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“There is no truth to the news reports that the dolomite sand has been washed out to the sea,” DENR Undersecretary for policy, planning and international affairs Jonas Leones said.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman, file

Dolomite sand not washed out, still intact – DENR

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) (The Philippine Star) - October 30, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) maintained on Wednesday that the artificial white sand overlayed on a portion of Manila Bay was not washed out but was only covered by black sand caused by rains.

“There is no truth to the news reports that the dolomite sand has been washed out to the sea,” DENR Undersecretary for policy, planning and international affairs Jonas Leones said.

Leones issued the statement in response to reports quoting him as saying that “about 10 percent of the dolomite sand in Manila Bay has been swept to the sea by heavy rains.”

He said the white sand, made of crushed dolomite rocks, has been washed in by black sand but still intact.

“Dolomite sand will not be washed out because of the geo-engineering intervention used for the project,” Leones explained.

#KapitLangDolomite: Manila Bay dolomite sand still intact - DENR

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Oct 29 2020 10:27 AM | Updated as of Oct 29 2020 11:18 AM



Maintenance workers clean up debris washed up at the “white sand” area of the Manila Bay rehabilitation project as Typhoon Quinta moves westward across Southern Luzon on Oct. 26, 2020. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA – The pulverized dolomite laid over a portion of Manila Bay for an artificial beach project remains intact, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said Thursday, amid allegations the overlay was washed out following a spate of heavy rains.

“Based on our inspection last Monday, we observed that the placed dolomite in the beach nourishment are still intact,” Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones told ANC’s “Matters of Fact”.

“And that we observed that our geo-interventions in the beach nourishment are still there and serving the purpose of protecting the placed sand from heavy rains and strong waves.”

Leones clarified that the artificial sand was not swept to the sea, but instead the shore was covered by black sand.

Engineering interventions put in place in the area such as “geo tubes” will allow the project to withstand any weather disturbances, he added.

Despite a slew of criticism of the P28-million beautification project, the DENR has ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to fast-track its completion.

“We are committing to the public that by yearend we can finish all activities in the bay walk,” Leones said.

He said they still need to dump additional powdered dolomite rocks to complete its 1-meter thickness.

The white sand project is composed of 3 layers – the bottom and middle layer are black sand while the top layer is white sand.

Asked if the project was a bad proposition to begin with, Leones had this to say.

“I don’t want to say that this is a mistake. Kasi it’s too early to determine whether there is a wrong move on our part,” he said.

“What we are focusing now is the fact there remains a mandamus case issued by the Supreme Court ordering all agencies to clean up Manila Bay and there’s also a directive from the President to fast track the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.”

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/29/20/kapitlangdolomite-manila-bay-dolomite-sand-still-intact-says-denr?fbclid=IwAR0crZhW6DUi9TiousntLrnpb0YxSZjZYAgUYmuurtXwggfztFf3XirFcCg>



The controversy that refuses to die: Manila Bay dolomite sand

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:07 PM October 29, 2020



Dolomite Beach along Roxas Boulevard, Manila on Friday, October 9, 2020. INQUIRER PHOTO / GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — A “white sand” paradise in the heart of Manila, perhaps?

After years of being known for its polluted waters, Manila Bay suddenly got a facelift as the government decided to take a big risk by overlaying mounds of artificial white sand on a part of the bay’s naturally gray shoreline.

But this project, which is spearheaded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), was instantly met with harsh disapproval from environmentalists and experts alike, pointing out the dangers this may bring not only to the bay but as well as to the area where the “sand” came from.

From gray to white



TO SAVE THE BAY A 500-meter stretch of the 190-kilometer coastline of Manila Bay will be covered with sand derived from crushed dolomite in a bid by the government to beautify the scenery and encourage the public to protect it. Environmental activists are not exactly pleased. — INQUIRER FILE PHOTO / RICHARD A. REYES

With so much noise surrounding a piece of land, why is the project controversial in the first place?

The government is spending P389 million to fill Manila Bay’s gray shoreline stretching 500 meters with crushed dolomite—an anhydrous carbonate mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate—transported from Cebu province to Manila.

During the House deliberations for DENR’s proposed 2020 budget, Undersecretary Jonas Leones, of the DENR’s Environment and International Environment Affairs, clarified that of the P389 million, P28 million was only spent for the crushed dolomite. As for the remaining funds, this will be spent on the construction of other support structures, including “geo interventions” supposedly meant to prevent the crushed dolomite from being washed away.



Such [“geo interventions”](#) include the placing of geotubes to protect the new layer of crushed dolomite from being washed away during storm surges or high tide.

Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo Jr., of the DENR’s finance, during the same hearing, said that the P389 million funding for the beautification project was derived from the “contingency fund” of President Rodrigo Duterte, and was released by the Department of Budget and Management in 2019 for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

“The DENR has complied with the directive to return 10 percent of our 2020 funding, which is roughly P1.069 billion, purposely to help in the COVID-19 response,” Adobo said during the House deliberation.

But before it sparked the interest of Filipinos, [dolomite](#) is already known to be used for various purposes, most commonly in the production of concrete, exterior cladding, roads, and garden paths. In fact, dolomite was also used for the construction of other man-made beaches, one of which is the popular French Riviera in the northwestern Mediterranean.

The beautification project, meanwhile, is part of the [DENR’s Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program](#) launched in January 2019, in a bid to restore the bay’s former glory after decades of pollution, in compliance with a Supreme Court 2008 ruling directing 13 agencies to clean up Manila Bay.

It was during the first week of September when the DENR started overlaying the area with crushed dolomite. From Sept. 19 to Sept. 20, the attraction was temporarily opened to the public, drawing crowds, reaching a point where quarantine protocols were ignored.

Despite the makeover, the government still prohibited [spectators](#) from swimming in the waters of Manila Bay, as that part remains polluted despite efforts to restore it.

The project somehow earned Malacañang’s praise, saying that the photo [people flocking to see](#) the “white sand” was proof that the project was a “right decision.”

“Naintindihan po natin ‘yan dahil talagang ‘yan naman po ay nagpapatunay na tama ang desisyon ng DENR at ang siyudad ng Maynila na lalo pang pagandahin ang Manila Bay,” Palace spokesman Harry Roque said in a press briefing.

(We understand that this is proof that the DENR and the City of Manila made the right decision to enhance Manila Bay.)

A day after the temporary opening, it was closed again for the continuation of the rehabilitation works.

At present, the DENR stopped putting crushed dolomite at the bay shoreline as it encountered problems with the private contractor and supplier of the crushed mineral.

The two mining companies, Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) were suspended after they [allegedly destroyed corals](#) in the water near the mine site.



Why the flak?



GRAY OR BLACK SAND MANILA BAY / SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 Gray or black sand are seen on the edge of white sand from crushed dolomite which was dumped at the portion of Manila Bay near beside the US Embassy in Roxas Boulevard, Manila. vINQUIRER PHOTO / RICHARD A. REYES

While the beautification [project drew awe for some](#), it also garnered widespread criticism from civil society groups, environment watchdogs, netizens and politicians alike.

For one, several groups pointed out that dolomite does not only bring dangers to the environment, but also pose health hazards as well. At one point, even the Department of Health (DOH) warned that inhalation of fine particles of dolomite may later lead to [respiratory problems](#), as well as other health hazards.

“Yung dolomite dust, it can cause respiratory issues or effects to a person. Kapag napunta sa mata, nagkakaroon ng irritation so you just have to wash it off with water,” DOH spokesperson and Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire previously said in an online forum with reporters. (If it comes in contact with the eyes, it can cause irritation so you just have to wash it off with water.)

“Kapag na-ingest ito, it can have discomfort sa gastrointestinal system natin and magkakaroon lang ng kaunting sakit ng tiyan at pagtatae,” she added.

(If this is ingested, it can have discomfort in a person’s gastrointestinal system it will cause pain and diarrhea.)

But DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu later explained that the dolomite used for the “white sand beach” was safe, citing medical studies. He also explained that the particles of the crushed dolomite was only 2 to 5 millimeters or equivalent to 2,000 to 5,000 microns or 100 times bigger than dust.

After Cimatu’s explanation, the DOH later took note of his statement and retracted its warning.

Aside from the dolomite, groups such as the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the DENR’s project is an “artificial rehabilitation focusing on aesthetic appearance rather than addressing the environmental degradation problems.”

Another environment watchdog, Youth Strike 4 Climate Philippines, likewise slammed the plan, saying, “There are so many issues we need to FOCUS ON like the pandemic response and yet here is our government, doing this stuff.”

The Manila Bay facelift also earned the ire of some senators, such as Nancy Binay, Risa Hontiveros and Leila De Lima, calling on the DENR to stop the beautification project.

“If DENR is really concerned about the environment and the people, it is but proper for them to immediately stop the dumping of dolomite,” Binay previously said in a statement.

As for Hontiveros, she took a jab at Palace spokesman Harry Roque who claimed that the crushed dolomite would help [people mentally cope](#) with the COVID-19 pandemic.

De Lima billed the environmental agency as the “[Department of Environmental Cosmetics](#)”, and reminded the DENR that its mandate is the “rehabilitation, preservation, and protection of our environment.”

“It is not a beach resort developer,” De Lima said of the DENR.

The outcry to stop DENR’s plan was even brought to the [Supreme Court](#), as cause-oriented group Akbayan asked the high court to cite DENR for contempt for the Manila Bay beautification project.

And as scientists from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman Institute of Biology also criticized the DENR for the project, they provided an alternative: instead of crushed dolomite, the government should invest in [rehabilitating mangroves](#).

The UP scientists explained that unlike crushed dolomite, mangrove rehabilitation is a cheaper nature-based solution that can contribute in biodiversity conservation and in climate change adaptation.

“Having ecologically healthy mangroves will also help lessen heavy metal contamination, a condition that beset Manila Bay for a long time,” the group said.

They also even expressed willingness to assist the DENR in forming and implementing a “science-based” rehabilitation program, which would focus on the recovery of the bay’s biological functions and services by restoring and protecting key habitats, reducing pollution and managing invasive species.

Standing ground



PREVIEW Visitors enjoy the “white sand”—actually crushed dolomite—beach on the Manila Bay shore after it was opened to the public for one day on Sunday, September 20, 2020. INQUIRER/MARIANNE BERMUDEZ



Despite the flak the beautification has received, the DENR stood its ground and said that the program will still continue as planned.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who is perhaps the most vocal in defending the project, said that [more crushed dolomite](#) is needed to fill the 500-meter project area. He also assured that the next delivery of the crushed dolomite will be of no additional cost to the government.

Currently, only 120 meters of the 500 meters were filled with the “white sand.”

And as critics pointed out that the dolomite had washed out due to rains and the bay’s strong currents, Antiporda said that it was a “lie,” explaining that the [fake “white sand” was covered by the thick black sand](#) from the bay.

“Nakita po na puro kasinungalingan yung lumabas na nag-wash out yung white sand natin,” Antiporda said during a televised briefing. “Ang nangyari po talaga is wash in. Pumasok po yung itim na buhangin at pumatong sa white dolomite.”

(That claim that our white sand washed out is a lie. It was washed in. The black sand covered the white dolomite.)

To prevent the dolomite from being washed out, Leones said that aside from the geotubes, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is planning to construct a [breakwater](#) as an additional measure to ensure that the crushed dolomite will remain intact despite the bay’s strong waves.

“In addition to the geotubes we placed, the DPWH as we have been informed, to ensure that the beach will be there and it will not be destroyed by the strong current, they plan to put a breakwater in that area, siguro malayo lang sa beach,” Leones said in a televised interview.

“Ang purpose noon is similar to the geotubes, to caution the strong waves or strong waves na papalo doon sa beach area na ‘yun,” he added.

(Its purpose is the same as that of geotubes, which is to caution the strong waves that will hit the beach area.)

/MUF



VIA ZOOM: VALENZUELA



JONAS LEONES | PH ENVIRONMENT UNDERSECRETARY

BLACK SAND COVERS PARTS OF MANILA BAY BEACH FOLLOWING RECENT RAINS



0:33 / 13:33



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Breakwater plano ng DPWH para sa dolomite sa Manila Bay



October 29, 2020 @ 5:25 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Plano ng Department of Public Works and Highways na magtayo ng breakwater upang maprotektahan ang dolomite na nasa Manila Bay.

Sinabi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Jonas Leones nitong Huwebes na inabisuhan sila ng DPWH hinggil sa pagtatayo ng isang breakwater bilang karagdagan sa mga geotube, durable plastic o matibay na plastik na puno ng buhangin na inilagay na sa perimeter ng baybayin upang matiyak na ang dolomite ay mananatiling buo sa kabila ng malakas na alon.

Ayon kay Leones, ang layunin nito ay kapareho sa geotubes na maingat na sa malalakas na alon na hahampas sa baybayin.

Tiniyak din ng opisyal na ang dolomite sa Manila Bay ay mananatiling buo sa kabila ng malakas na alon at hangin na dala ng bagyong Quinta.

Aniya, imposible nang matangay ng alon ang mga puting buhangin dahil nakapaloob ito sa geotubes at ito ay magtatagal .


Kaugnay naman sa mga basurang nakita ng DENR sa kanilang pag-iinspeksyon, sinabi ng opisyal na kakaunti lamang ito kumlara sa dami ng mga basura sa mga nagdaan. **(Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden)**



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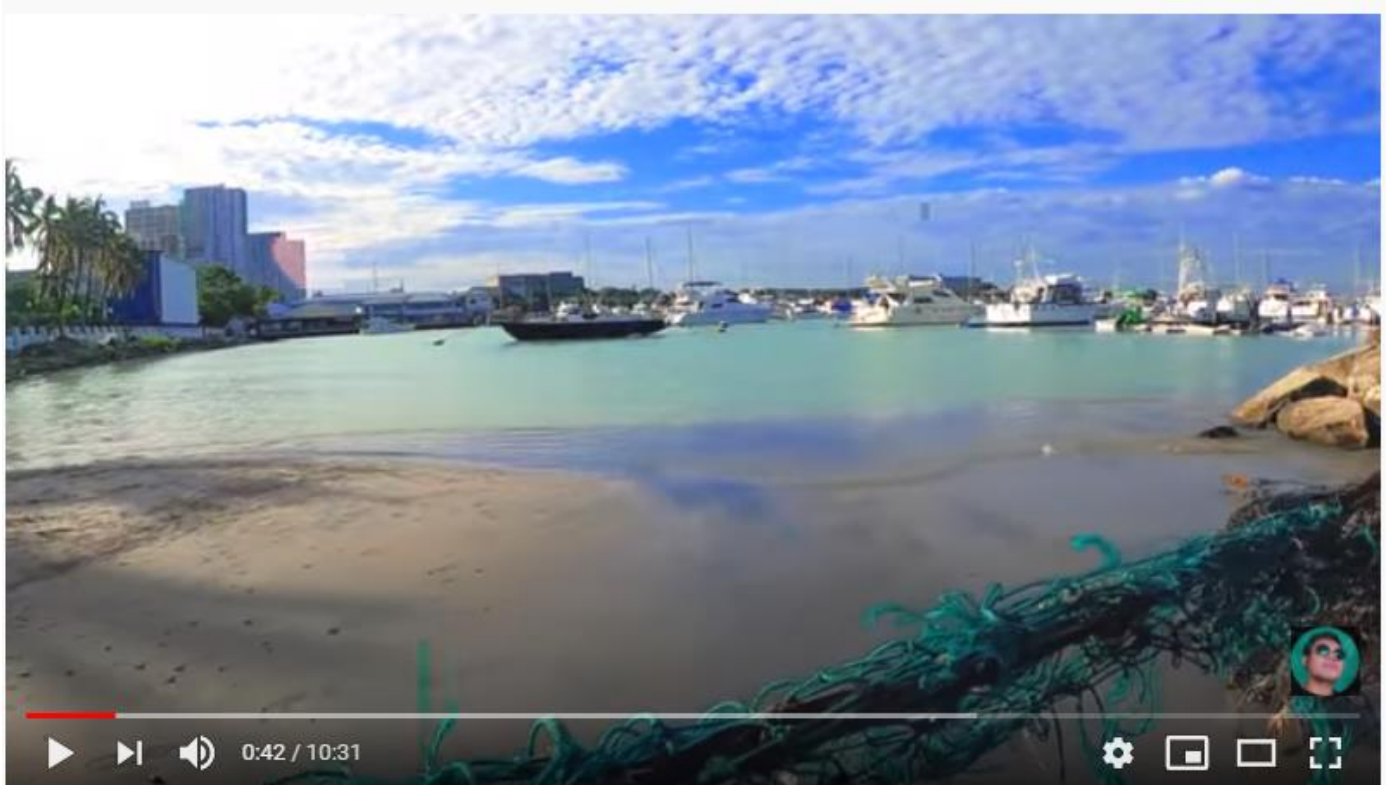
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Is the DENR true to its duties?

By Rev. Fr. Antonio Cecilio T. Pascual

October 29, 2020



Rev. Fr. Antonio Cecilio T. Pascual

SERVANT LEADER

Brothers and sisters, if the white sand beach in Manila Bay wasn't really washed away by the over-pouring rain during these past few days, as insisted by DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, he was overwhelmed by his emotions that urged him to call scientists and experts from the University of the Philippines as *bayaran* or sellouts.

In a statement, the UP Institute of Biology mentioned that it's preferable to plant mangroves in some parts of Manila Bay. We know that schools of fish use mangroves as their breeding ground, which is also important for other animals such as migratory birds and our fellowmen that rely on fishing for their livelihood. Experts added that even if these projects won't be able to address the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the immense funding used in the controversial dumping of the powdered dolomite in one small part of Manila Bay could have been used for solutions against the pollution in Manila Bay according to science that is effective and sustainable.

Before this, the UP Marine Science Institute explained that dolomite sand won't help in cleaning Manila Bay. What must be given priority by the government is the improvement of the quality of the water through the use of wastewater treatment plants, cleaning waterways, and prohibiting waste dumping or reclamations surrounding Manila Bay. This is a great task that the government and the communities must do together.

Usec. Antiporda viewed these suggestions from those at UP to be criticisms, and he couldn't stop calling the experts as sellouts. At first, officials held out that he would not apologize, but in the end in a TV interview, he took back what he said. As people with a high standard of intellect, the experts from UP professionally accepted Usec. Antiporda's apology.

But let us not allow this issue involving DENR to turn away our attention from the agency's inadequacy and irresponsibility in fulfilling its duties to preserve our environment.

Greater than the dolomite beach issue in Manila Bay, there are larger projects that would severely devastate nature. If DENR truly cares for our environment, why would it allow the construction of a 2,500-hectare airport in Bulacan stretching through the waters of Manila Bay? Why do they seem to be silent in the building of the Kaliwa Dam placed in the waterways of the natural wildlife park sanctuary in Sierra Madre? Why did it lift the suspension of mining companies halted by the late former DENR secretary Gina Lopez because of their destructive acts against mountains and forests? Why did it allow the acquisition of black sand from the shores of a town in Negros Occidental that can ruin the marine resources in the area?



In the Catholic social teaching *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI said that God bless all with nature, and with its use, we fulfill our duties for the poor, for generations to come, and for all mankind. But if our use of nature leads to abuse, whose interests do we prioritize? If those who can help in preserving nature only listen to those who wish to profit from the destruction of the environment instead of the experts and communities, are they not betraying us by not performing their duties?

Brothers and sisters, like what is said in the letter of St. Paul to the Romans, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

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Batas at kontrol sa e-waste umarangkada na



October 29, 2020 @ 5:16 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Umarangkada na ang national policy at regulatory framework ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para sa paghawak sa ng electronic waste.

“As early as 1990, the Philippines already has a national and regulatory framework on e-waste management with the enactment of Republic Act (RA) 6969 or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act,” ayon sa pahayag ng EMB .

Ayon sa DENR, iniaatas ng nasabing batas ang paghahanap ng paraan na maisaayos ang importasyon, paggawa, pagproseso, paghawak, pag-iimbak, transportasyon, pagbebenta, distribsyon, paggamit, paglilinis, at pagbabasura na nakalalasang kemikal at delikadong basura na nakasasama sa kalusugan at kapaligiran.

Sinabi pa ng DENR na dalawang taon matapos pagtibayin ang batas, naglabas ang DENR ng mga panuntunan at patakaran dito sa pamamagitan ng DENR Administrative Order No. 1992-29.

Ayon sa EMB, naaayon umano ang batas, panuntunan at patakaran sa tadhana Basel Convention sa Control of Transboundary Movement ng Hazardous Wastes at Disposal noong 1994.

Sa pamamagitan ng RA 6969, may kontrol na ang DENR sa mga basurang electrical at electronic equipment na mabilis na lumalaking basura sa Pilipinas.

Ayon sa Global Environment Report, may 3.9 kilo na e-waste ng bawat tao sa nakalipas na taon.

Kaya naman, nitong 2019, nakapagtala ang Pilipinas ng kabuuang 32,664.41 tonelada ng naturang mga basura, ayon namang sa EMB.

Sinabi ng EMB, ang e-waste na computers, television (TV) sets, refrigerators, cell phones at iba pang electronic devices ay pinaghalo-halong materyales na may delikadong laman at kung hindi umano maayos ang paghawak sa mga ito, magbubunga ng mga problema sa kalusugan at kapaligiran.

Noon namang 2013, nagpalabas ang DENR ng mga gabay para sa paghawak sa mga nasabing basura na naglalaman ng mga nakalalasang kemikal gaya ng lead, cadmium, mercury at hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyls at polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE). Santi Celario

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/batas-at-kontrol-sa-e-waste-umarangkada-na/>



Collecting water hyacinths as source of livelihood for Taytay fisherfolk

Published October 29, 2020, 5:09 PM

by [Nel Andrade](#)

Taytay, RIZAL – For one month, fishermen here will have a chance to earn extra income, not for fishing, but for gathering water hyacinths that have become a menace in the town and nearby areas in Metro Manila.

Mayor George Ricardo Gacula II said that Taytay fishermen will have the chance to earn extra money out of the water hyacinths that they will turn over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Gacula said DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda personally made the assurance to the town's fisherfolk that they will be receiving P1.50 per kilo of water hyacinth they will turn over to the DENR.

Antiporda said the project will be initially done for a month and may be extended depending on the need as overpopulation of water hyacinths is a perennial problem in Laguna Lake.

Floodway area in Barangay San Juan is being targeted for the water hyacinth collection project, leading to Pasig River and Manila Bay.

Boats will be customized to serve as receptacles of the collected water hyacinths according to Usec. Antiporda.

During this period of the year, water hyacinths are blocking the major waterways in Laguna Lake and other tributaries and river systems in the province.

Aside from waterways in Taytay, large portions of Laguna Lake, especially in the Cardona side, are also being populated by water hyacinths affecting the livelihood opportunities of fisherfolk in the lakeshore villages in the town.



Combating illegal wildlife trade amid the pandemic

Despite the lockdowns forced by the pandemic, the illegal wildlife trade—a P50-billion-a-year criminal enterprise in the Philippines—has flourished even while migrating many operations online. But the good ones are staying a step ahead of them.

By Jonathan L. Mayuga October 29, 2020



Large-billed Crow, Black-naped Oriole and Pink-neck Green Pigeon

ON October 11 the Bureau of Customs intercepted a live reticulated python from an outbound parcel in the warehouse of DHL, a German courier, at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

The New York-bound parcel was declared as “wood curtains,” “lanterns” and “rattan basket”, except that the “rattan basket” contained the python, commonly known as *sama* in the Philippines.

Wildlife law enforcers believe the smuggling attempt will happen again and again, especially now that the government has decided to soon ease the restriction on non-essential travels to open up the economy, and hopefully boost tourism and kickstart the economy after the long economic slump during the pandemic-forced lockdowns.

Community quarantine impacts

DESPITE the community quarantines that resulted in travel restrictions across the globe, the challenge posed by the illegal wildlife trade, a P50-billion-a-year industry in the Philippines, became even more alarming amid the public health emergency.

The environmental pressure is aggravated by the economic impact of the community quarantines that compelled tens of thousands of businesses to close shop, in the process rendering millions of Filipinos jobless, Nilo Tamera, the chief of the DENR’s Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force (EPETF), said.

Tamera said such economic situation gave rise to so-called “plantitos” and “plantitas” whose “hobby” and desire to cash in from “plant parenting” turned them into instant customers of enterprising Filipinos who have been gathering wild plants in the forests for easy cash.

“Before, we only go after traders of wild animals. Now, we are also busy going after plant poachers,” Tamera said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Collection guidelines, special permits

UNDER the Wildlife Act, collecting plants in the forest, especially in Protected Areas, requires a special permit coming from the DENR, Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, concurrent director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), said.



Otherwise, Calderon said those collecting plants, like those illegally catching wild animals, risk being slapped with penalties and fines under the law upon apprehension.

According to Calderon, collection permits are issued on condition that the collectors will not sell the plants they gathered, but may propagate and sell the progeny. This, however, will require strict monitoring by the DENR.

As such, the DENR official said the issuance of collector's permits comes after due diligence.

Tamoria added that there's a proposal to register wild plants by those who engage in propagation and trading. "Like animals, these plants should be registered so that we will know if they are progenies or legally acquired," says Tamoria.

Beside, he said, not all plants —or even animals—can survive outside their natural habitats, a reason for DENR's strict enforcement of the law.

IWT trends

EMERSON Y. SY, a researcher at the anti-wildlife trafficking non-government organization TRAFFIC, said that aside from the fact that the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) has worsened, the Covid-19 pandemic and the community lockdowns in the Philippines saw the illegal wildlife trade shifting from Palawan species to Luzon species. Sy was referring to targeted bird species by traders catering to the illicit pet trade. As for reptiles, he said there was not much of a change or shift.

"Palawan wildlife is very dissimilar to the rest of the country. Palawan's wildlife is more similar to that of Borneo," he said.

To demonstrate, he said that in 2018, the top 5 illegally traded native birds were the Palawan Hill Myna, Blue-naped Parrot, Lowland White-eye, Philippine Hanging Parrot and Brahminy Kite. In 2019 it's the Palawan Hill Myna, Black-naped Oriole, Blue-naped Parrot, Blue-crowned Racquet-tail and Large-billed Crow.

In 2020, from January to August, the top 5 illegally traded species are the Black-naped Oriole, White-eared Brown Dove, Philippine Hanging Parrot, Large-billed Crow and Pink-necked Green Pigeon.

Reduced mobility, checkpoints

THE new trend or shift from Palawan to Luzon birds as the target may be explained by the strict enforcement of the community quarantine rules where travel is greatly reduced. "Illegal wildlife traders have trouble smuggling species out of Palawan to mainland Luzon because there are too many checkpoints," he said.

"Before, apprehensions involved Mynah and Blue-naped Parrots, but since the lockdown, more birds can be found in mainland Luzon." This, he said, may be because of the fact that most traders are from mainland Luzon. Although Palawan is politically part of Luzon, biogeographically Palawan does not belong to Luzon, that is why the wildlife on the island paradise can be considered rare or exotic, compared to that in mainland Luzon.

Another factor that can be considered as the reason for the shift of IWT from Palawan to mainland Luzon is the fact that law-enforcement activities have intensified more in Palawan specifically targeting those engaging in IWT.



Pandemic accomplishments

DESPITE the pandemic, the BMB's Wildlife Confiscation Record reveals substantial accomplishments. Apprehensions include exotic animals such as the seizure of two Serval Cats, Ducorp Cockatoo, Blue and Gold Macaw on May 5 in Antipolo, Rizal; A White-breasted Sea Eagle, 2 Brahminy Kites, a Changeable Hawk-Eagle seized on June 6, in Santa Mesa, Manila.

On July 9, authorities also confiscated in Tondo, Manila, six Diamondback Terrapins, three African spurred Tortoises, 11 Black Pond Turtles, and 22 Red-footed Tortoises.

Four other operations in various parts of Metro Manila and Cainta, Rizal, between June 8 and August 25 resulted in the confiscation of agarwood derivatives weighing a total of 27.36 kilos. Agarwood is critically endangered and its derivatives are highly in demand. Because of its rare fragrance, it sells for as much as \$30,000 per kilogram.

Online selling

MEANWHILE, noticeable is the fact that many people are now into online selling, including bird traps.

According to Sy, the strict enforcement of community quarantines had somehow benefited the fight against illegal wildlife trade. Because of this, he said there was a shift of the market from physical to online.

“This should be a cue for law enforcers to also shift monitoring and enforcement online.” In particular, he said law enforcers should be monitoring Facebook, jabbing at the social-media platform's failure to curb illegal selling of wild-caught animals and even equipment that can be used to catch them in the wild.

“The biggest challenge now is [that] Facebook is not doing enough to shut down groups and accounts engaged in illegal trade on its platform,” he said.

According to Sy, the DENR through the BMB is monitoring social media actively. However, he said “they need more staff since there are hundreds of wildlife trade groups on Facebook.”

According to Sy, IWT is a demand-driven market. “Buyers dictate what wild species are desirable [endangered, perceived to be rare] and the price,” he said.

The fight continues

EVEN though it is the agency mandated to enforce various environmental laws, DENR is compelled to operate under strict quarantine rules set by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases.

The DENR has been operating with a skeletal workforce until now, while the rest are on a work-from-home scheme. But that has not stopped the illicit activities of unscrupulous people at the expense of the country's threatened wildlife—both plants and animals.

The implementation and enforcement of environmental laws saw no hindrance and obstacles even with the Covid-19 pandemic, Tamoria said.



“We have established a network of assets for information and intelligence gathering, be it from reports directly addressed to the office, anonymous tips and posts from social-media platforms,” he said.

In coordination with other law-enforcement agencies, the EPETF has significantly apprehended environmental offenders and confiscated illegally traded wildlife and agarwood, notwithstanding threats from armed and dangerous criminals.

According to Tamoria, the only way to effectively fight illegal wildlife trade—the fourth largest transnational crime next to drugs, arms and human trafficking—is by establishing a law-enforcement unit dedicated to fighting environmental crimes. He is referring to the proposed bill creating the Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau which is gaining traction in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

He said the only way to fight environmental crimes is by creating an enforcement bureau specializing in the enforcement of various environmental laws.

“That is why we are pushing for the enactment of a law that will create a separate enforcement bureau within the DENR to fight environmental crimes, particularly the illegal wildlife trade,” he said.

Image credits: [David Havel | Dreamstime.com](#)



Heavy siltation, poor coral found

By [Mae Fhel K. Gom-os](#)(The Freeman)

- October 30, 2020 - 12:00am



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Environmental Management Bureau in Region 7 have conducted assessment to the corals, fish biomass, seagrass and the ambient air and water sampling. [Philstar.com/Efigenio Toledo IV, file](#)

CEBU, Philippines — Authorities have found heavy siltation and poor coral conditions in the seabed near the Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC) in the southern town of Alcoy.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Environmental Management Bureau in Region 7 have conducted assessment to the corals, fish biomass, seagrass and the ambient air and water sampling.

In a report of Sugbo News, the Capitol news website, Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia met Tuesday with representatives from DENR-7 and EMB-7 after the assessment.

The EMB's sampling team showed that there were excessive total suspended solids (TSS) in milligrams per liter (mg/L) collected through water samples taken from the three stations of PMSC on October 14 which means there is heavy siltation in the areas assessed.

In station one in Barangay Poblacion, the water samples exceeded the guideline value of 25 mg/L with the results taken from the water sections.

The surface section has 191 mg/L, while 176 mg/L in the middle, and 192 mg/L in the bottom.

TSS is defined as solids in the water that can be trapped by a filter. This can be measured through a pre-weighed filter using the water sample.



Water samples taken from the station two or at the south side of PMSC also showed excessive TSS.

With a guideline value of only 80 mg/L, the water samples exceeded having the TSS of 191 mg/L, 176 mg/L, and 192 mg/L, respectively.

This also manifested in the water samples taken in the station four in Balud-Consolacion in Dalaguete town.

With a guideline value of only 25 mg/L, the samples showed 164 mg/L, 185 mg/L, and 192 mg/L, respectively.

The DENR-7, for their part, showed that coral reefs at the areas are typically patches except portions in the pier area in Poblacion, Alcoy as well as the deeper areas in Balud-Consolacion in Dalaguete.

The assessment results undertaken currently and in 2017 were categorized under poor condition of coral cover as old coral rubbles and high levels of macroalgae are present in both PMSC areas.

Garcia is set to write a letter to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu regarding the consolidated report of DENR-7 and EMB-7 on the damage the PMSC has caused in the seawaters.

She added that Provincial Board Member John Ismael Borgonia who chairs the PB committee on environment and natural resources will also be furnished a copy of the letter in order for the PB to take necessary action on the matter.

Garcia said this way, they will be properly informing the EMB that the pending renewal of the water discharge permit of PMSC will bear strong opposition from the PB should such renewal would happen. — **GMR (FREEMAN)**



Authorities nab 7 illegal loggers in Bulacan

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

October 29, 2020

LOCAL authorities apprehended seven suspected illegal loggers in the boundary between Bulacan and Rizal watershed, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported.

The arrest was the result of the massive anti-illegal logging operation of the combined operatives of the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources (Cenro) based in Guiguinto, Bulacan and the DENR regional office Enforcement Division, the 48th Infantry Battalion (IB) of the Philippine Army (PA) and the Angat Watershed Area Team (Awat) of the National Power Corporation (NPC).

DENR-Cenro head Rolly Mulato said the suspects were caught while hauling illegally-cut lumber fitches using horses and "kolong-kolong" in Mount Balabag and Sitio Pulang Lupa in Barangay San Isidro, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan and in Sitio Ilas, Barangay Makaingalan in Rodriguez, Rizal.

"The style of this individual is to illegally cut trees here in Ipo watershed portion of Bulacan and transport it down to a near village in Rodriguez, Rizal where they will try to sell it," he said.

Mulato identified the suspects as Diego Agudes Esto, Marlon Inggo Keling, Armando Agudes Esto, Ian Hermosa Lagos, Ronel Asiong Cocoy, Melvin Alacha Caballero, and Apolinario Avener Jr. De Asis, all from Puroy village in Rodriguez, Rizal.

Isagani Navalta, chief of the enforcement section of Cenro Guiguinto, said a total of 1,750 board feet of illegally-cut fitches of lumber worth P61,250, including four horses, two multi-cabs, and a motorized "kolong-kolong," were also seized from the suspects.

The DENR appealed to the public to report any illegal forest activities in the forests and watersheds of Bulacan to save the remaining forests of the province.

The DENR is now preparing to file criminal charges against the suspects for violation of the Forestry Code of the Philippines or Presidential Decree (PD) 705.

Earlier, five suspected illegal loggers were also arrested by the joint operatives of the DENR-Cenro, Baliwag in Bulacan, Philippine National Police (PNP) of Dona Remedios Trinidad (DRT) in Bulacan and the NPC-Awat in the forested area of Camachin village in DRT during an anti-illegal logging operation.

The more than 6,000-hectare Ipo watershed is part of the much larger Angat watershed, which supplies the 97 percent water requirement of over 13 million population of Metro Manila.



Forest ranger, binaril-patay habang nasa anti-illegal logging ops sa Agusan Sur

By **Bombo Radyo Butuan** -October 30, 2020 | 12:22 AM

BUTUAN CITY – Pursigido ang pamilya ng isang forest ranger na kasuhan ang apat na mga responsable ng pagbaril-patay nito kagahapon.

Naila ang biktimang si Marianito Rufano, residente ng Brgy. Bayugan 3, Rosario, Agusan del Sur at nadestino sa Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Bunawan.

Sa eksklusibong pakighinabi sa Bombo Radyo Butuan, inihayag ni CENRO-Bunawan Jerome Albia na nangyayari ito dakong alas-2:30 kahapon ng hapon nang pa-uwi na sana mula sa dalawang araw nilang operasyon.

Sa siyam na mga naglunsad ng operasyon, una umanong umalis ang biktima kungsaan pinara ito ng noo’y hindi pa kilalang mga armadong lalaki at dito na sinaksak at binril ngunit nakaganti pa ang biktima kungsaan dalawa sa mga suspek ang nagawa na nitong tamaan.

Dito na sumuko ang dalawang iba pa sa pinakamalapit na detachment habang sa police station naman ang isang iba pa.

Narekober sa crime scene ang isang kalibre 45 na pistola at limang mga bala at isang bolo.

Susuportahan naman ng CENRO-Bunawan ang na-iwang pamilya ng biktima sa aspetong legal lalo na’t nangyari ang kremin habang ito’y nasa tour of duty.

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/forest-ranger-binaril-patay-habang-nasa-anti-illegal-logging-ops-sa-agusan-sur/>



EMB notes lack of wastewater facilities

[JONATHAN LLANES](#)

October 29, 2020

ALTHOUGH most industries and establishments in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) are compliant with the water and air quality requirements set by the government, some still lack wastewater treatment facilities.

The Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera (DENR-CAR) warned these businesses to comply or face sanctions.

Engineer Louell Barton Jr., Engineer III of the Water and Air Management Section of the Environmental and Enforcement Division of EMB-CAR, said aside from minor glitches, the region is still compliant with the clean air and water acts.

“For water quality, generally for the Baguio and Benguet area, our establishments are very compliant. Of course, we cannot do away with minor non-compliances like manufacturing industries. We also have gasoline stations that have very minimal waste management generation, but in general, the Cordillera Administrative Region is very compliant when it comes to wastewater and with the provisions of the clean water act,” Barton said.

Barton said the EMB regularly checks different establishments in Baguio City, particularly those in the export industry, and are given reprimands.

“Not all establishments have their own waste-to-water facilities connected to the city and provincial sewer lines. Those establishments that discharge their effluents to any receiving water body needs to get a discharge permit from the EMB,” Barton added.

Barton said the EMB conducts quarterly testing of water samples for those having discharge permits.

DENR Administrative Order 2016-08 sets parameters and standards for compliance, depending on the classification of a river system, aside from predetermined priority parameters in which a specific establishment should comply.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1875137/Baguio/Local-News/EMB-notes-lack-of-wastewater-facilities>



Pena: EPA or EPEB?

[ROX PENA](#)

October 29, 2020

OUR country is blessed with rich natural resources. As good stewards, we have to preserve this wealth for the future generations. Leading this task is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the government agency responsible for the conservation, management, development, and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources.

In the performance of its mandate, the DENR enforces many environmental laws including those related to pollution prevention. Preventing pollution is a highly technical and specialized field. This job is done by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) which is a line bureau of the DENR. It is manned mostly by Engineers.

To enable the DENR to concentrate on its core mandate, there were moves in the past to create a separate agency to handle the task of enforcing environmental laws related to pollution prevention. This agency is similar to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of the United States. Other environmental laws such as forestry and wildlife protection will be handled by the DENR whose key personnel are mostly foresters.

It was in 2010 when Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri proposed the creation of an EPA-like body. The proposed name is also Environmental Protection Agency. It will be independent of the DENR. It would have broad powers for research, standard-setting, monitoring and enforcement with regard to five environmental hazards namely air and water pollution, solid waste disposal, radiation and pesticides.

The powers, functions, duties and responsibilities of some of the DENR's line agencies such as the EMB, the Protected Wildlife, Pollution Adjudication Board and the National Water and Air Pollution Control Commission would be transferred to the EPA. In fact, the EMB might altogether be abolished or absorbed by the new agency.

The proposed EPA did not materialize. In this present congress however, bills were filed in both houses to create an enforcement bureau, but it is within the DENR. It is not an independent agency. Since last year, DENR Secretary Cimatu has been advocating for the creation of this enforcement arm. The environment chief said that the DENR lacked teeth in enforcing the country's environmental laws. Their unarmed frontline workers are being killed in the line of duty.

Last June 15, former Senator, and now Antique Rep. Loren Legarda, filed House Bill 6973 establishing the Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau (EPEB). This is the enforcement arm that Sec. Cimatu is pushing for. The measure is now pending with the House Committees on Government Reorganization and on Natural Resources.

At the upper house, Senator Nancy Binay filed on October 12 Senate Bill 1878, their counterpart bill creating the EPEB. If enacted, the EPEB would consolidate and harmonize all enforcement functions performed by the DENR's different bureaus and attached agencies. An Environmental and Natural Resources Law Enforcement Academy will also be established to train ENR law enforcers.

Personally, I prefer the creation of an EPA rather than an EPEB. It would be great if both are created. The EPEB will enforce all laws not covered by EPA such as those related to forestry, wildlife, fisheries, mining and protected areas. Forest rangers can be armed too.



Of death and hope for the Tamaraw Rangers

By Gab Mejia October 30, 2020

MOUNTS IGLIT-BACO, Occidental Mindoro: Gunshots echoed across the verdant fields of the mountain. Fear and silence followed in its wake. Throughout the nearly seven long months of the pandemic, it was not just the virus that the Tamaraw Rangers feared but the bullets in the sky. The pandemic has left the environmental defenders of the Philippines in peril as wildlife atrocities surge at an alarming rate. The Tamaraw Rangers have been left to face this crisis without institutional support after unprecedented budget cuts and strict travel restrictions hindered our wildlife rangers' movement and emergency response to protect and conserve our beloved national icon, the Tamaraw. About two months ago on August 28, another adult Tamaraw was killed and poached in the grassy steppes of the Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park — a 106,655-hectare protected area, where the last few remaining wild populations of the critically endangered Tamaraw roams. It was another tragic loss as strips of bushmeat of the poached Tamaraw were seen being dried under the sun and above the land where it should have roamed free — leaving nothing but droplets of blood on the slivers of grass in the mountains dedicated to their entire existence. With only an estimated 500 individual Tamaraws left in the wild, every single loss is a step closer to its extinction. The Tamaraw Rangers have taken the brunt of the pandemic, while Filipinos take advantage of this crisis as a means to poach and destroy the wildlife habitats where today rangers are pinned to the ground, making ends meet while trying to save an entire species from extinction. Our wildlife rangers have faced the threats of unemployment amid the socioeconomic impacts of this pandemic — only to risk their lives dodging bullets to protect what they love. Yet the sound of firing guns was not the only tragedy in this long and complex ordeal, but the death of the last captive-bred Tamaraw, Kali.



Tamaraw Ranger Eduardo Bata says his final goodbye to Kalibasib, the last captive-bred Tamaraw on the planet, as his remains were put in cold storage for preservation on Oct. 24, 2020. October is the Animal Welfare and National Tamaraw Month. Photo by Gab Mejia

At around 2:30 p.m. on October 10, Kali took his last breath in a lonely corner of the enclosure he had lived in for 21 years. Twenty-one long years the Tamaraw Rangers fed and cared for him every single day of his life without fail; 21 long years of service to protect not just a beast, but a brother. And on Kali's timely death — occurring on the National Tamaraw Month dedicated to the lives of his brothers and sisters in the wild — people gathered together to support the very people protecting him, our Tamaraw Rangers. More than P1.1 million has already been raised through the efforts of the Biodiversity Finance Initiative of the United Nations Development Program, and the Tamaraw Conservation Program headed by Neil Anthony del Mundo, with partner organizations across the nation to support the Tamaraw Rangers at a crucial time when they need it the most. And through Kali's death, new conservation initiatives, efforts and studies are being pushed to increase the population of the Tamaraws and save their species from the brink of demise.

National Tamaraw Month may be ending, and both the tame and the wild may have died — but never should we lose hope. The fight to support our Tamaraw Rangers and environmental frontliners must live on!

This article is supported by the National Geographic Society.

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<https://www.instagram.com/gabmejia/>

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/10/30/opinion/columnists/of-death-and-hope-for-the-tamaraw-rangers/788797/>



#SustainAbilidad: Quarantine Waste Management

By [The Manila Times](#)

October 30, 2020



There's no denying that Filipino's lifestyle, habits and consumption patterns have radically changed after six months into the community quarantine due to coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). As we are compelled to stay at home, we have relied more on deliveries for food, online shopping, and other essentials — posing additional environmental challenges because of our increased municipal solid waste (MSW) and hazardous waste.

Even before the pandemic, the Philippines has been navigating through overwhelming volume of waste. According to a 2015 report by the Ocean Conservancy and McKinsey Center for Business and Environment, the Philippines ranks third among the world's highest contributors to the global marine plastic pollution problem.

But were you aware that household waste contribute to the biggest chunk of solid wastes in the country? The National Solid Waste Management Status Report 2008 — 2014 of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) showed that residential waste constitutes the bulk of MSW (56.7 percent), followed by commercial sources and public or private markets (27.1 percent).

Now, the biggest challenge is for us to break old habits and adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Through its business activities, Ajinomoto Philippines Corporation (APC) has always been committed in engaging in initiatives that solve social issues which include global sustainability. With environment educational campaign dubbed as #SustainAbilidad, APC aims to aid consumers to incorporate sustainable practices into their daily activities. This campaign includes social media promotions featuring Super Suzy and her kid, the main characters representing ordinary people that champion global sustainability to teach and inspire young and old members of their family and community to bring out their "SustainAbilidad."

Visit [facebook.com/CookmunitybyAjinomotoPH/](https://www.facebook.com/CookmunitybyAjinomotoPH/) to learn more about #SustainAbilidad.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/10/30/public-square/sustainabilidad-quarantine-waste-management/788895/>



Illegal reclamation site, sinalakay ng NBI



October 29, 2020 @ 7:33 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sinalakay ng National Bureau of Investigation-Environmental Crime Division ang isang umano'y iligal na reclamation project sa Kawit, Cavite kung saan tinabunan ang isang bahagi ng ilog at sinira ang mga bakawan.

Tatlong suspek na nag-ooperate ng mga heavy equipments sa Ylang-Ylang river sa bayan ng Kawit, Cavite ang inaresto ng NBI.

Hindi rin muna pinangalanan ng NBI ang kumpanya na nag-ooperate ng naturang reclamation dahil isinasailalim pa ang mga ito sa interogasyon.

Ayon kay Atty. Eric Nuqui, hepe ng NBI-Environmental Crime Division, natuklasan nila na walang permit mula sa mga kinauukulang ahensiya ng pamahalaan ang kompanyang nasa likod ng reclamation project.

Sa ibinahaging larawan naman ng mga residente sa NBI, makikita na maayos pang nakadadaloy ang tubig sa Ylang-Ylang River at malalago ang mga bakawan.

Ngunit nakita sa kuha ng aerial drone, halos isang ektarya ng bakawan ang nasira at tinabunan na ng lupa ang ilog.

Dahil dito, maaari umanong masama ang epekto ng pagtabon sa ilog dahil magresulta ito ng pagbaha sa Kawit at mga karatig-bayan dahil sa wala nang pupuntahan ang tubig.

Ang bakawan naman ay ang unang depensa ng mga residente laban sa malalakas na bagyo at daluyong ng tubig.

Ayon sa NBI, inihahanda na ang kasong isadampa laban sa mga naaresto at mga nasa likod ng iligal na reclamation. (Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden)



San Miguel vows to help clean up Bulacan rivers

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

October 29, 2020

San Miguel Corp. (SMC) is gearing up for the construction of its P734-billion Manila International Airport in Bulakan, Bulacan and has vowed to help solve the province's perennial flooding problem.

With the support of concerned local government units (LGUs) in the province, SMC said it aims to widen and dredge or remove silts and other debris in major waterways to allow the smooth flow of water.

In a statement, SMC President and Chief Operating Officer Ramon S. Ang said the company had been in talks with local government units and other stakeholders the past few weeks, to outline the company's flood mitigation strategy.

He said concerned LGUs and other stakeholders had been requesting for SMC to replicate its ongoing P1-billion Tullahan-Tinajeros River System dredging project in Bulacan, to help mitigate flooding which has affected Bulacan residents, particularly those living in the low-lying areas of the province.

"Cleaning up major rivers in Bulacan is really part of our plan. That is why many stakeholders, led by the provincial government and local government units, welcome (to) the project. We have committed to help with this issue and show that this airport project will not only provide jobs and boost the economy but will also provide a long-term solution to the perennial flooding in Bulacan," Ang said.

As part of SMC's commitment, the tributaries belonging to the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River System (MMORS) will be subjected to river channel improvement.

The plan, he said, is to dredge, widen, and deepen the Alipit or Taliptip River, Sta. Maria River, and the Meycauayan River, to address the risk of upstream flooding.

For the Alipit River, Ang said the target is to achieve a bottom width of 60 meters and a depth of 2.5 meters, mean sea level (MSL) throughout its 7.21-kilometer length. For the Sta. Maria River, the target is a bottom width of 90m, dredged depth of 5.0m MSL, and length of 0.50 km.

Meanwhile, for the Meycauayan River, the target bottom width is 80m; dredged depth, 4.5m MSL, and length of 4.46 km.

Ang revealed that SMC has also studied future improvements to alleviate the potential risk of flooding, as continued urban development, can increase surface runoff volumes. These include further dredging the rivers to increase their top width and dredged depth.

"Constant dredging and cleanup is important for these tributaries leading to the Manila Bay as silt, trash, and other obstructions restrict the free flow of water, caused heavy flooding, and affecting the marine ecosystem and traditional fishing grounds," he said.



“By dredging, cleaning, and widening these tributaries both in Bulacan along with the Tullahan River System, we can increase their capacity to carry excess rainwater and thus reduce flooding.”

SMC’s flood mitigation strategy will complement the Department of Public Works and Highways’ Valenzuela-Obando-Meycauayan Area Drainage System Improvement Project, further improving overall flood mitigation in the province.

Early this year, SMC launched its 5-year, P1-billion initiative to dredge and clean the Tullahan River. Some 600 metric tons (MT) of dredged soil and solid wastes are being collected daily from the initial 5.25-kilometer stretch from Navotas to Malabon City.

As of October 25, a total of 49,281 MT of silt and solid wastes have been extracted. The entire project spans 27 km from the La Mesa Dam to Navotas City leading to the Manila Bay.

The Tullahan River dredging project is in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and is part of the government’s efforts to rehabilitate the Manila Bay. Tullahan River, also acts as a spillway for water coming from Angat and Ipo Dams.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, SMC has committed to pursuing various infrastructure projects to help stimulate the economy, including building the airport, which is seen to generate millions of direct and indirect jobs. At P734 billion, it is the largest single-item investment in the history of the Philippines.

SMC acquired larger excavators, a fleet of barges, tugboats, cranes, and dump trucks for the project, and is looking to acquire more as the project progresses.



October 29, 2020

Harvard Study Finds Low Level Of Climate Change Awareness Among Filipinos

A study published by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative shows that 59.9 percent of the 5,184 Filipino adults included in the survey have low or very low knowledge about climate change.

Janvic Mateo Thursday, October 29, 2020



A girl walks through a flooded village in Calumpit, Bulacan caused by a swollen Pampanga River on Oct. 26, 2020 as Typhoon Quinta battered Luzon. Photo by Michael Varcas

Even with the Philippines “disproportionately impacted” by the effects of climate change, only a small percentage of Filipinos are well informed about the issue, a recently published study by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) showed.

But the same study, published in the latest issue of the academic journal *Climate Risk Management*, also revealed high concern among Filipinos about the impact of climate change on their lives.

HHI researchers conducted a nationwide survey in 2017 to determine public perception of climate change and disaster preparedness among Filipinos.

It showed that 59.9 percent of the 5,184 adults included in the survey have low or very low knowledge about climate change.

Only 11.7 percent said they heard a lot or felt extremely well informed about the issue, while the remaining 28.4 percent said they felt somewhat informed.

Almost half of the respondents or 42.2 percent agreed that the disasters they had experienced were due to climate change, while 28.3 percent thought these were not at all or only slightly due to climate change.

The remaining 29.5 percent believed that disasters they experienced were “somewhat” due to climate change.

When asked about the causes of climate change, 46.9 percent of respondents believed it to be due to both natural and human factors while 32.4 percent attributed it mainly to human activity. Twenty percent believed climate change was purely due to natural processes.

Across regions, low-level awareness of climate change was highest among respondents from Bicol (71.7 percent), which is among those heavily affected by typhoons that hit the country.



It was followed by Zamboanga Peninsula (70.4 percent), Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (70.8 percent), Mimaropa (65.4 percent), Calabarzon (62.1 percent) and Soccsksargen (60.8 percent).

Respondents from Caraga had the highest level of awareness about climate change among respondents (23.8 percent), followed by the Cordillera Administrative Region (21.3 percent), Northern Mindanao (19.6 percent), Davao (19.2 percent), Soccsksargen (17.9 percent) and Cagayan Valley (15.8 percent).

High level of concern

Despite the low public awareness on climate change, the study found that most Filipinos were concerned about its potential impacts.

Some 71.4 percent of the respondents believe they will be somewhat affected by climate change, with the likely reported impacts seen to include harm, injury or illness (55.6 percent); loss of income (21.4 percent); damage to crops (19.7 percent); damage to house and property (19 percent), and farming or change of livelihood (18.3 percent).

Those living in Eastern Visayas, which was battered by Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013, were most concerned about damage to houses (40.8 percent) and impact on farming (39.7 percent).

Almost seven in every 10 respondents in Metro Manila were concerned about the impacts of climate change on health, particularly resulting in harm, injury or illness, while 56.5 percent of those living in Davao were concerned about the impact of climate change on their household income.

“Our data demonstrate that those Filipinos that are concerned about the impacts of climate change take actions to prepare for future disasters,” said HHI communities program director Vincenzo Bollettino, one of the authors of the study.

“These findings support efforts taken to raise awareness of climate change and its anticipated impacts on the Philippines,” he added.

The paper was co-authored by Tilly Alcayna-Stevens, Manasi Sharma, Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck of the HHI and Philip Dy of the Harvard Kennedy School.

Preparedness activities

The study also found that 53.1 percent of the respondents have undertaken some form of preparation for natural disasters in the past five years.

These include training activities, disaster planning, and material preparedness such as retrofitting homes and storing emergency food supplies and equipment.

According to researchers, previous experience and education are associated with disaster preparedness.

“Filipinos’ previous direct experience with disasters in the past five years and their level of education are both important factors that increase significantly the odds that they engage in disaster preparedness activities and make material investments in disaster preparedness,” read the paper.



“Regarding previous experience with disaster, we found that direct experience with a disaster is positively associated with preparedness activities,” it added.

It also noted that membership in a community organization is highly correlated with actions to prepare for disasters.

“The findings imply that, while posing different challenges and requiring different responses, adaptation to climate change and disaster preparedness are inherently associated and potentially mutually reinforcing,” the researchers declared.

“Policies and programs would arguably benefit from a more unified intervention framework that links climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness,” they said.

Source: https://www.onenews.ph/harvard-study-finds-low-level-of-climate-change-awareness-among-filipinos?fbclid=IwAR2k2RfoLz_3k8hbSXteBsvD811qG1bJw_U0EelSyubfLs78EigpGlm8RP
[c](#)

LOOK: Coast Guard rescues green sea turtle in Bohol

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Oct 29 2020 08:48 AM

MANILA - Coast Guard personnel rescued a green sea turtle trapped in a fish cage in waters off Barangay Achila in Ubay, Bohol during the onslaught of typhoon Quinta on Monday.



In a Facebook post, the PCG said the turtle measured 3.5 feet in length and 2.5 feet in width and weighed 100 kilograms.





Dead pregnant dolphin washes ashore at Bohol town village

By: [Leo Udtohan](#) - Correspondent / [@leoudtohanINQ](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 08:07 PM October 29, 2020



A pregnant Fraser's dolphin was found dead on the shores of Bahi village in Albuquerque town, Bohol province on Wednesday.

PHOTO FROM BOHOL ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

TAGBILARAN CITY – A dolphin was found dead in waters off the village of Bahi in Alburquerque town, Bohol province on Wednesday (Oct. 29).

In a post on Facebook, the Bohol Environment Management Office, said villagers found a mature Fraser's dolphin.

During necropsy conducted by Dr. Jo Marie Acebes, senior researcher of the National Museum of the Philippines, said the dolphin was pregnant.

The fetus was a male Fraser's dolphin with a length of 40 centimeters.

The dolphin was buried in a beach near where it was washed ashore.

Edited by TSB



GMA News

11h



A night heron was found dead from entanglement in a kite string in the previously protected area of the UP Arboretum in Diliman campus.

The UP Wild urges people to be more responsible with their actions, no matter how simple, so as to protect the environment and save wildlife.

Courtesy: Michael Magtoto via The UP Wild



👍👎👏 20K

1K Comments 1K Shares



Centennial tree uprooted



October 29, 2020

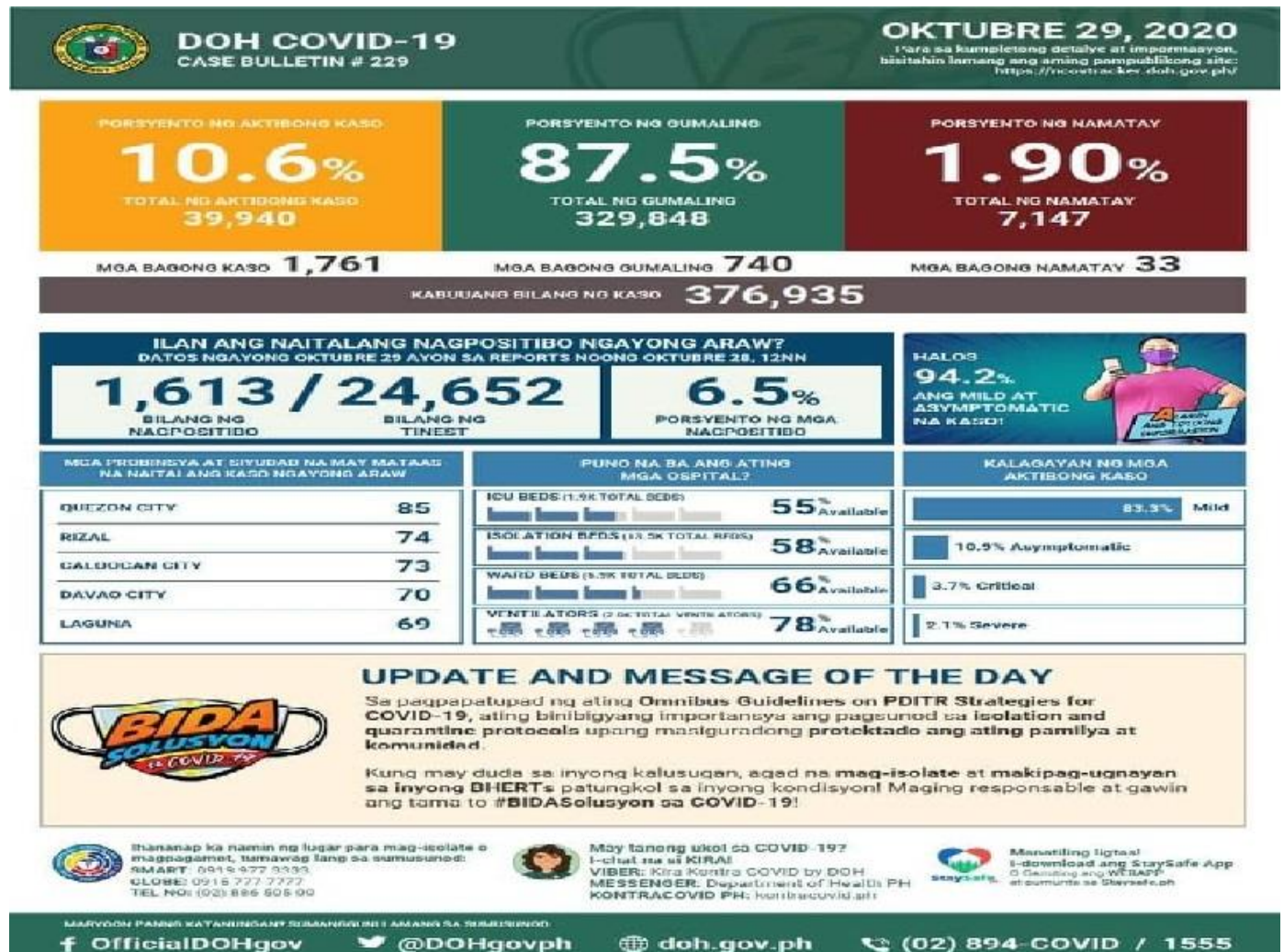
VALLADOLID. The centennial tree beside the national highway of Valladolid town was uprooted early Thursday morning, October 29, 2020. The municipal government, in a Facebook post, said the tree's rotten root can no longer hold its weight. The 20-foot-high tree has a circumference equivalent to five trunks of a mature coconut tree. (Mark Cabrillos photo)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1875153/Bacolod/Local-News/Centennial-tree-uprooted>



BREAKING: Kaso ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, pumalo na sa 376,935

By Angellic Jordan October 29, 2020 - 04:10 PM



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

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Huwebes (October 29), umabot na sa 376,935 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 39,940 o 10.6 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,761 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

83.3 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 10.9 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 2.1 porsyento ang severe habang 3.7 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 33 ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 7,147 o 1.90 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 740 naman ang gumaling pa sa bansa.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 329,848 o 87.5 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Source: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/272347/breaking-kaso-ng-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-pumalo-na-sa-376935>



SA KAPASKUHAN: MAY COVID-19-30M; PATAY-300K



October 30, 2020 @ 2:22 AM 4 hours ago

HALIMBAWANG wala pang bakuna laban sa coronavirus disease-19 sa katapusan ng taon, tantiya natin, may 30 milyong dagdag sa ngayo'y nasa 44.7M nang nagkasakit sa nasabing pandemya at may dagdag din na 300,000 patay sa ngayo'y nasa 1.83M patay.

Nababatay ang tantiya natin sa naglalaro sa 450,000 araw-araw na bilang ng nagkakasakit na biktima at naglalaro sa 5,000-6,000 namamatay rin araw-araw.

60 araw ang bilang natin sa dalawang buwan mula Nobyembre hanggang Disyembre 2020 at dito natin ibinatay ang forecast natin na rami ng mga biktima at patay.

Magkagayunman, sa parte ng mga nagkakasakit, naglalaro sa 10.7M ang aktibong kaso at nasa 80,421 naman ang malala o kritikal.

Karaniwang nagmumula ang mga patay sa mga aktibong kaso, lalo na mula sa mga malala at kritikal ang kalagayan.

KASAMA ANG PINAS

Tanggapin man natin o hindi, hindi maganda ang kalagayan ng Pilipinas na naglalaro sa pang-20 sa may pinakamaraming kabuuang kaso sa 215 bansa at ilang teritoryo.

Hindi rin natin masasabing consuelo natin ang pagiging 23 sa may pinakamaraming patay sa buong mundo pa rin.

Kung kailan talaga huhupa ang COVID-19, walang nakatitiyak.

Hindi naman kasi natin alam kung magaganap o hindi ang katulad ng pagsirit ng pandemya sa Europa at nanatiling kritikal na kalagayan sa United States na nangunguna sa buong mundo sa bilang ng mga nagkakasakit at namamatay araw-araw.

Basta ang nasa rekord natin ngayon, naglalaro sa 2,000 ang nagkakasakit, nasa 40-50 ang patay at nasa 500 lang ang gumagaling araw-araw.

May aktibo tayong kaso na nasa 38,000 at may 1,483 na parehong pinagmumulan ng mga patay araw-araw.

Kung sakali namang manatili sa 2,000 araw-araw ang magkakasakit at 50 araw-araw ang mamamatay, magkakaroon pa tayo ng dagdag na 120,000 maysakit at 3,000 patay sa katapusan ng taong ito.



Masakit na kalagayang ito, mga Bro.

BUONG PINAS APEKTADO

Kung sakali nga na magkakatotoo ang tantiya natin na may dagdag na 120,000 maysakit, magkakaroon na tayo ng kabuuang nasa 500,000 may virus at may dagdag na 3,000 patay, magkakaroon na tayo ng 10,000 patay sa Disyembre 2020.

Ang dalangin natin, sana hindi magkatotoo ang mga tantiya natin.

Pero ang totoo, walang Diyos ang COVID-19 at hindi nakikinig sa anomang dalangin at tuloy-tuloy ang pananalasa nito hangga't walang bakuna.

Kung meron man tayong idalangin sa ganitong kalagayan, matulad sana ang COVID-19 sa pandemya noong 1918 na may bakuna o wala, humupa at natapos din ito makalipas ang dalawang taon ngunit makaraang pumatay ng nasa 50-100M katao.

Whew!

HINDI MADALI ANG BAKUNA

Mahigit 100 milyong Pinoy ang dapat na mabakunahan.

Magandang pakinggan ang pamahalaan na nagsasabing maglalaan ito ng sapat na halaga para pambili ng bakuna.

At dapat lang na gawin ito at sa pinakamagandang paraan ang pagbili para maging mura — gobyerno sa gobyerno ang bilihan.

Subalit napakalalaki ang mga problemang kinahaharap dito gaya ng pagpakyaw ng mga mayayamang bansa sa mga bakuna.

Maaaring mapag-iwanan tayo sa pagbili at maaasahan na lang natin ang mga bansang nangangako na sa listahan nila ang mahal kong Pinas sa mga uunahin nilang pagbigyan., gaya ng China.

Ang ginagawa kasi ngayon ng mayayamang bansa, sila mismo ang isponsor sa paggawa ng mga bakuna at sila na rin ang mauunang magkakaroon ng bakuna.

Ang Amerika nga lang, nakapagbigay na ng nasa 10 bilyong dolyar sa mga tagagawa ng bakuna at nakatitiyak na itong mauna na magbabakuna sa mahigit 300 milyon nitong mamamayan.

AKSYON NG PINOY AT PAMAHALAAN

Gaano naman karami sa palagay ninyo ang unang babakunahan ng pamahalaan sa mahigit 100 milyong Pinoy?

Maaaring ang mga bata, gaya ng 27 milyong mag-aaral.

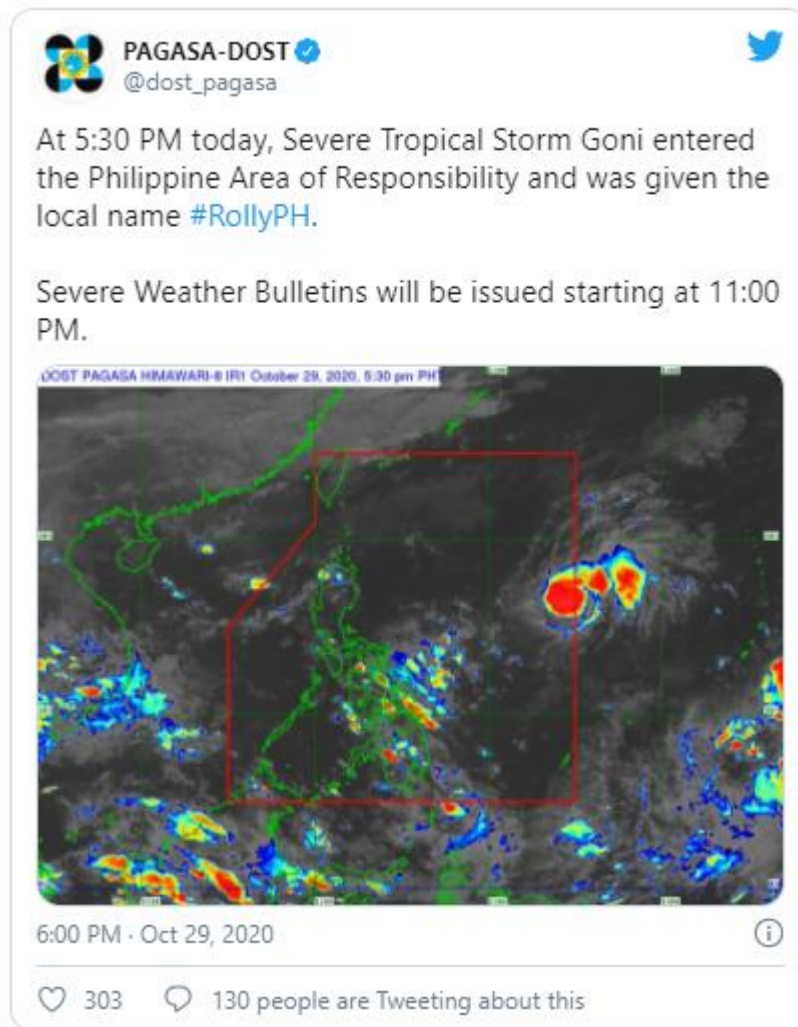
Pero sinasabing uunahing mabakunahan ang mga mahihirap.

Maaaring magsasarili ang mga mayayaman gaya ng nangyari noon sa Dengvaxia na nasa 12,000-14,000 ang tatlong turok kahit na nasa P600 lang ang halaga sa tatlong turok.



Ang pinakamaganda pa rin ay ang pagsunod sa lahat ng oras ng lahat ng health protocol na pinaiiral ng pamahalaan gaya ng pagsusuot ng face mask, face shield, social distancing at pagsunod sa mga kwarantining pinaiiral.

Hangga't walang bakuna, gawin natin lahat ng ito ng mga protocol at maging masunurin tayo sa mga kwarantina na pawang epektibong panlaban sa pagkalat ng COVID-19.



Severe tropical storm now inside PAR, now named Rolly

Published October 29, 2020 6:45pm

By MA. ANGELICA GARCIA, GMA News

Severe Tropical Storm Goni has entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility on Thursday afternoon, state weather bureau PAGASA said.

PAGASA said the weather disturbance entered PAR at 5:30 p.m. and was named “Rolly.”

A severe weather bulletin will be issued at 11 p.m., PAGASA added.

Earlier, the weather agency said Rolly was expected to move westwards by Saturday evening and west-northwestwards by Sunday toward the Quezon-Aurora area.

Signal No. 1 may be hoisted over some provinces in the Bicol region and Northern Samar by Friday evening, PAGASA said. **-NB, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/weather/761954/severe-tropical-storm-now-inside-par-now-named-rolly/story/>



Magnitude 5 quake jolts Batangas, nearby areas

By Ma. Cristina Arayata **October 29, 2020, 4:10 pm**



(Image grabbed from Phivolcs' website)

MANILA – A magnitude 5 quake jolted Batangas and was felt in nearby areas, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported on Thursday afternoon.

The tectonic quake struck 9 km. southwest of the municipality of Mabini at 1:25 p.m. Phivolcs earlier logged this as magnitude 4.5 and later updated it to magnitude 5. It had a depth of 2 km.

Intensity IV was felt in the towns of Mabini, San Luis, Lemery, Rosario, Agoncillo, Calatagan, Balayan, Bauan, Sta. Teresita; all in Batangas; and Tagaytay City, Alfonso, and Amadeo in Cavite.

Intensity III was also felt in Batangas City; Malvar, Talisay, Tanauan, and Alitagtag towns in Batangas; and San Pablo, Laguna.

Intensity II was reported in Quezon City; Mandaluyong City; Navotas City; Majayjay, Laguna; and Dolores, Quezon, while Intensity I was reported in Malabon City; Pasay City; Talisay, Batangas; and Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Some netizens in Cavite and Metro Manila also took to social media saying that they felt an earthquake past 1 p.m., and were wondering if it was really an earthquake.

Phivolcs said aftershocks are possible, while damages are not expected from the quake. (PNA)



New coral species discovered on seabed prized for mining potential

October 29, 2020 | 11:57 am



*Large corals, such as the black coral shown here, can host an abundance of associates, including several flytrap anemones (*Actinoscyphia aurelia*) and squat lobsters. These associates use the coral to get farther off the seafloor and into nutrient-delivering currents. Image courtesy of the NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration and Research, Windows to the Deep 2019*

JOHANNESBURG — Three species of black coral have been discovered on the seabed of the northern Pacific Ocean, an area where several countries have contracts to explore for metals including cobalt and nickel as they race to find new supplies of the key battery elements.

The corals were discovered on deep seamounts and ridges in the mineral-rich Prime Crust Zone, which stretches from the Mariana Trench to the Hawaiian islands, according to a paper published in scientific journal *Zootaxa* on Thursday.

Authors Dennis Opresko of the Smithsonian Institute and Daniel Wagner of Conservation International said they aimed to identify deep-sea habitats in the zone which holds the highest concentrations on Earth of cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts.

“These long-living corals are much like the redwoods of the ocean. They’re not only slow-growing and long-lived, but also provide important habitat for many other species,” Mr. Wagner said.

“Mining their habitat could potentially wipe them out before we know their true value.” China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea all hold exploration contracts in the Prime Crust Zone, according to the International Seabed Authority (ISA), a UN body in charge of regulating the ocean floors.

Environmentalists have called for a ban on deep-sea mining which would extract prized resources including cobalt, copper, nickel, and manganese from seabed nodules and crusts. Deep-sea mining could destroy as yet undiscovered species, the Ocean Panel said in June. Only around 20% of the ocean floor has been mapped to date, according to Conservation International.

The new black coral species are so named because of their black skeletons, but they can appear pink, white, or various other colors because of the living tissues growing over the skeleton.

Previous studies have found a black coral species more than 4,250 years old, Conservation International said.



The Jamaica-headquartered ISA has drawn up regulations on exploration but has yet to establish the rules for exploitation needed for deep-sea mining to go ahead.

An in-person ISA assembly was postponed from July due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and would now “most likely” take place in early December, according to the ISA website. — **Helen Reid/Reuters**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/new-coral-species-discovered-on-seabed-prized-for-mining-potential/?fbclid=IwAR1YSpJ-WDLAU7VNnVI7ZLQLdsBU57j3PpfqY62NtiPStdz-vlQXgNK86mI>



New coral species discovered on seabed prized for mining potential

Helen Reid, Reuters

Posted at Oct 29 2020 02:50 PM



New Black Coral species *Antipathes sylospongia* is seen in this handout photo from 2015 obtained by Reuters on October 28, 2020. NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration/Handout via Reuters

JOHANNESBURG— Three species of black coral have been discovered on the seabed of the northern Pacific Ocean, an area where several countries have contracts to explore for metals including cobalt and nickel as they race to find new supplies of the key battery elements.

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Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/10/29/20/new-coral-species-discovered-on-seabed-prized-for-mining-potential?fbclid=IwAR0xODXPuOLVuDYsGtbW7nENs8L6vCSd_mlRsIcLSCGU-pgWNufmsOf-5vE



UNTV News and Rescue
15h · 🌐

Natuklasan ng mga researcher sa North Queensland, Australia ang isang detached reef na mas mataas pa sa Empire State Building at mayroong healthy marine ecosystem.



YOUTUBE.COM

Detached reef na may 500-metro ang taas, natuklasan sa North Queensland, Australia

👍👎❤️ 729

9 Comments 83 Shares



Climate change: China's forest carbon uptake 'underestimated'

By Jonathan Amos
BBC Science Correspondent



Some tree planting has come from a desire to establish vibrant timber and paper industries

China's aggressive policy of planting trees is likely playing a significant role in tempering its climate impacts.

An international team has identified two areas in the country where the scale of carbon dioxide absorption by new forests has been underestimated.

Taken together, these areas account for a little over 35% of China's entire land carbon "sink", the group says.

The researchers' analysis, based on ground and satellite observations, is [reported in Nature journal](#).

- [Norway funds map of world's tropical forests](#)
- ['Unacceptable' losses of older trees in 2019](#)

A carbon sink is any reservoir - such as peatlands, or forests - that absorbs more carbon than it releases, thereby lowering the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

China is the world's biggest source of human-produced carbon dioxide, responsible for around 28% of global emissions.

But it recently stated an intention to peak those emissions before 2030 and then to move to carbon neutrality by 2060.

The specifics of how the country would reach these goals is not clear, but it inevitably has to include not only deep cuts in fossil fuel use but ways also to pull carbon out of the atmosphere. "Achieving China's net-zero target by 2060, recently announced by the Chinese President Xi Jinping, will involve a massive change in energy production and also the growth of sustainable land carbon sinks," said co-author Prof Yi Liu at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics (IAP), Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China.

"The afforestation activities described in [our Nature] paper will play a role in achieving that target," he told BBC News.

China's increasing leafiness has been evident for some time. Billions of trees have been planted in recent decades, to tackle desertification and soil loss, and to establish vibrant timber and paper industries.

The new study refines estimates for how much CO₂ all these extra trees could be taking up as they grow.



China is engaged in large programmes to conserve and expand its forests

The latest analysis examined a host of data sources. These comprised forestry records, satellite remote-sensing measurements of vegetation greenness, soil water availability; and observations of CO₂, again made from space but also from direct sampling of the air at ground level.

"China is one of the major global emitters of CO₂ but how much is absorbed by its forests is very uncertain," said the IAP scientist Jing Wang, the report's lead author.

"Working with CO₂ data collected by the Chinese Meteorological Administration we have been able to locate and quantify how much CO₂ is absorbed by Chinese forests."

- [China and India make planet leafier](#)
- [European satellites to map global CO₂ emissions](#)

The two previously under-appreciated carbon sink areas are centred on China's southwest, in Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi provinces; and its northeast, particularly Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces.

The land biosphere over southwest China, by far the largest single region of uptake, represents a sink of about -0.35 petagrams per year, representing 31.5% of the Chinese land carbon sink. A petagram is a billion tonnes.

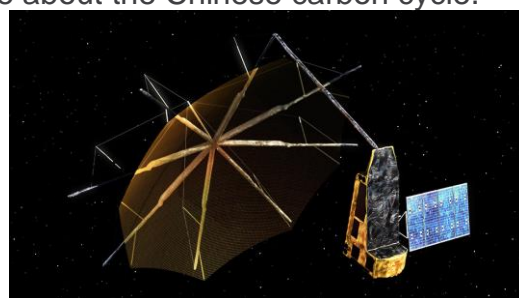
The land biosphere over northeast China, the researchers say, is seasonal, so it takes up carbon during the growing season but emits carbon otherwise. Its net annual balance is roughly -0.05 petagrams per year, representing about 4.5% of the Chinese land carbon sink.

To put these numbers in context, the group adds, China was emitting 2.67 petagrams of carbon as a consequence of fossil fuel use in 2017.

Prof Paul Palmer, a co-author from Edinburgh University, UK, said the size of the forest sinks might surprise people but pointed to the very good agreement between space and in situ measurements as reason to have confidence in the analysis.

"Bold scientific statements must be supported by massive amounts of evidence and this is what we have done in this study," the NERC National Centre of Earth Observation scientist told BBC News.

"We have collected together a range of ground-based and satellite data-driven evidence to form a consistent and robust narrative about the Chinese carbon cycle."



Artwork: The Biomass satellite is one of several new mission to refine understanding of Earth carbon budgets



Prof Shaun Quegan from Sheffield University, UK, studies Earth's carbon balance but was not involved in this research.

He said the extent of the northeast sink was not a surprise to him, but the southwest one was. But he cautioned that new forests' ability to draw down carbon declines with time as the growth rate declines and the systems move towards a more steady state.

"This paper clearly illustrates how multiple sources of evidence from space data can increase our confidence in carbon flux estimates based on sparse ground data," he said.

"This augurs well for the use of the new generation of space sensors to aid nations' efforts to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement."

Prof Quegan is the lead scientist on **Europe's upcoming Biomass mission**, a radar spacecraft that will essentially weigh forests from orbit. It will be able to tell where exactly the carbon is being stored, be it in tree trunks, in the soil or somewhere else.

Another future satellite project of note in this context is the planned **EU Sentinel mission (currently codenamed CO2M)** to measure CO2 in the atmosphere at very high resolution. Richard Black is director of the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU), a non-profit think-tank working on climate change and energy issues.

He commented: "With China setting out its ambition for net zero, it's obviously crucial to know the size of the national carbon sink, so this is an important study.

"However, although the forest sink is bigger than thought, no-one should mistake this as constituting a 'free pass' way to reach net zero. For one thing, carbon absorption will be needed to compensate for ongoing emissions of all greenhouse gases, not just CO2; for another, the carbon balance of China's forests may be compromised by climate change impacts, as we're seeing now in places such as California, Australia and Russia."

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Ice loss to add 0.4C to global temperatures: study

Patrick Galey, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Oct 28 2020 04:32 AM



Floating ice is seen during the expedition of the The Greenpeace's Arctic Sunrise ship at the Arctic Ocean, September 14, 2020. *Natalie Thomas, Reuters/File*

PARIS - The loss of billions of tons of ice from Earth's frozen spaces is likely to increase global temperatures by an additional 0.4 degrees Celsius, according to research Tuesday highlighting the danger of a "vicious circle" of warming.

Arctic summer sea ice levels have declined by more than 10 percent each decade since the late 1970s and mountain glaciers have shed roughly 250 billion tons of ice annually over the last century.

Ice loss from the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets is accelerating and already outstripping what scientists until recently believed to be the worst-case melt scenarios.

Decades of studies have sought to quantify how Earth's melting ice will contribute to sea level rise -- Antarctica and Greenland alone contain enough frozen water to boost oceans' height by around 60 meters.

But little research has tried to predict how ice loss will add to the already 1.0 degree C of global warming emissions from fossil fuels since the start of the Industrial Era.

Scientists at Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) used a climate model that includes components on atmosphere, ocean, sea- and land-ice data to predict temperature change from ice loss under a variety of emissions scenarios.

They found that under current levels of atmospheric CO₂ -- roughly 400 parts per million -- the melting of Arctic sea ice, mountain glaciers and the polar ice caps would raise temperatures by 0.4C.

That's on top of the 1.5C of warming our current emissions levels have rendered all but inevitable, and the safer cap on global warming aimed for in the Paris climate accord.

The main driver of temperature gain from ice loss would be due to a process known as albedo feedback, in which heat reflective bright ice is replaced by absorbant darker sea water and/or soil.

"If global ice masses shrink, this changes how much of the sunlight that hits the Earth's surface is reflected back into space," said lead author Nico Wunderling.

He likened the albedo effect to wearing either white or black clothes in summer.

"If you wear dark, you heat up more easily," Wunderling noted.

This is one of Earth's so-called climate "feedback loops", in which increased temperatures lead to further ice loss, which in turn further increases temperatures.



TIPPING POINT

Other ways that temperatures would rise further as ice receded include increased water vapor in the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effects, said authors of the study published in Nature Communications.

Looking solely at Arctic sea ice -- which unlike polar ice caps might be totally absent during summer months within decades -- they found its melt would contribute 0.2C to global temperatures alone.

The largest ice masses in Greenland and West Antarctica, by comparison, are huge and will likely take centuries to melt fully even if emissions continue their unabated growth.

But the authors highlighted the risk that those enormous bodies of frozen water could soon reach a point of no return as temperatures creep ever higher.

Given the unknowns surrounding ice cap tipping points, Wunderling told AFP it would be best to act in "a risk-averse" way and try to drag down emissions as soon as possible.

"With continued global warming, it becomes more and more likely that we cross tipping points -- not just in the ice-sheets, but also in other parts of the climate system," he said.

"If the Paris Agreement is fulfilled we can avoid many of the strongest and potentially irreversible impacts on Earth's ice masses, the global climate and humanity."



ACB 2020 webinar: What does mainstreaming of biodiversity across sectors mean for ASEAN?

By ACB Published on October 29, 2020

LAGUNA, Oct. 29 -- The second virtual session of the Third ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity or ACB 2020 on Tuesday drew over a hundred representatives from government, private sector, academia and non-government agencies from the ASEAN. The attending experts weighed in with their experiences and views on biodiversity mainstreaming relevant to the Region's context.

The meeting held on Zoom and broadcast live on Facebook focused on mainstreaming of biodiversity, or the process of embedding biodiversity considerations into policies and practices of sectors that rely and have an impact on it.

Keynoted by Oliver Hillel, programme officer of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the programme is part of a series of virtual sessions being organised by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (KeTSA) of Malaysia in the run-up to the physical conference to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2021.

In the face of pressing global challenges such as the ongoing health crisis, the task of integrating biodiversity considerations into development plans and processes become even more critical and urgent not just for ASEAN but for the rest of the world. "The COVID-19 crisis served as a catalyst for change. It made people perceive how important it is to integrate nature in development and are now coming up with nature-based solutions," Hillel said.

Hillel also presented the action areas identified in the action plan for the long-term approach on biodiversity mainstreaming, which was released this year by the Informal Advisory Group on Mainstreaming composed of experts nominated by parties to the CBD.

One of these action areas stressed the need for assessment, valuation, and accounting tools and methodologies to inform decision making at all levels of governance, he said.

Another action area, he said, tackles the issue of financial resources, particularly incentives and subsidies.

"Biodiversity today is threatened, mainly due to human actions stemming from perverse incentives and subsidies to nature. We need to bend that curve and prohibit and refrain from harmful incentives and develop green safeguards and promote nature-friendly innovation tools", he said.

Hillel likewise emphasised that multi-stakeholder participation along with connecting national and sectoral processes and upscaling of existing tools are important in biodiversity mainstreaming.

Other reactors in the panel were Clarissa Arida, director of the ACB's Programme Development and Implementation Unit; Dr. Glenn Gregorio, director of Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA); Dr. Nappy Navarra of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), and Dr. Khairul Naim Adham, undersecretary of the Biodiversity Management Division of KeTSA.

The webinar was moderated by Dato' Dr. Marzalina Mansor, deputy-director general of the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM).



Speaking on behalf of ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim, Arida said many initiatives in the ASEAN contribute to facilitating long-term approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity.

"The ASEAN Member States (AMS) are implementing mainstreaming of biodiversity through their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)," said Arida, citing good practices of the AMS.

Singapore, for example, has been engaging financial institutions to consider environmental, social, and governance criteria in decision-making processes, as well as in developing the green bond market. In the Philippines, the government has partnered with a renewable energy company for the conservation of priority threatened species. Thailand incorporated biodiversity awareness into its education curriculum.

In Malaysia's case, Dr. Naim pointed out that biodiversity considerations have been embedded into the country's land use plan through the National Physical Plan, which includes initiatives and strategies related to biodiversity conservation. Other initiatives aligned with biodiversity conservation in Malaysia are the mandatory implementation of the national certification scheme for palm oil growers, the establishment of the Palm Oil Wildlife Conservation Fund, and the adoption of integrated river basin management approach for the protection of key water resources.

Lena Chan, senior director of the International Biodiversity Conservation of Singapore's National Parks, said it is imperative to implement biodiversity mainstreaming as governments need to adopt an integrated approach to sustainable development. "We must proceed at top speed to mainstream biodiversity especially heading our way to COP 15 and beyond," added Chan.

Gregorio, on the other hand, underlined the importance of accelerating the transformation of the agriculture sector and applying agrobiodiversity innovations. He said SEARCA has embedded innovative and transformative approaches into their current five-year plan. "We saw the need to rethink how we view agriculture, our food and food production. Biodiversity is at the core of all this," he said.

Meanwhile, Navarra discussed how architects mainstream biodiversity into sustainable urban development by promoting innovative approaches in urban spaces, reintroducing natural areas in cities, and promoting the use of native vegetation and blue-green corridors and habitat restoration.

Navarra said architects, whose roles include being "stewards of the land", recognise that biodiversity conservation is a shared responsibility of the private and public sectors.

Similarly, Dr. Naim noted in his intervention that biodiversity mainstreaming requires a whole-of-nation approach. For this, he emphasised that as a regional body, the rich experience and success stories of ASEAN Member States will inspire others in the Region and across the world to further their efforts in protecting biodiversity through mainstreaming.

The full recording of the second session of the virtual ACB 2020 may be accessed through this link: <https://fb.watch/1nD41Zqq2/>.

On 23 September 2020, the ACB 2020 kicked off through a virtual dialogue intended to enhance understanding of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) among the ASEAN Member States with focus on several priority areas emphasised by the ASEAN: mainstreaming, resource mobilisation, and nature-based solutions. (ACB)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/releases/1057376>



Chinese workers carry a timber log at a lumber yard in Shenyang, northeast China's Liaoning province on March 12, 2008.

STR/AFP

Nature loss means deadlier future pandemics, UN warns

Published October 29, 2020 10:59pm

By PATRICK GALEY, Agence France-Presse

PARIS — Future pandemics will happen more often, kill more people and wreak even worse damage to the global economy than COVID-19 without a fundamental shift in how humans treat nature, the United Nations' biodiversity panel said Thursday.

Warning that there are up to 850,000 viruses which, like the novel coronavirus, exist in animals and may be able to infect people, the panel known as IPBES said pandemics represented an "existential threat" to humanity.

Authors of the special report on biodiversity and pandemics said that habitat destruction and insatiable consumption made animal-borne diseases far more likely to make the jump to people in future.

"There is no great mystery about the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic—or any modern pandemic," said Peter Daszak, president of the Ecohealth Alliance and chair of the IPBES workshop that drafted the report.

"The same human activities that drive climate change and biodiversity loss also drive pandemic risk though their impacts on our agriculture."

The panel said that COVID-19 was the sixth pandemic since the influenza outbreak of 1918—all of which had been "entirely driven by human activities."

These include unsustainable exploitation of the environment through deforestation, agricultural expansion, wildlife trade and consumption—all of which put humans in increasingly close contact with wild and farmed animals and the diseases they harbor.

Around five new diseases emerge among humans every single year, any one of which has the potential to become a pandemic, the panel warned.

IPBES said in its periodic assessment on the state of nature last year that more than three-quarters of land on Earth had already been severely degraded by human activity.



One-third of land surface and three-quarters of fresh water on the planet is currently taken up by farming, and humanity's resource use has rocketed up 80 percent in just three decades, it said.

'We've stagnated'

IPBES conducted a virtual workshop with 22 leading experts to come up with a list of options governments could take to lower the risk of repeat pandemics.

It acknowledged the difficulty in counting the full economic cost of COVID-19.

But the assessment pointed to estimated costs as high as \$16 trillion as of July 2020.

The experts said that the cost of preventing future pandemics was likely to be 100 times cheaper than responding to them, "providing strong economic incentives for transformative change."

"Our approach has effectively stagnated," said Daszak.

"We still rely on attempts to contain and control diseases after they emerge, through vaccines and therapeutics."

The IPBES suggested a global, coordinated pandemic response, and for countries to agree upon targets to prevent biodiversity loss within an international accord similar to the Paris agreement on climate change.

Among the options for policymakers to reduce the likelihood of a COVID-19 re-run are taxes or levies on meat consumption, livestock production and other forms of "high pandemic-risk activities."

The assessment also suggested better regulation of international wildlife trade and empowering indigenous communities to better preserve wild habitats.

Nick Ostle, a researcher at the CEH Lancaster Environment Center, Lancaster University, said the IPBES' assessment should serve as a "withering reminder" of how reliant mankind is on nature.

"Our health, wealth and wellbeing relies on the health, wealth and wellbeing of our environment," said Ostle, who was not involved in the research process.

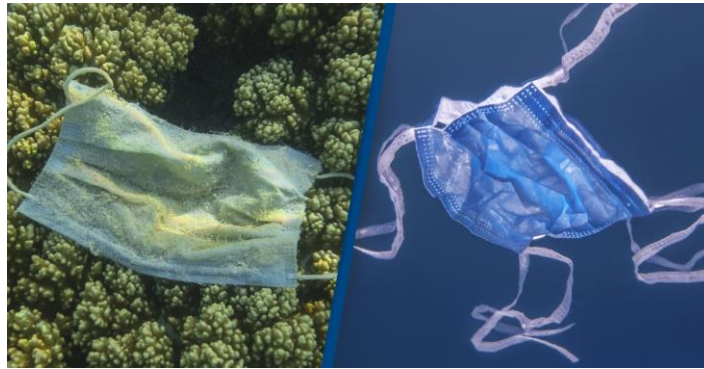
"The challenges of this pandemic have highlighted the importance of protecting and restoring our globally important and shared environmental 'life-support' systems." — **AFP**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/761985/nature-loss-means-deadlier-future-pandemics-un-warns/story/>



62,000 Pieces Of PPE In Oceans Pose Significant Threat To Marine Ecosystems

BY : [MIKE WILLIAMS](#) ON : 29 OCT 2020 16:17



With the threat of the coronavirus pandemic having swept the globe, another very real danger has emerged; thousands of pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have been washing up on the planet's shores.

Activists and environmentalists are growing increasingly worried about the sheer volume of PPE that's finding its way into our oceans and washing up on beaches across the world, as we collectively fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

With social-distancing and mask-wearing now commonplace in most public places, people have needed to buy them to prevent the spread of a virus that's already caused over 1.1 million deaths worldwide.

As many of 62,210 individual pieces of PPE, including the common single-use masks, gloves, and anti-bacterial wipes, were recovered in oceans and on the shores in September alone, after a recovery effort was initiated by the International Coastal Cleanup, [CNN](#) reports.

The data is an historical moment, as this is the first and only time PPE has been recorded as the sole purpose for a clean-up event.

Ocean Conservancy, set up three decades ago, confirm this is the first of its kind, and it's entirely down to people using various forms of protective materials and carelessly discarding them since the start of 2020.

'We absolutely believe that PPE waste is a significant threat to oceans and marine life,' said Dr. George Leonard, a chief scientist with Ocean Conservancy.

According to Ocean Conservancy's official website, their aim is to clean away rubbish from the world's beaches and shorelines and, in turn, protect the planet's oceans and its waterways.

In excess of 60,000 pieces of PPE recovered in a single month is staggering, and an alarming indication that people are irresponsibly disposing of their masks. It's also indicative that the social messaging – just like informing people of their carbon footprints and the importance of recycling – needs to be much firmer.

Other items that are commonly removed from our waters include a lot of plastic, such as bottles, food wrappers, food containers, bottle caps, straws, and supermarket bags. Cigarette butts are also one of the biggest finds, according to the non-profit company.

In 2019, 122 countries participated in a global clean-up, with an incredible 23,333,816 pounds of rubbish recovered from the collective global effort. That said, this year has seen the number significantly drop to 1.6 million pounds with 76 countries participating.



The massive drop is clearly down to people having had their entire years put on hold, preventing a majority from going on holiday or venturing to the beach or for days out.

'Widespread environmental contamination' has been cited by the [Environmental Science and Technology](#) journal, claiming a staggering 129 billion face masks and 65 billion gloves are in use, which people are then failing to safely and responsibly dispose of.

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