



DENR looking into discoloration of Manila Bay

Updated March 30, 2020, 9:39 AM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The authorities are now looking into the possible liability of hotels and establishments surrounding the Manila Bay, after discoloration of water in the bay was observed last week.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (MANILA BULLETIN)

“We suspect that this sudden color change from the previous dark blue to turquoise blue is caused by the direct discharge of wastewater from the treatment plants of buildings and establishments in the vicinity,” Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

After a photo made the rounds on social media showing a striking discoloration of Manila Bay, Cimatu inspected the wastewater discharge along the baywalk area and outfall No. 3 located near the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City last March 28.

He has instructed the DENR-National Capital Region and its Environmental Management Bureau to conduct a joint investigation on the sudden color change of Manila Bay’s water.

“We assure the public that the incident is now being investigated by the DENR to find out who is responsible for the discoloration,” Cimatu said.

“Once the investigation is completed, appropriate and immediate actions will be taken on who or what caused the incident,” he added.

The Manila Bay Interagency Task Force, headed by Cimatu, is mandated to enforce relevant provisions of Code of Sanitation of the Philippines (Presidential Decree 856), Philippine Clean Water Act (Republic Act 9275) and Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003) to ensure the complete rehabilitation, restoration, and conservation of the Manila Bay.

The rehabilitation of the historic bay is a priority program of the present administration until 2022.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/03/30/denr-looking-into-discoloration-of-manila-bay/>

DENR to probe 'discoloration' of Manila Bay after

March 31, 2020

TITLE: Luzon ECQ

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DENR to probe 'discoloration' of Manila Bay after Luzon ECQ

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

-March 31, 2020



Illegal settlers contribute to the piles of garbage on Manila Bay.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will look into the reported discoloration of the waters of Manila Bay last week once the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) over Luzon is lifted by Malacañang.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, acting on complaints reaching his office, conducted a site inspection along Roxas Boulevard on March 28.

Last week, a netizen uploaded a video of the historic bay with turquoise blue waters in the social-media platform Facebook after noticing the change of its color.

Cause-oriented groups led by the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) have called for a thorough investigation into the phenomenon.

Pamalakaya surmised that the waters turning turquoise means there was massive dumping of chemicals, or pollution discharge, while the entire Luzon is under partial lockdown.

Cimatu also sits as chairman of the Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force tasked to clean the bay dubbed as "Battle for Manila Bay." The Manila Bay rehabilitation, which was ordered by President Duterte, is the agency's top priority until 2022.

In ordering the investigation, Cimatu said hotels and other business establishments should be investigated, suspecting that erring companies that decided to take advantage of the partial lockdown decided to discharge their untreated wastewater leading to the unusual change of the colors of the waters of Manila Bay.

"We suspect that this sudden color change from the previous dark blue to turquoise blue is caused by the direct discharge of wastewater from the treatment plants of buildings and establishments in the vicinity," Cimatu said in a news statement.

DENR to probe 'discoloration' of Manila Bay after

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"We assure the public that the incident is now being investigated by the DENR to find out who is responsible for the discoloration," said Cimatu adding that "once the investigation is completed, appropriate and immediate actions will be taken on who, or what caused the incident."

Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said the investigation will be conducted as soon as ECQ is lifted.

According to Antiporda, the DENR's hands are tied right now because the agency is currently operating under strict guidelines of the State of Public Health Emergency and Enhanced Community Quarantine over Luzon Island.

He said they are not risking the lives of DENR personnel because of the threat of Covid-19.

"Right now, we can't use the NCR [National Capital Region] laboratory because one of our personnel was tested positive of Covid-19 that's why we need to disinfect it first," he said.

Antiporda said the DENR is also falling in line in requesting for disinfection of its facilities and would not want to join other establishments like hospitals requesting for disinfection. "We don't want to join the long list of personnel who are racing to have disinfection. What we are going to do is wait for the quarantine to end. After the quarantine, we will immediately conduct the investigation," he said.

All establishments along Manila Bay are now required to have their own sewage treatment plant, or STPs, while households need to be connected to proper sewer lines as part of the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

Antiporda urged business establishments to come out clean and do corrective measures right away to avoid getting into deeper trouble with the authorities.

I am appealing to them to do what is necessary to correct this right now, I Antiporda said.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/03/31/denr-to-probe-discoloration-of-manila-bay-after-luzon-ecq/>

Cimatu orders probe on discoloration of Manila Bay

By Press Release **March 30, 2020, 11:46 am**



MANILA — Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has ordered an investigation of the hotels and establishments in the Manila Bay area after discoloration on the waters of the bay was observed last Thursday.

“We suspect that this sudden color change from the previous dark blue to turquoise blue is caused by the direct discharge of wastewater from the treatment plants of buildings and establishments in the vicinity,” Cimatu said.

The environment chief made the statement after he personally inspected the Baywalk near SM Mall of Asia (MOA) on March 28 to check the color of the waters of the bay in the area.

Cimatu also inspected Outfall No. 3 located near SM MOA to check the wastewater discharged by the outfall, and instructed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) National Capital Region and the Environmental Management Bureau “to conduct a joint investigation on the sudden color change of Manila Bay.”

At the same time, the environment chief instructed DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda “to monitor the investigation that will be conducted by the two offices.”

“We assure the public that the incident is now being investigated by the DENR to find out who is responsible for the discoloration,” said Cimatu adding that “once the investigation is completed, appropriate and immediate actions will be taken on who or what caused the incident.”

Last week, a netizen uploaded a video of the historic bay with turquoise blue waters on the social media platform Facebook after noticing the change of its color.

Cimatu is chair of the Manila Bay Inter Agency Task Force tasked to clean the historic bay dubbed as "Battle for Manila Bay".

The Manila Bay rehabilitation is a top priority of the government until 2022. (**PR**)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1098196>

DENR probes Manila Bay ‘pollution’

March 30, 2020

By Joel dela Torre

People's Journal

HOTELS and establishments in the Manila Bay area are now being placed under investigation following the discoloration on the waters of the bay.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said he suspected that the sudden color change from the previous dark blue to turquoise blue is caused by direct discharge of wastewater from the treatment plants of buildings and establishments in the vicinity. He did not mention the names of establishments facing the probe.

Appropriate and immediate actions will be taken against who caused the incident once the probe is completed.

Cimatu last Saturday personally led an inspection team in the baywalk area near SM Mall of Asia to check the color of the waters off the area.

The environment chief also checked the wastewater discharge at Outfall No. 3 located near SM MOA and instructed the DENR-National Capital Region and the Environment Management Bureau to conduct a joint investigation regarding the sudden color change of the waters.

Cimatu also told Undersecretary Benny Antiporda of the Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns to monitor the investigation that will be conducted by the two offices.

“We assure the public that the incident is now being investigated by the DENR to find out who is responsible for the discoloration,” Cimatu said.

Last week, a netizen uploaded a video of the historic bay with turquoise blue waters in the social media platform Facebook after noticing the change of its color.

Cimatu is chair of the Manila Bay Inter Agency Task Force tasked to clean the historic bay, a project dubbed “Battle for Manila Bay.” The Manila Bay rehabilitation is a top priority of the government until 2022.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/nation/denr-probes-manila-bay-pollution>

Discoloration ng Manila Bay, pinabubusisi ni Cimatú;

March 31, 2020

TITLE: kalapit na hotel, resto, sisilipin

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Discoloration ng Manila Bay, pinabubusisi ni Cimatú; kalapit na hotel, resto, sisilipin

March 30, 2020 @ 3:23 PM 14 hours ago
Views: 110

Manila, Philippines – dahil sa nangyaring discoloration o pagkakapas ng kulay ng tubig ng Manila Bay ipinag-utos ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatú ang agarang imbestigasyon ng mga hotel at establisyimento sa paligid ng baybayin.

Ayon kay Cimatú ang discoloration ng tubig ng Manila Bay ay dahil sa pagtatapon umano ng maduming tubig sa baybayin kung kaya kumupas ang tubig nito nitong nakaraang Huwebes.

“We suspect that this sudden color change from the previous dark blue to turquoise blue is caused by the direct discharge of wastewater from the treatment plants of buildings and establishments in the vicinity,” sabi ni Cimatú.

Sinabi ito ng environment chief matapos nyang personal na puntahan ang baywalk sa likod ng SM Mall of Asia (MOA) noong Sabado upang siyasatin ang napa ulat na pagbabago ng kulay ng tubig ng Manila Bay.

Kasabay nito, nagsagawa din si Cimatú ng inspeksyon ng Outfall No. 3 malapit sa MOA upang ma-check ang wastewater na lumalabas dito. Ipinag-utos din niya sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) National Capital Region at sa Environmental Management Bureau na magsagawa ng joint investigation dahil sa pagbabago ng kulay ng tubig ng Manila Bay.”

Kasabay nito, inatasan niya si DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda “to monitor the investigation that will be conducted by the two offices.”

Discoloration ng Manila Bay, pinabubusisi ni Cimatú;

March 31, 2020

TITLE: kalapit na hotel, resto, sisilipin

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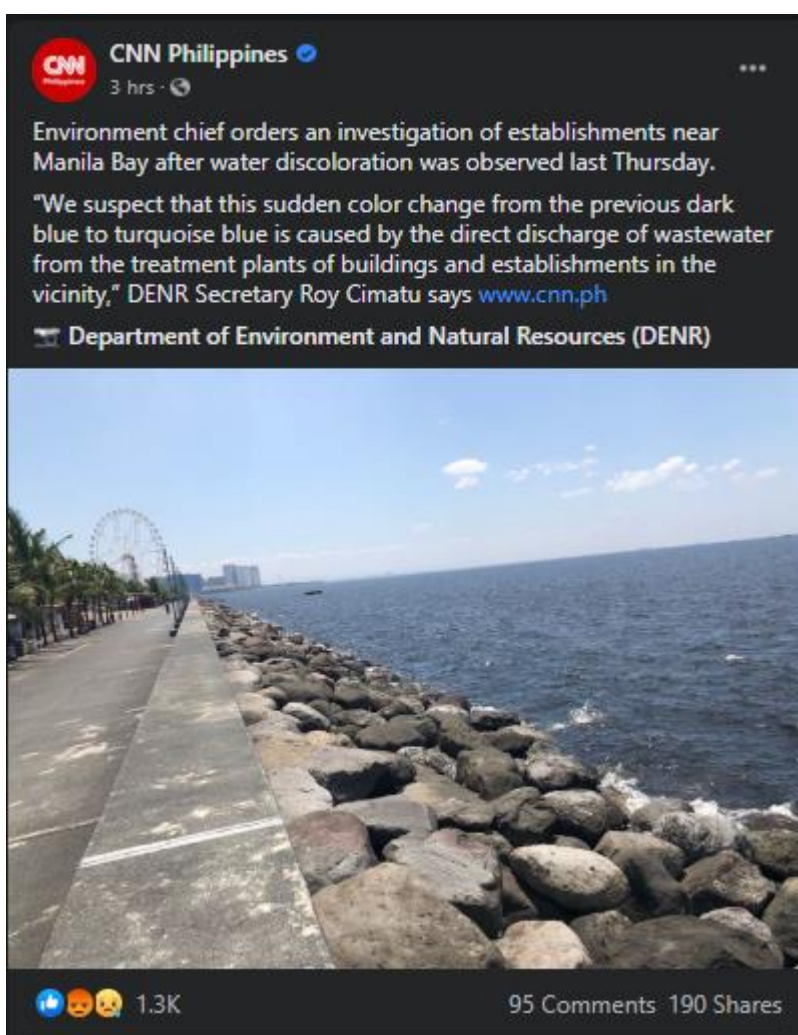
DATE

“We assure the public that the incident is now being investigated by the DENR to find out who is responsible for the discoloration,” said Cimatú adding that “once the investigation is completed, appropriate and immediate actions will be taken on who or what caused the incident.”

Noong isang linggo, isang netizen ang nag-upload ng video, gamit ang Facebook, ng makasaysayang look na may kulay na turquoise blue.

Si Cimatú ang chair ng Manila Bay Inter Agency Task Force na naatasang linisin ang makasaysayang look na tinawag na ‘Battle for Manila Bay’. Ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ay top priority ng pamahalaan hanggang 2022. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://remate.ph/dicoloration-ng-manila-bay-pinabubusisi-ni-cimatu-kalapit-na-hotel-resto-sisilipin/>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/1515763818663512/posts/2778859289020619/>



MUKHA NG MGA LUGAR SA BIYAHE NG REMATE

March 30, 2020 @ 1:39 PM 18 hours ago

Views: 97

BINAYBAY ng isang Remate Team ang isang bahagi ng kahabaan ng MacArthur Highway, Rizal Avenue Extension at Abad Santos kahapon ng umaga.

Maraming mukha ng kalagayan ng mga mamamayan at kapaligiran ang nasaksihan ng team.

KALSADA

Mula Bocaue hanggang Meycauayan, maraming sirang bahagi ng MacArthur Highway.

Ang maganda nito, darating ang araw na maganda-ganda na rin ang pagbiyahe sa kalsadang ito.

Kitang-kita ang paggawa ng Department of Public Works and Highways sa mga sirang kalsada.

At magandang balita na ang mga lumulubog na bahagi tuwing high tide at tag-ulan ay tinaasan na ng mahigit isang metro.

Sana, hindi na magiging problema ang paglalakbay sa bahaging ito ng nasabing highway kahit tag-ulan at tag-high tide.

MARAMING SASAKYAN

Marami pa ring tumatakbong sasakyan na pribado at motorsiklo ngunit hindi kasingdami ng mga ito sa mga panahong bago sumalakay ang Corona Virus Disease.

Kaya naman, hindi matrapik.

Lalo na sa parte ng Valenzuela City na magan ang sakop nitong kahabaan ng MacArthur Highway.

Nagpapatrapik lang ang mga single lane na bahagi ng kalsada dahil sa isinasagawang mga repair.

At sa rami na rin ng mga checkpoint na sumisita sa mga motorista na nakamotorsiklo, naka-4 wheel at mas malalaking sasakyan.

Kakaiba ang ginagawa ng Meycauayan City.

May bus itong umiikot sa highway sa mga hangganan nito sa Valenzuela City at Marilao at libreng sinasakay ang mga residente nito.

PAWNSHOP, REMITTANCE CENTER

Dinaragsa ang mga pawnshop at remittance center at napakahaba ang pila rito.

Hindi tayo tiyak ngunit naiisip lang natin na higit na mas marami sa mga nakapila ang nagsasanla ng pupwede nilang isanla kaysa sa mga bumibili sa SALE ng mga nakasanla.

Marami rin ang nagpapadala o tumatanggap ng salapi sa mga remittance center.

Malamang na bunga ito ng krisis pang-ekonomiya dahil sa mga lockdown at quarantine na nagpasara sa mga pagawaan, opisina at iba pang pinagkakakitaan ng mga mamamayan.

Maaaring larawan din ito ng hindi sapat na ayuda ng mga pamahalaang lokal at nasyonal sa mga mamamayan.

Aminin man natin o hindi, maraming tulong ang pamahalaan ang hindi pa nakararating sa mga mamamayan.

Maging ang mga ayuda mula sa Social Security System at Government Service Insurance system.

Kaya bumabaling ang maraming mamamayan sa pagsasanla ng me ron sila na may halaga at umaasa sa padala ng iba.

Merong ding mga bangko na bukas at pinipilahan din.

Dapat na tiyaking hindi maputol ang suplay ng salapi sa pagitan ng mga bangko, pawnshop at remittance center para sa pangangailangan ng mga mamamayan.

FASTFOOD, PALENGKE, BOTIKA

Kabilang sa mga pin ipilahan ang mga restorang fastfood, palengke at botika, kasama ang mga convenience store.

Tila walang nagpapakain sa loob ng mga fastfood resto at sa labas lang sa gusali ang mga kostumer at umaalis makaraang makabili ng gusto nito.

Pinakamahaba ang pila ng mga namamalengke, gaya ng sa Caloocan City na ang isang palengke ay makipot ang pasukan.

Pailan-ilan naman ang pinapapasok sa mga convenience store para walang siksikan.

Ang style ng pagpasok sa mga convenience store ay halos pareho sa pinaiiral ng mga sikat na botika na may mga paninda ring hindi gamot.

TRICYCLE MAY BIYAHE

Tila buhay na buhay ang mga tricycle bilang sasakyan ng mga mamamayan palabas sa highway at papasok sa mga barangay.

Walang tumatakabong mga jeepney, UV express at bus.

Ang mga tricycle ang sinasakyan ng mga ordinaryong mamamayan papunta sa mga bilihan ng gamot, pagkain at iba pang mga pangangailangan na nabibili lang sa mga pwesto sa highway.

Kahit na higit na nakararami ang mga saradong establisimyento kaysa mga bukas.

SA COVID-19 NATUTO

Maraming natutunan ang mga mamamayan sa pagdating ng Covid-19 na hindi dapat kalimutan.

Kabilang dito ang disiplina sa pila at hindi ang waisan o unahan o palakasan.

Ang tao, ang mga sasakyan, natututong pumila.

Mahalaga rin ang paglitaw ng pagsunod sa mga batas na umiiral.

Sana naman, kahit mabaklas na ang mga pinagsama-samang pwersa sa checkpoints na pulis, sundalo at tanod, mapanatili natin ang pagsunod sa mga batas sa trapiko at maayos na pagbibigayan sa kalsada at walang unahan at waisan, lalo na sa hanay ng mga pampasaherong sasakyan at mga barumbadong tsuper ng mga pribadong sasakyan.

MAS MATINDI SA TOKHANG

Nakapagtataka lang na higit na kinatatakutan ang Covid-19 kaysa ang Oplan Tokhang.

At isa rin ito sa mga natutunan natin.

Mahalaga ang usaping ito dahil nilikha nito ang paglingap sa isa't isa at hindi katulad sa Tokhang na pabayaang maghirap at mamatay.

Kung ano ang ipinakita nating pagmamalasakit sa panahon ng pagputok ng bulkan at mga kalamidad sanhi ng bagyo at lindol, ganito rin sa panahon ng Covid-19.

Mabuhay ang lahing Pinoy.

Source: <https://remate.ph/mukha-ng-mga-lugar-sa-biyahe-ng-remate/>

MWSS says tap water clean, free from COVID-19

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lulu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLuluNQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:12 PM March 30, 2020

MANILA, Philippines – The water being delivered to households in Metro Manila and its neighboring towns are clean and guaranteed to be free from bacterias and viruses like the latest coronavirus strain, the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) assured on Monday.

MWSS' Regulatory Office (RO) clarified that both the water supplied to houses and the wastewater being discharged from their cleaning facilities are both being disinfected.

“The water supply maintained in our distribution systems up to the customers’ taps has been disinfected with chlorine, as prescribed by the Philippine National Standard for Drinking Water (PNSDW) set by the Department of Health (DOH). Our water is therefore free from bacteria and viruses (including the COVID-19 virus) and is safe for domestic consumption,” Chief Regulator Patrick Ty said.

“The wastewater discharged from our Sewage and/or Septage Treatment Plants (STPs) into our receiving water bodies has also been disinfected with chlorine; in accordance with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2016-08 or the “Water Quality Guidelines and General Effluent Standards,” he added.

Ty said that MWSS-RO’s statement came amid speculations that the water from concessionaires may be carrying the COVID-19, as cases continued to pile up in the Philippines.

MWSS oversees the supply of water to Metro Manila, which is divided into two sectors under the concession agreement: the east side belonging to Manila Water, and the west side being serviced by Maynilad.

As of Monday, Metro Manila, Luzon, and other areas are still under an enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) to prevent COVID-19 from further spreading. The Department of Health said that there are now 1,546 patients infected with COVID-19, 78 of which have already died while at least 42 have recovered.

Worldwide, 713,258 persons have been confirmed to contracted the latest coronavirus strain, while 33,658 have died from the disease and 148,707 have recovered from it.

Ty assured that it is the World Health Organization that assured that disinfecting with chlorine would be enough to neutralize viruses, including the SARS-COV-2 strain that causes COVID-19.

“In a technical brief on water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for the COVID-19 virus released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 19 March 2020; the WHO maintained that chlorine disinfection should inactivate the COVID-19 virus,” Ty explained.

“The MWSS RO assures the public that it is continuously and rigorously monitoring the quality of our water and wastewater to protect the health and safety of its consumers, as well as the environment,” he added.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1251173/mwss-says-tap-water-clean-free-from-covid-19#ixzz6IDI6Tg6Z>



MWSS: Water free from new coronavirus, safe for consumption

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - March 30, 2020 - 11:11am

MANILA, Philippines — Water supply within its concession areas is safe for domestic consumption even as the new coronavirus continues to spread in the country, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems Regulatory Office said Monday.

In a statement, the agency said the water supply maintained in the distribution systems up to the customers' taps has been disinfected with chlorine as prescribed by the Department of Health.

"Our water is therefore free from bacteria and viruses (including the COVID-19 virus) and is safe for domestic consumption," MWSS Chief Regulator Patrick Lester Ty said.

The wastewater discharged from sewages and septage treatment plants into receiving bodies of water has also been disinfected with chlorine.

Currently, there is no evidence about the survival of the new coronavirus in drinking water or sewage, the World Health Organization said.

"The COVID-19 virus is an enveloped virus with a fragile outer membrane. Generally, enveloped viruses are less stable in the environment and are more susceptible to oxidants such as chlorine," WHO said in an interim guidance for water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for COVID-19 on March 19.

COVID-19 can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when an infected person coughs or exhales. The virus can also be caught by a people when they touch the objects or surfaces where droplets land then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

The DOH on Sunday reported 343 new COVID-19 cases, marking the country's largest daily increase in infections. This brought the nation's total to 1,418.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/03/30/2004339/mwss-water-free-new-coronavirus-safe-consumption>

‘ECQ brings more domestic waste in Central Luzon’

posted March 30, 2020 at 11:20 pm

by [Jess Malabanan](#)

Angeles City—The amount of domestic waste being collected from households has been increasing in the past weeks due to the strict home quarantine implemented by authorities to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Waste collection and disposal has been identified as one of the essential services by the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF), because the proper management of household waste becomes especially critical at a time like this, to further safeguard public health.

A study revealed that each household member produces at least half a kilo of garbage every day or three kilos for a family of six and 90 kilos for 30 days.

In Capas, Tarlac, Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation’s (MCWMC) engineered sanitary landfill maintains its operations, with more than 100 workers, drivers and helpers, as well as support staff, continuing to provide hauling and disposal services as well as accepting garbage at the company’s disposal site.

“Garbage collectors and waste disposal site workers are also frontliners,” said Vicky Gaetos, MCWM Executive Vice President. “They are on duty 24/7 to address the mounting domestic waste being disposed from different households cross Central Luzon.”

Gaetos said critical workers at the sanitary landfill have requested to temporarily stay within the site premises to ensure that disposal of household waste from LGU’s and industrial clients continue uninterrupted during the ongoing health crisis.

The company has taken all the necessary precautions and is strictly implementing these policies inside its landfill facilities. These include social distancing, regular disinfection and all other necessary hygienic practices.

Domestic waste if not disposed properly will expose residents to additional health risks, said Gaetos, at a time when people must do everything they can to stay healthy. She said garbage must be collected as soon as possible to prevent illnesses in their communities.

Gaetos said that the Luzon-wide quarantine has resulted in more domestic waste, both biodegradable and non-degradable, and is contributing to the piling up of garbage in different towns and cities in the region.

“Hindi lang virus ang makukuha sa basura na siyang pinagmumulan ng iba’t-ibang klase ng sakit kaya minabuti ng MCWMC na ipagpatuloy ang pagkolekta ng basura upang makatulong at maiwasan ang pagkalat ng mga karamdaman,” she said.

Gaetos also assured the continuance of collection and disposal of garbage of municipal wastes for as long as their daily services remain unhampered, particularly at checkpoints along and within the boundaries of provinces in Central Luzon.

She expressed her thanks to local government units who sent their passes and to the members of the Philippine National Police who allowed unhampered passage to all garbage trucks that haul the municipal waste from the waste transfer stations and material recovery facilities.

“MCWMC assures communities in Central Luzon of our continuing services amid the enhanced community quarantine, and this time of crisis. We are ready to haul your domestic wastes,” Gaetos said.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/320735>

Volume of waste increases in Central Luzon

By [Frederick Silverio](#)

March 31, 2020

ANGELES CITY: The amount of domestic waste being collected from households has been increasing in the past weeks as a result of the strict home quarantine implemented by authorities to prevent the spread the coronavirus.

Waste collection and disposal was identified by the the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases as one of the essential services because the proper management of household waste becomes especially critical in times like the coronavirus crisis to further safeguard public health.

A study shows that each household produces at least half a kilo of garbage everyday or 15 kilos for every household in 30 days at least in Region 3 (Central Luzon).

Vicky Gaetos, Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWMC) executive vice president, said during the quarantine period, families are intact and staying home, resulting in more domestic waste, both biodegradable and non-degradable, contributing to the piling up of garbage in different towns and cities in the region.

In Capas, Tarlac, MCWMC's engineered sanitary landfill maintains its operations, with more than 100 workers, drivers and helpers, and support staff continuing to provide hauling and disposal services as well as accepting garbage at the company's disposal site.

"Garbage collectors and waste disposal site workers are also frontliners," Gatos said. "They are on duty 24/7 to address the mounting domestic waste being disposed from different households across Central Luzon."

Gaetos said critical workers at the sanitary landfill were asked to temporarily stay within the site premises to ensure that disposal of household waste from local government units and industrial clients would continue uninterrupted during the ongoing health crisis

The company has taken all the necessary precautions, including physical distancing and regular disinfections, to ensure the health and safety of its workers and clients, Gaetos said.

She said domestic waste if not disposed properly would expose residents to viruses and additional health risks, adding garbage must be collected as soon as possible to prevent illnesses in communities.

"MCWMC assures communities in Central Luzon of our continuing services amid the enhanced community quarantine, and this time of crisis. We are ready to haul your domestic wastes," Gaetos said.

Duterte threatens to detain officials mismanaging aid for poor amid COVID-19 crisis

Published March 31, 2020 12:27am
By JULIA MARI ORNEDO, GMA News

President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday night threatened to detain officials who would be caught mismanaging resources meant to assist citizens affected by the crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

In a nationally televised address, Duterte said he would go after people who will embezzle, hoard, or divert money, food, and other supplies intended for aid.

"I am not a cruel man pero kung may report ang pulis, I will order your detention hanggang matapos itong COVID-19," Duterte said.

"Wag na 'wag kayong mandaya, mangurakot, at taguin 'yung mga pagkain at 'yung iba hindi bigyan... Kung mamulitika ka tapos mabalitaan ko na 'yan ang nagawa mo, I will suspend you ora mismo," he added.

"And for those who are really absconding the money, I will detain you, and maybe I will release you pagkatapos ng COVID-19," Duterte said.

The Palace has previously warned that people who will be caught hoarding basic commodities such as food and disinfectants [may be arrested](#).

Under the measure that gave Duterte [additional powers](#) to deal with the COVID-19 threat, the president can enforce measures against "hoarding, profiteering, injurious speculations, manipulation of prices, product deceptions, and cartels, monopolies or other combinations in restraint of trade, or other pernicious practices." **-NB, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/731954/duterte-threatens-to-detain-officials-mismanaging-aid-for-poor-amid-covid-19-crisis/story/?just_in

Wakes, burial guidelines during COVID-19 lockdown

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Mar 30 2020 02:49 PM



Funeral service workers wearing protective gear bring a citizen, who died while being investigated for COVID-19 symptoms, to a crematorium specifically dealing with coronavirus cases in Quezon City. Rolex dela Pena, EPA

MANILA- The Philippine government has limited wakes and burials in Luzon to families until April 12 as it barred the public from holding mass gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are government guidelines on wakes and burials under the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon:

1. For deaths unrelated to COVID-19, the Philippine National Police said only the immediate family of the deceased and ministers or officiants are allowed to attend wakes.
2. For deaths due to COVID-19, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said bodies must be placed in cadaver bags which are wrapped, sealed and sprayed with sodium hydrochloride. The remains should be cremated within 12 hours.
3. For Muslim deaths due to COVID-19, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the body should be placed in an air-tight sealed bag and buried in the nearest Muslim cemetery within 12 hours, in accordance to Muslim rites.

Luzon was placed under lockdown until April 12, which meant strict home confinement in all households, suspension of transportation lines, regulation of provision for food and essential health services, and heightened presence of uniformed personnel to enforce isolation procedures.

The Philippines is in a state of public health emergency over COVID-19 that has spread out of its origin, China, to more than 160 countries and territories since it was first detected late last year.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/30/20/wakes-burial-guidelines-during-covid-19-lockdown>

Fallen healthcare workers fortunate to have died for country —Duterte

Published March 31, 2020 1:03am
By MA. ANGELICA GARCIA, GMA News

President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday night again paid tribute to the country's frontliners against COVID-19, saying the health workers who died in the war against the virus were fortunate to die in the line of duty.

In his nationally televised address, Duterte expressed his gratitude to all the doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, police, soldiers, civil servants and essential service workers of the private sector.

"I assure you that your efforts will be rewarded. Your heroism will not be forgotten. Saludo kami sa inyo," Duterte said.

"May doktor mga nurses namatay, sila 'yong nasawi ang buhay para lang makatulong sa kapuwa. Napakasuwerte nila. Namatay sila para sa bayan," he added.

"Yon ang dapat rason na bakit tayo mamatay," Duterte said.

Duterte also thanked local officials for "doing their best" to contain the spread of the virus in their localities.

"I see that you are employing innovative programs and initiatives to address the needs of your constituents. 'Yan ang dapat tulungan," Duterte said.

"Rest assured that the national government is behind you as we safeguard the welfare of our people in your communities," he added.

He also acknowledged the governments of China and Singapore, National Grid Corporation of the Philippines, Jack Ma and business tycoons Ramon Ang, Enrique Razon, Manny Pangilinan, Lucio Tan and Michael Tan for their help in this unprecedented situation.

Businesses such as Simeon of Shop Philippines, Century Peak Corporation, Udenna Foundation, PAGCOR, Mammoth Foundation, Ciriaco Lopez Global Fund, America Cares Foundation, UNFPA, Aboitiz Foundation, D and L Corp., Golden Tapper, Landers Superstore, Unilab Foundation, Allianz Global, Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation and Temasek Foundation were also recognized.

"In behalf of the Filipinos, I thank you and your compassion and your generosity and my personal gratitude," Duterte said.

"For those who have silently helped away from the cameras, maraming salamat po," he added.

The country has so far recorded a total of [1,546 COVID-19 cases, including 78 deaths](#). **-NB, GMA News**

AMID COVID-19

Duterte to farmers, fisherfolk: We have not forgotten you

Published March 31, 2020 12:40am

President Rodrigo Duterte assured that those who put food on the Filipino people's table — farmers and fisherfolk —who are also among the poorest sectors, will receive assistance from the government during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Addressing the nation anew late Monday, he also served warning to hoarder and profiteers who will take advantage of the disruption in the economic activities due to the enhanced community quarantine to contain the spread of the virus.

"To our farmers and fisherfolk, we have not forgotten you and government is now employing quick response measures to help you during the crisis, as well as ensure food productivity, availability and sustainability during the period of the pandemic," he said.

"Andito ang gobyerno para sa inyo," Duterte added.

Duterte reiterated that his administration would ensure the unhampered flow of cargoes and their workers "to maintain the continuous and steady supply of food, goods and other essential supplies and items."

The government has also earlier imposed a freeze on the price of some basic commodities.

"The price freeze on commodities is already in effect and measures to curtail hoarding and profiteering are also in place," he said.

"Uulitib ko hindi ito panahon para kumita, hindi ito panahon ng pagsasamantala," Duterte added.

On Tuesday, Duterte signed into law the Bayanihan To Heal As One Act that gave him additional powers to strengthen the country's defenses against the health, economic, and social consequences that may be caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Among its key provisions included giving subsidies amounting to P5,000 to P8,000 for two months to around 18 million low-income households belonging to the informal sector. The assistance shall be "computed based on the prevailing regional minimum wages rates."

It also said that productive sectors of the economy, especially in rural areas, must have enough credit resources to turn to, which can be ensured by employing measures such as "lowering the effective lending rates of interest and reserve requirements of lending institutions." —LDF, GMA News

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/731956/duterte-to-farmers-fisherfolk-we-have-not-forgotten-you/story/?just_in



Di pababayaan: Mga mangingisda at magsasaka, aayudahan ng gobyerno

March 31, 2020 @ 1:18 AM 6 hours ago
Views: 134

Manila, Philippines – Tiniyak ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte na makatatanggap ng ayuda mula sa pamahalaan ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda habang may coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic sa bansa.

Sa Public address ng Pangulo, Lunes ng gabi, Marso 30 ay sinabi nito na kabilang sa poorest sectors ang mga mangingisda at magsasaka.

“To our farmers and fisherfolk, we have not forgotten you and government is now employing quick response measures to help you during the crisis, as well as ensure food productivity, availability and sustainability during the period of the pandemic,” ayon sa Pangulo.

“Andito ang gobyerno para sa inyo,” dagdag na pahayag ng Punong Ehekutibo.

Inulit naman ng Pangulo na titiyakin ng kanyang administrasyon na hindi matitigil ang daloy ng cargoes at mga trabahador nito “to maintain the continuous and steady supply of food, goods and other essential supplies and items.”

Nauna rito, nagpatupad naman ang pamahalaan ng price freeze sa ilang pangunahing bilihin.

“The price freeze on commodities is already in effect and measures to curtail hoarding and profiteering are also in place,” ayon sa Pangulo.

“Uulitin ko hindi ito panahon para kumita, hindi ito panahon ng pagsasamantala,” diing pahayag ni Pangulong Duterte. Kris Jose

Source: <https://remate.ph/di-pababayaan-mga-mangingisda-at-magsasaka-aayudahan-ng-gobyerno/>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/163550757135020/posts/1937685003054911/>

How do we safely dispose of coronavirus-related health care waste?

Any PPE that could potentially be reused should be cut to pieces. Cut masks, for example, because there are reports that they are being illicitly resold.

Esperanza Cabral and Paeng Lopez

Published 1:36 PM, March 30, 2020

Updated 1:36 PM, March 30, 2020



PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT. Goggles, face masks, and gloves for protection against virus infection. Image from Shutterstock

It is with deep gratitude and profound respect to our frontline health workers that we are sharing these timely recommendations in order to ensure that the noble work they are doing at the front lines is not impeded and breached, and thus made worse. (READ: [IN NUMBERS: What hospitals need to treat COVID-19 patients](#))

As COVID-19 is a new virus, it should be pointed out that there is no established waste treatment process yet for waste generated in response to it. Nonetheless, according to the WHO, any health facility exercising best practices for infectious waste will also be able to manage waste potentially infected with COVID-19. Yet, special attention may still be given to COVID19-related waste such as PPEs by setting up a distinct bin for these types of waste, which then gets double bagged for safe transport. Segregating waste at the source should always be observed.

There is no need to incinerate COVID19-related waste since medical waste autoclaves that use pressurized steam at 30psi at a saturation time of 30 minutes are known to kill any heat-resistant pathogens without need for chemicals whatsoever. A temperature up to 135°C degrees or higher achieves microbial inactivation at a 99.9% kill rate on the most heat-resistant pathogens known to science, including *Bacillus Stearotherophilus*.

Once disinfected in an autoclave, COVID19-related waste, like any other hospital solid waste that underwent autoclaving, can then be treated as regular municipal waste. All technologies, whether autoclave or microwave should be validated and regularly tested.

(Incinerators as well as incinerators-in-disguise like pyroclaves, gasification, pyrolysis, and plasma arcs, apart from being overly expensive, produce deadly dioxins and furans that further harm people's health instead of protecting it.)

How do we safely dispose of coronavirus-related

March 31, 2020

TITLE: health care waste?

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Any PPE that could potentially be reused should be cut to pieces. Cut masks, for example, because there are reports that they are being illicitly resold. Thus, advise every staff to do this to PPEs they individually use before discarding them into appropriate bins.

Because the COVID-19 virus survives briefly in tropical temperatures, as an additional safety measure, it is recommended to label every bag of PPE waste with their collection dates and have them stored in waste holding areas for at least 3 days to ensure that no virus survives in the collected items. See to it that they are in leak-proof, puncture-proof containers, and that storage areas are clean, secure, and protected from the elements, pests, and disease vectors.

(READ: ['Chronic' global shortage of virus protective gear 'urgent threat' – WHO](#))

Finally, we can never overemphasize the importance of proper hand washing, especially for hospital personnel handling wastes. Together with appropriate PPEs, washing hands make a formidable defense against the virus. Since we know that the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is coated in lipids that dissolve in soap, which then result in the complete destruction of the virus, washing hands properly with soap and water remains to be the simplest and most consistent way of preventing the spread of or getting infected by the virus. – **Rappler.com**

Dr. Esperanza Cabral is the President of Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia's Board. She served as Secretary of the Department of Health in the Philippines. Before her appointment as Secretary of Health, she was previously the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Paeng Lopez is Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia's Healthy Energy Initiative Campaign Coordinator. He has been in the environmental movement for 25 years, and has worked as youth convenor, community organizer, project coordinator, and researcher for various conservation organizations.

Source: <https://www.rappler.com/science-nature/life-health/256373-how-dispose-properly-personal-protective-equipment-coronavirus>



Easterlies, makakaapekto sa silangang bahagi ng bansa

March 30, 2020 @ 8:27 AM 23 hours ago
Views: 112

Manila, Philippines – Batay sa early morning forecast ng PAGASA, makakaapekto ang hanging mula sa silangan o easterlies sa Pilipinas.

Magkakaroon naman ng bahagyang maulap hanggang sa maulap na kalangitan ang Metro Manila at nalalabing bahagi ng bansa. Remate News Team/MM

Source: <https://remate.ph/easterlies-makakaapekto-sa-silangang-bahagi-ng-bansa/>

Cloudy skies, isolated rains over Metro Manila due to the easterlies

Published March 31, 2020 4:19am

The easterlies will be affecting the eastern section of the country on Tuesday, PAGASA reported in its early morning forecast.

advertisement

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers due to the easterlies / localized thunderstorms.

The forecast wind speed for eastern section of the country will be moderate moving eastward while coastal waters will be moderate.

For extreme northern Luzon, the forecast wind speed is light to moderate moving in the east to southeast direction while coastal waters will be slight to moderate.

The forecast wind speed for the rest of the country is light to moderate moving in the east to northeast direction while coastal waters will be slight to moderate. -- **BAP, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/weather/731965/cloudy-skies-isolated-rains-over-metro-manila-due-to-the-easterlies/story/>

Chinese aircraft spotted in Kagitingan Reef, says group

Published March 30, 2020 5:37pm

A Chinese military aircraft was spotted at the Kagitingan Reef (Fiery Cross Reef) in the West Philippine Sea, data provider ImageSat International has said.

In a tweet dated March 29, the ImageSat International said a satellite image from March 28 had shown that a Chinese Y-8 transport aircraft landed on the said reef, "probably bringing supplies" to the area.



"Routine operation of transport aircraft in the South China Sea area could indicate that the Chinese military is hardly affected by the country's health crisis," the ImageSat International said.

This alleged activity by China came amid the increasing cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) across the globe. The pandemic started in Wuhan City in Hubei Province.

GMA News Online has contacted the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines for comment regarding the said activity of China in the region.

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/731912/chinese-aircraft-spotted-in-kagitingan-reef-says-group/story/>

COLUMNISTS

NO FREE LUNCH

A new normal

By: [Cielito F. Habito](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:05 AM March 31, 2020

Much like the aftermath of the so-called 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City in 2001, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to lead to fundamental changes around the globe. Air travel changed worldwide after 9/11, and it seems everyone has already adapted to rigid airport security screenings as a fact of life.

But COVID-19 is poised to change far more than that. In a recent article (“We’re not going back to normal”) in the MIT Technology Review, chief editor Gideon Lichfield declares: “This isn’t a temporary disruption. It’s the start of a completely different way of life.”

None of us living today had ever seen in our lifetimes what’s happening now. Many see us heading toward a “new normal,” and believe that life as we’ve known it is not coming back after the pandemic is overcome. Suddenly, travel and tourism have lost appeal, and it’s unlikely that the volume of airline travel, domestic or international, will go back to pre-COVID-19 levels in the foreseeable future. Airlines and cruise lines have made drastic cuts on operations, and many are likely to leave the business altogether. Public transport has lost much appeal, and if those who can afford cars are led to shun the bus or train, imagine the traffic mess that could result when the crisis is over.

It could take a long while, if at all, before restaurants, cafés, bars, hotels, cinemas, shopping malls, bazaars, museums, concerts, sporting events, conferences, universities, schools, and day-care centers recover their usual levels of activity. Lichfield anticipates some adaptive changes: “Maybe movie theaters will take out half their seats, meetings will be held in larger rooms with spaced-out chairs, and gyms will require you to book workouts ahead of time so they don’t get crowded.” He also sees an explosion of services in what’s been dubbed the “shut-in economy,” including online meeting platforms, entertainment, food and grocery delivery services, e-commerce, and more. An official of our Department of Information and Communications Technology has warned that the country’s ICT infrastructure is being stretched to the limit, causing slower internet speeds—all because the Luzon lockdown has led to unprecedented demand for online streaming services like YouTube and Netflix, and online meeting platforms like Zoom, Skype, and the like.

The indoor lifestyle that we are suddenly forced to adapt to, and possibly adopt more in the future, could bring its own domestic stresses: on family members caring for and protecting elderly relatives from the virus; on parents led to provide more home-schooling for their children; and on couples suddenly finding themselves “trapped” with each other, especially where relationships may not exactly be harmonious to begin with. Reports out of China reveal a spike in divorce rates after lockdown restrictions were lifted, as local civil registries cited “couples spending too much time together at home.”

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On the other hand, others see harbingers of positive change in the wake of COVID-19. The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration reports a reduction by as much as 30 percent in nitrogen dioxide pollution in heavily industrialized eastern China. Blue skies and clean air are now back in erstwhile smog-filled Chinese cities, and residents of Metro Manila are noting the same. Worldwide, the drastic drop in airline and factory activity has dramatically lowered greenhouse gas emissions that are the bane of climate change. Governments are being pushed into a long-term strengthening of national health systems. Cessation of public transport has driven people to walk and ride bicycles to move around, long the advocacy of crusaders for livable cities. And people have come to rely more on local supply chains and more home production for food and other necessities, seen by many to be a positive change toward stronger community self-reliance.

Will the world change for the better, for good? Cynics point to how the financial sector went back to its negative old ways even with the massive shake-up in the 2008-2009 crisis. Only time will tell whether the new normal that COVID-19 is leading the world to will be better or worse for us all.

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For more news about the novel coronavirus click [here](#).

[What you need to know about Coronavirus.](#)

For more information on COVID-19, call the DOH Hotline: (02) 86517800 local 1149/1150.

Source: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/128473/a-new-normal#ixzz6IDPGT6kc>

Police in England dye a 'Blue Lagoon' black to deter visitors during coronavirus lockdown

By Alicia Lee, CNN

Published Mar 30, 2020 9:39:40 AM



Police regularly dye the water to prevent people from swimming here.

(CNN) — Not even a nationwide lockdown could stop England's Instagrammers from flocking to a former limestone quarry in Harpur Hill, whose bright blue waters have earned it the nickname, "Blue Lagoon."

So police did what they had to do to stop visitors from coming. They dyed it black.

Last Monday, UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson banned residents from leaving their homes to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"If you don't follow the rules, the police will have the power to enforce them," said Johnson, who himself has tested positive for coronavirus.

Despite this order, police said people were still visiting the disused quarry, which has become a popular tourist attraction.

"With this in mind, we have attended the location this morning and used water dye to make the water look less appealing," the Buxton police department said in a Facebook post Wednesday. "Please stay at home."

This isn't the first time the picturesque body of water, near Buxton and about three hours northwest of London, has been dyed black, according to police. While the lagoon may look like a tropical getaway, officials say the water contains toxic chemicals and has a pH level of 11.3, according to the BBC. For reference, laundry bleach has a pH level of about 12.

Signs around the lagoon even warn tourists that the water contains cars, dead animals and trash. So police regularly dye the water to prevent people from swimming in it.

The move by Buxton police comes as the number of coronavirus cases in the UK continue to rise. As of Sunday there were at least 19,772 confirmed cases and 1,228 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Johnson says he is sending a letter to 30 million households across the UK to urge people to stay home.

"We know things will get worse before they get better," he writes in the letter. "But we are making the right preparations, and the more we all follow the rules, the fewer lives will be lost and the sooner life can return to normal."

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/3/30/England-police-Blue-Lagoon-dyed.html?fbclid=IwAR1q960sAFmutPGillekYrRre2jHKzPEaPszSRqthAulZq7bV1cgqPZkkxc>

Coronavirus lockdowns give Europe's cities cleaner air

Kate Abnett, Reuters

Posted at Mar 30 2020 11:37 AM



A French police officer wearing a protective face mask stands guard at a check point on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice , as a lockdown is imposed to slow the rate of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in France, March 29, 2020. Eric Gaillard, Reuters

BRUSSELS - Air pollution has decreased in urban areas across Europe during lockdowns to combat the coronavirus, new satellite images showed on Monday, but campaigners warned city-dwellers were still more vulnerable to the epidemic.

Cities including Brussels, Paris, Madrid, Milan and Frankfurt showed a reduction in average levels of noxious nitrogen dioxide over March 5-25, compared with the same period last year, according to the Sentinel-5 satellite images.

That coincides with lockdowns in many European countries which have curbed road transport – the largest source of nitrogen oxides - and slowed output at gas-emitting factories.

The new images, released by the European Space Agency (ESA) and analysed by the non-profit European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), show the changing density of nitrogen dioxide, which can cause respiratory problems and cancer, like heat maps.

Daily weather events can influence atmospheric pollution, so the satellite pictures took a 20-day average and excluded readings where cloud cover reduced the quality of the data.

Data from the European Environment Agency (EEA) showed a similar trend over March 16-22. In Madrid, average nitrogen dioxide levels decreased by 56% week-on-week after the Spanish government banned non-essential travel on March 14.

The EPHA said people living in polluted cities may be more at risk from COVID-19, because prolonged exposure to bad air can weaken the immune system, making it harder to fight infection.

"That connection is very likely," Zoltan Massay-Kosubek, policy manager for clean air at EPHA, told Reuters. "But because the disease is new, it still has to be demonstrated."

Air pollution can cause or exacerbate lung cancer, pulmonary disease and strokes.

Coronavirus lockdowns give Europe's cities cleaner

March 31, 2020

TITLE: air

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DATE

China also recorded a drop in nitrogen dioxide pollution in cities during February, when the government imposed draconian lockdown measures to contain the raging epidemic.

In some regions of Poland, however, nitrogen dioxide levels remained relatively high during the period despite its lockdown, perhaps due to the prevalence of coal-based heating.

Countries that went into lockdown later - such as Britain, which did so on March 23 - look set for a pollution reprieve in coming weeks, EPHA said.

Air pollution causes around 400,000 premature deaths each year in Europe, EEA data show.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/03/30/20/coronavirus-lockdowns-give-europes-cities-cleaner-air>

Nature takes back world's empty city streets

Agence France-Presse / 04:27 PM March 30, 2020



Aerial view of empty Plaza de Armas square in Santiago, Chile, on March 27, 2020. Image: AFP/Martin Bernetti

While humans retreat into their homes as more and more countries go under coronavirus lockdown, wild animals are slipping cover to explore the empty streets of some of our biggest cities. Wild boar have descended from the hills around Barcelona while sika deer are nosing their way around the deserted metro stations of Nara, Japan.

Indian social media has gone wild about footage of a stag scampering through Dehradun, the capital of the northern state of Uttarakhand.

Gangs of wild turkeys have been strutting the streets of Oakland, California, while a puma turned up in the center of the Chilean capital Santiago, which is under curfew.

“This is the habitat they once had and that we’ve taken away from them,” said Marcelo Giagnoni, the head of Chile’s agricultural and livestock service that helped police capture the curious big cat.

While sightings of dolphins in Venice’s canals turned out to be fanciful, they have been popping up in ports elsewhere in the Mediterranean as emboldened wildlife takes “free rein to wander our cities and towns”, said Romain Julliard, head of research at the French Natural History Museum.

He told AFP that foxes were at the vanguard of the new urban explorers. “They change their behavior very quickly. When a place becomes quiet, they’re straight in there.”

Animals ‘spring of love’

Animals and birds that normally live in urban parks, like sparrows and pigeons are also more likely to venture beyond their usual territories, Julliard said, “freeing a space for other animals.”

While the dawn and dusk choruses have been bringing comfort to many quarantined city dwellers, the museum’s acoustics specialist Jerome Sueur said that doesn’t mean there are more urban birds than before.

It is more that with reduced traffic noise we can hear them better. Some, however, “stop singing when there is noise, so now they are letting themselves go.”

“Animals are shaking off human noise pollution,” Sueur said. And the timing could not have been as they embark on their mating season.

With the hunting season suspended in several European countries, this promises to be a spring and possibly a summer of love for the animal kingdom.

It is certainly great news for species like the common toad and the spotted salamander. The amorous amphibians are being spared from being “crushed crossing busy roads” in their haste to find a mate, said Jean-Noel Rieffel, of the French biodiversity office.

With few dog walkers to disturb them, baby fawns are also getting an idyllic start to life while birds like Mediterranean gulls who nest along the sandy banks of rivers are being left undisturbed. In the Calanques National Park overlooking the Mediterranean near France’s second city of Marseille, wildlife “is reclaiming its natural habitat with surprising speed,” said the park’s president, Didier Reault.

With walkers and boating banned, “the puffins who used to stay on the islets in the highest protected areas are not gathering on the sea,” he said.

Birdwatching to stay sane

And it is the same for plants. Wild orchids, which are supposed to be protected, are often picked by walkers when they blossom in late April and May, said Rieffel. This year they will be spared that fate.

And in the cities and suburbs, unmowed lawns will be a source of “bounty for bees, bumble bees and butterflies,” Julliard added.

But for him, the biggest change is the effect this is having on humans. “The most important phenomenon perhaps is our relationship with nature changing, with people locked up in their homes realizing how much they miss nature,” he said.

Stuck indoors, with their worlds reduced to a few square meters (yards), confined urbanites have suddenly become avid birdwatchers.

British ornithologist David Lindo, who is known as the “Urban Birder,” has been tweeting and livestreaming birds he spots from the roof of the building in Spain where he has been quarantined.

“The sky is a great arena, anything can fly past and, at the very least, it will give you peace. My message is simple: keep looking up,” he told his new-found followers.

However, there are also down sides to the lockdown for nature.

Work to limit invasive species has been all but halted, cautioned Loic Obled of the OFB, as well as that to help endangered species.

And when the lockdown finally ends, Rieffel warned that “people will have a need of nature and there is a risk of too many visitors (to natural parks), which won’t be good for the flora and fauna.”

The birds which have nested in the yard of an abandoned school or factory will find themselves disturbed, he warned. Nature’s respite from man may be rather short-lived. *JB*

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/97848/nature-takes-back-worlds-empty-city-streets#ixzz6IDiPsT4u>

Daily Tribune (Philippines)

Nature takes back world's empty city streets

Animals · Wildlife · Zoology · Biology
31 Mar 2020 [+4 more](#) AFP

PARIS, France (AFP) — As humans retreat into their homes as more and more countries go under coronavirus lockdown, wild animals are slipping cover to explore the empty streets of some of our biggest cities.

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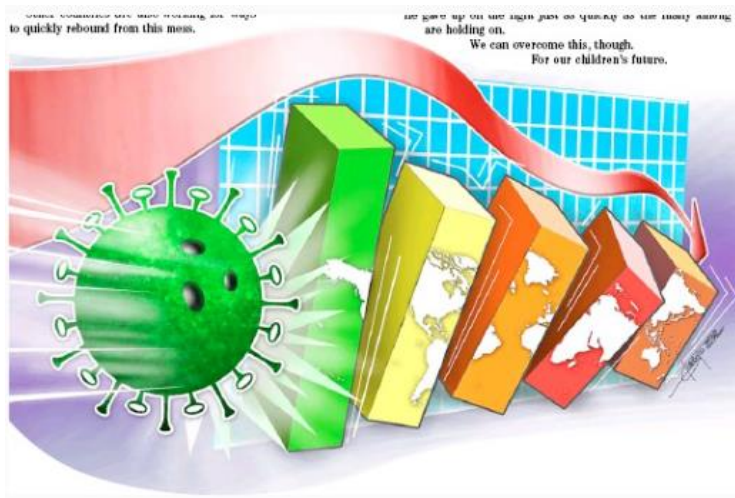
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— with people locked up in their homes realizing how much they miss nature,” he said.

Stuck indoors, with their worlds reduced to a few square meters, confined urbanites have sud-

denly become avid birdwatchers. British ornithologist David Lindo, who is known as the “Urban Birder,” has been tweeting and livestreaming birds he spots from the roof of the building in Spain where he has been quarantined.

“The sky is a great arena, anything can fly past and, at the very least, it will give you peace. My message is simple: keep looking up,” he told his new-found followers.

However, there are also downsides to the lockdown for nature. Work to limit invasive species has been all but halted, cautioned Loic Obled of the OFB, as well as that to help endangered species.

And when the lockdown finally ends, Rieffel warned that “people will have a need of nature

and there is a risk of too many visitors (to natural parks), which won’t be good for the flora and fauna.”

The birds which have nested in the yard of an abandoned school or factory will find themselves disturbed, he warned. Nature’s respite from man may be rather short-lived.

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SAFEST PLACE IN THE WORLD | Smaller Pacific islands and ice-cold Antarctica remain virus-free

March 30, 2020 , 05:14 PM
By Katrina Elaine Alba

March 30, 2020 – People looking for a safe place to stay as the coronavirus pandemic spread across the world should consider the palm tree-line tropical islands in the Pacific or the freezing continent of Antarctica in the South Pole as these are the remaining areas without cases of highly contagious disease causing acute respiratory disease.

As of Sunday, the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has sickened more than 721,000 people across the world and nearly 34,000 had died, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Only about 20 percent of the people sick with the disease have recovered.

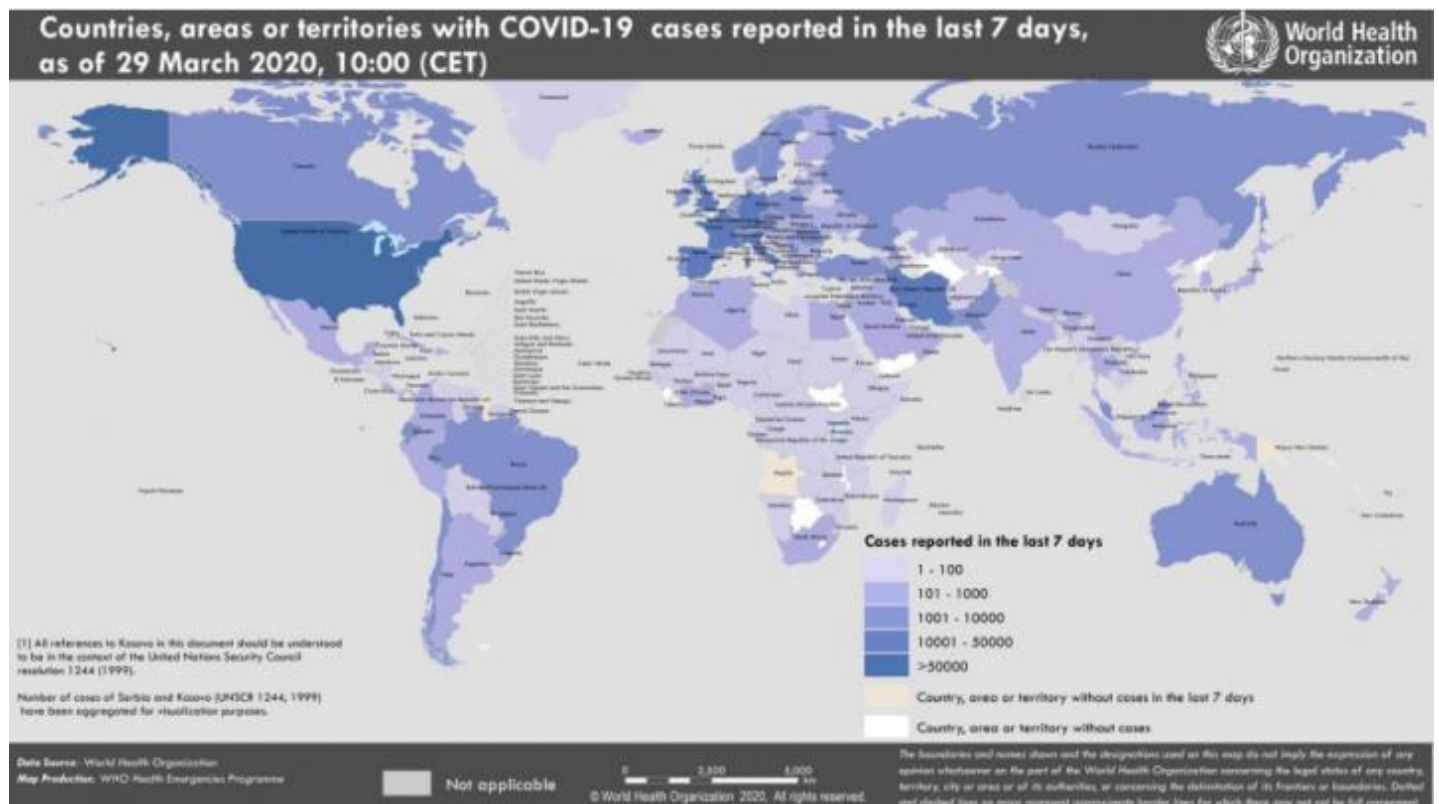
Based on WHO records, there are less than 40 countries, territories, and islands in the world that have not reported a single case of the disease, which originated from China in December 2019 have no reported cases of COVID-19.

On Sunday, WHO said the Northern Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific, a United States commonwealth territory, became the latest to report cases of COVID-19 after two residents – a male and female returned to the capital Saipan from trips to other Pacific territories.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) of the Northern Mariana Islands said a 42-year old male and a 49-year old female were isolated in the quarantine facility of the Kanoa Resort.

One of the cases had traveled from Guam on March 12 and the other came from a trip to Tinian, one of the three principal islands of Northern Mariana, and returned to the main island of Saipan on March 14, the CHCC said.

Both were said to have showed symptoms starting March 17, and sought the CHCC on March 25 and 26. Three to four days later, the results of their tests showed positive results after the specimens were sent to a Public Health Laboratory to Guam.



Northern Mariana Islands is the latest territory in the world to report cases of COVID-19 according to the World Health Organization as of March 29, 2020

That means the tiny American Samoa island, also in the Pacific Ocean, is the only American territory without a case of COVID-19. The United States now leads with the highest number of cases at more than 105,000, surpassing China's more than 81,000 cases. Italy has the most deaths followed by Spain and China.

But there were fears South Pacific islands would not be completely free of the disease as the virus spread quickly across the world.

Health officials in the Pacific islands said it was difficult to have samples analyzed. "There's no way for us to test whether we have a case," Joseph Pereira, executive assistant to the American Samoa governor and the head of the territory's coronavirus task force, told NBC News.

With no certified lab to handle testing, officials told NBC News they had to submit the samples to Hawaii, 3,700 km away. But when the patient didn't meet the testing criteria, American Samoa had to send the samples to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, more than triple the distance away.

Other Pacific areas that have free from the disease are island territories and dependents such as Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

NO REPORTED CASES

There are also eight countries in Africa with no reported cases: Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Lesotho, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan, based on the latest WHO report.

Sierra Leone, one of the epicenters of the Ebola epidemic in 2014, had declared a 12-month state of emergency despite having no reported cases.

South Sudan has suspended the training of their unified forces, only a month after the end of a civil war.

In Asia, five areas have also not reported cases: British Indian Ocean Territory, North Korea, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Yemen. North Korea has denied having any cases of COVID-19.

Pyongyang's state media has announced last week that all but three of the reported 380 foreigners have been released from quarantine. But concerns remain that the region remains vulnerable. A South Korean news outlet Daily NK had reported that the novel coronavirus has killed 180 soldiers in North Korea.

Concerns have also been raised in the war-torn country of Yemen.

The United Nations Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, has called for the de-escalation of violence, stressing that the battlefields make it harder to combat potential outbreaks of the -pandemic.

ONLY CONTINENT STANDING

It seems the continent of Antarctica, the harsh land that is home to around 4,000 people, is the only continent free of the virus.

Alberto della Rovere, leader of the Italian expedition, had told The Washington Post, "Right now, this, Antarctica, is the safest place in the world."

Source: <https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/safest-place-in-the-world-smaller-pacific-islands-and-ice-cold-antarctica-remain-virus-free>