500 hectares, has an approximate 115,030,970 (MgC) tons of carbon stored in its vast array of forest ecosystems potentially be counted as carbon credits. This, according to Dr Chou Phanith, may be adequate to finance biodiversity conservation and livelihoods in the national park.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Forest Complex of Thailand, the environmental impacts of the proposed flooding of the Ang Rue Nai Wildlife sanctuary for water supply threaten critical elephant habitat. It was shared during the virtual session how the bid to restore the complex's ecosystem can significantly reduce the risks for both elephants and humans.

Data shows that the Philippine forests and coral reefs could generate approximate 300 US dollar per hectare per year and 450 US dollar per hectare per year, respectively. However, despite being one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, a gap exists in the allocated funds for the management of protected areas.

Protected area managers and key environment officials from the ASEAN Member States discussed potential efforts to augment revenue and diversify funding sources to finance conservation across the region.

On 27 April, the second session to the conservation finance webinar series will facilitate an in-depth discussion of the economics of biodiversity, taking off from the recommendations of the Dasgupta Review. The webinar aims to explore actions and priorities in the ASEAN context and build a good case for investing in nature and biodiversity-related actions, including protected areas. (ACB)



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#EagleNews

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Japan firm helps farmers lessen waste

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 25, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A Japanese private firm has provided farmers in Bicol with a facility that will help promote sustainable waste management.

Okada Manufactory Co. Ltd., the local government of Legazpi City and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources recently inaugurated a composting facility that will transform wastes into organic fertilizers.

The project is under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Partnership with the Private Sector scheme called SDGs Business Supporting Surveys, where Japanese businesses introduce innovations to solve social problems in JICA partner countries like the Philippines.

JICA Philippines senior representative Hiroswawa Jin said teaching farmers new approaches and methods in sustainable, organic farming can help direct new opportunities to agriculture.

“Sharing Japanese innovations with local farmers can help improve agriculture productivity, while at the same time promote a win-win relationship between Japanese investors and Filipino farmers,” Jin said.

Based on the project’s feasibility study, only three percent of waste materials are composted in Bicol.

With the composting technology from Okada, raw waste processing is expected to increase by 20 times or 0.5 to 10 cubic meters per day.

The processed wastes may then be used by farmers to fertilize agricultural lands and save production costs compared to using chemical fertilizers.

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act mandates LGUs to divert at least 25 percent of solid wastes from waste disposal facilities through reuse, recycling, composting, and other resource recovery activities.

JICA said the new facility will complement Legazpi City’s efforts to manage solid waste and promote organic farming.

Okada is also partnering with local company Coco Technology Corp. for local assembly of composting equipment for export to Japan and to Southeast Asia.

The JICA Partnership with Private Sector scheme began in 2012 and has since supported technology transfer, human resource development, and job creation in the Philippines.

Aside from the environment, it also supports sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, education and welfare.



CCENRO lobbies more rules for earth-balling, cutting of trees

By [Mary Ruth R. Malinao](#)(The Freeman) - April 25, 2021 - 12:00am



"CCENRO interposes no objection to the proposed ordinance," read its position paper submitted to the City Council.

CEBU, Philippines — The Cebu City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CCENRO) has backed the passage of a proposed ordinance regulating the earth balling, cutting, or removal of trees within the city whether for residential, commercial, or public purpose.

"CCENRO interposes no objection to the proposed ordinance," read its position paper submitted to the City Council.

The ordinance entitled "Earth Balling, Cutting, and Removal of Trees Ordinance of Cebu City" was penned by Councilor Joel Garganera.

But CCENRO has pushed for additional stipulations.

It proposed to add a provision stating that "location for earth-balled trees must be near the vicinity of the present location, and preferably in urban areas before relocating the same to the mountainous or rural areas of the city."

Also, the inclusion of inspection fee under Section 15 of the proposed ordinance.

"Since CCENRO is tasked in inspecting the trees, and due to the limited funds of our office, we would recommend to include under Section 15, Inspection Fee in the proposed amount of P100," CCENRO said.

But the amount is still subject to the results of the consultation with concerned agencies. The fees collected shall be deposited to the Environmental Trust Fund.

CCENRO also recommended for an inclusion of another section that contains Prohibited Acts, to wit:

"It shall be unlawful to cut trees of whatever species within the territorial jurisdiction of Cebu City without the authority or permit required in this City Ordinance."

Under Section 18 of the proposed ordinance which covers the penalty clause, CCENRO suggested that a first, second, and third offense with corresponding fines and penalties be included.



Moreover, a compromise fee of less than P1,000 per tree was also recommended by the office.

Further, they suggested that in all offenses, the violator/s shall be given seven days from the date of issuance of the citation ticket to settle their liabilities before a case for the violation of the ordinance be filed in court.

CCENRO recommended as well for the inclusion in the proposed ordinance the establishment of a special body to be composed of representatives from relevant offices and agencies such as CCENRO, Office of the Building Official, Department of Engineering and Public Works, among others.

The office reserved the "right to present additional comments and positions on the proposed ordinance during the scheduled public hearings," if any, for this purpose.

— KQD (FREEMAN)



Forest fire hits Benguet town

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 24, 2021 4:47:36 PM





Benguet (CNN Philippines, April 24) — Local fire and environment officials are trying to put out an ongoing forest fire which has razed around three hectares of land in Bokod town, Benguet since Friday.

The Bureau of Fire Protection in Bokod said the forest fire started in Sitio Pakak, in the municipality's Barangay Pito.

There are no reports of casualties so far, authorities added.

Last year, [similar forest fires](#) erupted in the Cordillera Region. The tragedy burned 889 hectares of land and left 2.08-million in damage.



Scientists discover 3 extinct giant rodents in PHL, say human activities may have led to disappearance

By KAELA MALIG, GMA News

Published April 24, 2021 4:46pm



Scientists have discovered three extinct species of giant cloud rats, locally known as buot, in the Philippines.

After a four-year study, scientists from University of the Philippines, National Museum of the Philippines, and Field of Museum of Natural History in the US discovered *Carpomys dakal*, the largest of the fossil cloud rat named so because it was "much larger compared to the known living species in the same genus"; *Crateromys ballik*, which was "slightly smaller than the living *Crateromys* species in Luzon"; and *Batomys cagayanensis*, named after the place where the archeological sites were located.

The study, led by Dr. Janine Ochoa, Armand Salvador Mijares, Philip Piper, Marian Reyes, and Lawrence Heaney, confirmed that the newly recorded species lived only in the Philippines. Published on Oxford Academic's *Journal of Mammalogy* on Friday, the study analyzed fossils that came from Callao Cave in Cagayan, the same place where *Homo luzonensis*, a previously unknown species of man, was discovered in 2019.

In an exclusive interview with GMA News Online, Ochoa, lead author and assistant professor of anthropology at UP Diliman, said they weren't expecting to discover the three species when they started their analysis in 2017.

This was because there were living cloud rats in the area and they expected to find their remains there, not those of extinct ones.

"It's quite fantastic actually," said Ochoa, adding that apart from those excavated in 2007, some of the specimens were those found at the National Museum, which were retrieved in the 1970s and '80s.

"They've been there for a while," she said. When they started doing the analysis in 2017, that was only when they found out that these were different giant cloud rats, she added.

Ochoa said they were surprised that these were totally different species and did not expect to find them in the lowlands, particularly the three species in those genera.

She also noted that the scientific names of the three new species of fossil cloud rats were chosen from Philippine languages found in Luzon.

As of today, there are 18 living species of cloud rats or buot, which are herbivore mammals that live in trees, have furry tails and striking fur color, and can only be found in the Philippines. The three newly discovered species were distinguished by their distinctive dental morphology, their body size, and their habitat.

The extinct species lived in lowlands or forests over limestones, in contrast with existing ones that dwelled in mossy forests up the mountains with an elevation of at least 1,200 meters.

"These differences in elevation and habitat type reinforce our morphological evidence that they represent distinct species. These observations also lead us to conclude that all three species are probably extinct," an excerpt from the study read.

Two of these extinct specimens were recorded 2,000 years ago, which meant these were resilient and persistent for tens of thousands of years.

Photo by D. Satumbaga



Photo by A. Mijares



Photo by Patricia Cabrera



Photos by Lauren Nassef, Field Museum of Natural History



The study also showed that these giant cloud rats survived alongside *Homo luzonensis*.

Ochoa said the cause of extinction needed further studies, but there was a possibility that it was caused by human or anthropogenic activities because the last recorded occurrence of the two species was also after the arrival of agricultural societies.

"The last record that we have for the two of them is roughly 2,000 years ago or slightly later," she said, adding this was after *Homo sapiens*, modern humans with domesticated animals, and invasive species such as monkeys were known.

The professor said it was possible that the "confluence" of human or anthropogenic activities, on top of hunting, led to their extinction.

These extinct giant cloud runts might have also been hunted down for food by humans.



Ochoa said the fossil assemblage included remains of species hunted down by humans, such as wild pigs.

"[I]yon iyong association nila pero (that's their association but) we need to do further studies," she said.

In an NMP press release, Heaney said such studies could help the public in understanding the impact of over-hunting.

"This is something we need to understand if we are going to be effective in preventing extinction in the future," said Heaney, Negaunee curator of mammals at Field of Museum of Natural History.

Ochoa, meanwhile, said the discovery of these extinct species further proved how "tremendous the biodiversity is" in the Philippines.

The study also said that the discovery of the three recently extinct species showed that the diversity of this distinctive endemic Philippine radiation was at least 17% higher in the recent past.

Ochoa said she did not learn at school that the Philippines had such a high level of biodiversity and endemism, which she defined as the state of a species being found only in the country.

"That just means marami pa ang dapat aralin at marami pa pwede pa ma-diskubre. Importante maintindihan natin 'yung biodiversity ng past para maintindihan natin ang biodiversity in the present, and that helps us in our conservation efforts para mapahalagahan remaining biodiversity," said the professor.

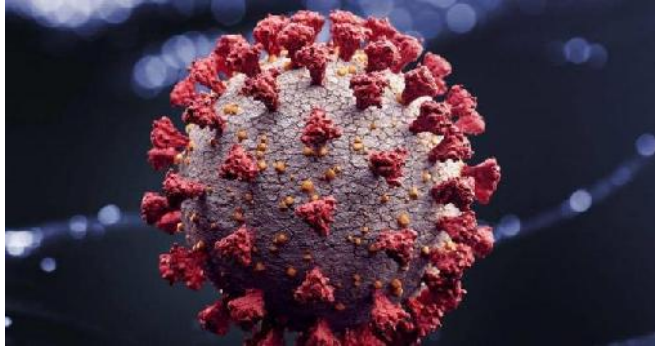
[That just means there are more things to study about and more things to discover. It's important for us to understand the biodiversity in the past so we can understand the biodiversity in the present, and that helps us in our conservation efforts to protect the remaining biodiversity.] – RC, GMA News

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/785009/scientists-discover-3-extinct-giant-rodents-in-phl-say-human-activities-may-have-led-to-disappearance/story/?fbclid=IwAR1_1prtqBzOmfDLPmbR4Hy_r3BmfCVTmmba7Ib5lbgATYArjViNbH2qJ5o



9,661 na bagong kaso ng COVID-19, naitala sa Pilipinas

By Chona Yu April 24, 2021 - 05:04 PM



Aabot sa 9,661 na bagong kaso ng COVID-19 ang naitala sa bansa ngayong araw.

Ayon sa ulat ng Department of Health, nasa 89, 485 ang kabuuang bilang ng active cases.

Nabatid na nasa 989,380 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga nag-positibo sa COVID-19.

Aabot naman sa 22, 877 ang nakarekober.

Nabatid na 95.9 percent ang mild cases, 1.4 percent ang asymptomatic, 1.1 percent ag severe at 0.8 percent ang critical at 0.7 percent ang moderate.

Sa kabuuan nasa 16, 674 na ang bilang ng mga nasawi.



U.S., other countries deepen climate goals at Earth Day summit

April 24, 2021 2:15 AM by [DZRH News Online](#)



FILE PHOTO: Chemical plants and refineries near the Houston Ship Channel are seen next to the Manchester neighborhood in the industrial east end of Houston, Texas, U.S., August 9, 2018. REUTERS/Loren Elliott

By Jeff Mason and Valerie Volcovici

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -The United States and other countries hiked their targets for slashing greenhouse gas emissions at a global climate summit hosted by President Joe Biden, an event meant to resurrect U.S. leadership in the fight against global warming.

Biden unveiled the goal to cut emissions by 50%-52% from 2005 levels at the start of a two-day climate summit kicked off on Earth Day and attended virtually by leaders of 40 countries including big emitters China, India and Russia.

The United States, the world's second-leading emitter after China, seeks to reclaim global leadership in the fight against global warming after former President Donald Trump withdrew the country from international efforts to cut emissions.

"This is the decade we must make decisions that will avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis," Biden, a Democrat, said at the White House.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called the new U.S. goal "game changing" as two other countries made new pledges.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, who visited Biden at the White House this month, raised Japan's target for cutting emissions to 46% by 2030, up from 26%. Environmentalists wanted a pledge of at least 50% while Japan's powerful business lobby has pushed for national policies that favor coal.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, meanwhile, raised his country's goal to a cut of 40%-45% by 2030 below 2005 levels, up from 30%.

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro announced his most ambitious environmental goal yet, saying the country would reach emissions neutrality by 2050, 10 years earlier than the previous goal.

Greenpeace UK's head of climate, Kate Blagojevic, said the summit had more targets than an archery competition.

"Targets, on their own, won't lead to emissions cuts," she said. "That takes real policy and money. And that's where the whole world is still way off course."

PUTIN SAYS PROBLEMS GO WAY BACK

Most of the countries did not offer new emissions goals. Chinese President Xi Jinping said China expects its carbon emissions to peak before 2030 and the country will achieve net zero emissions by 2060.

Xi said China will gradually reduce its coal use from 2025 to 2030. China, a leader in producing technology for renewable energy like solar panels, burns large amounts of coal for electricity generation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed giving preferential treatment for foreign investment in clean energy projects, but also made an apparent reference to the United States being historically the world's top greenhouse gas polluter. "It is no secret that the conditions that facilitated global warming and associated problems go way back," Putin said.



The U.S. climate goal marks a milestone in Biden’s broader plan to decarbonize the U.S. economy entirely by 2050 – an agenda he says can create millions of good-paying jobs but which many Republicans say will damage the economy.

The U.S. emissions cuts are expected to come from power plants, automobiles, and other sectors across the economy. Sector-specific goals will be laid out later this year.

The new U.S. target nearly doubles former President Barack Obama’s pledge of an emissions cut of 26%-28% below 2005 levels by 2025.

CEMENTING CREDIBILITY

How Washington intends to reach its climate goals will be crucial to cementing U.S. credibility on global warming, amid international concerns that America’s commitment to a clean energy economy can shift drastically from one administration to the next.

Biden’s recently introduced \$2.3 trillion infrastructure plan contains numerous measures that could deliver some of the emissions cuts needed this decade, including a clean energy standard to achieve net zero emissions in the power sector by 2035 and moves to electrify the vehicle fleet.

But the measures need to be passed by Congress before becoming reality.

The American Petroleum Institute, the top U.S. oil and gas lobbying group, cautiously welcomed Biden’s pledge but said it must come with policies including a price on carbon, which is a tough sell among some lawmakers.

‘THE U.S. IS BACK’

The summit is the first in a string of meetings of world leaders – including the G7 and G20 – ahead of annual UN climate talks in November in Scotland. That serves as the deadline for nearly 200 countries to update their climate pledges under the Paris agreement, an international accord set in 2015.

Leaders of small island nations vulnerable to rising seas, like Antigua and Barbuda and the Marshall Islands, also spoke at the summit.

World leaders aim to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, a threshold scientists say can prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

A Biden administration official said with the new U.S. target, enhanced commitments from Japan and Canada, and prior targets from the European Union and Britain, countries accounting for more than half the world’s economy were now committed to reductions to achieve the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal.

European leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressed delight that the United States was back in the climate fight.

“The importance of this day in my judgment is the world came together,” Biden’s climate envoy John Kerry told reporters at the White House.

(Reporting by Jeff Mason and Valerie Volcivici; additional reporting by Vladimir Soldatkin in Moscow; Elaine Lies and Aaron Sheldrick in Tokyo, David Ljunggren in Ottawa; Jake Spring and Lisandra Paraguassu in Brasilia, David Stanway in Shanghai, writing by Timothy Gardner; Editing by Richard Valdmanis and Lisa Shumaker)

Vatican Webinar Urges Common Efforts To Care For Biodiversity



BY VATICAN NEWS APRIL 25, 2021



The webinar on Biodiversity organized by the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development headed by Cardinal Peter Turkson (below, left). Also in the photo is Dr. Jane Goodall (top, right).

In partnership with the Vatican Covid-19 Commission Ecology Taskforce, the Dicastery for Integral Human Development on Tuesday hosted a webinar on Biodiversity, inspired by Pope Francis's Encyclical "Laudato si."

The online event, titled "The Road to COP15 [15th United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of Parties]," aims to share wisdom, understanding, experiences and mutual insights drawn from various disciplines of knowledge—including the indigenous and scientific traditions, the Holy Scriptures and the Social Doctrine of the Church on biodiversity.

These, together, will advocate and inspire biodiversity protection and restoration at the upcoming COP15 and 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) meetings.

The webinar invited the ecclesial community to generate dialogue on biodiversity in order to find new paths for the human family to heal and restore relations with creation, especially as in the wake of the ongoing Covid-19 health emergency.

Speakers at the event included Cardinal Peter Turkson, the prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; and Dr. Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace.

All Of Creation Is Interconnected

In his intervention, Cardinal Turkson highlighted two main points: the current context of the multifaceted crisis and the safeguard of biodiversity.

He explained how these two are connected, on the basis of a 2020 report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services that showed that the same human actions which drive biodiversity loss have also resulted in an increase in pandemics.

The current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic—which has affected world economies, increased the already existing gap between the rich and the poor, and has further made evident the poor access to healthcare suffered by some populations in society—"one pandemic has revealed other social pandemics," Turkson said, re-echoing Pope Francis's words.

Given that Covid-19 has been designated as a zoonotic disease, or transmitted between animals and people, he continued, "the current pandemic alerts us to the fact that when nature is sick, humanity itself is very sick."

This, he noted, has been highlighted in Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, which says that the way humanity treats the environment influences also the way that it treats itself.



Turkson pointed out that all the elements of creation are interconnected, and that the disregard and abuse of one invariably affects other components of society. The ecological crisis, therefore, is linked with an anthropological crisis—with human conduct and behavior.

Joint Responsibility To Protect Biodiversity

Drawing inspiration from the Scriptures, Turkson noted that in the book of Genesis, “biodiversity took its form right from the beginning of creation,” as God created the plants and animals as well as humans.

Moreover, in the social teaching of the Church, “biodiversity is the ongoing work of God’s creation, a sacred gift from God, and each creature has an intrinsic value and worth on that account, and a purpose known to God.”

In this sense, every creature reveals God to us and is a manifestation of God’s own glory as expressed in Psalms 19 and 104, he said.

Turkson lamented the deconstruction of God’s creation and the continuous cry of both creation and the poor highlighted in *Laudato si* and manifested in the disappearance of plant and animal species, lost forever because of our abusive treatment of nature.

“The cost of the damage caused by the human exploitation of nature is much greater than the economic benefits that are obtained.”

“For ethical, moral and theological reasons,” the Cardinal said, “it is incumbent upon us to safeguard biodiversity on earth.”

He noted that a global framework in this regard has been provided by the International Convention of Biological Diversity, which recognizes the need for a multisectoral and transversal approach to ensure the conservation and sustainability of biodiversity.

COP15 also has a vision of a world living in harmony with nature, where, by 2050, biodiversity is conserved and wisely used to sustain a healthy planet and deliver benefits essential for all, he said.

For this, four goals can serve as points of focus: first, an increase in protected areas so that biodiversity can be ensured in its interconnectivity and integrity in order to reduce the number of threatened species; secondly, valuing nature’s contribution to people, to maintain and enhance it through sustainable use for the benefit of all; thirdly, sharing fairly and equitably the benefits from genetic resources; and finally, checking the means of implementation of these goals and the targets relating to them.

‘To Keep And To Till’

“The Church always raises her prophetic voice to provide a spiritual basis for reflection on the protection of the poor, which includes the earth’s diversity and its ecosystems,” Turkson said.

He recalled, too, Pope Francis’ incessant calls for increased care for the earth, including his calls for universal fraternity, which further emphasize our interconnectedness.

Turkson further highlighted that humans have the responsibility to take care of nature. He explained that this comes from the book of Genesis, when at creation God charged Adam to till and keep the garden: “to ‘till’ was to make the earth productive, while to ‘keep’ was to ensure that the earth maintains its productive qualities and traits to support life all the time.”

This imperative of care also extends to the teaching about resting on the Sabbath, which is, for human beings, also to preserve creation, he said.

“Sabbath has a sense of liberation and respite, rest to any system that is oppressed and lives in bondage,” he added.



Indigenous People, Custodians Of Biodiversity

Indigenous people, according to the Cardinal, are “custodians of biodiversity,” and are essential to the protection of biodiversity. They have also been recognized by Pope Francis as “the great teachers of conservation of our biodiverse system.”

He added that they need to be respected and protected so that we can learn from them through paying attention to them.

Turkson also debunked claims that the relationship between indigenous people and nature is idolatrous. Rather, he explained, “it is an accumulation of time-tested wisdom that ensures the living together of human beings and the systems in creation.”

Concrete Steps

For steps to save biodiversity, Turkson proposed planting trees and partnering with organizations that care for nature.

He also urged the prioritization of restoring degraded ecosystems, support for regenerative agriculture, and participation in initiatives even at the local level in parishes.

The Cardinal pointed out that the protection of biodiversity directly affects each one of us, touching the social, cultural and economic dimensions of our lives.

“We are therefore called to embrace an integral ecological perspective and approach, and apply holistic thinking to reorient economies, education and cultural practices and policies, so that we honor the dignity of the human person and the integrity of creation,” he said.

Goodall Regrets Humans’ Destroying ‘Only Home’

Goodall shared her wealth of experience of studying chimpanzees in Africa and working to preserve their habitat.

She expressed regret that in spite of the developed intellect of humans, we are destroying our only home.

She noted that humans’ disrespect for the natural world and contribution to the destruction of the habitat of animals have put humans in increased contact with normally isolated animals, increasing the chance of pathogens spreading from animals to humans, and creating a zoonotic pandemic such as the current one.

This same disrespect for the world has also led to climate change, which is one of the major factors affecting biodiversity, she noted.

Proposing concrete action, Goodall emphasized the need to act within this “window of opportunity.”

She highlighted the urgency of reducing the “unsustainable lifestyle of hundreds of thousands of us on this planet who have way more than we need,” especially as regards food, where tons are wasted when there are people who go to bed hungry.

Goodall also stressed the importance of eliminating poverty. One way of achieving this, she explained, is teaching people to find ways of living without destroying the environment.

She recalls that this became apparent to her when she flew over a forest that used to house chimpanzees that had been greatly reduced and surrounded by human presence and farmlands.

Through the work of her foundation, she encourages community-based conservation to restore fertility to over-used land without agricultural chemicals and pesticides and water management.



She also suggests scholarships to keep girls in school; and micro-financing so that villagers, particularly women, can take loans to start businesses that are environmentally friendly.

In addition, local people can also be given tools with which they can monitor the health of their own village forest reserves.

This will help people to understand that “we protect the environment, not just for the wildlife, but for their own future, because the environment provides us with clean water; and we depend on healthy ecosystems for everything,” Goodall explained.

Biodiversity, Fragile Tapestry Of Life

“I like to see an ecosystem as a tapestry of life composed of this diversity of animal and plant species, all interrelated, each little species having a role to play,” Goodall said.

In this light, if one of the species becomes extinct, it tears a hole in that tapestry, and as more and more holes are torn, in the end we will be left with a tapestry so torn that the ecosystem will collapse, she warned.

In this regard, Goodall hailed the efforts of organizations and scientists working to protect and conserve the “tapestry.”

She also salutes the many young people who are rising up to tackle the ecological problems they have inherited from those before them.

Image courtesy of Vatican News

US Sets Aside Habitat Critical For Survival Of Rare Songbird

 **BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS** APRIL 25, 2021



The yellow-billed cuckoo is also known in the southern United States as rain crow and storm crow.

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico—US wildlife managers have set aside vast areas across several states as habitat critical to the survival of a rare songbird that migrates each year from Central and South America to breeding grounds in Mexico and the United States.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service announced the final habitat designation for the western yellow-billed cuckoo last Tuesday. It covers about 467 square miles (1,210 square kilometers) along hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the western states.

Most breeding in the US occurs in Arizona and New Mexico, but the habitat designation also includes areas in California, Colorado, Utah, Texas and Idaho.

The designation isn't as big as initially proposed. Wildlife managers opted to exclude more than 300 square miles (777 square kilometers) of potential habitat after considering updated information about ongoing conservation activities, the lack of suitable habitat in some areas and potential interference with critical infrastructure.

“This designation identifies important feeding and breeding grounds for the cuckoo to support the species’ recovery while also balancing the need in finding solutions that support current and future land-use plans,” Michael Fris, field supervisor for the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, said in a statement.

Federal biologists describe the cuckoo as an elusive species. Difficult to observe, it selects its nesting spots based on habitat conditions and the availability of food. That means breeding habitat not suitable one year may become suitable the next due to increased rainfall or flooding, while favorable areas might degrade the next year.

Each spring and fall, the cuckoo uses river corridors as routes to travel between its wintering and breeding grounds.

Nesting pairs find refuge in willows, cottonwoods and other trees along waterways and once their chicks hatch, their voracious appetites for insects help them fuel up for the return trip south.

Listed as threatened in 2014, biologists say the bird has seen population declines due to loss of riparian habitat and habitat fragmentation resulting from agriculture, dams and river management, erosion, overgrazing and competition from exotic plants. **AP**

Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/04/25/us-sets-aside-habitat-critical-for-survival-of-rare-songbird/>

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