

DATE: August 19, 2020

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

Trash-to-cash project to clean up Manila Bay

By August 19, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said its project with Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX) that incentivizes the collection of used plastic sachets ending up in Manila Bay is expected to further help in the latter's clean-up.

The DENR said the Aling Tindera program which will be implemented with the non-profit plastic offset organization will incentivize fishermen and their families to collect plastic waste around Manila Bay and sell them in exchange for cash at collection points stationed in coastal areas.

Sari-sari stores owned by women will collect the plastics and sell them to sustainability-conscious companies through the PCEX.

"This residual waste recovery program is very timely as it augments government efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay amid the pandemic where the use of sachets and other plastic packaging has become more rampant," said Benny Antiporda, DENR undersecretary for solid waste management and local government units concerns.

Antiporda said in a statement sari-sari stores were selected as collection points and the go-to place of most Filipinos for food and other essentials.

"Unfortunately, since these products come in small packages like sachet, more plastic trash is generated by the community which, if not properly disposed of, would find their way into our waterways," Antiporda said.

Meanwhile, DENR-National Capital Region executive director Jacqueline Caanca, said plastic waste, particularly the post-consumer plastic packaging, constitutes a big part of the growing volume of solid waste in the cities.

"The program was designed to promote qualified sari-sari stores as waste-to-cash collection centers at the barangay level. We are not only systematizing the recovery of post-consumer plastic wastes such as empty sachets and other single-use plastic packaging from the waste stream, we will also be incentivizing the store owners and also their suki for turning in their plastic wastes instead of just throwing them away," Caanca said.

DENR backs waste-to-cash program for Manila Bay

August 18, 2020, 7:30 pm



MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday threw its full support behind the “Aling Tindera” program, which incentivizes the collection of used plastic sachets that are ending up in Manila Bay.

“This residual waste recovery program is very timely as it augments government efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay amid the pandemic where the use of sachets and other plastic packaging has become more rampant,” DENR spokesperson and Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns, Benny Antiporda, said in a press release.

Aling Tindera is a joint project of the DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) office and The Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEx), a non-profit plastic offset organization founded by philanthropist and entrepreneur Nanette Medved-Po.

It seeks to incentivize fishermen and their families to collect plastic waste around Manila Bay and sell them in exchange for cash at Aling Tindera collection points stationed in coastal areas.

Aling Tindera shops—“sari-sari” stores owned by women—are collecting the plastics before turning them into profit by selling them to sustainability-conscious companies through the PCEx.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, Antiporda noted that the majority of people run to the ever-dependable “sari-sari” stores to buy food and other essentials.

Antiporda said people find consumer products sold in these stores “not only cheaper and affordable but also practical to meet their daily needs.”

“Unfortunately, since these products come in small packages like sachet, more plastic trash are generated by the community which, if not properly disposed of, would find their way into our waterways,” he said.

This, Antiporda said, is the reason why it is important for the public to religiously practice waste segregation at home and support solid waste management programs like Aling Tindera.

DENR backs waste-to-cash program for Manila Bay

DENR-NCR executive director Jacqueline Caancan described the Aling Tindera program as an “innovative approach to addressing the problem of plastic waste in Metro Manila.”

Caancan said plastic waste, particularly the post-consumer plastic packaging, constitutes a big part of the growing volume of solid waste in the metropolis.

“The program was designed to promote qualified ‘sari-sari’ stores as waste-to-cash collection centers at the barangay level,” she said. “We are not only systematizing the recovery of post-consumer plastic wastes such as empty sachets and other single-use plastic packaging from the waste stream, but we will also be incentivizing the store owners, and also their suki for turning in their plastic wastes instead of just throwing them away.”

Meanwhile, Medved-Po said the Covid-19 should not be used as an excuse to discontinue the efforts to restore Manila Bay to its former glory.

“The conservation of Manila Bay should not come to a halt while we address the global pandemic,” Medved-Po said. “We need to collaborate to create long term solutions for the health of our oceans and waterways because it is very much tied to our own health.” **(PR)**

Aling Tindera gets support from DENR

August 18, 2020

By [Joel dela Torre](#) [People's Tonight](#)

ENVIRONMENT Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management Benny Antiporda was all praises for the “Aling Tindera” program – an approach to help clean up Manila Bay from used plastic which become rampant especially this time of pandemic.

According to Antiporda, the DENR is fully supporting the program which incentivizes the collection of plastic sachets and the likes that are ending up in Manila Bay.

“This residual waste recovery program is very timely as it augments government efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay amid the pandemic where the use of sachets and other plastic packaging has become more rampant,” he said.

Aling Tindera is a joint project of the DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) office and The Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX), a non-profit plastic offset organization founded by philanthropist and entrepreneur Nanette Medved-Po.

The project Antiporda said, is not only targeting to cleanup Manila Bay but also seeks to help fishermen and their families from the plastic wastes they gather around the historic shore which they can sell them at Aling Tindera collection points stationed in coastal areas.

Aling Tindera shops then turn the plastic collections into profit by selling them to sustainability-conscious companies through the PCEX.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, Antiporda noted that majority of people run to the ever-dependable “sari-sari” stores to buy food and other essentials.

“Unfortunately, since these products come in small packages like sachet, more plastic trash are generated by the community which, if not properly disposed of, would find their way into our waterways,” he pointed out.

This is the reason according to Antiporda why it is important for the public to religiously practice waste segregation at home and support solid waste management programs like Aling Tindera.

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Caancan said that plastic waste, particularly the post-consumer plastic packaging, constitutes a big part of the growing volume of solid waste in the metropolis.

“The program was designed to promote qualified ‘sari-sari’ stores as waste-to-cash collection centers at the barangay level,” the regional director explained.

Caancan said that the conservation of Manila Bay should not come to a halt while the government is addressing the global pandemic.

Don't bypass EMB findings, LGU is told

posted August 18, 2020 at 10:30 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

Hermosa, Bataan—"The issue is already at the Environment Management Bureau (EMB) Central Office, we don't want to bypass their findings.

But it looks like that is exactly what Hermosa LGU wants," said Beulah Coeli Fiel, CEO of Econest Waste Management Corporation.

She issued the statement following new Hermosa Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer Jake De Luna disclosed to some local media the alleged discovery of hospital wastes in the Hermosa Sanitary Landfill Facility in Brgy. Mambog, which was used to be managed by Econest.

"There is no truth to what the new Menro said that there was a surprise inspection by the EMB Central Office to (sic) the Hermosa sanitary landfill, because it was an scheduled inspection," Fiel said.

"We cannot accept what he is saying as gospel truth because he is not the spokesperson of DENR Central Office," she said.

"We were closed by Hermosa LGU last Feb 20, 2020, it means since March and the day of the inspection, we are no more managing the sanitary landfill," she explained.

"What is puzzling is that the alleged biomedical wastes purportedly discovered contained fresh blood," Fiel said. EO asked.

"Udenna [Company] disposed treated biomedical wastes to the sanitary landfill last October to December 2019 and why we said these wastes were treated, it was because they submitted to us certificates of treatment," she added.

"We cannot accept infectious wastes unless treated since our ECC is for solid wastes only," she added.

20 juvenile sea turtles released in Isabela town

Published August 18, 2020, 3:08 PM
by [Philippine News Agency](#)

DINAPIGUE, Isabela (PNA) – Workers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Palanan Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-CENRO) released 20 juvenile sea turtle hatchlings in the coastal village of Digumased here on Monday.



DENR-Palanan Community Environment and Natural Resources workers release 20 juvenile sea turtles in the coastal village of Digumased, Dinapigue town in Isabela province on Monday (Aug. 17, 2020). CENRO-Palanan chief Federico Cauilan, Jr. said the young turtles were released two months after hatching. (Photo courtesy of Racquel Caldez, DENR-PENRO Isabela via PNA)

DENR-CENRO Palanan chief Federico Cauilan, Jr. said the young turtles were released two months after hatching.

“These were from the sea turtle eggs that were gathered and retrieved and relocated at an undisclosed area where they were more likely to hatch,” he said in a news briefing.

“The release of the Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) aims to instill the importance of protecting endangered species and to boost the population and promote environmental protection,” Cauilan said.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office-Isabela information officer Racquel Caldez said turtles are among the most abundant marine animals but are still considered vulnerable because there are only a few places in which they nest.

“Sightings of sea turtles indicate a healthy marine ecosystem within the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park,” she added.

20 baby marine turtles freed to sea in Isabela

By: [Villamor Visaya Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@VillVisayaJrINQ](#)
[Inquirer Northern Luzon](#) / 01:44 PM August 18, 2020



Twenty newly hatched green sea turtles crawl back to their natural habitat in the coastal village of Dinapigue, Isabela. Photo courtesy of Racquel Caldez/DENR-PENRO Isabela

DINAPIGUE, Isabela -- Twenty juvenile sea turtles (pawikan) hatchlings were released to their natural habitat here on Monday.

The newborn green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) emerged from their nest at the coastline of Barangay Digumased, said Federico Cauilan, Jr., chief of the Palanan community environment and natural resources office.

“The release of the [baby] green sea turtles aims to instill [on the people] the importance of protecting endangered species and to boost the population and promote environmental protection,” Cauilan said.

An adult green sea turtle laid eggs in the area two months ago, he said.

Racquel Caldez, information officer of the provincial environment and natural resources office, said marine turtles are considered “vulnerable” due to their threatened hatching sites.

Caldez said sightings of sea turtles indicate a healthy marine ecosystem within the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park.

20 juvenile sea turtles released in Isabela town

By Villamor Visaya, Jr. August 18, 2020, 2:41 pm



RELEASING TURTLES. DENR-Palanan Community Environment and Natural Resources workers release 20 juvenile sea turtles in the coastal village of Digumased, Dinapigue town in Isabela province on Monday (Aug. 17, 2020). CENRO-Palanan chief Federico Cauilan, Jr. said the young turtles were released two months after hatching. *(Photo courtesy of Racquel Caldez, DENR-PENRO Isabela)*

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"Sightings of sea turtles indicate a healthy marine ecosystem within the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park," she added. *(PNA)*

Photo contest promoting wonders of biodiversity launched

Published August 18, 2020, 9:31 PM

[by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Calling all professional and amateur photographers in the ASEAN region who can best “promote the wonders of the diversity of life on earth through their lens.”



ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim

The Philippines-based ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, in partnership with the German Development Bank (KfW) and the European Union (EU) last Monday launched the 5th

“Zooming in on Biodiversity,” an ASEAN-wide photo contest that aims to bring out humanity’s deep relationship with nature.

This year’s theme is “Healing with Biodiversity: Building a Better Normal.”

“While this year has been challenging for the ASEAN, and the rest of the world, this photo contest hopes to bring out the best of nature and capture the increasing awareness of the people on the crucial importance of biodiversity to public health and the economy,” ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim said.

Lim highlighted the importance of taking into account the value of our biodiversity in the overall efforts to prevent the emergence of outbreaks and pandemics.

“Photographs are powerful visual tools that can spark the people’s appreciation for nature,” Lim said.

“We encourage all photographers in the ASEAN to join this exciting competition and promote the wonders of the diversity of life on earth through their lens,” she added.

In the contest’s general category, photo submissions should illustrate biodiversity’s role in the time of a global health crisis.

This category has two sub-themes—“A Glimpse of a Better Normal,” to show life and nature in the time of lockdowns and restrictions on mobility; and “The Macro Life,” to magnify the species that can easily be found in familiar and accessible spaces such as homes and gardens.



Photo contest promoting wonders of biodiversity launched

Under the special category, “Life Within and Around ASEAN Heritage Parks,” submissions must highlight the natural and cultural richness of ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) — protected areas in the ASEAN region recognised for their outstanding wilderness and biodiversity values.

Photos under this category must be taken in any of the 49 declared AHPs around the ASEAN region.

In the Peoples’ Choice category, a contestant with the highest number of Facebook votes will be selected.

The deadline for submission of all entries is on September 21.

The grand winner of the Zooming in on Biodiversity photo contest will receive US\$1,700 as prize, while the second and third prize winners will get US\$1200 and US\$600, respectively.

Special category and Peoples’ Choice winners will each receive US\$400.

Napakagandang Eco Park sa bayan ng Alamada Cotabato maipagmamalaki sa buong probinsya at bansa

By [Bombo Garry Fuerzas](#) -August 19, 2020 | 1:34 AM

CENTRAL MINDANAO- Tinungo ni Govenor Nancy Catamco isang bagong diskubreng potential Tourism attraction sa bayan ng Alamada Cotabato na matatagpuan sa Sitio Kitob, Barangay Bao na pinangalanang “Pampag Eco Park.”

Pinaka-atraksyon sa Eco Park na ito ang river boating, kaya kasama si Chairman Macario Pampag Sr. at Cong. Joel Sacdalan, di nag aksaya ng panahon si Gob. Catamco at sinubukan ang adventure sakay ng de-makinang bangka.

Panay “Wow” ang komento ng Gobernadora at nambabatas dahil sa kamangha-manghang tanawin sa looban habang papasok sa ilog.

Tanaw mula sa bangka ang matataas na bangin, iba’t-ibang anyo at hugis ng mga bato sa gilid na inukit ng tubig, napakaberdeng kulay ng mga halaman at kahoy sa paligid, mga ugat ng punong kahoy na tila iskulturang nililok ng kalikasan at ang maliliit na talon.

Hindi maipagkailang nag-enjoy ang Gobernadora sa nasabing attraction.

Sinabi nitong “Salamat sa pag-share ng napakagandang tanawing ito para sa Probinsya. Kung may Mekong River ang bansang Vietnam, meron din tayong maipagmamalaki rito sa Bao, Alamada. Ang Provincial Government at ang bayan ng Alamada ay gagawa ng paraan upang makahanap ng pundo mula sa Department Of Tourism (DOT) sa tulong ni Cong. Joel Sacdalan para mapalago ang Eco Park na ito.”

Binati naman ni Cong. Joel Sacdalan ang mga opisyaes ng Barangay Bao dahil sa pagkakaroon ng magandang tanawin sa kanilang lugar. Pinaalalahanan din nito ang kahalagahan ng pagmintina ng kalinisan at ang safety ng mga pumupunta bilang isang Tourism site.

Laking pasasalamat naman ni Chairman Pampag Sr. sa matagumpay na pagbisita ng Governor at Congressman.

Samantala positibo naman si Alamada Toursim Officer James Estoya, na matutulongan ng Gobernador ang nasabing Eco Park. Isa na naman umano itong dagdag na tourism site sa bayan ng Alamada, at makakatulong ito na magkakaroon ng kita ang barangay at ang munisipyo, at makapagbibigay ng trabaho sa mga taga Bao.

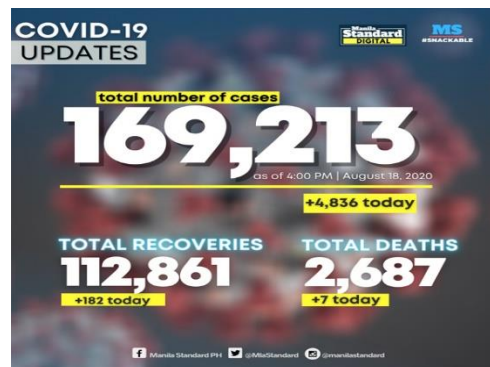
Kasama rin sa pagbisita si Provincial Tourism Officer Josephine Abellana, PDDRM Head Operation and warning section Arnolfo Villaruz, Engr. Eduardo Calamba ng Provincial Engineering Office, PD PCol. Henry Villar, COP Major Sanny Leoncito, Alamada Rescue Team.

PH records new cases of 4,836, total nears 170k

posted August 19, 2020 at 01:30 am

by [Willie Casas and Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

The number of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases in the Philippines increased to 169,213 on Tuesday after the Department of Health (DOH) announced 4,836 new infections.



This marks the seventh straight day in which more than 3,000 new cases were reported.

The number of new infections was based on the reports filed by 84 out of 105 operational testing labs.

The DOH reported seven new fatalities, bringing the COVID-19 death toll to 2,687.

The department also announced 182 recoveries, bringing to 112,861 the number of patients who have recovered from the disease.

Metro Manila still logged the highest number of new cases at 2,959, followed by Laguna with 321, Cavite with 220, Rizal with 185, and Bulacan with 145.

MECQ helped, UP researcher says

The Philippines is now close to flattening the curve of COVID-19 cases when Metro Manila and four provinces were under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), a researcher from the University of the Philippines said Tuesday.

Prof. Guido David of UP-OCTA Research Team, in an interview on Unang Hirit, said that the 15-day MECQ, which would end on Aug. 18, caused a decline in COVID-19 cases.

David noted that the R-naught (R_0), which describes the reproduction of COVID-19 cases, dropped from 1.5 in end of July to 1.1 now in August. An R_0 below 1 means a flattened curve, he said.

Ex-health adviser sees 250,000 cases soon

The country's COVID-19 tally could reach 250,000 cases by the end of August as Metro Manila and other urban centers ease the pandemic lockdown, a former government adviser said on Tuesday.

The tally increased by an average of 4,000 cases a day even during stricter quarantine measures, said Dr. Tony Leachon, in an interview on ANC.

Leachon is a former adviser of the National Task Force on COVID-19 response.

The reproductive number—the number of people an infected person can pass the virus to—is at 1.12. The Philippines' positivity rate, or the share of tests that come back positive is 12 percent, higher than the ideal 5 percent set by the World Health Organization, Leachon said.

PH records new cases of 4,836, total nears 170k

“All the metrics for acceleration of the cases are there,” he added.

Rise in cases alarming, Drilon says

Senate Minority Leader Franklin M. Drilon yesterday expressed grave concerns over the country’s continued failure to contain the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), saying that the government should consider as a “red flag” the 13.3 percent rolling average infection rate recorded over a seven-day period.

“The Covid-19 cases continue to rise at an alarming rate. The percentage of positive tests is hitting 13.3 percent despite putting Metro Manila, the center of Covid-19 in the country, under a modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ),” Drilon said.

“To me, that’s a ‘red flag’ already. Either we are not doing enough or we are totally mismanaging this pandemic,” he added. “While the IATF published a NAP, or National Action Plan for Covid-19, they’re maybe taking a nap, instead of managing the spread of the virus.”

Medical workers see improvement

A coalition of medical groups that called for a two-week “time-out” due to the COVID-19 pandemic on Tuesday said they saw improvements in response strategies.

But the coalition also stressed that plans need enforcement.

The Healthcare Professionals Alliance Against COVID-19 (HPAAC) said their talks with health care workers, government agencies, the private sector, and civil society led to the development of a “sturdy” plan against the disease.

Dr. Antonio Dans, of the Philippine Society of General Internal Medicine, said they found that hospitals were being filled to capacity because of “weak coordination,” which he said may be addressed by the One Hospital Command system.

Launched last week, the One Hospital Command system aims to improve the referral system and interoperability of public and private health care facilities catering to COVID-19 patients nationwide.

Dans also identified as “areas of great improvement” workplace and transportation safety guidelines, and the strengthening of the Health Technology Assessment Council.

Don't forget: Face shield required in public transport



Published 13 hours ago

On August 18, 2020 03:31 PM

By [Maria Romero](#)



The Department of Transportation has reminded the commuting public not to forget to wear face shield on top of a mask while riding a public transport as Metro Manila and four nearby provinces are back to general community quarantine beginning today.

In a Memorandum Circular released on 4 August, the DoTr has ordered all officials and heads of its various transportation sectors to implement, within their respective jurisdictions, the mandatory wearing of face shields for all passengers in areas where public transportation is allowed.

The directive applies to all public transportation — including the Aviation and Airports, Railways, Road, and Maritime sectors — throughout the country.

Transportation chief Arthur Tugade has reiterated that the order should not be viewed by the commuting public as “another burden.”

“Let us remember that no amount of protection is too much when it comes to health and safety, especially that we are battling an invisible enemy. What we are addressing is not a transport issue but rather a health issue,” Tugade said.

The DoTr underscored that face shields should sufficiently cover the whole face as it was meant as a redundancy of the protection of the face mask.

Health authorities have recently pointed out that the use of face shields and masks reduces exposure to and emission of respiratory droplets considerably.

Aside from wearing masks, face shields, social distancing measure, handwashing and sanitizing, alking and using mobile phones are likewise discouraged inside all public transportation.

PRRD wants to visit quake victims in Masbate

By Azer Parrocha August 18, 2020, 4:03 pm



President Rodrigo R. Duterte (File photo)

MANILA – Malacañang said President Rodrigo Duterte wants to visit residents affected by the 6.6 earthquake which rocked Masbate province on Tuesday morning.

In a virtual press briefing on Tuesday, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said even if Duterte is more than willing to fly to Masbate, it remains to be seen whether his close-in security would allow him to push through with his trip.

“Siguradong-sigurado po ako na gusto ni Presidente pumunta at siguro po makikipag-away pa ‘yan sa (Presidential Security Group) kung talagang siya’y pipigilan (I am very sure that the President wants to go and perhaps, he would even argue with PSG if he would be prohibited)” he said.

Roque said it is a decision to be discussed between the President and PSG.

“Instinctively, ang Presidente gusto na lumipad papuntang Masbate pero (the President wants to fly to Masbate but) whether or not he will be allowed, titignan po natin (we’ll see),” he added.

Duterte is known to visit victims of calamities prior to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

However, the PSG has limited the President’s public engagements to ensure his health and safety.

Roque also assured that the national government will provide quake victims with necessary assistance.

Since the country is no stranger to natural calamities and catastrophes, Roque said all their needs would be attended to immediately.

“Ang mga Pilipino, dahil nga sa dami ng bagyo at lindol at pagputok ng bulkan na nangyayari sa’tin, laging handa na tayo. At dahil laging handa tayo, tingin ko naman napa-preposition na nga gaya ng sinabi ko yung mga humanitarian assistance. Dadagdagan pa po natin ‘yan (Because of having gone through so many typhoons, earthquakes, explosions, we have always been prepared. And because we have always been prepared, I think humanitarian assistance has already been prepositioned),” he said.

PRRD wants to visit quake victims in Masbate

Roque said Filipinos always managed to rise above any challenge.

“Kabahagi ng buhay natin ang mga ganitong mga sakuna pero palagi po tayong tumatayo at palagi po natin sinisugurado na nagbabayanihan ang lahat (Disaster has always been a part of our lives but we always manage to rise again and we always ensure that we help each other),” he said.

He also expressed confidence that the private sector would step up and always help those in need of assistance.

“Huwag po kayo mag-alala. Yung mga pagkain, mga blankets, mga resettlement areas, lahat po ‘yan ay naka-preposition na po ‘yan at sanay na sanay na po tayo magbigay ng ganiyang tulong sa ating mga kababayan (Don’t worry. Food, blankets, resettlements areas, all of those area already prepositioned. We are used to giving help to our citizens),” he said.

Reports showed that a retired police colonel died while several others were injured when the strong earthquake rocked the town of Cataingan in Masbate City on Tuesday with tremors felt in parts of Luzon and Visayas.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Philvolcs) said the epicenter of the quake was traced seven kilometers southwest of Cataingan at around 8:03 a.m. where “destructive” shaking was felt. **(PNA)**

Southwest monsoon magpapaulan sa kanlurang bahagi ng bansa



August 18, 2020 @ 6:33 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Makaapekto ang southwest monsoon sa kanlurang bahagi ng bansa habang makaapekto naman ang trough ng low pressure area sa Visayas at Mindanao, ayon sa PAGASA ngayong Martes ng hapon.

Ayon sa weather bureau na magdadala ang southwest monsoon ng sa Ilocos Region, MIMAROPA, Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Zambales and Bataan.

Ang trough naman ng LPA, ay magdadala rin ng maulap na kalangitan na may kalat-kalat na pag-ulan at pagkidlat Northern Mindanao, Caraga, Davao Region and the rest of Visayas.

Maulap na kalangitan at pulo-pulong pag-ulan naman at localized thunderstorm ang mararanasan sa Metro Manila.

Nagbabala naman ang PAGASA sa flash floods o landslides. *RNT*

Magnitude 6.6 quake rocks Masbate

By Ma. Cristina Arayata August 18, 2020, 10:30 am



(Image grabbed from Phivolcs' website)

MANILA – A magnitude 6.6 earthquake jolted Masbate on Tuesday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

The tectonic quake was located 7 kilometers southeast of Cataingan, Masbate at 8:03 a.m. It had a depth of 21 kilometers.

Intensity VII, which Phivolcs describes as "destructive", was felt in Cataingan.

Intensity V was also felt in the city of Masbate; and the towns of Almagro and Tagapul-an, Samar; and Intensity IV in Palanas and San Jacinto, Masbate; Sorsogon City; Legazpi City, Albay; San Andres, Quezon; Mapanas and Palapag, Northern Samar; Barugo, Dagami, Dulag, Julita, La Paz, Palo, and Tanauan in Leyte; and Sagay City, Negros Occidental.

Intensity III was reported in Baybay city and the towns of Isabel, Javier, and Kananga, Leyte; Ormoc City; Mulanay, Quezon; and Iloilo City. Intensity II was recorded in Guinayangan and Lopez, Quezon; President Roxas, Capiz; Patnongon, San Jose de Buenavista, and Tibiao, Antique.

Intensity I, on the other hand, was reported in Lezo, Aklan; and Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental.

The following instrumental intensities were also recorded:

Intensity V - Masbate City, Masbate

Intensity IV - Palo, Leyte; Iloilo City; Roxas City, Capiz; Naval, Biliran;

Intensity III - Bago City, Negros Occidental; Malinao, Aklan; Pandan, Antique; Jamindan, Capiz; Ormoc City

Intensity II - Gumaca, Quezon; San Jose de Buenavista, Antique; City of Sipalay, Negros Occidental; Valderrama, Antique; Sipocot, Camarines Sur; Talibon, Bohol; San Francisco, Cebu

Intensity I - Malay, Aklan; and Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental

Phivolcs said aftershocks and damage are both expected from the quake. *(PNA)*

Quake jolts portion of Western Visayas

By Perla Lena August 18, 2020, 1:03 pm



TREMOR. Employees of the Iloilo Provincial Capitol evacuate to safer grounds after an Intensity IV quake occurred early Tuesday morning (Aug. 18, 2020). The epicenter of the quake was traced in Caingan, Masbate. *(Photo courtesy of Erly Garcia)*

ILOILO CITY – The Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) in Western Visayas has ordered local disaster risk reduction and management councils (LDRRMCs) down to the barangay level to conduct an assessment of the structural integrity of infrastructures following the 6.6 magnitude quake that jolted portions of this region around 8:03 a.m. Tuesday.

Earthquake Information No. 1 of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) identified the epicenter of the quake to be in Cataingan, Masbate.

Instrumental intensities showed that Intensity IV was felt in this city and Roxas City in Capiz; Intensity III in Bago City, Negros Occidental; Malinao, Aklan, and Jamindan, Capiz; Intensity II in Sibalay City, Negros Occidental and Valderrama, Antique and Intensity I in Malay, Aklan.

Phivolcs also warned of aftershocks and damage.

“There is an urgent need to assess the structural integrity of various infrastructures in our area of responsibility (AOR) to ensure safety and resilience at all times,” said

Civil Defense regional director Jose Roberto Nuñez, who is also chair of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (RDRRMC) in Western Visayas.

In his memorandum order 167, the RDRRMC chair hoped to get an initial report within the day.

He also encouraged them to update their respective contingency plans for earthquake adapting to the new normal.

In an interview, he added that the various drills in the past helped a lot in preparing the public for the earthquake.

“The ‘duck, cover, and hold’ is very important. We also need to guide the public, especially those coming from higher buildings,” he said.

Since earthquake drills are no longer conducted on the ground, he said they will be doing video teleconferencing and updating of the contingency plans by the various local DRRM councils.

According to the Phivolcs website, the strength of an earthquake is measured through magnitude and intensity.

Magnitude is proportional to the energy released by an earthquake at the focus while intensity is the strength of an earthquake as perceived and felt by people in a certain locality. Intensity is generally higher near the epicenter (**PNA**)

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Phivolcs records 20-meter-high steam emissions from Taal Volcano

posted August 18, 2020 at 11:10 am

by [Benjamin Chavez](#)

Weak steam emissions rising at least 20 meters high were recorded from Taal Volcano, the Philippine Volcanology and Seismology said in a bulletin Tuesday.



Phivolcs said five volcanic earthquakes were likewise recorded in the past 24 hours.

Alert Level 1 is raised over the volcano, which means steam-driven explosions, volcanic earthquakes, and minor ashfall can occur.

“Local government units are advised to continuously assess previously evacuated barangays around Taal Lake for damages and road accessibilities and to strengthen preparedness, contingency, and communication measures in case of renewed unrest,” Phivolcs said in its bulletin.

Tragedies

posted August 19, 2020 at 12:20 am

by [Tony Lopez](#)



VIRTUAL REALITY

"Over the past half century, the Philippines has been bedeviled by among the worst possible disasters."

If indeed our President Duterte did not go to Singapore over the weekend for a health emergency and yet there is widespread cynicism, that could mean he has a growing credibility problem.

The anecdotal evidence was there—that someone very important was being attended to in hush-hush fashion. Viber posts showed a Lear Jet plane ambulance landing in Davao, is surrounded by hordes of men looking like security people, and then takes off and lands at Singapore's small Seletar Airport, less than four hours later, by 8 p.m.

In Manila, on Monday, Aug. 17, meanwhile, Foreign Secretary TeddyBoy Locsin turned emotional at his mention of Duterte, while welcoming some 410 returning overseas workers. He cried.

"We do it because we love you. And we do it because we respect our President, the first and only President who has dared for the least of the Filipino people," the former journalist and presidential speechwriter said, his voice choking.

On the other hand, if indeed the President flew to Singapore and yet tried to conceal it, the more he will have a credibility problem. In the age of the internet and vibrant social media, very few secrets can be kept from this world.

Either way, Duterte could be likened later to the boy who cried wolf. This is not the first time rumors swirled around the whereabouts of the President whenever he disappeared from the scene, mysteriously. There would be talks of his having made quick trips to China, his favorite country.

If talks of the President's unexplained disappearances surface again in the future, then he risks undermining the fourth major pillar of pandemic management: TRUST. There are four Ts to coping with a deadly and unpredictable pandemic—testing, tracing of contacts, treatment, and trust.

The first three pillars—testing, tracing and treatment—all are suffering from major inadequacies, principally the thin thread of science and credibility stitching government maneuvers. Now, you have trust, or lack of it.

The Philippines is on the way to beating Germany in number of COVID-19 cases.

As of yesterday, Germany had 226,700 cases, No. 20 worldwide, and ahead of the Philippines by 62,226. The Philippines had 164,474 cases, No. 22 among 220 countries. With Manila piling up 3,000 new cases per day, in three weeks or less, the Philippines will overtake Germany.

That is said and tragic. We will have more cases than Germany, but without Europe's economic power's technocratic and focused leadership (Chancellor Angela Merkel is a scientist, being a physicist and a chemist), ample health care resources, and disciplined testing, tracing and treatment.

Tragedies

We are thus perpetually in God's mercy that nothing much worse befall us as people become isolated and distant from a more competent, caring and clean government. No wonder, Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said Duterte is in "perpetual isolation."

I think what my friend Harry Roque meant but did not want to explain plainly is that Duterte might be afraid to get sick and die from COVID. At 75, the President has many underlying conditions, making him highly susceptible to a vicious virus like the corona and its disease, SARS-Cov-2. So "isolation" could mean the President cannot meet people, including perhaps even members of his cabinet. "Perpetually" means that is now the standard operating procedure while the COVID devastation is in full swing.

Another explanation, not forwarded, is that the public should now get used to unexplained, frequent, prolonged or extended absences or silence by Duterte for two reasons: To enable him to hide from COVID, ala Kim Jong-Un, or recuperate or have treatment from whatever ails and pains him.

Over the past half century, the Philippines has been bedeviled by among the worst possible disasters and tragedies, natural and man-made, the world has ever seen.

The COVID pandemic is the worst of them all, in the last 100 years. It has brought the Philippines down to its knees, with 70 percent of businesses closed, 50 percent of the work force jobless, and 30 percent of the population certifiably poor.

In the second quarter of 2020, the economy shrank by 16.5 percent, the greatest economic contraction in the country's history. In the second quarter alone, more than five million were rendered jobless. A third of them will never get their jobs back.

As if the pandemic was not bad enough, nature, again, struck the Philippines with a 6.5-magnitude earthquake at 8:03 a.m. yesterday, 5 kilometers southwest of Cataingan, Masbate. At the same time, Taal Volcano, which erupted on Jan. 12, this year and displaced 380,000, is acting up again. So we will have the unusual phenomenon of an earthquake and a volcano eruption along a 571-km stretch of Southern Luzon from Manila to Masbate island. Viber pictures of the Masbate earthquake indicate the damage is extensive, with several otherwise solid buildings, collapsing or teetering dangerously.

After a magical presidency in his first three years that saw him riding on the crest of an unprecedented 80-percent popularity/ approval rating, the populist Duterte is engulfed by a maelstrom of disasters and tragedies of unprecedented proportion and timing.

I remember President Cory Aquino's reign. She was hugely popular, the savior of the nation. Then tragedies and disasters struck one after another. On top of eight coup attempts, there was the pre-Christmas 1987 MV Dona Paz sinking where more than 4,300 died, the worst maritime disaster in world history; the 1990 Luzon earthquake; the 1991 Mount Pinatubo volcano eruption, the second-largest terrestrial eruption of the 20th century; the 1991 Typhoon Thelma that killed 5,000, the deadliest typhoon in Philippine history, plus the worst power blackouts in history, 12 to 18 hours of no electricity daily.

Duterte, of course, is made of a different mettle. He has fought many battles, including diseases, and won them all—so far. The only problem: The man is less religious and prayerful than Cory was. God, however, attends to men of lesser faith, in equal measure, as those with fulsome faith. Let's pray for our President, our leader.

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Global COVID-19 cases almost 22M, death toll at 774,832 with more than 13.6M recoveries

Published August 19, 2020 1:22am

PARIS, France - The novel coronavirus has killed at least 774,832 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT on Tuesday.

At least 21,936,820 cases of coronavirus have been registered in 196 countries and territories. Of these, at least 13,623,700 are now considered recovered.

The tallies, using data collected by AFP from national authorities and information from the World Health Organization (WHO), probably reflect only a fraction of the actual number of infections.

Many countries are testing only symptomatic or the most serious cases.

On Monday, 4,233 new deaths and 220,645 new cases were recorded worldwide. Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were India with 876 new deaths, followed by Brazil with 684 and United States with 434.

The United States is the worst-hit country with 170,497 deaths from 5,438,325 cases. At least 1,865,580 people have been declared recovered.

After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 108,536 deaths from 3,359,570 cases, Mexico with 57,023 deaths from 525,733 cases, India with 51,797 deaths from 2,702,742 cases, and United Kingdom with 41,369 deaths from 319,197 cases.

The country with the highest number of deaths compared to its population is Belgium with 86 fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Peru (80), Spain 61, United Kingdom 61, and Italy 59.

China -- excluding Hong Kong and Macau -- has to date declared 84,871 cases (22 new since Monday), including 4,634 deaths (0 new) and 79,642 recoveries.

Latin America and the Caribbean overall has 243,470 deaths from 6,225,679 cases, Europe 210,978 deaths from 3,562,495 infections, the United States and Canada 179,562 deaths from 5,560,567 cases, Asia 81,738 deaths from 4,080,157 cases, Middle East 32,723 deaths from 1,352,244 cases, Africa 25,890 deaths from 1,129,613 cases, and Oceania 471 deaths from 26,072 cases.

As a result of corrections by national authorities or late publication of data, the figures updated over the past 24 hours may not correspond exactly to the previous day's tallies. -- **Agence France-Presse**

Scorching temperature in US's Death Valley could be global high

Published August 18, 2020, 6:14 AM
[by Agence France-Presse](#)

A temperature of 130 degrees Fahrenheit (54.4 degrees Celsius) recorded in California's Death Valley on Sunday by the US National Weather Service could be the hottest ever measured with modern instruments, officials say.



A new scorching temperature of 130 degrees Fahrenheit (54.4 degrees Celsius) recorded in California's Death Valley could be the highest ever recorded, US officials say

The reading was registered at 3:41 pm at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center in the Death Valley national park by an automated observation system — an electronic thermometer encased inside a box in the shade.

In 1913, a weather station half an hour's walk away recorded what officially remains the world record of 134 degrees Fahrenheit (56.7 degrees Celsius).

But its validity has been disputed for a number of reasons: regional weather stations at the time didn't report an exceptional heatwave, and there were questions around the researcher's competence.

The next highest temperature was set in July 1931 in Kebili, Tunisia, at 131 degrees Fahrenheit (55.0 degrees Celsius) — but again, the accuracy of older instruments has been questioned.

In 2016 and 2017, weather stations in Mitribah, Kuwait and Turbat, Pakistan recorded temperatures of 129.2 degrees Fahrenheit (54 degrees Celsius). After evaluation by the World Meteorological Organization both were downgraded by a few fractions of a degree.

The Geneva-based World Meteorological Organization said Monday it would start verifying the new US reading.

"This observed high temperature is considered preliminary and not yet official," said the US National Weather Service.

– **'On the fence'** –

Dan Berc, an official at the Las Vegas NWS office responsible for the site, told AFP that the sensor would be brought in for evaluation.

The investigation would take "at least a couple of months," he said, adding: "Growing up as a kid, I thought 130 degrees Fahrenheit was a really cool record."

Scorching temperature in US's Death Valley could be global high

Validation isn't a formality, and long-held records have been thrown out after modern evaluation.

For decades, the heat record was officially the 136.4 degrees Fahrenheit (58 degrees Celsius) recorded in 1922 in El Azizia, now modern Libya.

But a WMO panel that investigated it in detail between 2010 and 2012 stripped it of the title after finding multiple troubling aspects, including a potential problem with the thermometers and an inexperienced observer.

Weather historian Chris Burt, who conducted an analysis in 2016 that disputed the 1913 record, said the meteorological community was "on the fence" about whether the new record was real.

"The suspicion about yesterday is that normally... all the stations are also reporting record high temperatures at the same time, and yesterday that wasn't the case," he told AFP.

Las Vegas, for example, only recorded 113 degrees Fahrenheit (45 degrees Celsius).

On the other hand, he said, a tropical storm off the coast of the Baja California Peninsula had left a deep plume of moisture over much of California, which has resulted in large thunderstorms and localized heat surges.

"There was also a lot of convection in the mountains just west of Death Valley so there could have been some kind of effect downslope into Death Valley that really pushed up the temperatures," he added.

– Global warming –

The southwestern United States is currently enduring an intense heat wave. Scientists say such waves are becoming more frequent and dangerous because of human-driven climate change.

Worldwide, the five hottest years in history have occurred in the last five years.

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, nations committed to limit temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, mainly through sweeping emissions cuts.

These goals are seen as crucial to avoid triggering a series of tipping points that would cause irreversible global heating by the end of the century, making vast swaths of the planet inhospitable for life.

Michael Mann, a climate science professor at Pennsylvania State University, said: "As the planet continues to warm, it is inevitable that we will continue to see records fall."

If the new reading is confirmed, then "that record too shall fall soon enough," he added.

Greenland ice melting past 'tipping point': study

Published August 18, 2020, 6:25 AM

[by Agence France-Presse](#)

The melting of Greenland's ice cap has gone so far that it is now irreversible, with snowfall no longer able to compensate for the loss of ice even if global warming were to end today, according to researchers.



The loss of ice from the Apusiajik glacier, and elsewhere in Greenland, is now irreversible according to new research

“Greenland's glaciers have passed a tipping point of sorts, where the snowfall that replenishes the ice sheet each year cannot keep up with the ice that is flowing into the ocean from glaciers,” said a statement from Ohio State University, where several authors of a study published August 13 in Communications Earth and Environment are based.

Climate change is having a devastating effect on the world's glaciers, with the ice melt posing a threat to millions of people around the world.

Alarming reports about the ice melt on the vast Arctic island — which is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet — have multiplied in recent years.

Eighty-five percent of the surface of Greenland, an island of two million square kilometres or four times the size of France, is covered in ice.

“The study confirms results from a lot of other studies ... that the combination of melt and calving of icebergs explains the large amount of ice lost from Greenland over the last couple of decades,” Ruth Mottram, a climatologist at Denmark's Meteorological Institute told AFP.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the ice cap lost around 450 billion tonnes of ice per year, which was compensated by snowfall, the scientists said after analysing 40 years of data.

But the ice melt has accelerated this century, climbing to 500 billion tonnes and it is no longer sufficiently replenished with snow.

“The Greenland ice sheet is losing mass at accelerated rates in the 21st century, making it the largest single contributor to rising sea levels,” the study said.

Greenland ice melting past ‘tipping point’: study

The melting ice actually causes more ice to melt, as the meltwater that collects on the ice sheet absorbs more of the Sun’s radiative force than snow and ice do — snow and ice reflect sunlight back into space.

In addition, the loss of ice exposes the permafrost, or frozen soil, which when thawed releases powerful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, trapping heat.

Therefore the melting ice is not just a symptom of global warming, it is also becoming a driver of global warming.

– Tipping point debate –

While researchers are in agreement that the Greenland ice melt is worrying, not all agree that it has reached a ‘tipping point’.

“We don’t know how much greenhouse gas concentrations will rise,” Mottram said.

The published results show that “even if we stabilised temperatures (and greenhouse gas emissions) at the present level, the ice sheet would still continue to melt, but only until the size of the ice sheet is once more in balance with the climate,” she said.

As the ice sheet is rapidly losing mass in contact with the ocean, once the ice loses contact with the water the massive ice discharge will stop.

Meanwhile, a recent study from Britain’s University of Lincoln concluded that Greenland’s ice melt alone is expected to contribute 10-12 centimetres to the world’s rising sea levels by 2100.

The UN’s IPCC climate science advisory panel said in 2013 it expected sea levels to rise 60 centimetres by the end of the century.

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Greenland ice melting past 'tipping point': study

posted August 18, 2020 at 09:00 am

by [AFP](#)

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Penguins originated in Australia and New Zealand — not the Antarctic, new study finds

By Jessie Yeung, CNN

Published Aug 18, 2020 4:48:28 PM



(CNN) — When you think of the penguin, the image that pops to mind is usually the fuzzy bird waddling through snow or swimming in frigid Antarctic waters.

But penguins didn't originate in Antarctica, as scientists have believed for years -- they first evolved in Australia and New Zealand, according to a new study by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley.

The study, which was conducted in collaboration with museums and universities around the world, analyzed blood and tissue samples from 18 different species of penguins. They used this genomic information to look back in time, and trace the penguins' movement and diversification over millennia.

"Our results indicate that the penguin crown-group originated during the Miocene (geological period) in New Zealand and Australia, not in Antarctica as previously thought," said the study, published on Monday in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#). "Penguins first occupied temperate environments and then radiated to cold Antarctic waters."

Penguins originated in Australia and New Zealand 22 million years ago, researchers suggest; then, ancestors of the king and emperor penguins split off and moved to Antarctic waters, likely attracted by the abundant food supply there.

These findings also support the theory that king and emperor penguins are the "sister group" to all other penguin lineages -- adding another piece to the long-debated puzzle on where exactly these two species sit on the family tree.

Then about 12 million years ago, the Drake Passage -- the body of water between Antarctica and the southern tip of South America -- fully opened up. This allowed the penguins to swim throughout the Southern Ocean, and spread more widely to sub-Antarctic Islands as well as the warmer coastal regions of South America and Africa.

Today, the flightless birds are still found in Australia and New Zealand -- as well as Antarctica, South America, the South Atlantic, southern Africa, the sub-Antarctic, Indian Ocean islands, and subtropical regions.

Penguins originated in Australia and New Zealand — not the Antarctic, new study finds

During the study, researchers also discovered a new lineage of penguin that has yet to be given a scientific description.

Penguins are adaptable -- but not enough for climate change

The study shed light on the penguins' adaptability to changing climates -- and on the danger they now face in the modern climate crisis.

"We are able to show how penguins have been able to diversify to occupy the incredibly different thermal environments they live in today, going from 9 degrees Celsius (48 Fahrenheit) in the waters around Australia and New Zealand, down to negative temperatures in Antarctica and up to 26 degrees (79 Fahrenheit) in the Galapagos Islands," said Rauri Bowie, one of the lead researchers and a professor of integrative biology at UC Berkeley, in a [statement from the university](#).

"But we want to make the point that it has taken millions of years for penguins to be able to occupy such diverse habitats, and at the rate that oceans are warming, penguins are not going to be able to adapt fast enough to keep up with changing climate."

The team was able to pinpoint genetic adaptations that allowed penguins to thrive in challenging environments; for example, their genes evolved to better regulate body temperature, which allowed them to live in both subzero Antarctic temperatures and warmer tropical climes.

But these steps of evolution took millions of years -- time that the penguins don't have now, as their populations dwindle.

"Right now, changes in the climate and environment are going too fast for some species to respond to the climate change," said Juliana Vianna, associate professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, in the UC Berkeley statement.

The different elements of climate change culminate in a perfect storm. Disappearing sea ice mean fewer breeding and resting grounds for emperor penguins. The reduced ice and warming oceans also mean less krill, the main component of the penguins' diet.

The world's second-largest emperor penguin colony has [almost disappeared](#); thousands of emperor penguin chicks in Antarctica drowned when sea ice was destroyed by storms in 2016. Reoccurring storms in 2017 and 2018 led to the death of almost all the chicks at the site each season.

Some penguin colonies in the Antarctic have declined by more than [75% over the past 50 years](#), largely as a result of climate change.

In the Galapagos, penguin populations are declining as warm El Nino events -- a weather phenomenon that sees warming of the eastern Pacific Ocean -- happen more frequently and with greater severity. In Africa, warming waters off the southern coast have also caused penguin populations to drop drastically.

This story was first published on CNN.com, ["Penguins originated in Australia and New Zealand — not the Antarctic, new study finds"](#)

Tiny elephant shrew species documented in Horn of Africa for first time in nearly 50 years

By Jack Guy, CNN

Updated 1735 GMT (0135 HKT) August 18, 2020



A tiny 'elephant' has been rediscovered in Africa 00:46

(CNN)Scientists working in the [Horn of Africa](#) have documented the existence of a remarkable little mammal called the Somali elephant shrew -- or Somali sengi -- for the first time since the 1970s.

While local people were aware that the mouse-sized [critters](#) lived in the area, there was no scientific information on their populations, according to research from Duke University published Tuesday.

The Somali sengi uses its nose to sift through leaf litter in search of insects to eat, Duke researcher Steven Heritage told CNN.

Strangely it is neither a shrew nor a mouse, but is instead closely related to elephants, aardvarks and manatees, all of which have similar trunks.

Humans are more closely related to shrews and mice than elephant shrews are, said Heritage.

Another interesting trait is the animal's long hind limbs, which means they are highly adapted to running.

"The proportions of their hind limbs are closer to antelopes or gazelles than they are to other small mammals," said Heritage, who added that some species of sengi can run at up to 30 kilometers per hour (18.6 miles per hour).



Researcher Steven Heritage with a Somali Sengi in his palm.

The mammals also form monogamous mating pairs for life, and live in a fairly small home range that's exclusive from other pairs, added Heritage.

Tiny elephant shrew species documented in Horn of Africa for first time in nearly 50 years

"It's really a fascinating combination of mammal traits that aren't really found in any other order of mammals," he said.

"In the scientific community we try to use a reserved language that would classify the animals as 'charismatic microfauna,' which translates from science speak to normal speak as 'adorable little animals.'"

During a research trip to Djibouti in early 2019, a team including Heritage, Galen Rathbun from the California Academy of Sciences and Houssein Rayaleh from Association Djibouti Nature set out to see if they could find the tiny mammal.

The team set more than 1,200 live-traps using bait made from peanut butter, oatmeal and yeast -- a far cry from the sengi's normal diet of ants and termites, but Heritage explained why it's not such a strange choice.

"You can imagine if you're a small mouse-sized mammal in the super-arid desert rocky landscapes and you smell something one night that smells like Marmite and peanut butter, you're gonna go to check that out," he said.

In a paper published Tuesday in the journal *Peer J*, the team concluded that not only was the Somali sengi more common than thought, it lives over a larger area that covers Somalia and Djibouti, and potentially Ethiopia.

Heritage believes that the lack of urban development and widespread agriculture in the arid areas the Somali sengi calls home is good news for the animal.

Heritage plans to return to the Horn of Africa next year to place radio tags on some of the animals in order to work out more about where they live, how much space they use and how pairs are formed.

Overfishing in Congo threatens endangered sharks, report warns

August 19, 2020 12:58 AM by [DZRH News Online](#)



Artisanal fishermen and fisheries department officials survey a recently unloaded haul of different shark species at Songolo Beach, Congo Republic November 14, 2019. Picture taken November 14, 2019. TRAFFIC and Longshot Productions/Christopher Clark/Handout via REUTERS

DAKAR (Reuters) – Each day, fishmongers in Congo Republic pile up hundreds of dead sharks on the shore and begin lopping off fins and bartering over hammerheads and other endangered species.

The bustling seaside business could be jeopardising the marine environment in the Gulf of Guinea, wildlife trade group TRAFFIC warned this week. Artisanal fishermen are harvesting 400-1,000 sharks and rays per day, according to surveys it conducted last year.

The fishermen say they don't have a choice. A rise in industrial fishing by dozens of mainly Chinese trawlers in Congolese waters is eroding their livelihoods.

“Since the Chinese trawlers arrived, it's complicated things,” said Alain Pangou, a 54-year-old fisherman. “It's difficult to live.”

In a short film released alongside the report on Monday, Pangou and his small crew lament bygone days of plentiful fish, as they clear a net of juvenile hammerheads – too young to have had any offspring to replace their numbers.

At the nearby Songolo Beach market, in Pointe-Noire, traders haggle over fins for export to Asia, while the rest of the meat is sold for local consumption.

“The artisanal shark fishers shouldn't be targeted as the bad boys here, they're getting squeezed by an unregulated industrial fisheries sector,” said Emma Stokes who heads the regional office of another environmental group, the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Worldwide, shark populations are in trouble due to industrial fishing and the practice of ‘finning’ – or slicing off shark fins for a soup considered a Chinese delicacy. Demand for fins has spurred a global raid on these apex predators.

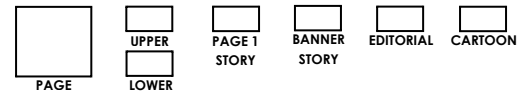
A global ocean survey published on July 22 in the journal Nature found that sharks were “functionally extinct” at one fifth of 371 coastal reefs monitored since 2015.



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Overfishing in Congo threatens endangered sharks, report warns

In Congo, fishermen say their catches have declined since the Chinese boats began appearing in 2000. Oil platforms set up in the Gulf have also drastically reduced the area open for fishing.

The country's waters have yet to be surveyed; officials say they need outside financing and expertise.

"We fish them, we know how to do that, but the stock is unknown," said Fisheries Director Benoit Atsango in the video, which was financed by charitable fund Arcadia.

(Reporting by Alessandra Prentice; Editing by Katy Daigle and Peter Graff)