

Ensure healthier air quality after lockdown – Legarda

Published
14 hours ago

on April 1, 2020 04:10 PM

By **Keith A. Calayag**



House Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda called on the government to ensure that the air quality in Metro Manila and urban regions will become “healthier” even after the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in the entire Luzon.

Citing reports from the Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resource, Legarda said there is substantial decrease in levels of particulate matter or the particles capable of penetrating deep into lung passageways and could cause cardiovascular, cerebrovascular and respiratory problems following the declaration of the ECQ.

“The improvement in our air quality may just be temporary and would likely see a reverse when industries, businesses, transportation, and daily activities resume,” said Legarda in a statement.

“This health crisis, although truly unfortunate, provided us a glimpse on the quality of air we and our families could be enjoying if our economy utilizes more of the clean sources of energy and not fossil fuel,” she added.

According to the EMB, the air quality in Metro Manila is “improving” recording “good” or “moderate” levels of PM10 or inhalable particles 10 micrometers or smaller in diameter in various cities.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/01/ensure-healthier-air-quality-after-lockdown-legarda/>

NATION

Lake Mahagnao water quality to be monitored

Published
6 hours ago

on April 2, 2020 12:40 AM

By [Elmer Recuerdo](#)

In recent years, the Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park has become an important ecotourism destination in Leyte where it attracts hundreds of visitors every week through the hot springs and waterfalls as well as the rowing or kayaking activities it offers.



PHOTOgraph COURTESY OF MAHAGNAO VOLCANO NATURAL PARK FACEBOOK PAGE Pristine beauty The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is intent to keep it that way as Lake Mahagnao is threatened by increasing fecal coliform levels due to informal settlers in the area.

TACLOBAN CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Eastern Visayas is stepping up its campaign to protect Lake Mahagnao from degradation amid the increase in the number of families living within its protected area.

DENR regional director Tirso Parian said the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) will conduct a monthly extraction of water samples and laboratory tests to gauge fecal coliform levels and other water quality indicators.

Parian said the EMB will also be conducting focus group discussions to residents living near the lake and within the protected area to gather information on their activities and facilities within the area that may have an effect on Mahagnao Lake's water quality.

"These intervention activities will provide the department and the Protected Area Management Board, as the policy-making body of protected areas, the needed data for an effective and efficient management plan," Parian said.

The lake is part of the park that was first created in 1937 through Proclamation 184 which named it as the Mahagnao National Park. It was later renamed as the Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park (MVNP) by the DENR through Proclamation 1157 in 1998.

Around 65 kilometers south of Tacloban City and 18 kilometers away from the town center of Burauen, the MVNP has around 635 hectares of forestlands surrounding the pristine Mahagnao Lake that has an elevation of 860 meters.

The area is mostly composed of wetland forests and is also the origin of many rivers and streams flowing on many parts of Burauen town and its neighboring municipalities.

Due to the numerous streams, rivers and similar kind bodies of water, Burauen has been known as the Spring Capital of Leyte.

In recent years, the MVNP has become an important ecotourism destination in Leyte where it attracts hundreds of visitors every week through its hot springs and waterfalls as well as the rowing or kayaking activities it offers.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/02/lake-mahagnao-water-quality-to-be-monitored/>

Urgent appeal to close all live animal markets in PH

Published April 1, 2020, 1:38 PM

By Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz

Animal welfare advocates appealed to authorities on Wednesday to permanently close all live animal markets or “wet markets” across the Philippines, which are possible breeding grounds for deadly viruses.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals’ (PETA) sent a letter of “urgent” appeal to the Department of Agriculture (DA) on Wednesday.



(Erwin Beleo / MANILA BULLETIN)

“It’s a matter of when—not if—the next pandemic will occur, as long as live-animal markets are permitted to continue endangering both humans and other animals,” PETA senior vice president Jason Baker said.

“PETA is urging the Philippines to take the next logical step and close these dangerous operations,” he added.

While some live-animal markets in China have closed, which could be temporary, many continue to operate throughout Asia, including the Balintawak Public Market and Farmers’ Market in Manila, PETA pointed out.

The group noted that deadly outbreaks of swine flu, avian flu, severe acute respiratory syndrome, human immunodeficiency virus, Ebola, hoof-and-mouth disease, mad cow disease, and other maladies have stemmed from capturing or farming animals for food.

It added that live-animal markets are perfect breeding grounds for diseases, which can jump from various other species to humans, since stressed, injured, and sickly animals are commonly caged in public areas and on sidewalks where feces, blood, and offal can contaminate buyers and sellers and be tracked into restaurants or homes.

Shut down live animal markets, gov't urged

posted April 01, 2020 at 10:20 pm

by [Willie Casas](#)

As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) continues to spread, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) sent an urgent e-mail on Wednesday asking Department of Agriculture Secretary William Dar to close live-animal meat markets, or “wet markets,” across the Philippines permanently, pointing out that markets crammed full of sick and stressed animals are breeding grounds for deadly diseases.

“It’s a matter of when—not if—the next pandemic will occur, as long as live-animal markets are permitted to continue endangering both humans and other animals,” said PETA Senior Vice President Jason Baker.

“PETA is urging the Philippines to take the next logical step and close these dangerous operations,” Baker said.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/320886>

Boracay waste down to about 50% amid

April 2, 2020

TITLE: coronavirus lockdown

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DATE

Boracay waste down to about 50% amid coronavirus lockdown

Boy Ryan B. Zabal

Published 2:56 PM, April 01, 2020

Updated 3:08 PM, April 01, 2020

Aklan province reports its 4th case of coronavirus. All of them have history of travel to Metro Manila, the epicenter of coronavirus outbreak in the country



BEFORE COVID. File photo of tourists in Boracay Island. Boy Ryan Zabal/Rappler

AKLAN, Philippines – Tourist island Boracay in Aklan province has been generating about half of its usual waste since lockdown measures were put in place to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus disease.

The province has at least 4 confirmed coronavirus cases as of Wednesday, April 1.

Garbage collection continued undisturbed during the lockdown but Alex Carlo Magno, spokesperson of the ECOS Sanitary Landfill and Waste Management Corporation, said they noted a decrease in the quantity of garbage collected in the island.

"Sa ngayon, apat na trucks na lang kumukulekta ng mga basura sa mga collection points, at isang trip ng mga 10-wheeler trucks ang humahakot from Manocmanoc staging area papuntang Kabulihan sa mainland Malay (We are only sending right now 4 trucks to collect wastes deposited in collection points. The 10-wheeler trucks are only making one trip each from the staging area in Manocmanoc town going to Kabulihan in mainland Malay)," Magno said.

Magno said up to 8 trucks used to make two trips a day going to the landfill.

Bulk of the island's wastes came from hotels, resorts, and establishments, which were forced to close down for the duration of the lockdown.

Residents are under strict home quarantine. Only workers and employees of essential businesses like pharmacies, banks, remittance centers, stores, convenience stores, groceries and markets are exempted.

Magno said they made sure their employees had protection against the disease. The drivers and collectors were required to wear protective gears and to observe physical distancing.



FRONTLINERS, TOO. Boracay's garbage collectors wear protective gears to perform their jobs amid the coronavirus pandemic

Aklan reported its 4th coronavirus case on Wednesday. [All of them had history of travel to Metro Manila](#), the epicenter of coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The 4th case is a 44-year old resident of Altavas town who may have been exposed to a confirmed coronavirus patient. He was admitted to the Roxas Memorial Provincial Hospital (RMPH) in Roxas City.

“The patient was confined in Capiz by nature of his work. He was assigned in Capiz. The patient had exposure in Manila,” said Capiz provincial health officer Leah Del Rosario. – **Rappler.com**

Source: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/256638-boracay-waste-down-coronavirus-lockdown>

'Boracay-like' turquoise waters of Manila Bay may be

April 2, 2020

TITLE: dead zone: UP marine biologist

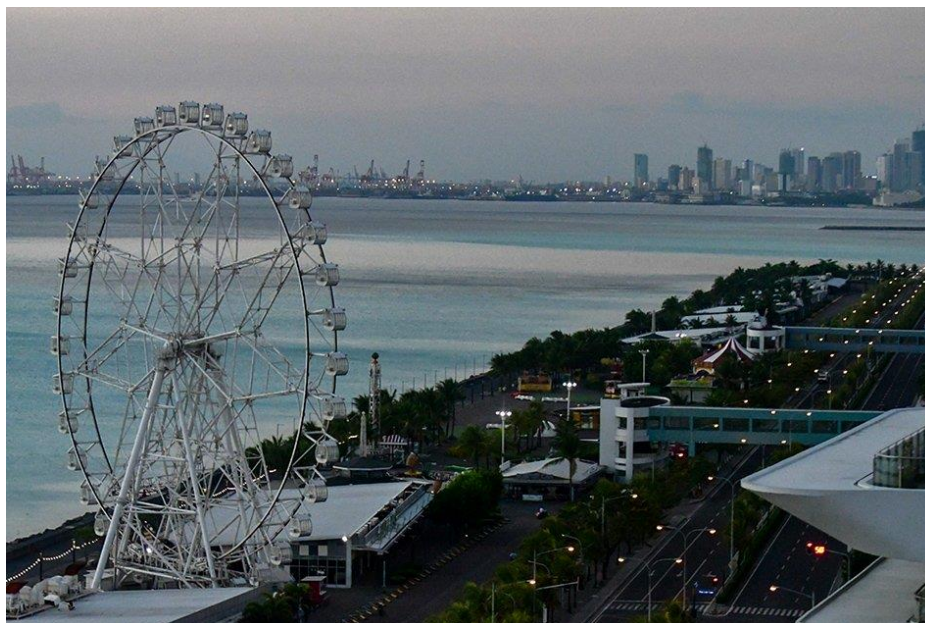
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'Boracay-like' turquoise waters of Manila Bay may be dead zone: UP marine biologist

Art Fuentes, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 01 2020 03:39 PM | Updated as of Apr 01 2020 04:09 PM



Manila Bay's waters appear turquoise amid the enhanced community quarantine on March 25, 2020. *Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA – Far from being clean, Manila Bay’s change of color from gray to turquoise that was observed last week may actually indicate that its waters have been contaminated with chemicals that kill marine life, a scientist said on Monday.

Last March 25, netizens shared photos and videos showing how Manila Bay’s waters near Roxas Boulevard had changed color and now looked clean and “Boracay-like.”

This was after photos of much [clearer skies](#) over a locked-down Metro Manila spread on social media.

Some [speculated](#) that the enhanced community quarantine imposed over Metro Manila, which suspended the operations of many industries and establishments, had also lessened pollution and allowed Manila Bay’s water to “heal.”

But a marine biologist from UP Diliman’s Marine Science Institute said a 2- to 3-week pause in pollution was not enough for Manila Bay's water quality to improve.

“Hindi dahil ganun ang kulay, malinis na sya (Having that color doesn’t mean it’s clean),” Dr. Deo Florence Onda said referring to the turquoise patch of water that was observed in Manila Bay starting March 11.

Instead, the change in color was most likely due to chemical pollution, said Onda.

“It could actually be a dead zone,” said Onda, who heads the Microbial Oceanography Laboratory of the UP Diliman College of Science.

Onda said scientists at the laboratory are looking at two possibilities for the water’s change in color.

First, it could be the result of microorganisms blooming in Manila Bay’s waters. A bloom of phytoplankton called coccolithophores has been known to result in turquoise waters.

But these microorganisms bloom only in waters that are free from man-made pollution, and have never been observed in Manila Bay.

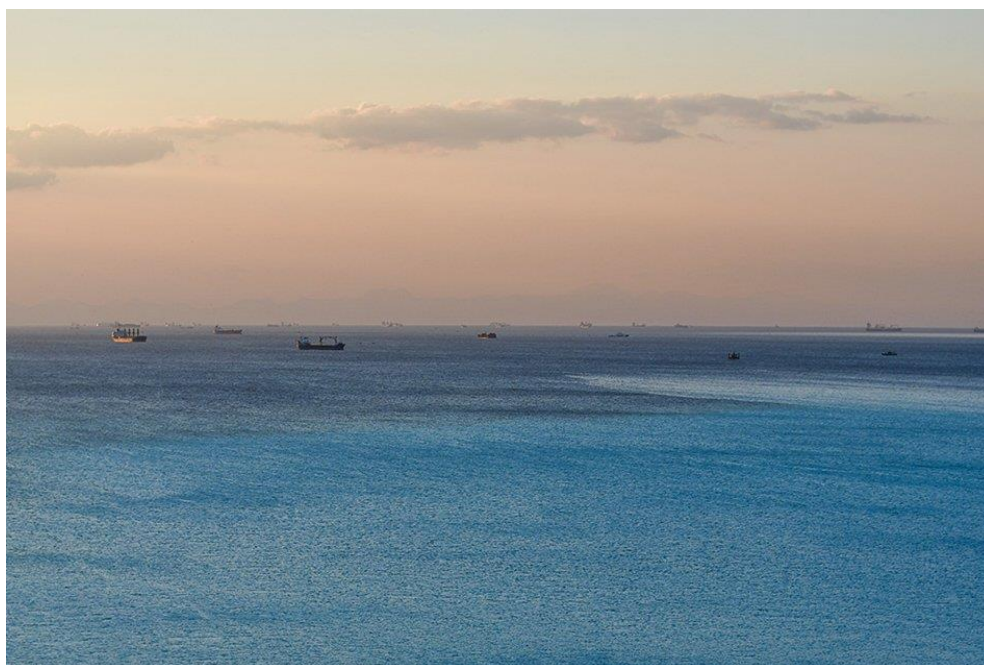
‘Boracay-like’ turquoise waters of Manila Bay may be

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Manila Bay's waters appear turquoise amid the enhanced community quarantine on March 25, 2020. *Mark Demayo,*
ABS-CBN News

“Mukhang yung experience natin at yung kaalaman natin, sinasabi na mukhang hindi yun yung possibility,” said Onda.

(Our experience and knowledge do not point to this possibility.)

The second and more likely possibility is that the change in color was due to chlorine pollution, Onda said.

Large establishments in Manila Bay like malls, restaurants and hotels with pools may be discharging chlorinated water into the sewerage system, which drains into Manila Bay, Onda said.

The constant disinfection of many parts of Metro Manila using chlorine solutions may have also led to this, Onda said.

Chlorine contamination may explain why patches of the turquoise water looked clear, Onda said, because chlorine kills microorganisms whose bodies then settle at the bottom of the Bay.

Besides microorganisms, chlorine also kills fish and other marine life.

Manila Bay’s discoloration was also reported in 2014. That incident coincided with a fish kill, which prompted the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to investigate the incident.

Apparently, the discoloration happened again in the succeeding years, though the turquoise patch was not as large and as prominent in 2014.

It was seen again in 2017, based on satellite photos shared by Google Earth. Netizens also posted photos showing that it recurred in October 2018

“So mukhang nangyayari sya nang mas madalas. Di lang napapansin kasi mas maliit, mas patchy.”

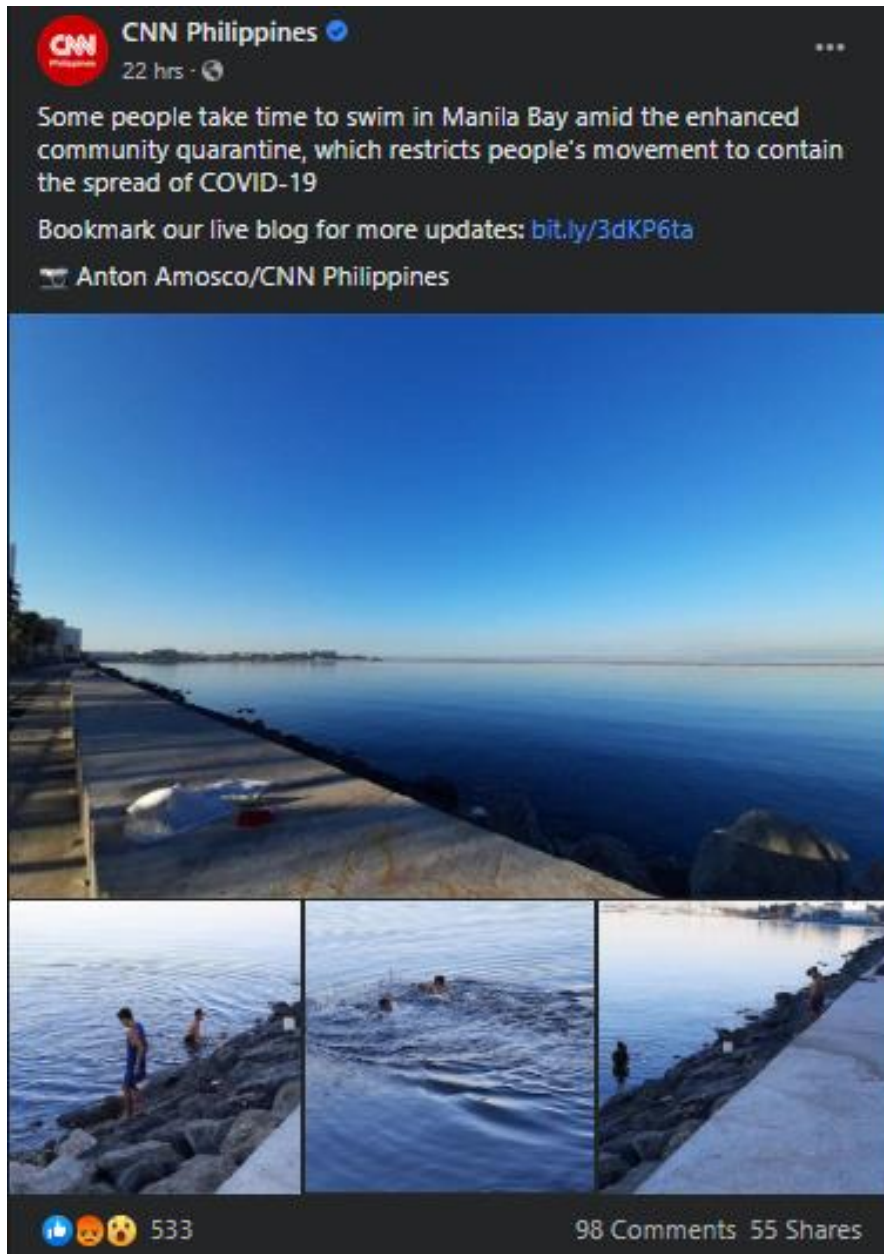
(So it seems that this happens often. It just doesn’t get noticed as often because its smaller, patchier.)

Onda said scientists from the Microbial Oceanography Laboratory would have wanted to analyze samples from Manila Bay, but are constrained by the enhanced community quarantine in effect over Metro Manila and Luzon.

Last Monday, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered the discoloration of Manila Bay to be investigated.

Before Metro Manila went into lockdown, the DENR closed several establishments in Pasay City that were found to be discharging untreated wastewater into Manila Bay.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/01/20/boracay-like-turquoise-waters-of-manila-bay-may-be-dead-zone-up-marine-biologist>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/1515763818663512/posts/2780782315494983/>

HEADLINES

Metro Manila to have normal water supply for April

By: [Ronnel W. Domingo](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:10 AM April 02, 2020

The allocation of raw water from Angat dam to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) remains normal in April at 46 cubic meters per second, mainly to address the continuing need for sanitation in households and health facilities as the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine passes the halfway point.

Sevillo David Jr., executive director of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), said in an interview that the decision to keep the MWSS allocation, instead of reducing it, was still based on the aim of ensuring there would be enough supply during the hot, summer months.

“[The board] also considered the importance of securing future requirements, in case the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease) problem prevails for much longer,” David told the Inquirer.

Before the MWSS allocation was raised to 46 cms in the second week of March, the NWRB had kept this at 42 cms in January and February as Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. continued to implement rotating supply interruption at nonpeak hours.

“While water consumption decreased for business establishments because many are not operating or doing so at reduced levels [since the quarantine started], household consumption increased because people are [confined] to their homes.”

Meanwhile, the NWRB reduced the allocation for the irrigation of farms in nearby provinces, such as Bulacan, from 20 cms in March to 15 cms in April.

“The decision was made considering that farms are in the terminal phase of cropping,” David said. “Crops are in their vegetative period and harvest is nearing.”

As of Wednesday, water level at Angat was recorded at 196.25 meters above sea level, more than 16 meters over the minimum operating level of 180 masl.

Source: <https://business.inquirer.net/293907/metro-manila-to-have-normal-water-supply-for-april>

SBMA requests help in tracing DENR diver

Published
6 hours ago

on April 2, 2020 12:40 AM

By [Jonas Reyes](#)

The patient, who was reported positive of COVID-19 on 29 March, is a crew member of one of the four survey ships of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.



SUBIC BAY FREEPORT — The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) on Tuesday requested assistance in contact tracing after a crew member from a survey ship berthed in Subic Bay has recently tested positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The SBMA Incident Management Team (IMT) confirmed that the patient, who was reported positive of COVID-19 on 29 March, is a crew member of one of the four survey ships of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

SBMA chairman and Administrator Wilma Eisma said that what made the contact tracing worrisome was that the person, unaware of his condition, had possibly visited some relatives in Olongapo as well as travelled to Mindoro via Manila and Batangas in the intervening period between his confinement and possible date of infection.

According to the SBMA-IMT, the patient first complained of fever and body pains on 10 March after cleaning the ship's hull alongside fellow divers near Grande Island. He then consulted doctors at Baypointe Hospital on 12 March and again the next day. In the afternoon of 13 March, he picked up his sister in Olongapo and, with her, consulted again at St. Jude's Hospital in the city.

The patient then stayed inside the hydrographer BRP Palma that was docked at Subic's Bravo Wharf for two days, after which he consulted doctors at the Our Lady of Lourdes International Medical Center in Olongapo on 16 March.

Denying any history of travel, the patient was admitted on suspicion of dengue fever. When dengue tests proved negative, he finally admitted to travelling but denied going out of his vehicle. Swab samples taken on 21 March then showed positive results of COVID-19 infection on 29 March.

It was also ascertained that before he fell ill, the patient travelled to Mindoro on 6 March, stayed with friends and family in Mindoro for two days, then went back to his ship in Subic on 9 March.

Eisma said that while personal information about persons under investigation for COVID-19 are normally withheld for privacy reasons, this particular case needs the attention of concerned agencies and local government units because it could potentially cause local virus transmission.

“There should not be any quarrel about whether to classify the PUI as a resident of the Subic Bay Freeport or Olongapo City, or even of Mindoro because that doesn’t matter at all,” Eisma said. “What matters is that we know he has been in all these areas and we might have an outbreak in our hands if we don’t act immediately to identify his contacts.”

Eisma said that the PUI has been described as in stable condition, has good appetite, and took phone calls from the SBMA-IMT for pertinent information.

Meanwhile, the patient’s ship was quarantined on 16 March and was eventually brought to anchorage further out on the bay on 29 March. His fellow crewmembers aboard BRP Palma are currently in stable condition and did not show any symptoms, Eisma added.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/02/sbma-requests-help-in-tracing-denr-diver/>

BFAR warns vs. consuming shellfish from several areas in Visayas, Mindanao

Published April 1, 2020 3:37pm
By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Wednesday warned against the consumption of shellfish collected at coastal waters in several areas in Visayas and Mindanao.

advertisement

In a bulletin issued March 27, the BFAR said based on the results of its laboratory testing, shellfish collected at coastal waters of Dauis and Tagbilaran City in Bohol; San Pedro Bay in Western Samar; Balite Bay, Mati City in Davao Oriental; Lianga Bay in Surigao del Sur; and Ormoc Bay, Ormoc City in Leyte "are still positive for paralytic shellfish poison that is beyond the regulatory limit."

"All types of shellfish and alamang gathered from these areas, then, are "not safe for human consumption," the BFAR added.

However, the BFAR said that fish, squids, and crabs from the said coastal areas are safe to be eaten, as long as they are fresh and washed thoroughly, and the internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking.—**AOL, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/732216/bfar-warns-vs-consuming-shellfish-from-several-areas-in-visayas-mindanao/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook

News5 16 hrs -

Positibo pa rin sa paralytic shellfish poison ang ilang katubigan sa Bohol, Western Samar, Davao Oriental, Surigao del Sur at Leyte. Ibig sabihin, hindi ligtas kainin ang shellfish at alamang na makukuha at mahuhuli mula sa nasabing mga lugar.

RED TIDE ALERT

(as of March 27, 2020)

- 1 COASTAL WATERS OF DAUIS AND TAGBILARAN CITY, BOHOL
- 2 SAN PEDRO BAY, WESTERN SAMAR
- 3 BALITE BAY, MATI, DAVAO ORIENTAL
- 4 LIANGA BAY, SURIGAO DEL SUR
- 5 ORMOC BAY, ORMOC CITY, LEYTE

NEWS 5 DIGITAL source: B FAR

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718 48 Comments 660 Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/163550757135020/posts/1941074382715973/>

Quezon City records 23 new COVID-19 cases; total rises to 174

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 02 2020 01:28 AM

MANILA - The Quezon City government on Wednesday reported 23 new cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the city, raising the total to 174.

The new cases were recorded in barangays Bagong Pag-asa, Bahay Toro, Del Monte, San Isidro Labrador, Siena, Batasan Hills, Bagong Silangan, Holy Spirit, Matandang Balara, Botocan, Central, Damayang Lagi, Immaculate Conception, Roxas, Santol, Tatalon, Fairview, Culiat, New Era, Pasong Tamo, and Talipapa.

No new fatalities and recoveries were reported.

The total number of deaths remain at 27, with 11 recoveries.

Eighteen barangays in the city have been placed under extreme enhanced community quarantine.

In an effort to contain the virus, decontamination efforts are ongoing in different barangays, city officials said.

As of Wednesday, a total of 142 barangays were disinfected.

President Rodrigo Duterte has placed the country under a state of public health emergency because of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The health department has tallied 2,311 cases of COVID-19 nationwide, with 96 fatalities and 50

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/02/20/quezon-city-records-23-new-covid-19-cases-total-rises-to-174>

How to clean and disinfect groceries

And other shopping tips in the time of COVID-19

posted April 01, 2020 at 06:20 pm

by [Bernadette Lunas](#)

Hands washed, floors wiped, phones disinfected. As household members regularly and thoroughly clean all objects and surfaces in their homes to prevent coronavirus from entering, one question remains: Do we need to sanitize our groceries, too?



Pick produce, not virus

The short answer is yes.

And the slightly longer answer is yes, but using the right cleaners.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms that coronavirus spreads from person to person—who are within six feet from each another, hence the importance of social distancing—and through respiratory droplets which can land directly in mouths or noses of nearby people or on surfaces which can be touched by another person.

Available evidence shows that the coronavirus can thrive for hours or days on different surfaces: four hours on copper, 24 hours on cardboard, two to three days on plastic and stainless steel.

Hence the possibility of catching the virus from, say, canned goods or grocery cart handles is likely, which highlights the importance of not touching your face when outside.

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, the most likely way of contracting coronavirus and other viruses when shopping is from touching a shopping cart or basket, thus microbiologist Elsie Gatpayat of the Food Safety and Hygiene Academy of the Philippines recommends bringing alcohol or hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes when going to the supermarkets.



SHOP RESPONSIBLY. Aside from not hoarding groceries, experts remind shoppers to practice social distancing as well as disinfecting cart and basket handles before using them

Here's how to do your grocery shopping to prevent contracting viruses and bringing them into your home.

While at the grocery store:

- Before using the basket or cart, wipe down the handles using tissue with disinfectant or disinfectant wipes. Discard them immediately.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet or 1 meter from other shoppers as much as possible.
- Offer to bag your own groceries to minimize contact.

After shopping:

- Leave footwear outside the house
- Wash hands immediately before touching anything.
- Throw away cardboard and plastic packaging.
- Wash cloth and reusable bags after use.
- Transfer seafood and meat into sealed containers.



The Food Safety and Hygiene Academy of the Philippines shares the right way to clean and disinfect grocery items

Cleaning groceries:

- Canned goods, Tetra Paks, boxes, bottles, foil packs, and produce wrapped in plastic: wash using water with soap or wipe down using clean cloth or paper towel with disinfectant.
- Fruits and vegetables with peels: wash with water and soap

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/320854>

What can we do to flatten the curve?



[EYES WIDE OPEN](#) - [Iris Gonzales](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 2, 2020 - 12:00am

It's easy to lose one's mind these days. We can't help it. It's as if our dystopian future descended on us in the wink of an eye. Our everyday lives have been so rudely interrupted, no thanks to the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic.

Our contact with other people has been limited to virtual interactions. We can only laugh with those tiny yellow smileys or tear up with crying emoticons. Our meetings are on Zoom and in chat groups. We've become detached from the outside world. But then again, the outside world has disappeared, too. There is nothing out there, but a giant empty city.

There's no telling when this will end.

Bayanihan

But isolated and detached as we are, there is a way we can help and I am encouraged by the stories of people reaching out to others.

The bayanihan spirit is very much alive these days. Derived from the Filipino word "bayan," which means town or community, the term bayanihan refers to the spirit of communal unity to achieve a particular goal. It stems from the age-old practice of villagers working together to help a family relocate by moving their entire bahay kubo to another part of the village.

There's no English word that captures bayanihan perfectly because I believe the custom itself is uniquely Filipino and I am happy to see it so strong nowadays as the country grapples with this pandemic.

I hear about stories of strangers helping each other and pooling resources to help frontliners. Individuals are raising funds to help health workers – and strangers are responding to these calls.

From my own circle, one chat group alone has already raised funds to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE) for UP frontliners. We were able to look for suppliers with just a few texts, calls, and posts here and there despite our respective isolated existence.

Big business

Conglomerates have rallied their own troops, leading the private sector's response to the crisis.

Lucio Tan-owned LT Group Inc. and Ramon Ang-led San Miguel Corp., for instance, have repurposed their facilities to produce much-needed ethyl alcohol for our frontline health workers.

The Sy-owned SM Foundation has also donated P170 million worth of full protective suits and other equipment to hospitals, while the MVP Group contributed virus specimen collection kits and other supplies needed by medical frontliners.

The Consunji Group's DMCI, with the help of Bloomberg Foundation, also helped retrofit two wards of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) to handle COVID-19 cases. The wards have negative pressure rooms that prevent contaminated air from going out.

From the food sector, Bounty Fresh donated a whopping 105,000 kilograms of fresh, dressed chicken to different areas in Luzon.

Some of these donations are for police frontliners in Bamban, Tarlac and Sta. Maria, Bulacan and frontliners in the cities of Pasig and Taguig through various community kitchens.

Bounty Fresh has also started donating 1,200 Adobo Connection packed meals for the healthcare workers of different hospitals, including the University of the East – Ramon Magsaysay (UERM) Memorial Medical Center, San Juan de Dios Hospital, East Avenue Medical Center and PGH.

The company also pledged 45,000 kilograms of fresh, dressed chickens as support to its merchandisers across Luzon and to its employees who are continuously in service.

Pilipinas Shell

Oil giant Pilipinas Shell is also doing its part to help, I was told when I asked about their response.

It has already endorsed P4 million to the Philippine Businesses for Social Progress (PBSP) for the purchase of family packs containing food and protection kits for displaced workers.

In addition, it donated more than 10,000 face masks and complete PPE sets to the Department of Health and the PGH.

Shell is also providing fuel support to BGC Bus, Ceres Bus and Ube Transport to help medical frontliners get to where they need to go.

As Pilipinas Shell country chairman Cesar Romero said, “this is an unprecedented time that demands compassion, respect, and kindness from all of us.”

Let’s do our share

There are many more companies and individuals joining in the collective effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The greater your capacity to help, the bigger support you can and you must give.

I hope there will be more. We all need to do our part to flatten the infection curve. We can help even from our own homes.

As one tycoon said to me, “this is not a battle, but a war.” Indeed, let’s all give our best and join the fight because it’s the right thing to do. Respond to calls for help or think of new ways to help. Let’s focus on saving Filipino lives.

Whether by sewing an improvised face mask or pooling funds for ventilators, we all can do something. Let the bayanihan spirit live on in each of us. In it, we see our dignity and with it, we are able to rise against all odds.

May we always remember that it is always an honor to help our fellow Filipinos. Let us do it today because as this virus has taught us, tomorrow may never come.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/04/02/2004843/what-can-we-do-flatten-curve>

BSP governor eyes 'restarting' PH economy by mid-May or early June

posted April 01, 2020 at 08:10 pm

by [Julito G. Rada](#)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Benjamin Diokno said the government should focus on containing the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 in April, before "restarting" the economy by mid-May or early June.

Diokno said in a message there would be an "enormous risk in restarting the economy prematurely" and that the remaining days of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon would be critical.

"If we do things right, we should be in the process of restarting the economy by mid-May or early June," Diokno said. He said these were his personal views and did not represent those of the Inter-Agency Task Force.

"The government should use the next 14 days in testing, identifying the persons under investigation and the persons under monitoring, and seriously separating them from the healthy population," he said.

Diokno said a new phase (from April 15 to May 25) could follow the quarantine period (ending April 14). He said in this stage, with new data from testing serious tracing of social interactions, the ECS could be done at the barangay level.

He said under the new phase traveling by air, sea and land and inter-island movement would be restricted. Checkpoints at barangay levels would be dismantled and LRT and MRT would be allowed to run.

The government for a limited period may operate a limited fleet of buses. The buses maybe allowed to operate in Greater Metro Manila—meaning Metro Manila plus the provinces of Cavite, Bulacan, Rizal and Laguna.

He said only those with ID authorized by the IATF would be allowed to take public transport while other forms of public transport would continue to be banned.

Meanwhile, schools at all levels will remain closed and office hours will be staggered. Essential public sector workers will work from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and essential private sector workers will work from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Malls, theaters, gyms will be closed and sports events, concerts and the like will continue to be banned.

Farming and fishery activities will continue to be allowed and manufacturing activities involving essential goods (food, drugs, exports, etc.) may resume operations, depending on which the Trade Department chooses.

"Banks and other financial institutions [like pawnshops, online payment operators like GCash or PayMaya, money transfers and the likes] should continue to function. The stock market should operate. This early, the IATF should plan on how Phase 2 would look like," Diokno said.

He said Phase 3—that involves the restarting of the economy—should be crafted by the Expanded Economic Team headed by the National Economic and Development Authority.

Its members are the Finance Department, Budget Department, DTI, Public Works Department, Agriculture Department, Energy Department, Tourism Department, Environment Department and Housing Department. "This early, the EET should be mobilized," Diokno said.

Diokno was among those present in an IATF meeting early this week to discuss the direction of the country after the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon ends on April 12.

IATF was eyeing a "selective lockdown" and gradual resumption of economic activity when the lockdown ends, wary of a more damaging effect to the economy if another national lockdown happens.

Self-help virtue sustains tribal village in crisis

posted April 02, 2020 at 01:55 am

by [Dave Leprozo](#)

Sadanga, Mountain Province —The Sinadangas of Sadanga town north of Manila are showing their countrymen the time-tested virtue of self-help in these unprecedented difficult times imposed by the pandemic coronavirus.



HELPING THEMSELVES. Sadanga, a municipality in Mt. Province, boasts of a tribal group steeped in the Cordillera tradition that invokes their age-old wisdom of self-help in dealing with the global coronavirus pandemic. Dave Leprozo

The Sinadangas are part of the Bontocs, the erstwhile animists who have strong convictions about their mountain culture that has been legend for thousands of years in the Cordillera region between the Ilocos and the Cagayan Valley.

The town's Upper Social Class, a euphemism for the rich sector, under the age-old culture takes care of their fellow tribesmen in the lower rung of the economy of this 5th class town, 410 kilometers north of Manila via Baguio City and La Trinidad in Benguet and Bontoc in the Mountain Province.

On Tuesday, the Municipality's Social Welfare and Development Office told the Manila Standard that some relief food packs sent by the regional office were now available at the PDRRM office for requesting Local Government Units.

But Sadanga Mayor Gabino Gangangan, in a statement released to media here, said he had instructed the town's MSWDO "to relay our message that our municipality will not be availing (itself) of these food packs even if the lockdown will be extended."



Ganggangan added: "It's not that we don't have poor and needy families but i believe that we as tribal communities still have and should sustain our 'built-in' and home-grown or indigenous social structure, values, and practice of taking care of our respective relatives or kins (sic), neighbors or kailyan in distress during hard times or economic crisis."

He was referring to the centuries-old self-help virtue which is a grain in the culture of the Bontoc people, those living in the Cordillera provinces of Mountain Province, Benguet, Ifugao, Apayao, Kalinga and Abra.

Ganggangan said: "It is during these kinds of economic hardships such as 'food shortages', hunger and famine that the 'richer or better off' (kadangyans) among a clan or village are expected to aid their needy relatives by lending their surpluses.

"Should this crisis extend longer to the extent that our needy families really run out of their rice supplies, we shall mandate the kadangyans of every barangay to open up their rice granaries (agamang or sarusa) to sustain us through to the next harvest season."

He assured the people of Sadanga that no family would go hungry even in the lockdown period, which ends – unless extended by the national government – on April 14.

Ganggangan said: "Let the National Government feed those more needy urban poor in the cities and those less fortunate in other areas who can't sustain themselves, while we sustain ourselves while we can."

At the same time, Ganggangan urged his townmates to cooperate with the rules and protocols being implemented by the government during the Enhanced Community Quarantine and "shield our municipality from this COVID-19."

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/320895>



Climate commission supports NEDA post-COVID-19 development plan

Published April 1, 2020, 3:56 PM

By *Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz*

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on April 1, Wednesday, expressed its support to the three-phased program proposed by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) to prevent the current situation from becoming an economic and social crisis, as the international community seeks new and better ways to pursue development amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has earlier called on world leaders to “ensure that lessons are learned and that this crisis provides a watershed moment for health emergency preparedness and for investment in critical 21st century public services and the effective delivery of global public goods.”

The CCC echoed Guterres’ pronouncement, saying that the pandemic presents an opportunity for the Philippines to rebuild the economy.

According to the commission, the proposed NEDA program further strengthens CCC’s resolve to facilitate the country’s paradigm shift toward sustainable development pathways.

The first phase of the NEDA proposal involves clinical and medical response, such as early detection and diagnosis, effective management and treatment protocol, and research and epidemiological studies; public health responses such as travel bans, promotion of proper hygiene, school closures, and flexible work arrangements; and short-term augmentation of the Philippines’ health systems capacity, such as establishing makeshift outpatient consultation facilities with specimen harvesting and the increase of supply of personal protective equipment.

The second phase will focus on rebuilding consumer and business confidence, while the third phase will involve the resumption of a “new normal” state of economic activity that is more prepared for another possible pandemic.

The climate change body noted that the COVID-19 outbreak, just like the climate crisis, disproportionately affects the poor and marginalized.

Preventing and overcoming another public health crisis, therefore, will entail investments across all sectors of society.

The CCC pointed out that it has been laying the groundwork for the transformation of critical sectors toward a more sustainable and equitable economic growth, one that is more resilient to the interconnected threats of climate change and public health emergencies.

It reiterated its call for government and business leaders around the world to think and plan beyond returning to business-as-usual. It warned that restoring the status quo when the pandemic is over could only bring more public health problems in the future.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/01/climate-commission-supports-neda-post-covid-19-development-plan/>



MWC, Maynilad assure quality of water supply

Published April 1, 2020, 10:00 PM

By *Madelaine B. Miraflor*

Customers of Manila Water Company, Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. have nothing to worry about their water supply possibly being contaminated by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), according to a top official from Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's (MWSS).

In a statement, MWSS Chief Regular Patrick Ty assured that the water currently being released by Manila Water and Maynilad is free from bacteria and virus such as the highly contagious COVID-19.

This is in response to public concern over the possible COVID-19 contamination of drinking water and wastewater within MWSS' concession areas.

Ty said the water supply maintained in the agency's 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," Ty said.

"MWSS-RO [Regulatory Office] 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.

Right now, the wastewater being discharged from Maynilad and Manila Water's sewage and septage treatment plants (STPS) into the receiving water bodies has also been disinfected with chlorine.

This is likewise in accordance with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2016-08 or the "Water Quality Guidelines and General Effluent Standards, Ty said.

In a technical brief on water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management for the COVID-19 released by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 19 March 2020, it was specified that chlorine disinfection should inactivate the virus.

Meanwhile, international non-government organization, Oceana, urged the DENR, the Department of Agriculture (DA), and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to investigate the reported change in color of the surface of the historic Manila Bay last week.

"This development requires immediate study and continuous monitoring by experts on the water and its impact on the fisheries resources and marine environment of Manila Bay," said Oceana Vice President Estenzo Ramos.

Source: <https://business.mb.com.ph/2020/04/01/mwc-maynilad-assure-quality-of-water-supply/>



Patay na endangered na pagong, umalingasaw sa NegOr

April 1, 2020 @ 3:54 PM 15 hours ago
Views: 75

Negros Oriental – Isang endangered na pagong ang nakitang patay sa baybayin ng Sitio Campaclan, sa bayan ng Sibulan, Martes ng umaga, Marso 31.

Natagpuan ng mga residente sa lugar na naagnas na ang pagong kung kaya agad nila itong inilibing ani Indira Requiron-Puspus, Senior Administrative Assistant ng Sibulan municipal government.

Ayon pa kay Puspus na dahil sa ipinatutupad na general community quarantine sa probinsya kaya hindi agad nakita ang pagong.

Wala nang iba pang detalye tulad ng sukat, bigat ay kung anong specie ang nairekord ng Municipal Agriculture's Office na naglibing sa pagong.

Pero ayon sa ilang environmental experts na isa itong Green Sea Turtle o kaya ay Hawksbill Turtle, na pawing mga endangered species. **RNT**

Source: <https://remate.ph/patay-na-endangered-na-pagong-umalingasaw-sa-negor/>

Searca steps up home garden project



By [The Manila Times](#)

April 2, 2020

An agricultural think-tank has strengthened its partnerships for its School Plus Home Garden Project (S+HGP) as producing food became a pressing need during Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) is now replicating its S+HGP through partnerships, primarily with the Department of Education (DepEd).

The S+HGP has already expanded from the six pilot schools to 28 more educational institutions.

In its pilot work on S+HGP in six schools in Laguna, Searca found out that parents of schoolchildren also learned the multiple importance of home gardens.

“More than just establishing home gardens, the parents developed a greater sense of responsibility to ensure good nutrition for their children, while also saving on food expenses. It highlighted the multi-functionality of school gardens,” Searca said in a statement.

The project is also multi-functional as it also encompasses the promotion of environmental sustainability, organic agriculture, edible landscaping, climate change education and solid waste management, or the use of agricultural wastes as organic fertilizer.

The S+HGP also stresses the important role of local government units (LGUs) that can provide funds for a more unified and locality-wide home gardening initiative.

“Plus S+HGP promotes year-round production of nutritious food from both the school and home gardens, and (involving) LGUs to allocate funds, providing capacity building initiatives and services to maintain the school gardens or helping parents establish home gardens,” Searca said.

Searca Director Glenn Gregorio is also pushing for DepEd to including an agriculture subject or course in the K-12 curriculum, particularly in senior high school, where youngsters are trained on technical-vocational skills.

For her part, Education Secretary Leonor Briones said DepEd will explore urban-based gardening for schools like gardening on rooftops and pots.

“Make agriculture sexy like grafting. That is very interesting, kasi may (application) ng science iyan (Science has an application on that). Hindi ka lang nagtatanim at gumagawa ng (You are not just planting and making) organic fertilizers,” she said.

THE TIMES

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/02/business/agribusiness/searca-steps-up-home-garden-project/708814/>

Nickel Asia sees negative impact from Surigao mines' suspension



By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

April 2, 2020

Listed Nickel Asia Corp. said on Tuesday it expected the suspension of two of its subsidiaries' mining operations to have a negative impact on ore shipments and financial performance because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. In a disclosure, the mining company said the suspension "may adversely affect the scheduled ore shipments of TMC (Taganito Mining Corp.) and HMC (Hinatuan Mining Corp.) and their revenues for the second quarter of 2020." The impact, it added, on the two units would depend on the duration of suspension. TMC and HMC, which operates in the towns of Claver and Tagana-an in Surigao del Norte province, respectively, account for 59 percent of Nickel Asia's total nickel ore shipments. The suspension is in compliance with the March 28 order of Surigao del Norte Gov. Francisco Matugas aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19 in the province.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/02/business/at-a-glance-business/nickel-asia-sees-negative-impact-from-surigao-mines-suspension/708825/>

What's next?

posted April 02, 2020 at 01:05 am

Into the third week on a Luzon-wide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, speculation is rife over what the government will do afterward. Some suggest the lockdown will be extended, while others say the government is considering a selective community quarantine in which certain sectors will be allowed to go back to work as a way of resuscitating the battered economy.

It is good to plan, but our leaders would do well to bear in mind the words of Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who advises the White House on the COVID-19 crisis: "You've got to be realistic, and you've got to understand that you don't make the timeline, the virus makes the timeline."



Given how little we still know about the virus and how to stop it, talk of a partial lifting of the enhanced community quarantine and social distancing guidelines seems premature, at best, despite the huge economic costs that the lockdown has entailed.

Certainly, depriving millions of people of their livelihood carries not only a huge economic price, but a political cost as well that is not lost on our leaders. People must eventually go back to work to put food on the table. How soon they can safely do this is a matter of debate.

Amid all the speculation, however, it is gratifying to hear Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, spokesman for the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infections Diseases, say: "In this discussion, science is in charge."

All decision on what comes next over the short term surely must be informed by what is the best course to save lives.

The Philippines recorded on Tuesday its largest daily increase in COVID-19 deaths and infections—538—as it ramped up testing with the arrival of thousands of kits from abroad and the opening of new laboratories.

On Wednesday, eight more deaths took the national toll to 96, while the number of infections climbed to 2,311, with 227 additional cases, the Department of Health reported.

The DOH has opened new labs and run more than 15,000 tests, up from only 3,000 last week, even as more hospitals are seeking government approval to function as testing centers.

Ramping up testing is crucial, because this will let us know the real number of sick people, and the extent of the infections. Over time, testing will also give us a better idea of how the quarantine measures are working.

Hard data and an overriding concern about the need to save lives must trump any wishful thinking about sending people back to work too soon.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/320868>

The world's largest coronavirus lockdown is having a
TITLE: dramatic impact on pollution in India

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April 2, 2020
DATE

The world's largest coronavirus lockdown is having a dramatic impact on pollution in India

By Rebecca Wright, CNN

Published Apr 1, 2020 1:23:18 PM



These pictures taken on March 25 show deserted streets across India. The top row, from left to right, shows Ghaziabad, New Delhi, Mumbai. The middle row, left to right, is Allahabad, Chennai, Kashmir. The bottom row, left to right, depicts Siliguri, Kolkata, and Bangalore

But grinding this country of 1.3 billion people to a near halt has also provided a temporary remedy to another pressing health issue: suffocating pollution levels.

The world's largest lockdown means all factories, markets, shops, and places of worship are now closed, most public transport suspended and construction work halted, as India asks its citizens to stay home and practice social distancing. So far, India has more than 1,300 confirmed cases of Covid-19, including 35 deaths.

Already, data shows that the main cities are recording much lower levels of harmful microscopic particulate matter known as PM 2.5, and of nitrogen dioxide, which is released by vehicles and power plants.

PM 2.5, which is smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, is considered particularly dangerous as it can lodge deep into the lungs and pass into other organs and the bloodstream, causing serious health risks.

The sudden fall in pollutants and the subsequent blue skies signal a dramatic shift for India — which has 21 of the world's 30 most polluted cities, according to the IQAir AirVisual's 2019 World Air Quality Report.

In the capital, New Delhi, government data shows the average concentration of PM 2.5 plunged by 71% in the space of a week — falling from 91 microgram per cubic meter on March 20, to 26 on March 27, after the lockdown began. The World Health Organization considers anything above 25 to be unsafe.

The data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), part of India's Environment Ministry, was collated by the Centre for Research on Clean Air and Energy (CREA).

Similar patterns showing drastic falls in pollution levels were seen in parts of Europe and China since their lockdowns, as industry and transport networks grind to a virtual halt.

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But this data is no reason to celebrate, Dahia said.

"This is a really grave situation which the entire world is grappling with," Dahia said.

"Pollution is going down, but we cannot let the suffering of so many human beings be the way to clean the air," Dahia said. "We can only use the outbreak of coronavirus as a learning lesson for us."

Pollution protest

It's a lesson that is badly needed in India, activists say.

In November 2019, hundreds of Indians took to the streets in New Delhi to protest the levels of air pollution, after the city was blanketed in a dark yellow haze for several days.

Air pollution hit record high levels, forcing schools to close and flights to be diverted. Other cities in northern India also suffered.

Four months later, the skies are now clearing up. But the impact of living in such badly polluted conditions has left a hidden problem for residents: a potential vulnerability to the coronavirus pandemic — a severe respiratory disease.

India has one of the highest rates of respiratory disease in the world, and the world's highest number of tuberculosis cases. Such widespread lung damage could potentially increase the risks associated with the coronavirus.

"(There are) very high levels of respiratory disease, even among young children, they have asthma, the nebulizer has become a normal thing to have in the house for families who can afford them," said Lavakare from Care for Air.

According to the WHO, older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions, including asthma, appear to be a higher risk of becoming severely ill with the virus.

Investing in a cleaner future

Globally, deaths related to exposure to air pollution are of pandemic proportions, with 7 million deaths every year, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

Care for Air said this should be a wake-up call for India to address the problem.

"Obviously, this is not the most ideal way to bring down air pollution, but it does prove that air pollution is manmade," Lavakare said. "It gives a lot of encouragement and hope that we can bring pollution down."

The coronavirus crisis also presents India with an opportunity to invest in a clean energy future, said Dahia from CREA.

"India (is) a highly fossil-fueled country," said Dahia. "In order to tackle pollution, we need to tackle that."

"When we come out of the outbreak, it will be interesting to see if we invest money in the cleaner future," he added. "(Do) we ramp up the old fossil fuel based intensive industries, or we go towards more sustainable options."

Lavakare said that at the minimum, the government should commit to keeping existing policy pledges.

"Governments cannot use this disruption as an excuse to go back against the gains that have been made," she said. "Right now, we have a priority, we need to stop this big crisis."

"But when things are under better control ... we need to move towards renewable energy faster. It would be really sad (if) we make the same mistake again, using coal and non-renewable energy."

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/4/1/coronavirus-lockdown-impact-pollution-india.html?fbclid=IwARoOgPbB-UiP8iwe2OnioXc9MypVXD-zJC3FT7ERNuFuHUPu-w_2yqljg

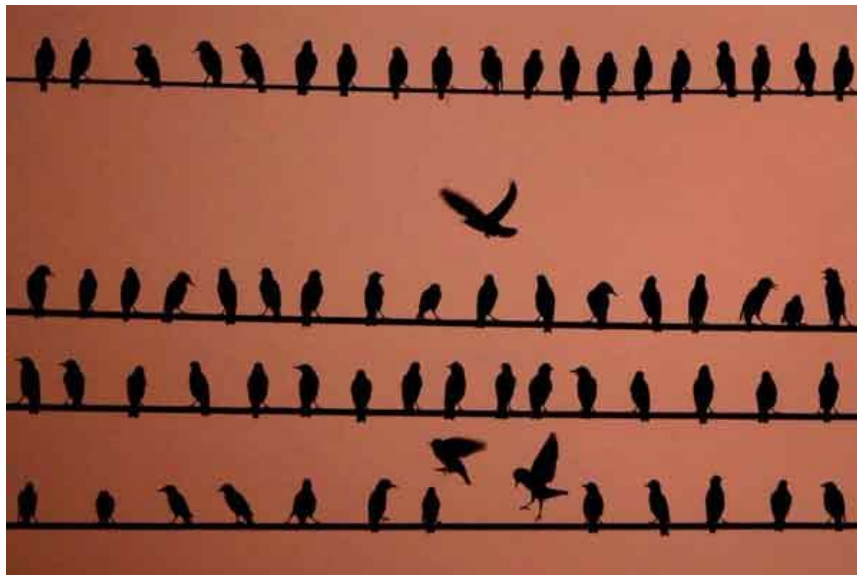
US' wildlife rule can kill billions of birds – expert

AP By [Associated Press](#)

April 2, 2020

MONTANA: At a former open pit copper mine filled with billions of gallons of toxic water, sirens and loud pops from propane cannons echo off the granite walls to scare away birds so they don't land.

After several thousand migrating snow geese perished in the Berkeley Pit's acidic, metal-laden waters in 2016, its owners deployed a sophisticated arsenal to frighten away flocks, including lasers, drones, fireworks and remote-controlled boats.



In this Sept. 24, 2017, file photo, birds vie for position on power lines at dusk in Kansas City, Kan. The Trump administration is moving to scale back criminal enforcement of a century-old law protecting most American wild bird species. The former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service told AP billions of birds could die if the government doesn't hold companies liable for accidental bird deaths. AP FILE PHOTO

Montana Resources already had been hazing incoming birds with spotlights and rifle shots into the water — and a spokesman says those existing deterrents likely helped the company avoid a penalty or prosecution under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

But the administration of United States President Donald Trump wants to end the 50-year practice of using the criminal penalties under the migratory bird law to pressure companies into taking measures like these to prevent unintentional bird deaths.

Critics — including top Interior department officials from Republican and Democratic administrations — say the proposed change could devastate threatened and endangered species and accelerate a bird population decline across North America since the 1970s.

Former US Fish and Wildlife Service director Dan Ashe told the Associated Press the law's threat of prosecution served as "a brake on industry" that had saved probably billions of birds.

"Removing that obligation, if it stands, over the next several decades will result in billions of birds being casualties," said Ashe, who served in the Obama administration. "It will be catastrophic."

Industry sources kill an estimated 450 million to 1.1 billion birds annually, out of an overall 7.2 billion birds in North America, according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and recent studies.

The Trump administration dismissed Ashe's dire prediction, contending companies would continue to avoid bird deaths voluntarily.

At the Berkeley Pit, Montana Resources plans to keep up efforts that drive away almost all birds, in part to avoid a repeat of the negative publicity and community backlash that followed the 2016 bird kill, according to Mark Thompson, the manager of environmental affairs.

"We, as a company, see it as an essential environmental protection," he continued.

The 1918 migratory bird law came after many US bird populations had been decimated by hunting and poaching, much of it for feathers for women's hats. Over the past half-century, the law also was applied against companies that failed to prevent foreseeable bird deaths.

But the Trump administration says deaths of birds that fly into oil pits, mining sites, telecommunications towers, wind turbines and other hazards should be treated as accidents not subject to prosecution. And an Interior department proposal would cement that into federal regulation.

State officials and wildlife advocates who are suing the administration in federal court say birds already are being harmed under actions allowed by a 2017 Trump administration legal memorandum that signaled the rule change.

Most notable was the destruction last fall of nesting grounds for 25,000 shorebirds in Virginia to make way for a road and tunnel project. State officials had ended conservation measures for the birds after federal officials advised such measures were voluntary under the new interpretation of the law.

The move to relax the bird law, combined with Trump rollbacks of the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, puts birds and their habitat at greater risk, said Audubon Society Vice President Sarah Greenberger.

The Trump administration proposal follows longstanding pressure from oil companies, utilities and other industries.

The Edison Electric Institute, which represents many US utilities, contends it will be "absurd" to criminalize "ordinary, everyday activities" that happen to result in a bird death, which can result in up to six months in prison and a \$15,000 penalty for every bird injured or killed.

AP

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/02/news/world/us-wildlife-rule-can-kill-billions-of-birds-expert/708802/>

Heatwave hits Antarctica

AP By [Associated Press](#)

April 2, 2020

ALASKA: Climate scientists have recorded the first heatwave at a research base in East Antarctica, warning that such “unprecedented” temperatures could impact animals and plant life in the region.

Researchers from the Australian Antarctic Program recorded the heatwave at the Casey Research Station — located on the northern part of Bailey Peninsula on the Budd Coast — between January 23 and 26, which falls in the region’s summer season.

Over the course of the three days, experts found the area to be experiencing “its highest temperature ever,” journaling a record of 9.2 degrees Celsius or C (48.6 degrees Fahrenheit or F) at Casey on January 24.

During the three days, minimum temperatures climbed above zero and maximum temperatures reached above 7.5 C (45.5 F).

“Heatwaves are classified as three consecutive days with both extreme maximum and minimum temperatures,” biologist Dr. Sharon Robinson said in the research, which was published in the *Global Change Biology* journal on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

Scientists say temperatures above zero accelerate ice melt. The Antarctic region is heating up rapidly because of heat-trapping gas pollution from humans. Warming observed in the area has serious global consequences, especially for the millions of people living on the world’s coasts who are vulnerable to sea level rise.

Antarctic ecologist Dr. Dana Bergstrom warned that the warm summer could result in long-term disruption to local populations and communities, and pose a threat to the broader ecosystem.

“Most life exists in small ice-free oases in Antarctica and largely depends on melting snow and ice for their water supply,” Bergstrom said.

AP

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/02/news/world/heatwave-hits-antarctica/708792/>