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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR installs trash traps to reduce solid waste in Manila Bay

By Zorayda Tecson August 13, 2020, 5:56 pm



TRASH TRAPS. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Luzon installs 50 trash traps in rivers in the region to prevent solid wastes from reaching the waters of Manila Bay. The floating trash traps, which were made from recycled materials, were put up in Lamao, Orani, Orion, Pinulot, Pangulisanin, Amo, Aguawan, Almacen, Bilolo, Talisay, Mabuco and Samal rivers, all in Bataan, and Guagua-Pasak river in Pampanga. *(Photo by DENR-3)*

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office here has installed 50 trash traps in some rivers in Central Luzon to prevent solid wastes from reaching the waters of Manila Bay.

Paquito Moreno Jr., executive director of DENR in Central Luzon, said on Thursday the floating trash traps, which were made from recycled materials such as plastic and fishing gear and measuring about 30 to 100 meters, were put up in Lamao, Orani, Orion, Pinulot, Pangulisanin, Amo, Aguawan, Almacen, Bilolo, Talisay, Mabuco and Samal rivers, all in Bataan, and Guagua-Pasak river in Pampanga.

“Aside from the regular cleanup, which we are doing every week, these trash traps are another strategy to prevent the accumulation of garbage in the shoreline of our historic Manila Bay. Solid wastes are now being removed from the source before it reaches the bay,” Moreno said in a statement.

DENR record shows that these traps have prevented at least 30 tons of solid waste from reaching the waters of the bay through its various tributaries since they were installed early this year.

The traps are strategically placed in rivers and streams where they can stop solid waste from floating further downstream, without hampering the movements of aquatic life such as fish.

“We have partnered with local government units (LGUs) in the region to manufacture and install these floating trash traps in the rivers within their locality while new traps are continually being installed with their help. Also, our estero rangers regularly collect and characterize the wastes from traps before it can be disposed of in sanitary landfills,” he said.

Moreno appealed to the public to support the DENR in its campaign to save Manila Bay and to religiously practice the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle), of solid waste management coupled with discipline to reduce waste generation in the region.

He said it is the commitment of the DENR and the rest of the mandamus agencies to the public to clean Manila Bay.

Manila Bay covers the region of Calabarzon, National Capital Region, and Central Luzon. It has a total of 190 kilometers of coastline.

Of these, 144 kilometers are part of Central Luzon, covering the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, and Bataan.

Meanwhile, statistics from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Region 3 showed that the average solid waste generation of Central Luzon is estimated to be 5,598 tons per year. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1112144>

Wetland cleanup to sustain Boracay folk through

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Wetland cleanup to sustain Boracay folk through pandemic

By: [Nestor P. Burgos Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@nestorburgosINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:06 AM August 13, 2020



ISLAND REHAB The rehabilitation of Boracay's wetlands, like Wetland No. 4 near the shopping district D'Mall, is part of efforts to improve the resort island's environmental health. —LYN RILLON

ILOILO CITY, Iloilo, Philippines — With few tourists going to Boracay due to the coronavirus pandemic, residents of the resort island in Malay, Aklan province, have been mobilized to help clean up its wetlands.

The Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday launched the “Boracay Wetland Bayanihan Program: We Clean and Heal as One,” a drive aimed to clean the island and help residents badly affected by the tourism slump.

Under the program that will last until December, community volunteers will receive 5 kilograms of rice per household for the weekly cleanup in eight wetlands on the island.

“We aim to raise greater awareness on the need to protect and maintain the wetlands and also help residents who are experiencing economic hardships,” Natividad Bernardino, the BIARMG general manager, told the Inquirer.

Prevent flooding

Around 120 volunteers joined the first food-for-work cleanup activity, most of them living in or near the wetlands. The program has been supported by the local government of Malay and private groups. The recovery of at least five of the nine wetlands was among the focus of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force when the island was closed to tourists from April 26 to Oct. 25 in 2018.

Wetlands help prevent or minimize flooding by acting as a sponge for excess water but many of those on the island have been developed or illegally used as site for wastewater discharge or trash. Five of the nine wetlands have been adopted for rehabilitation and development by private companies under separate memorandums of agreement with the DENR.

Ecotourism areas

The projects that are being implemented in phases involve the restoration of wetlands and their development into parks or ecotourism areas.

Wetland No. 4, the most visible near the entrance to the D'Mall commercial complex, has been transformed into a park. It was adopted by Aboitiz Equity Ventures.

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The other companies funding and undertaking the rehabilitation and development of wetlands include the Energy Development Corp. (Wetland No. 2), San Miguel Corp. (Wetland No. 3), Boracay Tubi System Inc. (Wetland No. 6) and JG Summit Petrochemical Corp. (Wetland No. 8).

Bernardino said occupants of some of the wetlands, who are natives of the island, still need to be transferred to relocation sites.

Last month, 31 families, who were formerly living on Wetland No. 6, were given certificates of land ownership award by the Department of Agrarian Reform for a 2-hectare property in Barangay Manoc-Manoc.

New seagrass species found in Boracay island

Published August 13, 2020, 4:40 AM

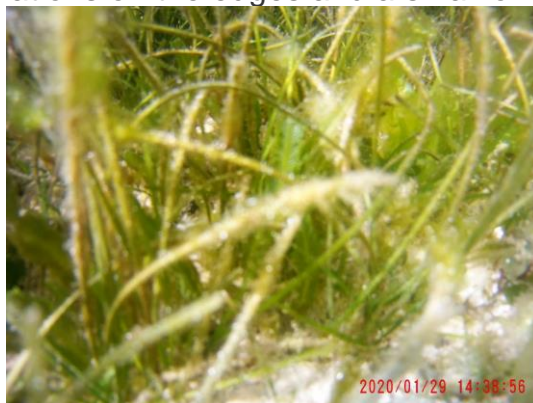
by [Johannes Chua](#)

A seagrass mapping and assessment of Boracay Island has revealed that the island now has nine species of seagrass, with the newest recorded species called *Halophila spinulosa*. Experts have said that this is due to the ongoing rehabilitation of the island, which resulted into a healthy marine ecosystem.



Aerial view of the seagrass bed in Bolabog, Balabag Malay, Aklan

Halophila spinulosa has tiny leaves that grow in opposite pairs on a long thin stem forming a flat fern-like overall shape. Around 10 to 20 pairs may form on the stem. New leaves grow from the tip, while older leaves at the bottom drop off. A leaf is about two centimeters long and 0.4 centimeters wide with tiny serrations on the edges and a small one-sided fold at the base.



The newly discovered *Halophila spinulosa* seagrass at Sitio Tambisaan, Manoc-manoc, Malay, Aklan (Photo courtesy of Dagatnon Environmental Consulting Services)

Seagrasses are angiosperm or flowering plant that holds a vital role to the complex coastal ecosystem, as being one of the most productive coastal habitats. The leaves harbor epiphytic algae and animals like sea squirts that serve as food sources to larger animals such as fish, sea turtles, crabs, lobsters, sea cows or *dugong*, and sea birds. Its foliage also slows down water currents and traps sediments that clear and improves nearshore waters.

There are 16 species of seagrass found in the Philippines and nine of them are recorded existing in the island of Boracay, including the newly recorded species *Halophila spinulosa* or the fern seagrass.

Boracay Island has approximately 95.37 hectares of seagrass bed. Barangay Balabag in the island yields the highest percentage cover with 81.84 percent, followed by Barangay Manocmanoc and Yapak with 53.85 percent and 53.68 percent, respectively, according to the report on "Assessment, Mapping, and Delineation of Coastal and Marine Resources and Marine Protected Areas in Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan" which is subjected for regional review.

Discovery team

A team of professionals from the Dagatnon Environmental Consulting Services was tapped by the Conservation Development Division (CDD) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region 6 (DENR 6) to conduct the seagrass mapping and assessment in the island early this year.

It was conducted in connection to the Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Management Program (CMEMP) that aims to manage, address, and effectively reduce threats of degradation on coastal and marine ecosystem for the sustainability of ecosystem services, food security, and climate change resiliency. CMEMP's thrust also includes assessment and mapping the extent of the areas covered by different coastal habitat, as well as identifying, characterizing, and analyzing the threats that affect the island.

The *Halophila spinulosa* was recorded by Jan Felix Balquin of Dagatnon. Balquin was able to photograph the species situated in not more than 1x1 meter portion of the seagrass bed.

According to regional executive director Francisco E. Milla, Jr., the cleaner waters of Boracay due to the continuous rehabilitation has a positive effect.

"The cleaner waters of Boracay Island have helped sustain the healthy marine ecosystem. We also conducted an initiative on biodiversity monitoring that resulted to the discovery of species of marine resources in the island. Let us continue to exert efforts in conserving the environment of Boracay," he said.

The DENR considered the successful rehabilitation of Boracay Island as one of its major accomplishments. Enhanced biodiversity conservation and scaling up of coastal and marine ecosystem program are among the top 10 priority programs of the department.

Bagong species ng seagrass natuklasan ng DENR sa Boracay



August 13, 2020 @ 4:19 PM 15 hours ago

Iloilo City- Natuklasan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang panibagong uri ng seagrass sa baybayin ng Boracay Island sa Malay, Aklan.

Ayon kay DENR-6 Western Visayas Regional Director Francisco Milla Jr., kailan lang nadiskubre ang panibagong species ng seagrass o kilala bilang *Halophila spinulosa* kung saan kinunsulta na ng DENR-6 Conservation Development Division (CDD) ang Dagatnon Environmental Consulting Services (Dagatnon ECS) para sa mapping at assesment ng coastal at marine resources ng Boracay.

Sa kasalukuyan, may 16 na species na ng seagrass ang matatagpuan sa bansa na aabot sa 95.37 ektarya ang lawak nito kung saan ang bayan ng Balabag ang may pinakamataas na antas ng seagrass bed kung saan nasa 81.84 percent ito.

Nabatid na ang mapping at assessment ng seagrass at bahagi ng matagalang rehabilitasyon ng Boracay na nag-umpisa noong 2018 ng ipasara ito sa loob ng anim na buwan sa mga turista. RNT/LF

Source: https://www.remate.ph/bagong-species-ng-seagrass-natuklasan-ng-denr-sa-boracay/?fbclid=IwAR3yuPD9eluuvufGAK_rraHJ0nqgX9BaoQWum38n0bsLfj0Vzb4cVD4i3u4

Foresters call for preservation of country's oldest Toog tree

By [CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN](#)

-AUGUST 13, 2020 5:05 PM

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur (MindaNews / 13 August) – Foresters nationwide have joined the calls to save the iconic giant 300-year old Philippine Rosewood tree (*Petersianthus quarialatus*) in this town after the local government decided to cut down its upper half portion.



The proposed design of the triangular retrofitting structure with two elevated platform levels that will serve as a view deck for tourists and visitors to get a panoramic view of the magnificent Mt. Magdiwata presented by Engr. Marjun Ursos, a structural engineer and member of Save the Toog tree Please (STOP) movement, to local officials of San Francisco, Agusan del Sur on Monday (10 August 2020). MindaNews photo by CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN

Locally known as Toog and considered the oldest of its kind in the country, the tree purportedly endangers houses nearby as well as motorists along the Agusan del Sur-Surigao del Sur highway due to the advancing decay on its buttress caused by fungi and termites.

In a letter dated August 12, the Society of Filipino Foresters, Inc. (SFFI) appealed to Mayor Solomon Rufila to hold in abeyance their decision pending an assessment of the landmark tree by Dr. Armando Palijon, a known tree surgeon and former forestry professor at University of the Philippines-Los Baños.

“The SFFI is willing to contribute to the cause of Dr. Palijon with the belief that sustainable forest management starts with a single tree,” said the letter signed by Tommy Valdez, SFFI national council president.

SFFI has over 12,000 members, is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and accredited by the Professional Regulation Commission as an accredited professional organization for foresters.

Valdez suggested a post-assessment guideline can be later prepared between Palijon and the local government unit (LGU) on how to scientifically handle the case.

Jose Kanapi, vice president of SFFI Davao Region Council, expressed disgust over the decision to cut down the tree by vowing to step down from his post and burn his license on live video the moment the decision is implemented.

“I posted on SFFI official Facebook page a challenge to speak out. Silence from SFFI means go ahead cut the Toog tree,” Kanapi said, adding that 89 percent of SFFI members are from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) and LGUs.

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Last week, the Philippine Native Tree Enthusiasts (PNTE) based in Quezon City sent a letter to Rufila, Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Cane Jr. and Hadja Didaw D. Piang-Brahim, DENR Caraga regional director, expressing support to save the Toog tree.

PNTE is a social media group of around 14,000 members dedicated to, and actively propagating native trees since 2013.

Dr. Jurgenne Primavera, Pew fellow and PNTE member, and Arceli Tungol, PNTE administrator, in the letter asked the concerned government officials if they acted on the recommendations during the stakeholders meeting on September 10 last year.

The recommendations included pruning of decaying branches, treating the infected portions and conducting studies to improve tree stability by means of artificial buttresses, and guy wires.

Primavera, an aquaculture scientist who hails from Butuan City in Agusan del Norte, said Palijon is willing to share his expertise to preserve the iconic heritage tree.

Another call came from singer-composer and environmentalist Bayang Barrios-Villegas, who grew up in Bunawan town in this province. She asked netizens to make noise and share her message until it reaches the proper authorities.

"I hope they will preserve it," the Manobo singer said in her social media post, adding she has never heard of a Toog tree that fell "since time immemorial."

The verdict on the fate of the tallest and the oldest Toog tree in the country was handed down by Rufila and Sangguniang Bayan members in a consultative meeting on Monday. The officials decided for the retention of about 30 meters tree trunk.

Moves to cut down the tree due to the hazard it allegedly poses have been pushed since last week.



Dr. Jurgenne Primavera. MindaNews file photo by H. MARCOS C. MORDENO

A local environmental movement called Save the Toog Tree Please (STOP) led by Mauro Bravo Jr., a retired district engineer at the Department of Public Works and Highways and a long-time local resident, has asked the local officials during the meeting to preserve the tree by following the recommendation of experts to pursue the scientific treatment to cure it.

STOP even presented at the meeting a proposed retrofitting structure with two elevated platform levels that will serve as a view deck for tourists and visitors to get a panoramic view of the magnificent Mt. Magdiwata.

Dr. Marcelina Pacho, a tree surgeon and a former pathologist at DENR-ERDB, last year said the tree can still be treated by pruning the branches and cleaning the cavities with fungicide.

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Pacho made this recommendation during her visit here in September last year upon the request of the local government to let her personally see the state of the tree.

For 10 months, the local government made no intervention to treat the tree aside from spraying the fungi on the decayed buttress twice in December last year.

Elmer Luzon, general manager of the San Francisco Water District, has called for the preservation of the tree rather than cutting down half of it.

“Let’s exhaust all means to save the tree,” Luzon said as he suggested during the meeting to consider a third party that will reexamine and reevaluate its real situation. (Chris V. Panganiban/MindaNews)

La Union's iconic centennial tree collapses

Published August 13, 2020, 1:13 PM

by [Erwin Beleo](#)

BACNOTAN, La Union – One of the famous and historical landmarks of this province — the so-called Giant Green Parachute or the Centennial Acacia Tree — which was planted in 1896 on the grounds of Carcarmay Elementary School collapsed Thursday morning.



CENTENNIAL ACACIA TREE – The famous historical landmark of Bacnotan, La Union is this Giant Green Parachute or the Carcarmay Centennial Acacia Tree. (Photo by ERWIN BELEO/ MANILA BULLETIN)

Lester Cardinez, a wedding photographer and resident in the area, said that at about 4:00 a.m. on Thursday, a loud strange sound was heard coming from the tree and he felt the ground shake. The acacia tree fell on the ground.

The tree was one of the favorite destinations of local tourists for its long branches that fan out like a parachute and large trunk that served as a backdrop for hundreds of thousands of souvenir photos.

“Sa sobrang tagal na nito siguro at nabulok na. Sayang lang kasi hindi na siya magandang tignan,” Cardinez said.

“Buti nalang at walang nasaktan na tao (it’s a good thing that no one was hurt),” Cardinez added. The centennial tree, also known as Carcarmay acacia tree or Victor Ortega tree was proclaimed as one of the 13th Philippine Centennial Trees under DENR Administrative Order No. 98-25 on June 3, 1998.

The tree provided shade to millions of pupils, soldiers, and community locals during the Spanish colonization period, Japanese, and American invasions.

Years after World War II, a group of Japanese soldiers returned to visit the area where they were once stationed. The problem is they could no longer remember the exact location of their former base.

One day, one of the Japanese soldiers remembered a tall old tree that they used to hang out. After several inquiries with the locals, the Japanese were able to locate the exact spot of their former refuge and were amazed at the tree’s beauty. Some people, especially treasure hunters, believed that the tree was used as a marker and repository of alleged buried gold chests because of its size and location.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/13/la-unions-iconic-centennial-tree-collapses/>

Group raises alarm over pangolin trade in Philippines

Published August 13, 2020 10:48pm

A non-government organization, which is a part of a wildlife monitoring network, has raised concerns over the rising incidents of illegal trade involving Philippine pangolins.

Traffic is an NGO that works in different countries on trade in wild animals and plants for the promotion of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

According to Raffy Tima's report on "24 Oras" on Thursday, a study conducted by Traffic showed that 6,894 Philippine pangolins were seized from 2018 to 2019. This was nine times higher than the 740 from 2000 to 2017.

Data from Traffic also showed that the Philippines recorded 28 incidents of illegal pangolin trading for the past two years.

Traffic said the illegal trade is surging due to the demand for pangolin scales that are used as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine while pangolin meat is also used in delicacies.

Traffic said five restaurants in Metro Manila have been serving pangolin dishes. It is off the menu and available for pre-order only.

Most of the customers who order the dish were Chinese nationals, it added.

The organization urged the national government to look into the matter amid the rise of gambling-related foreign visitors and workers in the country.

However, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said the demand for pangolin come from abroad.

"Wala kaming nakikitang ganiyang sitwasyon dahil alam naman nila na the mere transport lang at mahuli ka ay may kaso ka na," DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said.

'Yong mga owners ng mga POGOs diyan mostly, wala rin naman dito sa bansa natin 'yan eh kung kaya't what we see in this situation is walang koneksyon sa ganoon. Ang nakikita natin is 'yong demand talaga sa abroad dahil sa laki ng presyo niya,' he added.

Under Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, killing and destroying wildlife species can result in 6 to 12 years of imprisonment and/or fine of P100,000 to P1 million.

"We came up with a proposal to Congress na baguhin 'yung batas especially when it comes to the punishment. At least, 10 years to 20 years na parusa. Ang nangyayari dito, tuwing mahuhuli 'yong violators, ang nangyari nagkakaroon lang ng negotiation na nagpi-plead guilty sila at probation so karamihan ng nahuhuli ng DENR ay mga repeat offenders," Antiporda said. -- **Ma. Angelica**

Garcia/BAP, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/751261/group-raises-alarm-over-pangolin-trade-in-philippines/story/>

Baguio City decay worsening

Published 2 hours ago on August 14, 2020 04:29 AM

By [Aldwin Quitasol](#)



PHYSICAL distancing is the way to go, like in this Baguio City mall, if we are to curb the spread of COVID-19. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BAGUIO PIO

BAGUIO CITY — The City Planning and Development Office (CPDO) warned urban decay is eating up the country's Summer Capital and more should be done to address population growth vis-a-vis what remains of natural resources.

CPDO coordinator Donna Tabangin, an architect, said Baguio has long breached its carrying capacity.

With city's environmental degradation, Tabangin said Baguio can no longer support its people.

"If business as usual and we just continue our ways, we will feel the effect of urban decay by 2043," Tabangin said.

As of 2010, the city's open spaces, watersheds and green covers have already been exhausted.

Baguio, noted Tabangin, is over the 200 per square meter open space per person; the urban road network of 40 square meters per person has been breached since 1988; the water supply of .15 cubic meters per person per day; the green cover of 80 square meters per person; and land for development of 110 square meters per person.

She said Baguio residents are lucky if they get water twice or thrice a week as service interruption are becoming more frequent.

The CPDO likewise noted decreasing spaces for comfortable living, which include housing areas and easements, due to the increase in population.

It is also the reason why the city is having a hard time solving traffic woes, water pollution and waste disposal problems.

CPDO's observations are based on data gathered from the United Nations, World Health Organization and the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources.

To address the problem, Tabangin said creativeness and innovation are needed.

"Whatever city managers decide with the remaining land the city has will be crucial for the city's future," she said.

Tabangin said the city should consider building upwards instead of using up too much horizontal spaces.

She proposed the establishment of a “20-minute City,” a pedestrian-friendly Baguio where folks would rather rely on “body fat” rather than petrol to move around.

She also suggested an “incubator city” which encourages new enterprises to gear toward landscape management.

Mayor Benjamin Magalong, according to Tabangin, has ordered the CPDO to initiate reforms, plans and activities and link all departments for a united action.

Lebel ng tubig sa Angat tumaas sa pag-uulan



August 13, 2020 @ 1:57 PM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Bahagyang tumaas ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam dulot ng mga pag-ulang naranasan nitong mga nakaraang araw, ayon sa National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

“Sa ngayon, itong mga huling araw nang pag-uulan nakatulong po, nakarekober kahit bahagya ‘yung mga dam natin, partikular ang Angat Dam,” ayon kay NWRB Executive Director Sevilla David.

Ayon kay David, halos 183 meters na ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam na mataas ng tatlong metro sa minimum operating level nito.

“Sana kahit papaano magpatuloy ang pag-ulan sa watershed ng Angat para madagdagan at mabigyan nang kasiguraduhan ang supply ng tubig sa buong taon at hanggang sa susunod na taon,” paliwanag nito.

Bunsod nito, tiniyak ng NWRB na sapat naman ang suplay ng tubig sa kasalukuyan pero patuloy pa rin ang panawagan ng ahensya sa mga konsyumer na magtipid at gamitin ng tama ang tubig.

Umaasa rin ang NWRB na magiging maganda ang lebel ng tubig na maiipon bago magtapos ang kasalukuyang taon.

“Ang tinitingnan natin dapat mga 212 [metro] ‘yan. Malayo-layo pa tayo sa 212 level bago magtapos ang taon. Ito ang kailangan natin para mabigyan ng kasiguraduhan ang pangangailangan ng water supply natin hanggang sa summer po, pati na rin po para sa irigasyon,” ayon pa kay David. RNT/LF

Lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam bahagyang tumaas, suplay ng tubig sapat: NWRB

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 13 2020 10:36 AM

MAYNILA - Nakatulong nang bahagya ang mga pag-ulang dala ng mga weather disturbances kamakailan para madagdagan ang tubig sa mga dam, ayon sa National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

“Sa ngayon, itong mga huling araw nang pag-uulan nakatulong po, nakarekober kahit bahagya 'yung mga dam natin, partikular ang Angat Dam,” sabi ni NWRB Executive Director Seville David.

Sa panayam sa ABS-CBN Teleradyo, sinabi ni David na halos 183 meters na ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, mataas ng tatlong metro sa minimum operating level nito.

“Sana kahit papaano magpatuloy ang pag-ulan sa watershed ng Angat para madagdagan at mabigyan nang kasiguraduhan ang supply ng tubig sa buong taon at hanggang sa susunod na taon,” sabi niya.

Bagama't wala pang nakikitang kakulangan sa supply ng tubig sa ngayon, panawagan ni David na sana magtipid pa rin at gamitin ito sa tama.

Inaasahan rin niyang magiging maganda ang lebel ng tubig na maiipon bago magtapos ang taong ito.

“Ang tinitingnan natin dapat mga 212 [metro] 'yan. Malayo-layo pa tayo sa 212 level bago magtapos ang taon. Ito ang kailangan natin para mabigyan ng kasiguraduhan ang pangangailangan ng water supply natin hanggang sa summer po, pati na rin po para sa irigasyon,” sabi niya.

Pangunahing water source ng Metro Manila ang Angat Dam.

Gina Lopez inalala sa paninindigan, pagmamahal para sa kalikasan

Abner Mercado, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 13 2020 06:44 PM | Updated as of Aug 14 2020 12:21 AM



ABS-CBN Foundation

Isa sa mga pangunahing programa ng ABS-CBN Foundation ang Bantay Kalikasan. Isang programa ito na inilunsad ng pumanaw nang si Gina Lopez batay sa matapang nitong paninindigan para pagmalasakitan at tunay na mahal in ang kalikasan.

“Si Miss Gina, ang dami niyang naimpluwensyahan at na-inspire na mga tao. Bantay Kalikasan is one of the many environmental groups na talagang na-inspire niya.” pagbabalik tanaw ni Jen Santos, Program Director ng Bantay Kalikasan ng ABS-CBN Foundation, isang taon makalipas ang pagpanaw ni Lopez.

“Sa amin dito sa Bantay Kalikasan, ang talagang nagiging focus namin is 'yung action, 'yun naman talaga si Miss Gina para sa amin. 'Yong to make sure na naumpisahan niya, nagawa niyang mga proyekto ay patuloy pa din naming ginagawa 'yung legacy projects niya. Katulad ng Pasig River. Hindi lang Pasig River kundi 'yung paglilinis ng mga estero” dagdag ni Santos.

Isa ang paglilinis ng Ilog Pasig sa kampanyang Kapit Bisig Para sa Ilog Pasig ng Bantay Kalikasan ng ABS-CBN Foundation ang ipinaglaban noon ni Lopez.

Pero para magtagumpay ang pagbuhay sa Ilog Pasig, ang paglilinis ng mga estero na tributaries o daluyan ng tubig palabas nito ang kaniyang inuna. Ito'y dahil kung mananatiling lumulutang ang mga basura sa mga estero sa kalakhang Maynila, mahihirapang buhayin ang Ilog Pasig.

Inunang alisin ni Lopez ang mga kabahayan ng mga informal settlers sa kahabaan ng mga estero na siyang mga nagtatapon ng basura dito.

Pagkatapos mabigyan ng relokasyon at kabuhayan, sumunod ang paglilinis ng mga estero, kaugnay ang pagbuo ng volunteer group na River Warriors na mismong si Lopez ang nagtatag.

Ang mga River Warrior volunteers ay nagmula sa mga komunidad na babantayan ang mga estero para hindi na ito panirahan at tapunan ng basura.

Sina Raquel Bautista at Arnel Panganiban ang dalawa sa mga River Warrior Volunteers na nagbabantay sa Estero de Paco sa Maynila.

Kuwento ni Raquel Bautista, pinag alinlanganan nila si Lopez noong una sa proyekto nito kung kakayanin niyang malinis ang mga estero.

“Nong dumating si Mam Gina dito sa Estero de Paco sabi namin, sino ba 'yan, imposibleng malinis itong Paco, ganun ang reaksyon namin noong una. Pero 'nong nakita namin, ginawa niya talaga, nagpursigi siya na malinis itong Paco. Noong una hindi pa ko nagvo-volunteer.” kuwento ni Bautista.

Pero nakumbinsi siya na magboluntaryo na maging River Warrior nang makita niya ang resulta.

Para naman kay Panganiban, hindi dapat masayang ang nasimulan ni Lopez sa paglilinis ng mga estero na susi sa pagbuhay sa Ilog Pasig.

“Mahalagang mahalaga po siya lalo na sa aming mga taga Paco. Lalo na nang mapaayos niya itong estero. Napapakinabangan ng mga tao na nasa paligid nito, nagkaroon ng daanan, naging malinis 'yung gilid gilid ng estero,” ayon kay Panganiban.

Ayon kay Celina Rotea, isa sa mga huling nakasama ni Gina Lopez sa kaniyang mga nagawang proyekto isang hamon na maipagpatuloy ang mga nasimulan nito higit lalo para sa pagtatanggol sa kalikasan.

“I guess it’s really been a challenge kasi Gina Lopez is Gina Lopez, I don’t think anyone could replace her,” ayon kay Rotea na isa sa mga Program Staff ng Bantay Kalikasan.

“She left a part of her in each and everyone of us and I think 'yun ang bumubuhay sa alaala niya ngayon,” dagdag pa ni Rotea.

Bilang pag-alala sa naipunlang pagmamalasakit at tunay na pagmamahal sa kalikasan sa ika-40 araw ng kaniyang pagpanaw noong nakaraang taon, itinayo ang halaman sa La Mesa Eco Park na tinawag na Gina Lopez Garden of Love.



Kasama ang anak ni Gina Lopez na si Bapi Lopez Roy (2nd right) sa mga nakiisa sa tree planting activity sa Garden of Love sa La Mesa Eco Park na ginanap bilang paggunita sa ika-40 araw mula nang pumanaw ang ina, Setyembre 27, 2019. *Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News/File*

Ang La Mesa Eco Park na nasa Quezon City ay nasa pamamahala ng ABS-CBN Foundation na pinagmalasakitan din ni Lopez.

Ito na lamang ang natitirang kadawagan na gubat sa lungsod.

“Dati ang daming nakatirang mga tao dito pinuputol nila 'yung mga puno. Hindi lang maliliit na puno kundi malalaki talaga,” ayon kay Josarie Cocoy, Grounds and Landscaping Head La Mesa Ecopark.

Sakop din ng La Mesa ang critical water shed na pinagsumikapan ni Lopez na maisalba.

“Yong water shed. 'Yan ang kauna-unahang project ng Bantay Kalikasan, 'yung water shed. Napakahalaga ng ginawa ni Ma'am Gina dahil kung wala po ang forest diyan 'yung ating La Mesa dam kalaunan n'yan wala nang magiging tubig diyan dahil sa siltation,” kuwento ni Jose Pascual, Forest Protection officer sa La Mesa Watershed.

Ang La Mesa watershed ang isa sa pinakaimportanteng pinagkukunan ng tubig ng Metro Manila.

Nakipagkasundo si Lopez, isang dating environment secretary, sa pamunuan ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System na namamahala sa La Mesa watershed, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, at lokal na pamahalaan ng Quezon City para sa pangangalaga nito sa ilalim ng ABS-CBN Foundation.

Ayon naman kay Sarah Agcaoili, officer-in-charge ng Save The La Mesa Watershed Project, mahalagang ang nasimulan ni Lopez ay sama-samang maitaguyod ng kasalukuyang henerasyon.

“Ito kasi 'yung tinatawag na crowning glory ni Mam Gina, kumbaga pag sinabing Gina Lopez unang maiisip mo 'yung La Mesa kasi kung wala si Ma'am Gina at wala 'yung vision niya na ma-rehabilitate 'yung La Mesa saan na tayo kukuha ng maiinom na tubig?” paliwanag ni Agcaoili.

Gina Lopez inalala sa paninindigan, pagmamahal para sa

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Isa pang proyektong itinaguyod ni Lopez ang Sagip Kapamilya na ayuda sa mga komunidad na ibinibigay ng ABS-CBN Foundation sa panahon ng kalamidad.

“Isa sa mga vision ni Ma'am Gina 'yung mabilis na aksyon. 'Pag kailangan ng tao nand'yan tayo,” paliwanag ni Jun Dungo ng Sagip Kapamilya.

“Itong Sagip Kapamilya magpapatuloy dahil malaking inspirasyon natin kung paano 'yung passion, commitment 'yung conviction na makatulong at makapagserbisyo sa kapwa Filipino.”



ABS-CBN News

12h · 🌐

TINGNAN: Isang kuwago ang namataan ni Bayan Patroller Fae Pascua sa playground sa tapat ng kanilang bahay sa Calendola Village, San Pedro, Laguna ngayong Huwebes.

Hirap lumipad ang nasabing kuwago na nakita nila ng kanyang tiyuhin sa sahig ng playground. Nagawa pa rin naman nitong pumuwesto sa taas ng puno.

"Nagulat po kami kanina nung nakita namin... Actually first time ko lang din talagang makakita ng owl. Nakakaawa lang kasi parang stressed siya," ani Pascua. | via Sarah Sales, Bayan Mo, Ipatrol Mo



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Duterte to announce new quarantine status in PH on

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Duterte to announce new quarantine status in PH on Aug. 17

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos August 13, 2020, 4:53 pm



President Rodrigo Duterte (Presidential photo)

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte is expected to announce the new classifications of community quarantine in the country on August 17, Malacañang said on Thursday.

Duterte would deliver a public address on Monday to present the new quarantine rules nationwide starting August 18, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a virtual press conference.

“Inaasahan po natin na magme-mensahe sa taumbayan muli ang ating Presidente sa August 17 kung saan ia-anunsiyo rin niya kung ano ‘yung mga bagong classification (We expect the President to deliver a message to the public on August 17 to announce the new [quarantine] classifications),” Roque said.

On July 30, Duterte downgraded the quarantine status in Cebu City to a less restrictive general community quarantine (GCQ) from the stricter modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

Aside from Cebu City, Duterte also initially implemented GCQ in Metro Manila and the provinces of Bulacan, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal from August 1 to 15.

GCQ was also imposed in Talisay City, Minglanilla, and Consolacion in Cebu province.

However, Metro Manila and the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal were eventually placed under MECQ from August 4 to 18 following the appeal of medical front-liners to avoid the collapse of the country’s health care system amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

Modified GCQ (MGCQ), the least restrictive community quarantine, was implemented in the rest of the country until August 15.

Roque said the current quarantine classifications in all parts of the country, except in areas under MECQ, are set to lapse on August 15.

“Meron na pong rekomendasyon (There is already a recommendation) for all other areas, except for Metro Manila and four provinces under MECQ. So I think it is without prejudice na hanggang 15 lang ‘yung (that quarantine classifications will end on August 15 in) all other areas other than Metro Manila and the four provinces,” he said.

MGCQ in Metro Manila a ‘remote possibility’

Roque reiterated that it would be “highly unlikely” for Duterte to extend the MECQ status in Metro Manila and its nearby provinces, unless the proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2) contains a provision that would grant cash aid to poor families who have to bear the brunt of the implementation of stricter quarantine measures.

Duterte to announce new quarantine status in PH on

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He said there was a “remote possibility” that Metro Manila might be under MGCQ, considering that there will be 250 additional beds for Covid-19 patients at the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City by August 17.

“It’s a remote possibility,” Roque said. *“Baka meron pang possibility na mag-MGCQ na dahil napakalaki na ng critical care capacity ng Metro Manila with additional 250-bed capacity* (Perhaps, there is a possibility that Metro Manila might be under MGCQ because of its improved critical care capacity, with (an) additional 250-bed capacity.”

He, however, clarified that he was merely “speculating”, adding that the final recommendation would still come from the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), subject to Duterte’s approval.

“Let me correct. I was just speculating. It’s a decision of the IATF,” Roque said. **(PNA)**

NCR posibleng isailalim na sa GCQ; COVID-19 cases bumababa

(Pang-Masa) - August 14, 2020 - 12:00am



Kinumpirma ni Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez na ang implementasyon ng modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) sa Metro Manila ay naging epektibo.

The STAR/Michael Varcas, file

MANILA, Philippines — Kung magtutuloy-tuloy ang pagbaba ng coronavirus disease 2019 o COVID-19 cases ay umaasa si Metro Manila Council chairperson Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez na isasailalim na ang National Capital Region sa general community quarantine (GCQ).

Kinumpirma ni Olivarez na ang implementasyon ng modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) sa Metro Manila ay naging epektibo.

“Kung magtutuloy ‘tong trend natin mula pa noong August 4, most probably magdyi-GCQ na tayo,” aniya.

Iniulat din nito ang pagbaba ng kaso sa Parañaque City mula 876 noong August 4 hanggang sa 651.

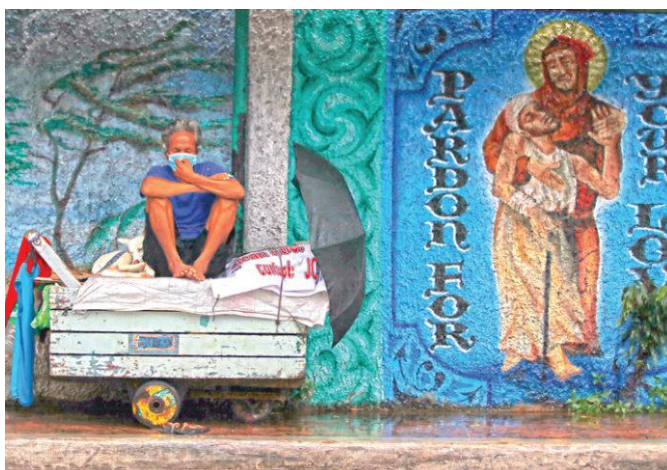
“Ngayon po ang data namin kahapon, 651 po ang aming active cases, after ng nine to 10 days ng ating MECQ,” paliwanag pa nito.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pang-masa/police-metro/2020/08/14/2035167/ncr-posibleng-isailalim-na-sa-gcq-covid-19-cases-bumababa/amp/>

Bayanihan 2 done by end-August, House defends P10 billion for Tieza

By [Jovee Marie de la Cruz](#)

August 14, 2020



A homeless man who lives with his dog in a cart beside the Saint Francis School in Santa Ana, Manila, is seen beside a mural of Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and the environment. He is just one of many homeless people at risk from the coronavirus as they roam the streets trying to make a living.

THE congressional bicameral conference committee will submit to President Duterte before the end of the month the final version of the Bayanihan to Recover as One or the Bayanihan 2 for its target implementation in September, leaders of the House of Representatives said on Thursday.

Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund Villafuerte made a statement as the bicameral committee is set to wrap up its meetings this week.

According to Villafuerte, the government is targeting to implement the Bayanihan 2 in September. The measure seeks to arm President Duterte with continued special powers and funds to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier, Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano said Congress is targeting to ratify the Bayanihan II this Tuesday. After the ratification by both houses, the bill will be immediately transmitted to Duterte for signature.

Meanwhile, leaders of the House of Representatives also on Thursday said the P10-billion allocation for the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (Tieza), the infrastructure arm of the Department of Tourism (DOT), could generate P35 billion in economic activity for the tourism sector.

House Committee on Good Governance and Public Accountability Chairman Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado said the tourism industry can look forward to the long-term benefits from the P10-billion fund allocated to the Tieza under the proposed P162-billion Bayanihan to Recover as One.

The Senate version, with a total P140 billion in funding, puts the controversial P10-billion fund directly under DOT, not under Tieza, and focuses on helping Covid-impacted tourism enterprises instead of pouring this into infrastructure, like the House version.

In a statement, Sy-Alvarado said the fund under Tieza “will unlock development in the tourism industry by boosting infrastructure and providing establishments the opportunity to work on tourist sites often neglected and lacking in facilities, such as access roads, restrooms and accommodation facilities.”

He said the pending bill provides the mechanisms on how tourism enterprises can avail themselves of the credit facilities through government financial institutions (GFIs).

Bayanihan 2 provides P51 billion to GFIs with the following breakdown: P5 billion for the credit guarantee program of the Philippine Guarantee Corporation; P30 billion and P15 billion to support banking facilities and equity infusion of the LBP and the DBP, respectively; and P1 billion as additional funding for the Covid-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises (CARES) Program of the Small Business Corporation and for its other lending programs to be extended to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

“We value the tourism industry as much as we value all other sectors in the country, which is why aside from the P10-billion fund allocated for tourism infrastructure, we also allocated P51 billion to GFIs that can easily provide access to credit and loan programs to MSMEs, including small-scale tourism-oriented enterprises accredited by local government units,” Sy-Alvarado said.

Access

Also, Villafuerte assured tourism stakeholders that Bayanihan 2 will allow tourism enterprises, including small-scale tourism-oriented enterprises accredited by local government units, to avail themselves of much-needed assistance through various credit facilities.

“We are fully aware of the problems confronting the tourism industry, including the losses that they have incurred since the start of the travel restrictions early this year,” the Bicol lawmaker said.

“It should not be a choice between tourism infrastructure and additional working capital. Both will play equal importance in the recovery efforts of the sector. Thus, we included provisions to fulfill both requirements,” he added.

‘Not allowed’

Villafuerte explained that the House rejected the proposal of Tourism Congress of the Philippines president Jose Clemente III to provide “bailouts” or doles directly to private firms in the tourism sector as this is not allowed under the law.

Clemente’s proposal was backed by Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo Puyat.

“First of all, doleouts to private firms are not allowed. These can only be done for workers, that’s why we have the TUPAD [Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers] of the Department of Labor and Employment, the funds for Tesda [Technical Education and Skills Development Authority] and the cash-for-work programs,” said Villafuerte in an interview.

Moreover, he said the House version of Bayanihan 2 bill provides a P20-billion allocation for cash-for-work programs, P1 billion for the scholarship funds of Tesda, and another P100 million for the training of, and subsidies to, tourist guides.

Villafuerte explained that the bailout that Clemente wanted was already included in the P51-billion capital provided to government financial institutions, given that neither the Department of Tourism nor Tieza can officially lend money or grant doles to private firms in the tourism industry.

Villafuerte said Clemente has claimed that the Senate version provided direct funding support to the tourism sector in the sum of P10 billion, which the House had “realigned” instead to Tieza’s infra projects.

The lawmaker, however, made it clear that no “realignment” took place because the final version of the Bayanihan bill has not yet been approved.

Villafuerte also noted that the Senate’s P10 billion in funding support for the tourism sector was also in the form of loans and not “bailouts.”

“I was sad to learn that some stakeholders in the tourism sector are saying that we do not need infrastructure at the moment. Perhaps those who are saying this are those in Cebu or in other areas with relatively good infrastructure and airports. How about the areas with poor infrastructure?” Villafuerte said.

“Other countries in the region cannot compete when it comes to the beauty of our beaches and other tourism sites. But they attract more tourists each year than the Philippines because they have better infrastructure,” he added.

Defending the proposed Bayanihan 2 Act, Sy-Alvarado said that while the P10-billion supposed “working capital” for the programs of the DOT was diverted to Tieza, credit and loan programs for tourism stakeholders will still be accessible through the assistance of GFIs such as the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Sy-Alvarado said the House of Representatives will maintain close relations with the DOT, Tieza and tourism stakeholders in the crafting of programs to support the tourism industry’s recovery and the overall recovery of the national economy.

Impact

Villafuerte said there is a need to expedite the building of tourism infrastructure projects while tourist destinations are not yet fully operational because of the pandemic.

Villafuerte said every P1 spent on infrastructure will have a multiplier effect of 3.5, which means that the P10 billion for Tieza under the House version of the Bayanihan 2 bill would pump in around P35 billion into the tourism sector and economy.

He noted that even prior to the health crisis, many tourism sites have had inadequate comfort room facilities, inaccessible roads networks, and poor accommodation facilities.

“Bayanihan 2 is just the initial stimulus outlay for the recovery of the tourism sector as there would be further allocations for the DOT and the tourism industry in the proposed General Appropriations Act of 2021,” he said.



In a recent brief titled “Coronavirus resurgence dims some recovery prospects,” the research firm said the Philippines, along with Indonesia and India which are still reporting elevated numbers of cases, has so far been performing the worst in the region in terms of containment and workplace mobility.

[Philstar.com/Irish Lising](https://www.philstar.com/Irish-Lising)

Philippines recovery precarious as virus cases rise’

[Czerina Valencia](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 14, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Economic recovery in the country can be expected to be among the most uncertain in Asia Pacific due to the continued rise in coronavirus cases and the poor mobility of workers, according to UK-based think tank Oxford Economics.

In a recent brief titled “Coronavirus resurgence dims some recovery prospects,” the research firm said the Philippines, along with Indonesia and India which are still reporting elevated numbers of cases, has so far been performing the worst in the region in terms of containment and workplace mobility.

“The situation remains precarious in India, Indonesia and the Philippines, with infections accelerating after restrictions were prematurely relaxed, leading to a pause or reversal of reopening plans. These economies remain highly vulnerable, given weak public health infrastructure and limited fiscal resources,” Oxford Economics said.

The region is experiencing a major resurgence in some countries such as in Australia, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Japan — which were able to control the outbreak early on during the crisis.

Because of better mobility of workers, however, these economies along with China, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand can be expected to recover faster.

The report noted that Singapore and Malaysia are also making progress in containment with the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases falling, leading to loosened restriction and improved workplace mobility.

Mobility of workers is now increasingly used as an indicator of economic activity in light of the lockdowns, Oxford Economics said.

“In the Philippines, Metro Manila and nearby provinces imposed a second lockdown in early August, leading to a further decline in workplace mobility. In Indonesia, rising infections have also delayed a further easing of social distancing measures,”

Metro Manila and other growth centers Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite and Laguna have been placed under strict lockdown anew from Aug. 4 to Aug. 18 after health workers called for a two-week timeout to recuperate and seek reinforcements from the government.

Public transportation remains limited in keeping with social distancing measures, making it a challenge for workers to get to their places of employment.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/08/14/2035081/philippines-recovery-precarious-virus-cases-rise>

Nationwide mask distribution begins

Published 3 hours ago on August 14, 2020 03:40 AM

By [Neil Alcober](#)



The government on Wednesday started distributing masks for free in provinces around the country in ceremonies led by Health Secretary Francisco Duque III at Barangay San Roque, Antipolo City.

The distribution involved at least 30 million pieces of washable masks for the poor in remote areas to help cut the spread of the coronavirus disease by 85 percent if done properly.

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said the initiative is in response to the directive of President Duterte for the distribution of free masks to every Filipino.

Lopez said the washable and reusable masks are made by small and medium enterprise under the stewardship of the Department of Trade and Industry, including the sewers who graduated from the Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA).

Senior citizens, pregnant women, individuals with special health conditions and social amelioration program beneficiaries are given priority under the program.

Duque and officials of the National Task Force Against COVID-19 also visited Rizal province to help the local government implement the COVID-19 action plan via CODE protocol or Coordinated Operations to Defeat Epidemic.

There was a dialogue between local officials and the National Task Force COVID-19 prior to ceremonial distribution of masks.

Apart from face masks, the national government also distributed test kits and Bida Solusyon posters. The test kits were given to priority areas in the province, including the towns of Binangonan, Taytay and Antipolo City.

Top officials present included Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, testing czar Vince Dizon, Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello and DSWD Secretary Rolando Bautista.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/14/nationwide-mask-distribution-begins/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=nationwide-mask-distribution-begins

Sputnik V may be commercially available in PH by April 2021, not December this year

posted August 13, 2020 at 02:17 pm

by [Willie Casas](#)

The COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V from Russia may be available for commercial use in the Philippines by April 2021, a Philippine official who recently met with Russian authorities said on Thursday.

In an interview on Dabol B sa News TV, Dr. Jaime Montoya, executive director of Philippine Council for Health Research, was part of a team of health and vaccine experts who met with representatives of Sputnik V's Russian manufacturer Gamaleya and other Russian investors in connection with its Phase 3 clinical trials in the Philippines.

"Kailangan approved muna ng Russian FDA (Food and Drug Administration) bago ma-approve ng FDA ng ibang bansa. Ang projection po nila (Russians) ng kanilang FDA approval ay January 2021," Montoya said.

"Pag na-approve na po nila, pag-aaralan po ng FDA natin rito, kaya mga second quarter po, mga April 2021, ma-approve rito, magiging available na po rito," he added.

Montoya said Russia's FDA approval is different from the Russian government's approval of Sputnik V since the latter is only a certification for emergency use given the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Ginagawa lang po iyong (certification for emergency use) pag may pandemya. Iyong use po noon, pang healthcare workers lang po at mga high risk (population)," Montoya said.

"Di pa po puwede gamitin ng maramihan," he added.

Russians have expressed willingness to conduct Phase 3 of the clinical trials for Sputnik V in the Philippines at no cost, as long as they are provided with manpower and venue to conduct the trials, said Montoya.

President Rodrigo Duterte earlier said he has accepted Russian President Vladimir Putin's offer to provide the country with a vaccine against COVID-19. He even said he is willing to volunteer and have himself injected during the clinical trials.

Both Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, however, said that Sputnik V, which has not been cleared by the World Health Organization (WHO), needs further study.

WHO said its stamp of approval on a vaccine candidate would require a rigorous safety data review.

"We are in close contact with the Russian health authorities and discussions are ongoing with respect to possible WHO pre-qualification of the vaccine," said the United Nations health agency's spokesman Tarik Jasarevic.

A total of 168 candidate vaccines are being worked on around the world, according to a WHO overview published earlier this week.

Of those, 28 have progressed to the various phases of being tested on humans, of which six are the furthest ahead, having reached Phase 3 of clinical trials.

MAHAL NA DOKTOR AT GAMOT ANG PAPTAY SA IYO SA RABIES



August 13, 2020 @ 5:49 PM 14 hours ago

Alam ba ninyong nasa 300 Pinoy ang namamatay sa rabies taon-taon at kasama ang mga ito ng 59,000 patay rin sa rabies sa 150 bansa taon-taon?

Nakamamatay talaga ang rabies dahil isa itong virus na sumisira sa utak ng tao at kapag nasira na ito, patay kang bata ka!

Pero kung magtanong ka sa karanasan ng mga namamatayan sa rabies sa mahal kong Pinas, kasama sa pinakamalaking dahilan ang napakamahal na singil ng mga doktor, nurse, ospital at gamot dito.

At karaniwang mahihirap ang mga namamatay dahil nga sa mahal serbisyo ng mga doktor, nurse, ospital at napakamahal na gamot.

Isama na natin ang sistema ng kalusugan sa bansa.

TUNAY NA KARANASAN

Kahapon, may katrabaho tayong kinagat ng aso at bumaon ang nasa tatlong ngipin ng aso sa kanyang binti sa Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

Iba pa ang mga gasgas o mababaw na sugat.

Itinakbo siya sa limang ospital at isang animal bite clinic.

Para mabilis, dinala ang biktima sa isang private hospital na pinakamalapit subalit kulang ang gamot na dapat maisaksak nang sunod-sunod sa biktima.

Dahil dito, dinala siya sa isang government hospital ngunit hindi itinuloy dahil sabi ng kontak nila roon, walang gamot laban dito.

Dinala siya sa isang animal bite clinic ngunit sarado kaya tumakbo sila sa isa pang private hospital na nagsabing wala rin silang gamot.

Pagdating sa isa pang private hospital, dalawang gamot lang ang meron kaya tumakbo na sila sa Malolos na kapitolyo ng Bulacan ngunit sa isa pang private hospital dahil sa takot sa rami ng may coronavirus disease sa Bulacan Medical Center (BMC) na dating provincial hospital.

Kulang pa rin ng gamot na kailangan kaya napilitan na silang pumasok sa BMC.

Gumamit sila ng dalawang sasakyan para kung pumalya man ang isa, tiyak na makararating ang biktima sa ospital nang buhay.

SAN LAZARO HOSPITAL SA MANILA ANG BAGSAK

Wala palang maituturing na ultimatum na gamot din ang BMC sa may seryosong kalagayan sa rabies.

Naging seryoso ang rabies dahil ginamitan ng maling first aid ang biktima.

Sa halip na hugasan lang ng tubig at sabon ang kinagat ng aso, piniga nila ito upang dumugo sa paniniwalang makababawas ito sa pagpasok ng virus sa katawan ng biktima.

Paliwanag ng mga doktor, lalong papasok umano ang virus sa katawan ng tao sa ganitong hakbang.

Dahil sa kawalan ng tamang gamot para sa seryosong kalagayan mismo ang BMC, hayun, sa San Lazaro Hospital sa Maynila ang bagsak ng biktima at doon na siya nilapatan ng ultimatum na gamot, ang HRIG kung tawagin, para pampalakas umano ng immune system at pampabilis sa paggana ng anti-rabies na gamot.

NAPAKAMAMAHAL AT KANYA-KANYANG PRESYO

Sa unang private hospital, P2,500 ang singil sa anti-tetanus at anti-rabies, kasama ang konsultasyon at professional fees, pero dahil hindi raw pupwedeng wala ang ultimatum na gamot, hindi na nila tinanggap ang pasyente.

P5,000 naman ang sinisingil ng pangatlong private hospital at P6,000 ng pang-apat na private hospital at kasama pa rin sa mga halagang ito ang consultation at professional fees.

Wala namang siningil ang BMC na consultation at professional fees pero pinabili ang biktima ng mga gamot sa mga botika sa labas dahil mas mura umano roon kaysa mabibili sa parmasya ng ospital.

Ginawa ng biktima ang habilin at totoo nga namang mas mura ang anti-tetanus at anti-rabies sa labas.

Pero ang masaklap, ang gamot na ERIG kung tawagin ipara sa immune system ay pinabili ng doktor nang buo o apat na vial na nagkakahalaga ng P7,200 nang walang testing-testing.

Nang testingin sa biktima ito, anak ng tokwa, nagkaroon ito ng allergy kaya hindi itinurok sa kanya ang gamot dahil maaaring ikamatay umano ito ng biktima.

Ang ganitong gamot na pinasasamahan ng ice o yelo dahil madaling masira at dapat ituturok kaagad ay nasayang, lalo't sakop pala ito ng "no return, no exchange" ng mga botika.

Reklamo ng nasabing parmasya, marami na umanong ganitong maling gawain o pagkakamali ng mga doktor sa BMC— ang pagrereseta nang buo kahit walang testing na isinasagawa na ikinahihirap at ikinapapahamak ng mga biktima ng rabies.

Sa San Lazaro nagkaroon ng gamot na pang-ultimatum na HRIG na ginamit sa biktima na nagkahalaga naman ng P27,000 at iba pa ang anti-biotic dahil namaga ang kinagat ng aso.

24 ORAS LANG ANG PAGKILOS

Ginawa nang mabilisan ang pagkilos o pagpapagamot dahil sa ganoong kaseryosong kalagayan, malalagay sa alanganin umano ang buhay ng may rabies.

Kinagat ng aso ang biktima dakong ala-1:00 ng hapon at umabot ito sa BMC dakong alas-3:00 ng hapon at muntik nang hindi ginamot dahil hanggang 12 lang pala ang gamutan sa kagat ng hayop.

Nagpasalamat ang biktima sa pag-aasikaso sa kanya sa emergency room at umabot ng dalawang oras ang diagnosis, pagpapabili ng gamot, pagtesting sa allergy at pagtuturok ng anti-tetanus at anti-rabies.

Ayon sa mga doktor ng BMC, pitong araw ang alawans sa pagpapaturok ng HRIG ngunit dahil namanhid hanggang singit ang hita ng biktima, napilitan na itong tumakbo sa San Lazaro Hospital kaninang umaga.

Mabilis naman sa San Lazaro dahil nagkaroon ng sapat na pambili ang biktima at naturukan siya ng HRIG.

Ang pinakamahalagang tanong ng taga-San Lazaro Hospital: Buhay pa ba ang aso o patay na?

Kung buhay, maganda pero, kung patay na sa loob ng 24 oras, nalalagay na sa panganib ang pasyente at mas marami pang matitinding panggagamot ang gagawin sa biktima.

Nakahinga ang biktima nang malamang “buhay at nagpapadede pa ng kanyang mga tuta” ang aso.

MALA-IMPIYERNONG PROBLEMA

Sa karanasang ito, nakitaan ng mala-impiyernong kalagayan ang sistema ng kalusugan ng ating bansa sa problema sa rabies.

Ang rabies, karamihan ay mula sa kagat ng aso ngunit meron ding rabies mula sa mga paniki, fox o lobo, skunk na parang pusa na daga at iba pa.

Akalain ninyo, ang daming dikit-dikit na ospital at ang dami ring doktor at nurse ang dalawang bayan ng Sta. Maria at Malolos, Bulacan ngunit walang sapat na gamot laban sa rabies para sa matitinding kalagayan!

Sa Maynila pa kailangang dalhin ang pasyente at kung mamamalasin ka pa, sa Regional Institute of Tropical Medicine, Alabang, Muntinlupa City ka pa itatakbo.

Nangangahulugang maaaring ganito rin kasama ang kalagayan ng mga biktima ng rabies sa mga lalawigan ng Rizal, Cavite, Laguna at baka masama pa sa listahan ang mga lalawigan ng Nueva Ecija at Batangas.

Kung mahirap ang biktima, pagkakasakit o kamatayan sa rabies ang naghihintay sa kanya dahil sa napakabigat na gastusin sa pagpapagamot.

Dito na nagaganap ang tunay na kwento ng ibang biktima na hindi na nila kinukumpleto ang pagpapagamot dahil sa kakapusan at sa kalaunan, namamatay sila sa rabies nang 'di nila nalalaman at namamalayan.

Paano kaya igawan ng pamahalaan ang mga problemang ito, lalo ang pagpapalakas sa programa laban sa rabies sa puntong abot-kaya ang mga presyo ng gamot at serbisong medikal at hindi pahirapan ang pagdadala sa mga ospital ng mga biktima?

Maganda naman ang sipag nina kapitan at kagawad sa pagbabakuna, lalo na sa mga aso, subalit paano ang mga may seryosong kalagayan na biktima ng rabies, lalo na sa hanay ng mga mahihirap?

'Where's gov't when we're dying?'

Published 7 hours ago on August 14, 2020 12:07 AM

By [Aldrin Cardona](#)



It has come to this point of grief brought about by the new coronavirus pandemic that some families remember these names: Vince Dizon, Benjamin Magalong, Mark Villar and Bong Vega.

Theirs are familiar names whose roles seem safely tucked only on paper — but unheard of and unseen when the true test to the people's faith on government comes.

Dizon is the Chief testing czar; Baguio City Mayor Magalong the tracing czar; Villar the chief isolation czar; and Vega — the latest addition to the problematic Department of Health (DoH) as an undersecretary — as chief treatment czar.

These are czars sitting comfortably in their fortresses, unaware of the happenings on the ground.

They could not be familiar with Richmond Rondanilla, a former government worker, who died Thursday last week of the dreaded virus after he was turned down by four hospitals around Metro Manila.

Rondanilla does not ring a bell unlike a Pimentel, a Zubiri, an Angara or a Revilla — senators who have contracted the virus but have been given quick medical attention. He was not even close to a Lim or a Brillantes, who died of COVID-19 but not after they were given their chance to be saved.

Rondanilla did not get to have that chance at all. The poor former government worker was not even given attention from the start.

He complained of a breathing difficulty early last week. His first attempt at self-medication ended in him asking for a P10,000 loan from a friend so that he could afford an oxygen tank — a breathing apparatus which extended his life for a couple of days.

His friend offered him a gift of P20,000 on the condition that he will use the money for his hospital confinement.

Money on hand, he was rushed by his family aboard a side car to the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Roxas, Boulevard, Pasay City. There was no public transportation nor an ambulance available as Metro Manila reverted to a stricter modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

No room at the inn

The hospital had placed a barrier against new entries. The family was told that there was no vacancy in COVID-19 beds.

They rushed him back home after Rondilla was denied confinement at the Adventist Medical Center in Manila and the Pasay City General Hospital. They settled for a video consultation with a doctor based in Makati who declared that he was manifesting all signs of COVID-19. It included diarrhea which is among the worst of the symptoms a coronavirus victim has to endure. He was that close to death.

The physician instructed Rondilla's family not to spend time queueing for a swab test — results of which would take days — anymore.

And so, they went to St. Clare Hospital in Makati for the patient only to be told once again that he be placed in home care, telling the family to just boost his immune system. But his condition was already getting worse.

With the Rondillas in home quarantine, the family had requested the barangay leadership to place their compound of about 30 people in lockdown. It went unheeded.

Then they sought a referral again from the Pasay City General Hospital for a possible shot at admission at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH). It was given "upon the request of the patient." At that moment, the family could not bring him to the PGH anymore.

His condition further worsened on Wednesday, prompting his family to seek admission to the Pasay City General Hospital which had turned him away earlier.

Again, the family was told there was no slot available for him.

Then they asked if they could just wait at the hospital's parking lot for better chances of admission should a bed becomes available. They were given permission at first, only to be turned away later.

Declared dead

Rondilla died in agony of waiting at 7 a.m. on Thursday, time when he was finally admitted at the Pasay hospital as a "dead on arrival" patient. His body was given a CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) for 20 minutes before he was officially declared dead at 8 a.m.

His swab results from the RITM (Research Institute for Tropical Medicine) was delivered at 2 p.m., one hour after Rondilla's body had been cremated. He was COVID-19 positive.

It was after he died when the realities of the hospital operations unfolded before the eyes of one of Rondilla's family members. The Pasay hospital was not full as it claimed earlier.

No doctor had touched Rondilla. Not even with a stethoscope attached to a 10-foot pole. There was not a doctor there, they claimed.

"The doctors cried that they are tired fighting COVID-19. But where were the doctors when we needed them most?" Che-che Valle, Rondilla's sister, exclaimed.

"We've been transferring hospitals for hours, we were both exhausted and perplexed due to my brother's situation. Yet they (doctors) claimed they are tired, too. From where?" she added.

So the family asked further: Where was Dizon's testing? Magalong's tracing? Villar's isolation facilities when they even had to ask to be allowed to stay at a hospital parking lot just be close to an emergency ward? Where was Vega's treatment facilities when they did not have the chance to be even checked by doctors whom last week had complained of exhaustion but were not even there when they were needed by the family?

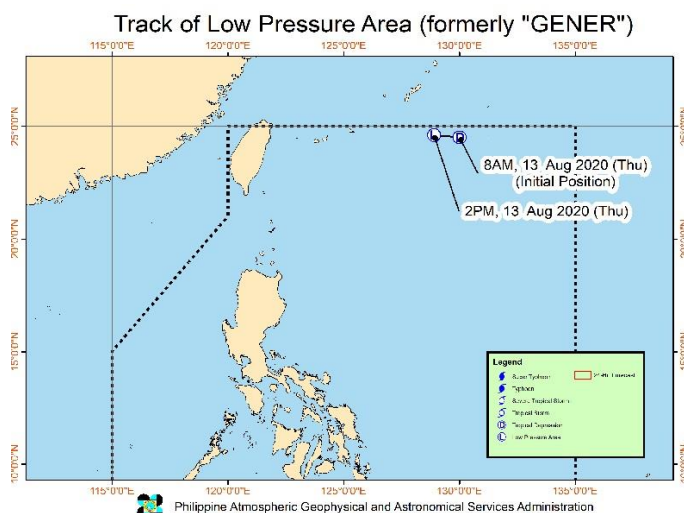
Where were Villar's isolation centers when a nurse, a frontliner who tested positive for COVID-19 roamed the streets after her landlady evicted her from her dormitory?

Where are they now when contact tracing is needed to chase all those Rondillas, her family, their friends who visited, their neighbors in the compound, the grocery staff who attended to them, that nurse and all those she touched?

It's no wonder that the number of COVID-19 victims continue to rise. It's no wonder President Duterte's fight against COVID-19 is failing.

Tropical Depression Gener, humina na at isa na lamang LPA

By Angellic Jordan August 13, 2020 - 07:01 PM



Tuluyan nang humina ang Tropical Depression Gener at isa na lamang low pressure area (LPA), ayon sa PAGASA.

Ayon kay PAGASA weather specialist Ariel Rojas, naging LPA ang sama ng panahon bandang 2:00 ng hapon.

Huling namataan ang bagyo sa layong 830 kilometers Hilagang-Silangan ng Basco, Batanes dakong 4:00 ng hapon.

Wala pa rin aniyang epekto ang LPA sa anumang bahagi ng bansa.

Samantala, patuloy namang magdadala ng maulap na kalangitan na may kalat-kalat na pag-ulan, pagkulong at pagkidlat ang Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

Partikular na maaapektuhan nito ang Southern Luzon, Visayas at Mindanao.

Ani Rojas, namataan ang isa pang LPA na nakapaloob sa ITCZ.

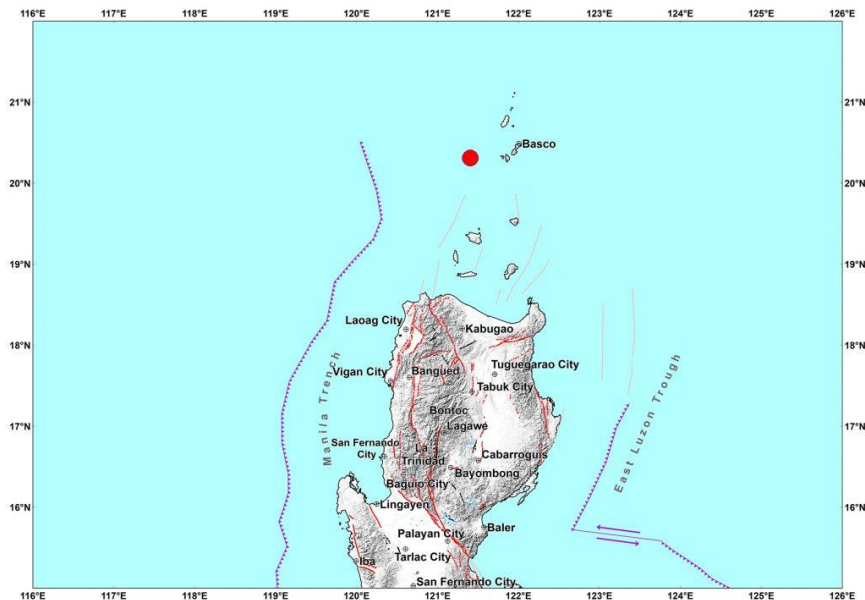
Huling itong namataan sa layong 1,150 kilometers Silangan ng Visayas bandang 4:00 ng hapon.

Mababa naman aniya ang tsansa na lumakas ang LPA at maging bagyo sa susunod na 24 oras.

5.5-magnitude quake hits Batanes

Published August 13, 2020, 7:08 AM
by [MB Online](#)

A 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Batanes on Thursday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) reported.



The earthquake, which occurred at 6:32 a.m., was tectonic in origin and was traced 49 kilometers southwest of Sabtang, Batanes. It had a depth of 14 km.

Phivolcs said the quake was not expected to cause any damage to property. However, aftershocks are likely to happen.

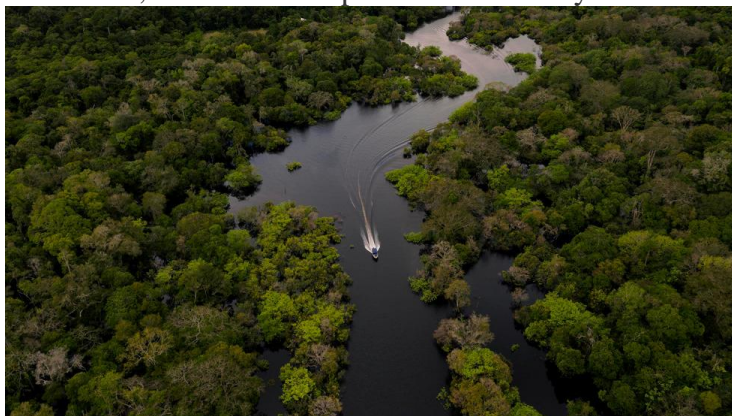
Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/13/5-5-magnitude-quake-hits-batanes/>

Global warming makes tropical soils leak CO2: study

Published August 13, 2020, 6:35 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Tropical forest soil warmed in experiments to levels consistent with end-of-century temperature projections released 55 percent more CO2 than control plots, exposing a previously underestimated source of greenhouse gas emissions, researchers reported Wednesday.



“Carbon held in tropical soils are more sensitive to warming than previously recognised,” says Andrew Nottingham, a researcher at the University of Edinburgh Florence GOISNARD AFP/File/ MANILA BULLETIN

Before humanity began loading the atmosphere with carbon pollution by burning fossil fuels, the input and outflow of CO2 into soil — one key element in Earth’s complex carbon cycle — remained roughly in balance.

Gases emitted by deadwood and decaying leaves, in other words, were cancelled out by microorganisms that feed on such matter.

But climate change has begun to upset that balance, according to a new study, published in Nature. “Carbon held in tropical soils is more sensitive to warming than previously recognised,” lead author Andrew Nottingham, a researcher at the University of Edinburgh’s School of Geosciences, told AFP.

“Even a small increase in respiration from tropical forest soils could have a large effect on atmospheric CO2 concentrations, with consequences for global climate.”

The quantity of carbon cycling each year through soils worldwide is up to 10 times greater than human-generated greenhouse gas emissions.

Just a one-percent imbalance — with more carbon going out than in — “would equal about ten percent of global anthropogenic (manmade) carbon emissions,” noted Eric Davidson, a researcher at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

Earth’s average surface temperature has risen just over one degree Celsius (1C) above preindustrial levels, enough to boost the severity of droughts, heatwaves and superstorms made more destructive by rising seas.

But the increase in temperatures over land alone — excluding oceans, which cover 70 percent of the planet — has been nearly 2C, or double the global average.

– Carbon ‘sink’ to ‘source’ –

In the experiments, Nottingham and colleagues placed heating rods in a one-hectare plot of undisturbed primary forest on Barro Colorado Island, Panama.

They warmed the soil to a depth of just over one metre (three feet) by 4C over a period of two years.

Soil temperature is usually about a degree warmer than air temperature.

While such experiments have been conducted in higher latitude forests, none had been carried out up to now in the tropics.

Climate models seeking to take into account the potential carbon leakage from soil due to rising temperatures have relied on theoretical calculations that underestimate outputs compared to the field tests reported in Nature.

Extrapolating from the new findings, the study estimates that if all the world's tropical soils warmed by 4C for a two-year period some time before 2100, it would release 65 billion tonnes of carbon — equivalent to about 240 billion tonnes of CO2 — into the atmosphere.

“That is more than six times the current annual emissions from human-related sources,” Nottingham said.

“This could be an underestimation, because we might see large continued loss beyond the two years in our experiment.”

Nor are deeper stores of carbon — below two metres — taken into account, he added.

No sweeping conclusions can be drawn on the basis of a single experiment, the researchers caution.

“But the study adds to recently accumulating evidence that tropical forests are unlikely to continue indefinitely to be carbon sinks as the world warms,” said Davidson, who was not among the study's authors.

Up to now, tree cover and the ocean have together consistently absorbed about half of the excess carbon emissions from human activity, but there are signs that some forests may be experiencing CO2 fatigue.

Stored CO2 is also released when trees are cut down.

Last year, a football pitch of primary, old-growth trees was destroyed every six seconds, about 38,000 square kilometres (14,500 square miles) in all, according to Global Forest Watch.

Last decade was Earth's hottest on record, exposing

TITLE: grim reality of climate change

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August 14, 2020

DATE

Last decade was Earth's hottest on record, exposing grim reality of climate change

By [Helen Regan](#), CNN

Updated 1521 GMT (2321 HKT) August 13, 2020

(CNN)A new report released Wednesday details how 2019 was another year of extremes for Earth's climate, adding to a litany of evidence exposing the grim reality of our [warming world](#).

Last year saw devastating wildfires burn through Australia; large regions including Europe, Japan, Pakistan, and India experienced deadly [heat waves](#); almost 100 tropical cyclones created havoc; glaciers and sea ice continued to melt at worrying levels; and drought and floods destroyed vital crops and infrastructure.

Among the key findings of the [State of the Climate in 2019](#), published by the American Meteorological Society, was that 2019 was among the warmest years on record, that greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are at their highest recorded levels and this decade is the hottest since records began in the mid-1800s.

"Each decade since 1980 has been successively warmer than the preceding decade, with the most recent (2010-2019) being around 0.2°C warmer than the previous (2000-2009)," the report said. "As a primary driver for our changing climate, the abundance of many long-lived greenhouse gases continues to increase."

The study also reported other key findings:

The six warmest years on record have all occurred in the past six years, since 2014.

2019 was among the three hottest years since records began in the mid-1800s. Only 2016, and for some datasets 2015, were warmer than 2019.

Average sea surface temperatures in 2019 was the second highest on record, surpassed only by 2016.

Sea levels rose to a new record high for the eighth consecutive year.

Surface air temperatures for the Arctic were the second highest in 120 years of records, trailing only 2016. In the Antarctic, 2019 was the second warmest year for the continent since 1979.

Glaciers continue to melt at a concerning rate for the 32nd straight year.

The warming influence of the major greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere -- including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide -- was 45% higher than in 1990, the researchers found. The burning of fossil fuels in our cars, airplanes, and factories releases heat-trapping pollution into the air, warming up our planet.

Global carbon dioxide concentrations, which represent the bulk of the gases' warming power, rose during 2010 to a record 409.8 parts per million, the study found. That was the "highest in the modern 61-year measurement record as well as the highest ever measured in ice core records dating back as far as 800,000 years," the report

The report was led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's [Centers for Environmental Information](#) and was based on contributions from more than 520 scientists from 60 countries. The annual report is often described by meteorologists as the "annual physical of the climate system."

Robert Dunn, one of the report's lead editors from the UK Met Office, said in a [statement](#) that, "The view for 2019 is that climate indicators and observations show that the global climate is continuing to change rapidly."

"A number of extreme events, such as wildfires, heatwaves and droughts, have at least part of their root linked to the rise in global temperature. And of course the rise in global temperature is linked to another climate indicator: the ongoing rise in emissions of greenhouse gases, notably carbon-dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane," Dunn said.

Record heat, rising seas

July 2019 was Earth's hottest month on record, the report found.

More than a dozen countries across Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Caribbean reported record high annual temperatures last year. It was so warm that Belgium and the Netherlands saw 40°C (104°F) temperatures for the time.

Deadly and [intense heat waves](#) last year exacerbated [India's](#) water crisis -- which saw [entire cities](#) running out of water -- [worsened drought conditions](#) in Australia that led to [months of destructive wildfires](#), and scorched Europe's cities -- which are [not designed to deal](#) with such temperatures.

Dunn said that the start of this millennium has been warmer than any other period since the start of the Industrial Revolution.

"Global average temperature is perhaps the simplest climate indicator through which to view the changes taking place in our climate. 2019 was one of the top three warmest years in the historical record dating back to 1850. It also marks the end of a decade in which the average global temperature had risen by 0.2 °C when compared with the previous decade," he said.

Increasing ocean temperatures have continued to reduce sea ice at alarming levels. The extent and magnitude of ice loss over the Greenland ice sheet -- the second biggest in the world -- last year rivaled 2012, the previous year of record ice loss.

Scientists found that after months of record temperatures, Greenland's [ice sheet lost 197 billion tons of ice](#) -- the equivalent of around 80 million Olympic swimming pools in July 2019 alone.

NOAA NCEI Climate @NOAANCEIclimate · Aug 13, 2020
Replying to @NOAANCEIclimate

#StateOfClimate2019 There were 96 named tropical cyclones across all ocean basins last year, well above the 1981-2010 average of 82 storms. Five tropical cyclones reached Saffir-Simpson scale Category 5 intensity: bit.ly/BAMSSotC2019

NOAA NCEI Climate @NOAANCEIclimate

#StateOfClimate2019 Global average sea level rose to a new record high last year and was about 3.4 inches (87.6 mm) higher than the 1993 average: bit.ly/BAMSSotC2019

SEA LEVEL CHANGE (1993-2019)

Change in sea level (cm)
-20 0 20
NOAA Climate.gov
Data: UHSLC

1:03 AM · Aug 13, 2020

30 28 people are Tweeting about this

TITLE: Last decade was Earth's hottest on record, exposing
grim reality of climate change

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Melting of glaciers and ice sheets, along with warming oceans, account for the trend in rising global sea levels, the report said.

In 2019, sea levels rose for the eighth consecutive year and hit a record high for the 27 years since satellite recordings began, having risen about 3.4 inches, or 87.6 millimeters, in that time above the 1993 average.

The report comes as the world is struggling to contain the coronavirus pandemic, which is overwhelming many healthcare systems, and shattering economies across the world.

Scientists have repeatedly warned that the impacts of the climate crisis to our health systems and economies will be much more severe if left unchecked. Experts say the pandemic has [valuable lessons](#) on preparing for future crises, such as [acting early to mitigate against climate impacts](#), reducing emissions, developing green technology and implementing effective climate policies.

Thai scientists catch bats to trace virus origins

By [Associated Press](#)

August 13, 2020

KANCHANABURI, Thailand: Researchers in Thailand have been trekking through the countryside to catch bats in their caves in an effort to trace the murky origins of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

Initial research has already pointed to bats as the source of the virus that has afflicted more than 20.5 million people and caused the deaths of over 748,000 worldwide, according to Johns Hopkins University data. The closest match to the coronavirus has been found in horseshoe bats in Yunnan in southern China.

Thailand has 19 species of horseshoe bats but researchers said they have not yet been tested for the new coronavirus.

Thai researchers hiked up a hill in Sai Yok National Park in the western province of Kanchanaburi to set up nets to trap some 200 bats from three different caves.



A researcher removes a bat from a trapping net inside a cave at Sai Yok National Park in Kanchanaburi province, west of Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday, Aug. 1, 2020. AP PHOTO

The team from the Thai Red Cross Emerging Infectious Diseases-Health Science Center took saliva, blood and stool samples from the bats before releasing them. They worked through the night and into the next day, taking samples not only from horseshoe bats but also from other bat species they caught in order to better understand pathogens carried by the animals.

The team was headed by Supaporn Wacharapluesadee, the center's deputy chief, who has studied bats and diseases associated with them for more than 20 years. He was part of the group that helped Thailand confirm the first Covid-19 case outside China in January.

She believes it is likely they will find in Thailand's bats the same virus that causes Covid-19.

"The pandemic is borderless," she said. "The disease can travel with bats. It could go anywhere."

Virus helps Sri Lanka's elephants live longer

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

August 13, 2020

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's coronavirus lockdown has helped reduce the death toll from clashes between elephants and humans, conservationists have said.

A record 405 elephants were killed by humans in the country last year, up from about 360 in 2018. A total of 121 people were killed by elephants, up from 96 the year before, according to government data.

Speaking ahead of World Elephant Day on Wednesday, Jayantha Jayewardene, a leading international expert on elephants, said: "We can say that the human-elephant conflict eased during curfews... But this is a temporary situation. Farmers will start defending their crops and the killings will resume."

Most of the killed elephants are shot dead or poisoned by farmers trying to keep them off their land. The beasts are considered sacred in the majority-Buddhist island and are protected, but prosecutions are rare.

Most of the humans are killed by elephants who have seen their habitat drastically reduced, rampaging in villages looking for food.

Sumith Pilapitiya, a conservationist and former director-general of the government's wildlife department, estimated that the number of elephant deaths decreased by 40 percent during the coronavirus lockdown, which started in March and officially ended in June.

Pilapitiya said an average of 240 elephants were killed annually between 2010 and 2017 and the rate had accelerated since. Pilapitiya told Agence France-Presse: "The Asian elephant is classified as 'endangered,' so we cannot afford to lose elephants at that rate."

He expressed hope that a "significant reduction" during the shutdown—which included nationwide stay-at-home orders, with people only allowed out to buy essentials—would bring down the overall toll for the year.

World's oldest captive alligator marks 83 years in

August 14, 2020

TITLE: Belgrade zoo

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World's oldest captive alligator marks 83 years in Belgrade zoo

Agence France-Presse / 05:56 AM August 14, 2020



For the last 83 years, Muja, world's oldest captive alligator, swims in a tiny pool in Belgrade's zoo, on August 13, 2020, due to his advanced age, Muja doesn't move much but becomes snappy during feeding time, which comes only once or twice a month. – Muja has lived through multiple bombing campaigns and several countries — all while never leaving a tiny pool in Belgrade's zoo for 83 years, making him the world's oldest captive alligator. While zookeepers don't know his exact hatch day, the reptile arrived in Belgrade this week in August of 1937 from a German zoo. (Photo by Andrej ISAKOVIC / AFP)

Belgrade, Serbia — Muja has lived through multiple bombing campaigns and several countries — all while never leaving a tiny pool in Belgrade's zoo for 83 years, making him the world's oldest captive alligator.

While zookeepers don't know his exact hatch day, the reptile arrived in Belgrade this week in August of 1937 from a German zoo.

“He's an older gentleman and we respect his age,” Jozef Edvedj, the zoo's veterinarian, told AFP with a smile after handlers helped guide a dead rat to the jaws of the slow-moving reptile.

He officially became the world's oldest captive alligator when Moscow zoo's famous Saturn, born in 1936, died in May.

According to news reports from 1937, Muja was two years old when arrived in Belgrade, a year after the zoo opened.

But in photos from the reports, he appears older, leading zookeepers to believe he is over 90 now.

While Muja has not seen much outside his shallow and spartan 12×7-meter pool, he survived bombings during World War II that killed many animals in the zoo, along with six zookeepers.

The gator arrived in Belgrade when it was still the capital of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, lived through the country's socialist era and the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia that ended in yet another bombing campaign carried out by NATO in 1999.

Muja is still in “good health for his age”, and the only time the veterinarians were seriously concerned was in 2012, when he had to have a right claw amputated due to gangrene.

World's oldest captive alligator marks 83 years in

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TITLE: Belgrade zoo

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For the last 83 years, Muja, world's oldest captive alligator, swims in a tiny pool in Belgrade's zoo, on August 13, 2020, due to his advanced age, Muja doesn't move much but becomes snappy during feeding time, which comes only once or twice a month. – Muja has lived through multiple bombing campaigns and several countries — all while never leaving a tiny pool in Belgrade's zoo for 83 years, making him the world's oldest captive alligator. While zookeepers don't know his exact hatch day, the reptile arrived in Belgrade this week in August of 1937 from a German zoo. (Photo by Andrej ISAKOVIC / AFP)

“The surgery was very difficult, but successful. Muja recovered and adjusted to a new lifestyle,” Edvedj said.

Due to his advanced age, Muja doesn't move much but becomes snappy during feeding time, which comes only once or twice a month.

These days, he often needs a bit of help finding his “prey”, which zookeepers place right in front of his jaws.

His diet consists of skinned rats, rabbits, birds, horse meat, and beef, Edvedj told AFP.

“We call it a ‘buffet’,” he said, adding that the old-timer is also receiving mineral and vitamin supplements.

Being cold-blooded works in Muja's favor, giving him a slow metabolism that impedes cell deterioration and thus prolongs his life, Edvedj explained.

“I genuinely hope that we could celebrate his 100th birthday, as I believe he could live comfortably for another 15-20 years”, the veterinarian said.

Birds and reptiles cry similar tears to humans, says new research

By Lauren Kent, CNN

Published Aug 13, 2020 1:15:17 PM



(CNN) — Birds and reptiles may not resemble humans in many ways, but they cry similar tears.

The composition of human tears is well known, but until now, there was very little research into the composition and structures of tears in reptiles, birds and other mammals.

That lack of research could be considered a crying shame since understanding the makeup of various species' tears can give insight into better eye treatments for both people and animals, as well as improve our understanding of animals' evolutionary adaptations, according to a [new study](#) in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*.

Researchers in Brazil collected samples of healthy animals' tears from seven species of birds and reptiles, including [macaws](#), hawks, owls and parrots, as well as tortoises, caimans and [sea turtles](#).

"It's important to understand healthy animals in order to treat sick animals, because species depend on their vision," said lead study author Arianne Oriá, a professor of clinical veterinary medicine at the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador, Brazil. "Animals are not able to live without vision in the wild. A sea turtle without vision will die."

Humans also need to have what researchers call a healthy "ocular surface" -- the outer layer of the eye, including the cornea, the tears and the edges of the eyelids. Otherwise they will have a lot of discomfort, redness and itching, or possibly even more severe vision problems.

The new study found both similarities and differences to human tears that could be key to veterinary treatments and eye disease. Although the tears of mammals like dogs and horses are more similar to humans, there are similar amounts of electrolyte fluid in the tears of birds, reptiles and humans (but birds and reptiles had slightly higher concentrations than humans).

The researchers also looked at the crystallization patterns that form when tears dry out, which can give insight into variations in tear types and even reveal certain types of eye disease.

"Although birds and reptiles have different structures that are responsible for tear production, some components of this fluid (electrolytes) are present at similar concentrations as what is found in humans," added Oriá in a press release. "But the crystal structures are organized in different ways so that they guarantee the eyes' health and an equilibrium with the various environments."

Despite similar tear composition across species, surprisingly the crystal structures showed greater variation. The crystal structures in sea turtle and caiman tears were the most distinctive, likely a product of adapting to their aquatic environments.

Environment is key

Tear research also gives scientists important insight into the [health of animal habitats](#) and pollution levels. That's because animals with similar habitats have similar tears, and the surrounding environment has a huge impact on tear composition, Oriá told CNN.

Birds and reptiles cry similar tears to humans, says new

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TITLE: research

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"Tears are the most exposed fluids to the environment. So, with subtle modifications to the environment, the tears will modify," Oriá explained. "For example, in humans, we know that people who smoke have their tears modified."

Because healthy organisms have the ideal tear film for their own habitats, any [changes to the environment](#) can throw things out of whack and have a big impact on eye health.

"If we modify our habitat with pollution or something else, we will create an unhealthy habitat for our tear film," Oriá said. "So animals, as well as humans, will have to have many many years to re-adapt to the habitat."

She added that in many parts of the world, habitats are being polluted and destroyed faster than animals -- and people -- can adapt.

Oriá said more research is needed to expand the understanding of more species' tears and to translate those findings into treatments for eye problems in both animals and people.

"This knowledge helps in the understanding of the evolution and adaption of these species, as well as in their conservation," Oriá said.

This story was first published on CNN.com, "[Birds and reptiles cry similar tears to humans, says new research](#)."

'Massive poisonous shock': Scientists fear lasting impact
from Mauritius oil spill

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A water jerrycan is seen on oil spilled from the bulk carrier ship MV Wakashio, belonging to a Japanese company but Panamanian-flagged, that ran aground on a reef, at the Mahebourg Waterfront in Riviere des Creoles, Mauritius, August 12, 2020.

REUTERS/Stephane Antoine

'Massive poisonous shock': Scientists fear lasting impact from Mauritius oil spill

Published August 14, 2020 5:15am

By DUNCAN MIRIRI, OMAR MOHAMMED, MATTHEW GREEN, Reuters

NAIROBI, Kenya - Some corals have lived for centuries at the fringes of Mauritius. Now smothered for days in heavy fuel oil spilled from a wrecked Japanese tanker nearby, parts of those reefs may be in trouble.

The full impact of the toxic spill is still unfolding, scientists say. As the Indian Ocean island's residents scramble to mop up the oil slicks and clumps, they are seeing dead eels and fish floating in the water, as fuel-soaked seabirds limp onto shore.

Satellite images also show the 1,000 tonnes of spilled oil spreading northward along the coastline from the spill site in the turquoise waters of Blue Bay Marine Park.

The damage, scientists say, could impact Mauritius and its tourism-dependent economy for decades.

"This oil spill occurred in one of, if not the most, sensitive areas in Mauritius," oceanographer and environmental engineer Vassen Kauppymuthoo told Reuters by telephone from the island, where he was surveying the disaster. "We are talking of decades to recover from this damage, and some of it may never recover."

The wildlife at risk include the seagrasses blanketing sand in the shallow waters, clownfish darting around coral reefs, mangrove trees corralling the coastline with their tangled root systems, and the critically endangered Pink Pigeon, endemic to the island.

Giant tortoises slow-walk through a nature reserve on the nearby islet, Ile-aux-Aigrettes, where there is also a scientific research station. Altogether, Blue Bay Marine park counts 38 types of coral and 78 species of fish.

The spill brings "a massive poisonous shock to the system," said Adam Moolna, an environmental scientist from Mauritius who lectures at Keele University in Britain. "This oil will have cascading effects across the webs of life."

STILL UNCONTAINED

The spill came from the Japanese-owned MV Wakashio, which rammed into a reef in the marine park on July 25. It is still unclear why the ship was sailing so closely to the coast. About a week later, oil began gushing from the cracked vessel.

However, the flow had been stopped, authorities say, after they pumped the remaining oil from the ship.

On Thursday, the ship's owner Nagashiki Shipping said it would face up to its liability and assess compensation for the disaster.

Already, about 15 km of coastline have been affected by the spill, said Mauritius Marine Conservation Society President Jacqueline Sauzier.

"We don't have the equipment or the expertise to remove the oil, and time is of the essence to limit the damage," she told Reuters.

Local residents are wading unprotected into the toxic waters, while using human hair as well as husks from sugar cane factories to quickly soak up as much of the spill as they can.

For both people and wildlife, the spill will have a "resonating and resounding impact for the next 10 to 20 years," said environmental toxicologist Craig Downs, who assesses oil spills but has not studied the spill in Mauritius.

SPIRALING IMPACT

Coral reefs and fish are likely to suffer first. That's especially rough for Mauritius, where tourism and fishing are mainstays of the economy.

Corals that survive could have weakened resistance to marine heat waves, which are hitting the area due to climate change and have already caused some coral bleaching, experts say.

"If things continue to go the way they are the future prospects for coral reefs look very, very bleak indeed," said Alex Rogers, a visiting professor at Oxford University and science director of REV Ocean, a not-for-profit company.

Conservationists are also anxious about oil washing into mangrove forests, where roots serve as nurseries for fish.

Oil also could sink into sediments around mangroves, where it could smother molluscs, crabs and fish larvae, said Callum Roberts, a professor of marine conservation at the University of Exeter in Britain.

"It's very hard to remove once it's sunk into the sediment," Roberts said. "Trees can become sick and die."

Birds nesting in the mangroves, or migrating via nearby mudflats, are also vulnerable. Ingesting oil can make it hard for birds to fight disease or even to fly, said environmental toxicologist Christopher Goodchild at Oklahoma State University.

Research has shown that "just a small amount of oil being transferred to a bird's egg -- as small as a droplet of blood -- can actually cause a change in the bird embryo's physiology," he said.

Beds of seagrass, which like mangroves store vast quantities of climate-warming carbon dioxide, play a vital role in protecting coasts from waves.

On land, some scientists warn that washed up oil deposits could harden and lead to lasting change.

"In the long term, we could see an asphalt-like coast as the oil dissipates and degrades, as the oil puddles," said Ralph Portier, an environmental scientist at Louisiana State University who studied the aftermath of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

"It's a real tragedy," Portier said. -- **Reuters**

Huge fire north of Los Angeles prompts evacuations

Published 11 hours ago on August 13, 2020 08:04 PM

By **TDI**



A fast-moving brush fire north of Los Angeles prompted mandatory evacuation orders for some 500 homes on Wednesday (Aug 12) as firefighters battled the flames that had burned more than 4,000ha by early evening, the authorities said.

The Lake Fire erupted at around 3:30 pm local time near Lake Hughes, about a 90-minute drive from Los Angeles.

Rapidly spreading flames had scorched some 4,050ha within a little more than three hours, according to the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

“Multiple agencies are battling a brush fire near the Lake Hughes area in the Angeles National Forest,” the department said in a tweet.

The smoke plume from the flames could be seen miles away from the site of the fire.

More than 300 firefighters backed by helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft were deployed to fight the blaze.

“#LASD deputies currently evacuating residents in the area,” the fire department said in another tweet, referring to the LA Sheriff’s Department. “Please help us help you and our loved ones get out safely.”

Wildfires have become more frequent and bigger in California in recent years, in part driven by climate change.

The deadliest fire in the state’s history – the Camp Fire – took place in northern California in November 2018 and killed 86 people. (Straits Times)

Nature by the numbers

By: [Robert Watson](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:10 AM August 14, 2020

Norwich—When Cyclone “Amphan” came barreling up the Bay of Bengal this past May, South Asia’s first named storm of the year appeared to pose a massive threat to the people who live on the coastal floodplains and to the animals and plants—including many endangered species—that rely on these sensitive ecosystems. But nature came to the region’s rescue.

The Sundarbans, the world’s largest mangrove forest, offered better protection than any man-made storm wall could have done. When Amphan’s 16-foot storm surge slammed into this 4,000-square-mile national park, the mangroves took the teeth out of it, just as they did with the two other supercharged cyclones, “Aila” and “Sidr,” that have made landfall in recent times.

On the other side of the world, natural storm defenses on the lower end of Manhattan have long since been paved over. Real-estate developers have even extended the island into New York Harbor with acres of landfill, neglecting to build up storm surge protections. As a result, when Hurricane “Irene” and Superstorm “Sandy” hammered the city in 2011 and 2012, respectively, lower Manhattan, including the city’s financial district, was inundated.

City planners have since been working with the US government to plan for the next wave of superstorms. But the price tag of the infrastructure needed—a retractable wall across New York Harbor costing at least \$62 billion—has prevented any plans from being finalized.

As we look to rebuild the global economy following the COVID-19 crisis, conserving our remaining natural assets must be a top priority. If we don’t act, we risk losing the plants, animals, and microorganisms needed to keep our air clean, our water pure, and our food supplies plentiful—not to mention the mangrove forests and barrier reefs that stand between us and the superstorms that are becoming more frequent as a result of climate change.

The world has become less wild as we have built and expanded cities, cut down forests for crops and livestock, drained wetlands for roads, and flooded valleys for dams. The economic cost of this ecological damage goes mostly uncounted. But it is prohibitively high, eroding the value of goods and services that nature produces. One million species are now at risk of extinction.

Fortunately, there is a relatively simple initiative underway to curb some of these losses and solve our looming conservation crises. Under the heading of “30×30,” it aims to protect 30 percent of our planet’s land and oceans by 2030 through effective, permanent measures. More than 20 member states in the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity have already committed to supporting this global target.

According to a new report authored by more than 100 scientists and economists from around the world, expanding existing protected areas to 30 percent of the planet would add \$250 billion to annual global economic output, on average. (The report estimates a range of \$64-454 billion, as the costs and benefits will vary depending on which areas are protected.) Moreover, the study finds that protected areas and the nature-based activities they support are among the world’s fastest-growing economic sectors, with 4-6 percent projected annual revenue growth, compared to less than 1 percent in agriculture, and negative growth in fisheries.

For countries with large areas of forest and mangroves, embracing 30×30 would prevent the loss of an average of \$350 billion (\$170-534 billion) annually in ecosystem services. These costs stem largely from flooding, soil loss, storm surges, and the release of stored carbon that occurs when natural vegetation is destroyed.

As governments contemplate how to reopen their economies after the COVID-19 lockdown, they must accommodate the need for greater conservation and restoration of natural resources. Every tropical storm that is strong enough to be named should serve as a reminder of what is at stake if we do nothing.

Not only is it critical for all countries to adopt the 30×30 target, but each should also look for ways to invest more in its natural areas. By doing so now, governments can ensure that nature-based sectors and ecosystem services will recover at the same pace as the rest of the economy. There's no better time to start than before another storm strikes. Project Syndicate

Robert Watson is chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (Ipbes).