



## **PDU30 sa mga Pinoy ngayong Mahal na Araw: “move ahead with faith and peace in our hearts”**

April 9, 2020 @ 4:40 PM 14 hours ago  
Views: 165

Manila, Philippines – Ngayong Huwebes Santo ay pinaalalahanan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang mga Filipino sa tagumpay mula sa sakripisyo habang ang mga Katoliko sa buong mundo ay ginugunita ang Mahal na Araw habang nakikipaglaban sa pandaigdigang krisis sa kalusugan.

Hinikayat ni Pangulong Duterte ang mga Filipino na kumuha ng inspirasyon mula sa Lenten season at ipagpatuloy ang matiyagang pagbibigay ng “lasting and transformative change in our society.”

“The opportunity for solemn prayer and reflection gives us a magnified view of the victory that is found in enduring sacrifice,” ang bahagi ng mensahe ng Pangulo.

“By remembering the death of Jesus Christ at the cross, we remind ourselves of the immense power of love and compassion which is able to tear down walls of prejudice, selfishness, and hatred,” anito.

Ang mga Holy Week activity para sa taong ito ay kanselado matapos sabihan ng pamahalaan ang mga Filipino na manatili na lamang sa bahay at iwasan ang dumalo sa mass gatherings dahil sa COVID-19.

Umaasa ang Pangulo na ang mga Filipino ngayong Holy Week ay magiging inspirado “to move ahead with faith and peace in our hearts.”


“Guided by our sense of hope and grace, may we walk with renewed fervor and faith towards our shared path of a brighter and better future for all,” aniya pa rin.

Para ngayong taon, sinabi ng Malakanyang na gugunitain ng Pangulo ang Mahal na Araw dito sa Maynila upang sa gayon ay maituon niya ang kanyang pansin sa pagtugon sa nasabing pandemic.

Samantala, idineklara ng Malakanyang ang April 9 (Maundy Thursday) at April 10 (Good Friday) bilang regular holidays, habang ang April 11 (Black Saturday) ay isang special non-working day. Kris Jose

Source: <https://remate.ph/pdu30-sa-mga-pinoy-ngayong-mahal-na-araw-move-ahead-with-faith-and-peace-in-our-hearts/>



 **Philippine News Agency** ✓  
15 hrs · 🌐

READ: In his Lenten message, President Rodrigo Duterte urges Filipinos to remember the passion and death of Jesus Christ and have renewed faith and peace in their hearts to bring lasting change in the society.



MALACAÑAN PALACE  
MANILA

MESSAGE

This **Lenten Season**, Catholics around the world are once again called to reflect upon the narrative of the ultimate sacrifice that paid the costly price for man's salvation. By remembering the death of Jesus Christ at the cross, we remind ourselves of the immense power of love and compassion which is able to tear down walls of prejudice, selfishness and hate.

Indeed, the opportunity for solemn prayer and reflection gives us a magnified view of the victory that is found in enduring sacrifice. Let the spirit of Lent inspire us to move ahead with faith and peace in our hearts as we persevere in bringing lasting and transformative change in our society.

Guided by our sense of hope and grace, may we walk with renewed fervor and faith towards our shared path of a brighter and better future for all.

I wish you a meaningful and purposeful Holy Week.

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

MANILA  
9 April 2020

# Illegal wildlife traders, beware

## Pandemic can't stop DENR from implementing law

Published 10 hours ago  
on April 9, 2020 07:22 PM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



A young juvenile Crested Serpent Eagle is rescued from a hunter in Maasim, Sarangani Province. (DENR Facebook)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) operations against illegal wildlife trade is unabated amid the “worst global humanitarian crisis,” Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

Data obtained by the Asian Development Bank and the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau indicate the value of illegal wildlife trade in the country is estimated at P50 billion yearly.

It includes the market value of wildlife and its resources, ecological role and value, damage to habitats and loss in potential revenues for ecotourism.

Among the majority of animals confiscated were freshwater turtles, pangolins, Goffins cockatoos, and plants such as endemic pitcher plants and lady slipper orchids.

Under Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, violators are subject to imprisonment of six to 12 years with a fine of P100,000 to P1 million, depending on the severity.

“We assure the public that the DENR would not cease in going after illegal wildlife trade criminals, especially those who have seized the opportunity to take advantage of the crisis through wildlife trafficking,” Cimatu said.

Last month, the DENR National Capital Region Enforcement Division rescued a Philippine pangolin in Quiapo, Manila, and taken to the Wildlife Rescue Center of the Biodiversity Management Bureau in Quezon City for proper care.

“Just like the other front liners in health, food security, social service, military, and economic governance institutions, our indefatigable wildlife enforcers have committed to continue with their public service and duty to protect our country’s natural resources,” Cimatu said.



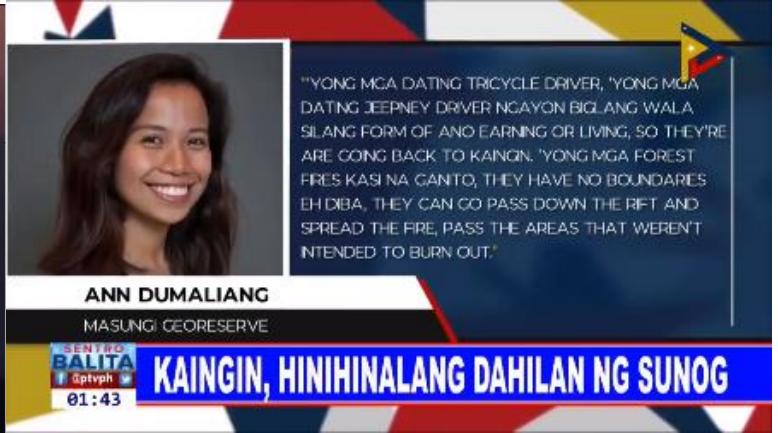
PTV · Follow

April 8 at 2:39 PM · 🌐



### #SentroBalita | Ilang forest fires, naitala sa Antipolo-Tanay area

#SentroBalita | Ilang forest fires, naitala sa Antipolo-Tanay area; DENR, mahigpit na nagbabantay vs mga iligal na aktibidad sa paligid ng Masungi Georeserve See Less



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/PTVph/videos/2832885586789724>



The water level in Angat Dam, the main source of potable water of Metro Manila residents, remains at 194.49 meters or more than 14 meters above the minimum operating level of 180 meters.

STAR/Ernie Peñaredondo/File

## Water in Angat enough amid extended quarantine

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 9, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — There is enough water supply in Angat Dam as the enhanced community quarantine was extended until April 30, according to the National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

The water level in Angat Dam, the main source of potable water of Metro Manila residents, remains at 194.49 meters or more than 14 meters above the minimum operating level of 180 meters.

The current level is also higher than during the water supply crisis last year, which was recorded at 189.58 meters.

“We have enough supply until the onset of the rainy season this May or June as projected by PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration),” NWRB executive director Sevilla David said in a text message.

“We are maintaining the release of 46 cms/s (cubic meters per second) since March 12 considering the importance of water as a preventative measure against COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019),” David said.

He said the water level in La Mesa Dam at 77.15 meters is also higher compared to last year’s 68.49 meters.

However, David appealed to the public to “use water responsibly, conserve and not waste it.”

“We are still drawing our supply from Angat Dam. Supply is okay based on our projection,” Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System administrator Emmanuel Salamat said.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/04/09/2006469/water-angat-enough-amid-extended-quarantine>

# FISHING BOAT INCIDENT | Philippines expresses concern over Vietnamese boat sinking by China in disputed sea

April 8, 2020 , 05:58 PM

By Manny Mogato, News5 editor-at-large

(April 8, 2020) – The Philippines on Wednesday expressed deep concern over the reported sinking last week of Vietnamese fishing boat by China, recalling a similar incident in the Reed Bank barely a year ago when a similar incident happened involving local fishermen, a statement from the foreign affairs department.

The Chinese vessel picked up the Vietnamese fishermen and transferred them to other Vietnamese vessels in the disputed South China Sea, in contrast with what happened to Filipinos who were abandoned but were rescued by Vietnamese fishermen in the area.

“Our own similar experience revealed how much trust in a friendship is lost by it; and how much trust was created by Vietnam’s humanitarian act of directly saving the lives of our Filipino fishermen,” the statement said. “We have not stopped and will not stop thanking Vietnam. It is with that in mind that we issue this statement of solidarity.”

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a strategic waterway where about \$3 trillion worth of sea-borne trade passed every year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam also have conflicting claims on the sea believed to have rich deposits of oil and gas.

In the statement, Manila said it “values the maintenance of peace and stability in the South China Sea and notes that such incidents undermine the potential of a genuinely deep and trusting regional relationship between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China”.

China and ASEAN have been negotiating a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and were close to reaching a deal by next year. Vietnam is the current chairman of the bloc.

“It is crucial that such incidents be avoided and that differences be addressed in a manner that enhances dialogue and mutual trust,” the DFA said noting the progress of the negotiation after China agreed on a framework during the last ASEAN summit in Manila in 2017.

The Philippines said the boat sinking incident is counterproductive as both China and ASEAN continued strengthening of regional relations is especially critical in light of the ASEAN-China joint commitment to collectively tackle the ongoing crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There is never a good time to indulge in provocations; they usually end in defeat of aggression or a devastating price of victory,” the statement read. “But it is always a good time to rise in the defense and affirmation of our respective sovereignties and in the peace and stability of our region especially in a time of pandemic.”

It said ASEAN has stood by China during that meeting in February. China has repaid the ASEAN support when China extended extensive assistance to countries like the Philippines to combat COVID-19.

“We remain deeply appreciative,” the statement said. “In our small way we had helped when the crisis in Wuhan was at its worst. The COVID-19 crisis is a crisis like no other in the past; not just in its potential calamitous scale, but in the hope to contain and stop it by unstinting cooperation and fullest trust between all countries, on the realization that if any of us fails the rest will follow; and if any of us succeeds that success must be extended to the rest of the world.”

The Philippines called on China and ASEAN to cooperate in the face of the pandemic. “COVID-19 is a very real threat that demands unity and mutual trust. In the face of it, neither fish nor fictional historical claims are worth the fuse that’s lit by such incidents.”

Source: <https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/fishing-boat-incident-philippines-expresses-concern-over-vietnamese-boat-sinking-by-china-in-disputed-sea>

## Wailing, anger haunts Didipio on Maundy Tuesday

posted April 07, 2020 at 05:20 pm

by [Abe Almirol](#)

Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya—The nine-month stand-off in barangay Didipio here turned into heavy Lenten drama as police dispersed anti-mining civilians blocking the entry of three hauler trucks carrying diesel fuel intended for mine dewatering activities.

Per video footage taken by Barangay Kagawad Julie Simongo posted on her Facebook page, women were heard screaming, crying and shouting at a Crowd Control Unit of the Philippine National Police armed with shields and clubs.

“Lord God in the Heavens, why are you letting this happen!” screams an old woman in a mix of Ifugao and Ilocano dialect, as police tried to physically remove her and some 15 others who laid down on the road to block the advance of hauler trucks.

“You vowed to protect us, why are you doing this to us! Your being educated has no use!” an elderly Ifugao man was seen yelling at the police officers.

Also captured in the video was word that Lorenzo Pulido, a senior citizen who led the protesters, was taken into police custody.

The beleaguered mine, operated by OceanaGold Corporation, is yet to renew its permit, a Financial and/or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) between the national government and the Melbourne-based company.

Didipio folks are heavily divided on the issue, as the mine has sustained several hundreds of breadwinners since it began full blast construction in 2011. The mine has more than a thousand workers directly employed by OceanaGold and its contractors.

Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos M. Padilla praised the bravery of the protesters.

“My heart bleeds for our brave men and women of Didipio who had to suffer and be arrested for expressing their resistance against mining, a great menace to Mother Earth. I salute them for their bravery and being steadfast for the protection of the environment to ensure the survival of all living things and of our planet,” he said in a statement.

“Instead of providing protection to OceanaGold whose FTAA had expired nine months ago, the national government should tell OGPI to pack up and go home,” Padilla added.

Region 2 Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Mario Ancheta earlier warned that the underground complex might collapse if dewatering will discontinue.

DILG had earlier written Padilla and local government units to allow the passage of fuel to be used in dewatering the underground mining complex, which is crucial to protect the investment in the mine partly owned by the national government.

After long negotiations, a source from OceanaGold said Mayor Romeo Tayaban and Barangay Chairman Ireneo Bobbola agreed in principle not to block the delivery, but some anti-mining villagers staged the blockade which the police responded to.

The fuel delivery on Tuesday is the fifth attempt and the first successful one, according to OceanaGold. The stakes of the national government are high, as Didipio mine was developed under a 60-40 profit sharing scheme as provided for in the FTAA.

At present, the pumps taking out excess water from the underground tunnels use power from the national grid. Diesel fuel is necessary to operate backup generators should grid power failure occur, OGPI explained.

At present, OceanaGold mining and mineral processing operation grounded to a halt, with only dewatering and other maintenance activities ongoing while government is yet to decide on its fate.

# Standoff over Philippines' Didipio mines escalates despite COVID-19 lockdown

April 9, 2020



- *Since July last year, local communities in the province of Nueva Vizcaya have blocked the entry of fuel tankers and service vehicles to the Didipio gold and copper site.*
- *But President Rodrigo Duterte's office issued a letter authorizing OceanaGold Philippines Inc (OGPI), the company that handles the mining operation, to be allowed to truck in 63,000 liters (16,600 gallons) of fuel for generators to run water pumps in the underground mines.*
- *A hundred police personnel assisted the entry of the vehicles to the mining site on April 6, even as the region remains locked down by the COVID-19 pandemic, with all domestic land, sea and air travel banned.*

NUEVA VIZCAYA, Philippines — The ongoing lockdown in the Philippines due to the novel coronavirus pandemic has failed to defuse a standoff between a local community and OceanaGold Philippines Inc (OGPI) over a controversial gold and copper mine in the province of Nueva Vizcaya.

The situation escalated on April 6 when an estimated 100 personnel from the provincial and municipal police forces dispersed the community's "[people barricade](#)," composed of 29 community leaders and members of peasant groups.

The barricade was an extralegal measure supported by the provincial government after OGPI's permit to operate the Didipio mines lapsed on June 20, 2019.

The latest escalation comes after President Rodrigo Duterte's office authorized in January the entry of 63,000 liters (16,600 gallons) of fuel to the Didipio mining site. After the dispersal, the police detained Rolando Pulido, chair of the Didipio Earth Savers Multi-Purpose Association (DESAMA).

The 27,000-hectare (66,700-acre) Didipio mine straddles the border between the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino, some 270 kilometers (170 miles) northeast of Manila. It's believed to hold 1.41 million ounces of gold and 169,400 tons of copper.



Standoff over Philippines' Didipio mines escalates  
despite COVID-19 lockdown

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April 10, 2020  
DATE

The standoff comes at a time when gold prices, stabilizing at \$1,600 per ounce since February this year, are expected to peak amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

On July 1, 2019, local communities in Didipio and Alimit, hosts to the underground mines, set up a blockade to stop the entry of fuel tankers and service vehicles to the mining site. After a series of confrontations in the streets and in the courts, OceanaGold formally suspended its operations on Oct. 15, 2019, while it processes its application for an extension.

The community took over abandoned checkpoints, and with members working on shifts, maintained the blockade until the COVID-19 pandemic placed Metro Manila and the whole island of Luzon under an "enhanced community quarantine" — a lockdown that has suspended all domestic land, sea and air travel from March 15 until April 14.

Prior to the lockdown, residents blocked OGPI's efforts to send in trucks carrying 630,000 liters (166,400 gallons) of fuel to run generators for its dewatering activities, which includes removing or pumping out groundwater from the mine site.

Governor [Carlos Padilla](#) clarified that the president's letter allowing the delivery of fuel does not authorize the mining giant to continue its mining operations, which stalled for a lack of an extension.

"The provincial government recognizes the authority granted by the Office of the President to OGPI to transport fuel for its dewatering activities," Padilla wrote in a letter dated March 10 to Eduardo Año, the secretary of the interior and local government. "We have reservations, however, as to the amount of fuel to be transported to the mine site."

Padilla said that 630,000 liters is "excessive if the same is to be used only for the dewatering activities," adding that a tank of fuel, with a capacity of about 20,000 liters (5,300 gallons), can run generators for 50 hours during a power outage, which seldom transpires in the area.

Three tanker trucks, carrying roughly 60,000 liters, were delivered to the site.

Environmental groups have questioned the timing of the move as it comes while the country is under a state of calamity (a state of emergency during which the government has access to extra funds) due to a rising number of coronavirus cases. There were 3,660 confirmed infections in the Philippines and 163 deaths as of April 6.

"The national government violates its own pronouncements and orders ... to give way for large-scale mining interests," said Leon Dulce of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment. "OceanaGold must be held accountable if the pandemic spreads in the villages affected by its operations."

*Banner image of the Didipio mines in the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. Image courtesy of OGPI.*

Source: <https://southafricatoday.net/environment/standoff-over-philippines-didipio-mines-escalates-despite-covid-19-lockdown/>



Philippine Star

12 hrs ·

IN PHOTOS: The Libingan ng mga Bayani in Taguig has no visitors on the Day of Valor due to the enhanced community quarantine prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Source: <https://www.facebook.com/134752476678442/posts/1730859263734414/>

From Taal eruption to COVID-19 pandemic: PETA

April 10, 2020

TITLE: continues animal rescue ops amid Luzon-wide quarantine PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

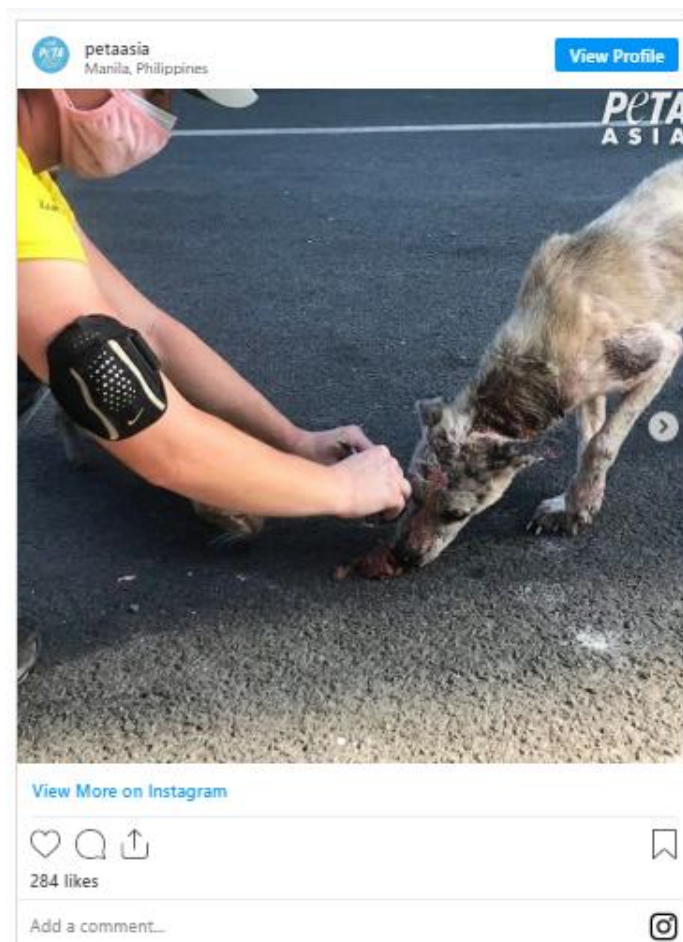


## From Taal eruption to COVID-19 pandemic: PETA continues animal rescue ops amid Luzon-wide quarantine

[Rosette Adel](#) (Philstar.com) - April 9, 2020 - 9:23am

MANILA, Philippines — An animal welfare organization said there is no stopping its team from helping animals as it continues its rescue operations amid the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals said that it is currently helping animals in Metro Manila including those rescued from the Taal Volcano island.



From Taal eruption to COVID-19 pandemic: PETA

April 10, 2020

TITLE: continues animal rescue ops amid Luzon-wide quarantine PAGE 1/ 2/2

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“While Filipinos are social distancing and keeping indoors, PETA's rescue team is on the streets of Metro Manila, feeding and rescuing injured and sick animals,” the group said.

It assured the public that it is following the guidelines set by the health agencies amid the COVID-19 crisis including the practice of social distancing, wearing gloves, and frequent handwashing while giving animals care.

“Before the lockdown started, our team tried to process as many Taal adoptions and foster applications as possible—with outstanding results. That work continues, but now, our team has to walk—sometimes many kilometers—to unite animals with their new guardians,” the group also said.

The enhanced community quarantine, extended until April 30, bans the mass transportation.

PETA then called on the government to grant its team and other rescuers the authority to travel freely to assist with ongoing rescue work as it is more efficient than walking long distances.

As of Tuesday, PETA has distributed 900 kilos of dog and cat food to guardians who are unable to afford it or can't access supermarkets because of the travel restrictions.

It added that the lockdown has forced its local veterinary clinic to close its doors to the public, but it said that it still has access to it.

The group urged Metro Manila residents who are unable to care for companion animals or if they encounter an animal in “immediate physical danger or in urgent need of food or veterinary care” to give them a call at their emergency response line at 0999-888-7382.

When Taal erupted in January, PETA placed some of the pets it rescued from the island for adoption.



## 14K kilong binhi ng gulay ipinamahagi sa CALABARZON para masiguro ang food production sa gitna ng COVID-19 threat

April 9, 2020 @ 4:50 PM 13 hours ago

Views: 297

Manila, Philippines – Nagpamahagi ang Department of Agriculture (DA) ng 14,427 kilograms ng mga binhi ng gulay na nagkakahalaga ng P34.8 million sa CALABARZON bilang aksyon para mamintina ang food production sa kalagitnaan ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis.

Pechay, mustasa, kangkong, lettuce, cucumber, cabbage, snap beans, radish, and “pinakbet” vegetable seeds were brought to five agricultural program coordinating offices (APCOs) in the region,” anang DA sa isang pahayag.

Anang DA na ipamamahagi ang mga binhi sa iba’t ibang syudad at munisipalidad sa susunod na linggo.

“The distribution of this intervention will be done through the assistance of the city and municipal agriculture offices,” dagdag pa.

Ang hakbang ay bahagi ng Plant, Plant, Plant Program ng DA na naglalayong masiguro ang food production sa bansa, ayon kay Field Operations Division Chief and Regional High Value Crops Development Program coordinator Engr. Redelliza A. Gruezo.

“We are doing our best to help prevent shortages and keep local food production going,” ayon kay Gruezo. **RNT**

Source: <https://remate.ph/14k-kilong-binhi-ng-gulay-ipinamahagi-sa-calabarzon-para-masiguro-ang-food-production-sa-gitna-ng-covid-19-threat/>

# Preparing now for post-COVID-19 recovery period

EDITORIAL



Published April 9, 2020, 12:49 AM

The national government is already looking far into the future when the COVID-19 pandemic shall have run its course. It has decided that a major way to mobilize the economy after all these weeks and months of inactivity would be a big increase in infrastructure spending.

The Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) that locked down Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon began on March 15 along with a State of Calamity in the rest of the country. Many local government units in the south enforced various levels of quarantine, all with the goal of stopping the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19),

The month-long quarantine in Metro Manila and Luzon is due to end on April 16 but it is expected to be lifted only gradually in the next two weeks. Even as private offices and factories begin resuming their operations, we must continue the “social distancing” that has kept the virus from spreading as fast as it has in other countries. If all goes well, the quarantine may be lifted by May.

But the national government is looking beyond May to the remaining months of 2020. The national economy has suffered a big setback and the best way to recovery is via stepped-up infrastructure spending. The “Build, Build, Build” program of the Duterte administration already has 100 approved projects – roads, bridges, airports, seaports, irrigation and other water projects. Half of these will be completed by the end of the Duterte administration in 2022.

The other 50 will all begin before the term ends.

In the wake of the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19, Secretary of Finance Carlos Dominguez III said the national government will now boost its infrastructure spending, using P203.8 billion already allocated to the Department of Public Works and Highways in the national budget, plus P100.6 billion allocated to the Department of Transportation.

The projects to be launched with these funds “will create jobs, stimulate demand, and enhance connectivity,” Secretary Dominguez said. The projects will immediately create construction jobs and this in turn will simulate other businesses. And upon the completion of a project, such as a new seaport, a whole new range of economic activity will arise from the new seaport.

The COVID-19 problem is still very much with us, but the government is already looking forward to when it ends. There has been a big slowdown in national economic activity, but even now we are preparing for it. Tags: [Roni Santiago](#)

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/09/preparing-now-for-post-covid-19-recovery-period/>

# DoE finalizing green energy auction rules



By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

April 10, 2020

THE Department of Energy (DoE) is finalizing its policy on the auction of green energy to promote the use of renewable energy (RE) in the Philippines.

In a text message to *The Manila Times*, Mylene Capongcol, director of the DoE's Renewable Energy Management Bureau, said they "have consolidated comments [for the proposed rules, which] will be finalized for endorsement to" Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi.

She did not disclose the timeline for issuing the rules governing the Green Energy Auction Program in the Philippines, but she said it was a "priority program" of the Energy chief.

We will no longer hold more public consultations, because we already held several, Capongcol said.

"I cannot tell when it will be promulgated, but it's a priority program of" Cusi, she added.

The draft circular on these rules has two components: green energy tariff and green energy auction. The former provides price signals on the commercial value of electricity generated from RE facilities. The Energy Regulatory Commission will set the tariff and price cap.

Meanwhile, the DoE shall facilitate the green energy auction for the contracting of supply from eligible suppliers to qualified customers under a competitive selection process.

Interested RE developers may offer their capacity to distribution utilities and retail electricity suppliers that are mandated to secure a certain percentage of their power needs from eligible RE sources.

Last year, Cusi bared his department's intention to bid out 2,000 megawatts of RE capacity to entice investors to develop RE facilities in the Philippines.

The DoE chief had tasked the National Renewable Energy Board, the bureau guiding the department on the implementation of RE initiatives in the country, to establish the guidelines for the auction of clean energy.

Based on the initial assessment of the 2011-2030 National Renewable Energy Program, total installed RE capacity as of December 2018 was lower than the target capacity by 3,608 MW, with the share of RE in the country's generation supply mix reduced to less than 24 percent.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/10/business/business-top/doe-finalizing-green-energy-auction-rules/711888/>

# China reclassifies dogs as pets, not livestock, in post-virus regulatory push

Published April 9, 2020 8:50pm

SHANGHAI — China has drawn up new guidelines to reclassify dogs as pets rather than livestock, the agriculture ministry said, part of a response to the coronavirus outbreak that the Humane Society called a potential "game changer" in animal welfare.

Though dog meat remains a delicacy in many regions, the Ministry of Agriculture said in a notice published on Wednesday that dogs would no longer be considered as livestock. It uses that designation for animals that can be bred to provide food, milk, fur, fibre and medicine, or to serve the needs of sports or the military.

"As far as dogs are concerned, along with the progress of human civilization and the public concern and love for animal protection, dogs have been 'specialized' to become companion animals, and internationally are not considered to be livestock, and they will not be regulated as livestock in China," it said.

The coronavirus is widely believed to have originated in horseshoe bats, and could have been passed onto humans by intermediary species on sale in the markets of the city of Wuhan, where the pathogen was first identified.

China subsequently banned the breeding, trading and consumption of wildlife, and revoked all existing licenses. It has also promised to revise legislation to make the ban permanent.

The draft guidelines published on Wednesday, which have been opened to the public for consultation, listed 18 traditional livestock species—including cattle, pigs, poultry and camels.

It also added 13 "special" species that would also be exempt from wild animal trading restrictions, including reindeer, alpaca, pheasants, ostriches and foxes.

Dog consumption has become increasingly unpopular in China, and the southern city of Shenzhen became the first to ban it last month.

However, the Humane Society International, an animal welfare group, estimated that around 10 million dogs a year are still killed in China for meat, including stolen pets. The city of Yulin in the region of Guangxi holds an annual dog meat festival in June.

"This draft proposal could signal a game-changer moment for animal protection in China," said Wendy Higgins, a Humane Society International spokeswoman. — **Reuters**



# Coronavirus forces new approaches to fighting wildfires

Associated Press / 03:53 AM April 10, 2020



In this photo, taken Nov. 9, 2018, firefighter Jose Corona sprays water as flames from the Camp Fire consume a home in Magalia, California. (Photo by NOAH BERGER / AP)

BOISE, Idaho — They are two disasters that require opposite responses: To save lives and reduce the spread of COVID-19, people are being told to remain isolated. But in a wildfire, thousands of firefighters must work in close quarters for weeks at a time.

Wildfires have already broken out in Texas and Florida, and agencies are scrambling to finish plans for a new approach. They are considering waivers for some training requirements to previously-certified crew members, and moving some training online.

Other proposals include limiting fire engines to a driver and one passenger, requiring other crew members to ride in additional vehicles. They may scrap the normal campsite catering tents in favor of military-issue MREs, or “Meals Ready to Eat” to reduce touching serving utensils. Federal resources for firefighting efforts may be more scarce, leaving states to deal with more fires.

In light of the “unprecedented challenge” of the pandemic, Forest Service resources will be used “only when there is a reasonable expectation of success in protecting life and critical property and infrastructure,” says Forest Service Chief Victoria Christiansen.

Wildland fire camps have always had a reputation for spreading illness. Norovirus outbreaks have occurred and outbreaks of illnesses collectively dubbed the “camp crud” are yearly occurrences for many.

The job is so demanding that it’s typically done by younger, healthy and physically fit people. But the nature of the job also works against them: firefighters regularly experiencing high stress, inhaling smoke and dust and dealing with poor sleeping and personal hygiene.

A suck-it-up and tough-it-out culture doesn't help either, said Jessica Gardetto, spokeswoman for the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. The center coordinates logistics for 14,000 federal firefighters and thousands more state, local and private crews."

"We have really been trying to educate and change that culture because not just in this situation but in others, it's not OK to just tough it out if something's wrong," she said.

You don't have to look too far back in history to see how the one-two punch of a pandemic and wildfire can decimate communities. The 1918 influenza pandemic killed an estimated 50 to 100 million people worldwide. In October 1918, sparks from a passing train ignited fields near Cloquet and Moose Lake, Minnesota.

Four hundred and fifty people were killed in an area that spanned 1,500 square miles (about 3,885 square kilometers). There were 21,000 injuries and 52,000 displaced people, said Curt Brown, a journalist and the author of "Minnesota, 1918." The aftermath made it easy to spread disease.

"It was the perfect situation to spread the flu — if you were lucky enough to survive the wildfire, you were crammed into evacuee housing," he said. At least 100 people died of the flu in evacuee housing, an estimate Brown called conservative.

There also are concerns about preparations not being done. Typically, agencies spend months and millions of dollars preparing for wildfire season — clearing brush and doing prescribed burns to reduce the plants that feed massive wildfires.

That's not happening in many places because some fire managers are trying to allow employees to abide by social distancing guidelines as long as possible and to curb smoke from the prescribed burns during the pandemic. Smoke can make breathing more difficult for people with asthma and other lung conditions.

"The biggest issue I see right now is that the prescribed burns aren't getting done," says Casey Judd, the president of the Federal Wildland Fire Services Association, which advocates on behalf of federal firefighters in 42 states. "That's going to increase the fire load."

He said leaders should have started working on a coronavirus plan for firefighters months ago. "I'm not suggesting they're dragging their feet, but obviously they're trying to figure it out just like everyone is," he said.

Kerry Greene, an emergency management specialist and spokeswoman with the U.S. Forest Service, said that although the plans haven't been released yet, they're coming together. The agency is already working to follow directives from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention as well as infectious disease guidelines created in 2008 after a bird flu epidemic. Like many, fire managers are to some extent flying blind. "Some of the things we're probably going to have to learn as we go," Greene said.

For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Wildland firefighters are first responders just like hospital staff and police, and should be protected accordingly, said , said Boise State University assistant professor Luke Montrose, an expert in community and environmental health. “Like potentially having them wear masks when traveling from place to place.”

Under the \$2 trillion federal CARES Act, federal fire crews will have paid sick leave for the first time, she said, which officials hope will encourage crew members to take sick leave when they need it. It’s not clear if all state or contract firefighters will have the same benefit.

Scott McLean, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, said the agency is following strict physical distancing protocols, and that could mean making larger campsites near wildfires and pulling in additional trailers for showers and other hygiene needs.

But there is no agency-wide guidance beyond the recommendations every American has been given for the pandemic, he said.

“It has to be handled on a case-by-case basis because every incident is different. We rely on each individual to be responsible, and we have safety officers on the teams,” McLean said. “We will meet those needs as they come.”

*Edited by JPV*

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1256601/coronavirus-forces-new-approaches-to-fighting-wildfires#ixzz6JA6RDky1>

Cats can catch coronavirus, study finds, prompting

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# Cats can catch coronavirus, study finds, prompting WHO investigation

Published April 9, 2020, 6:07 PM

By Reuters

Cats can become infected with the new coronavirus but dogs appear not to be vulnerable, according to a study published on Wednesday, prompting the WHO to say it will take a closer look at transmission of the virus between humans and pets.



Home veterinarian Wendy Jane McCulloch examines 8-year-old cat Ivy at the closed Botanica Inc. office as she makes client home visits, which have additional safety protocols in recent weeks during the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Manhattan, New York City, U.S., March 31, 2020. (REUTERS/Caitlin Ochs / MANILA BULLETIN)

The study, published on the website of the journal *Science*, found that ferrets can also become infected with SARS-CoV-2, the scientific term for the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease.

Dogs, chickens, pigs and ducks are not likely to catch the virus, however, the researchers found.

The study was aimed at identifying which animals are vulnerable to the virus so they can be used to test experimental vaccines to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 83,000 people worldwide since it emerged in China in December.

SARS-CoV-2 is believed to have spread from bats to humans. Except for a few reported infections in cats and dogs, there has not been strong evidence that pets can be carriers.

A tiger at the Bronx Zoo in New York City who developed a dry cough and loss of appetite after contact with an infected zookeeper tested positive for the coronavirus on Sunday.

The study, based on research conducted in China in January and February, found cats and ferrets highly susceptible to the virus when researchers attempted to infect the animals by introducing viral particles via the nose.

They also found cats can infect each other via respiratory droplets. Infected cats had virus in the mouth, nose and small intestine. Kittens exposed to the virus had massive lesions in their lungs, nose and throat.

“Surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 in cats should be considered as an adjunct to elimination of COVID-19 in humans,” the authors wrote.

In ferrets, the virus was found in the upper respiratory tract but did not cause severe disease.



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Antibody tests showed dogs were less likely to catch the virus, while inoculated pigs, chickens, and ducks were not found to have any strain of the virus.

“It’s both interesting and not terribly surprising in the sense that with the original SARS epidemic, civet cats were implicated as one of the vectors that may have transmitted virus to humans,” said Daniel Kuritzkes, head of infectious diseases at Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

“What these data do provide is support for the recommendation that people who are with COVID-19 should be distancing themselves, not only from other household members but also from their household pets, so as not to transmit the virus to their pets, particularly to cats or other felines,” he said.

The World Health Organization said on Wednesday it is working with its partners to look more closely at the role of pets in the health crisis.

Based on the evidence so far, WHO epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove told a news conference: “We don’t believe that they are playing a role in transmission but we think that they may be able to be infected from an infected person.”

The WHO’s top emergencies expert Mike Ryan asked people not to retaliate against animals over the outbreak.

“They’re beings in their own right and they deserve to be treated with kindness and respect. They are victims like the rest of us,” he said.

Tags: [ncov](#)

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/09/cats-can-catch-coronavirus-study-finds-prompting-who-investigation/>

# Strays feel the bite as pandemic spreads

Published April 9, 2020, 12:09 PM

By *Agence France-Presse*

As coronavirus forces billions of people around the world into lockdown, another sizeable population has also been hard hit — stray animals.

While pet owners in many countries are still allowed to walk their dogs, thousands of other animals — the exact numbers are unknown — are starving and turning feral.



The global lockdowns against the coronavirus are tantamount to a death sentence of stray cats and dogs (AFP Photo/ANGELOS TZORTZINIS / MANILA BULLETIN)

The mass closure of restaurants has also deprived hungry animals of leftover meals, forcing them to take greater risks.

For many, the restrictions are tantamount to a death sentence.

“We are seeing an increase in the numbers of cats in areas where we feed, some appear to have been abandoned, while others have roamed far from their usual spots in search of food,” says Cordelia Madden-Kanellopoulou, a co-founder of Nine Lives Greece, a network of volunteers dedicated to reducing the overpopulation of stray cats in Athens and other cities.

According to the municipality, the stray dog population in Athens is put at hundreds while the cats run into the thousands.

“It is a huge worry to us that strays could be exposed to more cruelty and poisoning, being more visible and hungrier now, and thus more likely to trust and approach people,” said Madden-Kanellopoulou.

Greek officials over the weekend said an online platform had been created for food donations and veterinary services for strays and pets whose owners are unable to care for them.

“During the lockdown, we make sure that all dogs have enough food so that they don’t become aggressive. This week we will also start installing feeders in different areas of the city making sure that dogs and cats are fed regularly,” said Serafina Avramidou, city of Athens councilor for animal welfare.

Avramidou said she has also already signed more than 350 permits for volunteers to visit feeding areas without getting fined.

In neighboring Turkey, authorities in Istanbul distribute around a tonne of food for street cats and dogs every day.

## ‘We’ll care for your friends’

“We were taking care of strays even before the coronavirus,” Tayfun Koc, an Istanbul municipal feeding worker, told AFP

“I say this to all our citizens, stay at home, we will take care of our little friends,” he said.

Authorities elsewhere in Europe are gradually realizing that allowances must be made for stray populations.

After Spain went into a nationwide lockdown on March 14, Madrid officials closed down 125-hectare Retiro park in the city centre where around 270 cats live in 19 different colonies.

For days, volunteers were not able to enter. City hall authorities eventually allowed them to give food to park gardeners to distribute.

A single volunteer may also enter the park three times a week, for an hour at a time, to check on the health of the cats.

Mercedes Hervas, the president of the Association of Friends of the Cats of Retiro, says this was not enough time to check on them all and look after those in need of medical care.

On March 30, a park employee found dead a female cat that the group had been treating with antibiotics. Hervas predicted other cats would also die.

“You have to go from colony to colony and wait for the cat to come out. Maybe Olympic athletes can do it in one hour, we can’t,” she says.

Elsewhere in the Balkans, provision is more ad hoc.

In Serbia, where there is no state-organized effort to feed and shelter stray animals, people in several cities and towns have organized help locally.

A similar effort is underway in North Macedonia where NGOs are calling on people to leave food on the street for the estimated 10,000 stray dogs in Skopje.

In Croatia, about 40 animal shelters which had to close their doors for visitors are imploring citizens not to abandon their pets.

In Albania, locked-down citizens say it is impossible to secure permission to walk a dog, let alone feed strays, so people go out in secret.

### ‘Death sentence’

“These measures taken for humans are effectively a death sentence for dogs and cats,” says Indrit Osmani who heads the Animal Rescue Albania volunteer group.

In Bulgaria, veterinary clinics ran an information campaign after pets were increasingly found on the street because their owners thought they may transmit the virus.

There was a similar campaign in Beirut, where Lebanese animal rights groups have reported an increase in abandoned pets.

The group, Beirut for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, last week said it had received “countless” calls concerning poisonings across the country, mainly around the capital.

Last month, it said that the number of abandoned pets had “at least tripled in recent weeks because of the panic” caused by the virus.

But in a time of heightened health concerns, pets are not entirely safe even at home.

French veterinarians last week warned owners against attempting to disinfect their dogs and cats with detergent or alcohol gel.

The move came after images online showed dogs whose legs had been burned by disinfectants.

“Soapy water or a dog shampoo works very well”, said Christine Debove, regional adviser of the Order of veterinarians for Ile-de-France.

Not only are dogs and cats unable to digest alcohol properly, but these products can also cause respiratory irritation and skin reactions, Debove said.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/09/strays-feel-the-bite-as-pandemic-spreads/>