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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Matapos ang Boracay, Palawan at Bohol **BAGUIO NEXT TARGET NG DENR**

SUSUNOD na target ng isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa mga ecotourism zone ang Baguio.

Ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, government efforts will be focused on the rehabilitation of Baguio after Boracay, Palawan, and Bohol.

"Meron pong study na 70% ng lugar diyan sa Baguio, sa Benguet, ay geo-hazard kung

kaya't immediately 'yan ang bibigyan natin ng concern at hindi na po natin hahayaang mangyari ulit 'yung dating nangyari, 'yung Hyatt tragedy," pahayag ni Antiporda sa panayam ng GMA Super Radyo dzBB.

Binanggit nito ang Hyatt Terraces Baguio Hotel na nawasak ng 7.7 magnitude na lindol noong 1990 na ikinamatay ng dose-dosena katao.

"Alam naman natin, karamihan ng soil sa Baguio, eh, saturated na po at fractured na rin po

'yung kanyang rocks," pahayag pa ni Antiporda.

Sinabi pa ni Antiporda na titingnan din ng gobyerno ang problema sa trapiko sa lungsod lalo na sa panahon ng holidays kung saan dagsa ang mga turista.

"Yan po ay isa rin na kailangang mai-address natin at sad to say, dahil din po sa istruktura ng kanyang bundok, eh, hindi ho natin magawa na ika-nga'y magkaroon ng tinatawag na expansion ng kanyang mga

road network," paliwanag nito.

Bukod dito, binanggit pa ni Antiporda na bibigyan-pansin din nila ang environmental concerns tulad ng air pollution lalo na't nawala ang amoy-pine kung saan ito nakilala.

Makikipag-ugnayan umano ang national government unit ng Baguio para tingnan ang posibilidad na pag-adopt ng e-vehicles na makababawas ng polusyon sa lugar.

"Habang may tiwala ang tao, gagawin natin lahat para po

ang tao mismo ay magising at magkaroon ng awareness," ayon kay Antiporda.

Sa nasabi ring panayam, sinabi ni Antiporda na inaasahang matatapos ang road networks sa Boracay bago matapos ang taong ito.

"Yung network, matatapos po siya, lalo na 'yung circumferential road. 'Yun lang naman ang pinangako natin at 'yan po ay may pondo na at ito'y matatapos bago matapos ang taon," aniya pa.

RNT



WALANG KUPAS Inaasahang dadagsain pa rin ng mga turista ang Boracay Island sa Malay, Aklan ngayong Disyembre matapos na lumampas sa capacity limit ang bilang ng mga dumayo sa isla nitong Nobyembre. **JUN AGUIRRE**

Boracay, lumampas na sa capacity limit

BORACAY ISLAND - Lumampas na sa bilang ang mga turistang dapat na pumasok sa isla ng Boracay sa Malay, Aklan nitong Nobyembre 30, ayon sa Department of Tourism (DoT).

Sa summary of verified tourists arrival nitong Nobyembre, makikitang umabot sa 6,772 ang bumisita sa isla.

Kamakailan, sinabi ng DoT na kailangang umabot sa 6,405 ang bilang turistang maaaring pumasok sa isla ngayong taon.

Ayon naman kay Maylynn Graf, presidente ng Boracay Foundation Incorporated (BFI), ang patuloy na pagdami ng mga turistang bumibisita sa isla ay nagpapakita lang na nais pa rin ng mga turista na dayuhin ito.

Wala pang malinaw na plano ang DoT kaugnay ng nasabing insidente.

Umaasa naman si Graf na tuluy-tuloy pa rin ang pagdagsa ng mga turista sa isla, lalo na ngayong Disyembre.

Jun Aguirre



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Baguio City sunod na sa rehabilitasyon ng DENR

Nasa listahan na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ayusin ang Baguio City ecotourism zone dahil sa lumalalang geo-hazard at problema sa trapiko sa nasabing lungsod.

Ayon kay DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda, isusunod nilang pagtutuunan ng pansin ang Baguio City matapos ang rehabilitasyon sa Boracay, Palawan at Bohol.

Sinabi ni Antiporda na ayaw nilang maulit ang nangyari sa Hyatt Terraces Baguio Hotel na gumuho dahil sa magnitude 7.7 na lindol noong 1900 at kumitil ng maraming buhay.

Dagdag pa ng opisyal, susuriin din ng ahensiya ang naging pagsikip sa trapiko lalo na sa pagbisita ng mga turista ngayong Disyembre.

Bukod sa nasabing problema, bibigyang-pansin din ng DENR ang polusyon sa hangin sa nasabing siyudad, na dating may kilala sa pine smell. (**Allan Bergonia**)



Climate change creates mutant fugu, a deadly Japanese delicacy

BY MARI SAITO

SHIMONOSEKI, JAPAN. — The road, hemmed in on one side by empty warehouses and the other by a concrete seawall, ends abruptly in a desolate parking lot. Men step out of their cars and into the darkness, then slip behind the sliding doors of a warehouse. Inside, they huddle under floodlights and wait. A clock on the wall ticks to ten past three in the morning.

"Ready? Ready? Ready?" shouts a man whose arm is covered to the elbow by a black nylon bag. One by one, the men step forward and their hands disappear into the bag.

And so begins a surreal auction in this port city in southwestern Japan. The buyers grip the dealer's hand, and after a few seconds of secret gesturing felt only by the auctioneer, he yells out the winning bid.

"13,000!" Thirteen thousand yen, or \$114, a kilo.

The furtive bidding, a relic of a time when fish traders wore kimonos whose sleeves obscured their hands as they signaled their bids, is part of the insular world of Japanese pufferfish, or fugu, a fish best known for its ability to kill a person in as little as a few hours.

Although deaths are extremely rare, the whiff of danger associated with the fish's poison is a significant element of the delicacy's enduring allure in Japanese culture. A kilogram fetches as much as 30,000 yen at the market here, and in the December holiday season, when fugu is particularly popular, a luxury fishmonger in Tokyo can sell up to \$88,000 worth of the fish on any given day.

News of poisonings elicits fevered national coverage. When a supermarket in western Japan accidentally sold five packets of the fish without its poisonous liver removed in January, the town used its missile alert system to warn residents.

And now, climate change is adding a new element of risk: Fishermen are discovering an unprecedented number of hybrid species in their catch as seas surrounding the archipelago — particularly off the northeastern coast — see some of the fastest rates of warming in the world.

With pufferfish heading north to seek cooler waters, sibling species of the fish have begun to inter-breed, triggering a sudden increase in the number of hybrid

fish. Hybrids are no more dangerous than your average lethal pufferfish. The problem is that they can be hard to distinguish from established species. To avoid accidental poisonings, Japan prohibits their sale and distribution. With the rise of these unclassifiable hybrids, fishermen and fish traders are having to discard a sizable share of their catch.

Kaniya, a seafood-processing company here in Shimonoseki, is one of many in the industry frustrated by the government's rule to discard such hybrids, considering that most subspecies of pufferfish frequently found in Japan's northeastern waters have poison in the same organs and can be safely eaten if handled correctly.

"But we have to follow the rules, because if there's any problems it leads to hysteria," says Naoto Itou, the gruff patriarch of the company.

Out of 50 or so species of pufferfish found around Japan, 22 of them are approved as edible by the government. Chefs and fish butchers handling pufferfish are specially trained and licensed to remove its liver and reproductive organs, which contain tetrodotoxin, a potent neurotoxin. Confusingly, the location of the deadly neurotoxin differs in certain types of pufferfish; it can sometimes be found in its skin or muscle, as well as its reproductive organs.

Every morning at 8 a.m., Kaniya receives boxes of pufferfish from fishermen in northern Japan. By 9, an experienced fish handler is at his post in an apron and hairnet, sorting as many as seven or eight different groupings of pufferfish at a metal counter.

His bare hands moving quickly, the man picks up one slippery fish after another, holding it up for several seconds, examining its fins and checking for prickles. He pauses on one, turns it to the side, traces its back with his finger, then throws it into the discard pile.

The entire process has a hazmat feel: Workers in latex gloves, white masks and plastic aprons gut the fish and take away the toxic parts and dump them into a lock box. The waste is then collected and incinerated.

Asked why he would continue handling such inherently dangerous fish despite all the headaches surrounding hybrids, Itou points to two of his salesmen hovering nearby, fielding calls from buyers.

"Isn't it a blessing to be able to handle something customers love

and want so much? There aren't many other fish out there like this."



Malaya Business Insight

"CLIMATE CHANGE"

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CLIMATE CHANGE

The rise in hybrid species is yet another example of the sweeping impact of climate change on marine creatures, which have undergone a mass migration as water temperatures increase. Hiroshi Takahashi, an associate professor at the National Fisheries University, first noticed the increase in hybrid pufferfish six years ago. He started receiving calls from a scientific facility on the northeastern coast of Japan's main island that had buckets of pufferfish it couldn't identify. In the fall of 2012, nearly 40 percent pufferfish caught in the area were unidentifiable, compared to less than 1 percent studied previously.

"It wasn't one out of a thousand as it had been in the past; this was on a completely different scale," he says. To an untrained eye, hybrids are barely discernible. Even veterans in the industry say it's nearly impossible to tell apart "quarters," or second-generation offspring of hybrid fish. At the end of June, more than 20 percent of pufferfish caught in a single day off the Pacific coast of Miyagi prefecture, 460 kilometers northeast of Tokyo, were hybrids.

Genetic tests found that the unidentifiable pufferfish were a hybrid of *Takifugu stictonotus* and *Takifugu snyderi*. Although they're close relatives, the *T. stictonotus* usually swim around the Sea of Japan and the *T. snyderi* in the Pacific Ocean. Takahashi believes that the *T. stictonotus* escaped their gradually warming habitat by riding the Tsushima current north and crossing the strait just below Japan's northern island of Hokkaido to emerge in the Pacific Ocean. There, they bred with their sibling species and multiplied. The resulting hybrid, which has fine spots and yellow-white fins, could pass for either one of its parent species.

A division of Japan's health ministry in charge of food safety said it began collecting information about the reported increase in hybrid pufferfish in September. Each prefecture has its own tests for issuing licenses to chefs and others, and an industry group has pushed the government to standardize those tests.

Before dawn on a recent weekday, dozens of hobby fishermen throng a deserted dock in the Ohara port, a two-hour drive

from Tokyo, to get a chance to catch the creature. They return on the Shikishima-maru around noon, sunburnt and tipsy, carrying white buckets filled with pufferfish.

While the anglers smoke cigarettes and hunch over noodles, Yoko Yamamoto grabs a knife and sits down on a low plastic stool. She works quickly, first striking the fish's spinal cord, then peeling back its skin to remove its poisonous outer layer. Her son, who captained the boat, then takes over and slashes the fish to its gills to remove its liver and intestines as a moored fishing boat with pastel pink bench seats blasts "Bohemian Rhapsody" from its speakers.

We have to go a bit further now to find them," says Yukio Yamamoto, 49, crouching next to his mother. "You see all kinds of hybrids now; it's been this way for the past few years."

Toshiharu Enomoto, a 71-year-old hobby fisherman, walks over after his lunch and ties a knot in a plastic bag filled with ice and a few pufferfish. Laughing, he talks about the little thrill of the poison. "Some people like it when they feel a bit of tingling on their lips," he says.

The Japanese have eaten the fish for thousands of years. After it was outlawed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a samurai general who unified Japan in the 16th century, peasants continued to eat it in secret and died in droves. The ban on fugu was finally lifted after World War II following years of petitioning by avid fans.

Despite its deadly nature, the fish has an almost comical face and, with its puffed cheeks and open mouth, looks as though it's perpetually surprised to be so sought after for special occasions.

In Tokyo, high-end restaurants serving pufferfish rely on Otsubo Suisan, a luxury wholesaler at the Toyosu fish market. At the company's wide stall, Koichi Kushida taps his smartwatch and answers calls on his silver Sony Bluetooth. In the span of an hour, the 34-year-old sells thousands of dollars worth of pufferfish.

"It's tasty, isn't it? It's a luxury and has class; that definitely attracts people," he says, deftly packing an airtight bag of gutted pufferfish into a golden box. With more hybrids appearing on the market, Kushida personally checks all the fish himself.

"When we hand it to our customers, we have to be sure it's absolutely safe," he says. "We can't have any problems." — Reuters



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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NAVOTAS MRF PINAPALAKAS ANG ZERO-WASTE CAMPAIGN

PINANGUNAHAN ni Mayor John Rey M. Tiangco, kasama sina Vice Mayor Clint Geronimo, Punong Barangay Malou Gonzales at iba pang opisyal ng lungsod, ang pagpapasinaya sa Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) ng Brgy. Bagumbayan North (BBN).

Nakipag-ugnayan ang Navotas sa GAIA at Mother Earth Foundation para sa pagpatutupad ng Zero Waste Program, kasama ang pagtatatag ng mga MRF.

Ang GAIA ay isang worldwide alliance na may higit na 600 grass-roots groups, non-government organizations at mga indibidwal na nangunguna sa pagkilos tungo sa isang zero waste world.

Sa kabilang banda, ang Mother Earth Foundation ay nakikipagtulungan sa mga komunidad, mga paaralan, at mga pribadong institusyon sa Filipinas para sa pagsasagawa ng mga zero waste project.

Inobserbahan ng parehong or-

ganisasyon ang implementasyon ng BBN ng door-to-door sorted waste collection at ang pagpapatupad nito ng mga batas pang-kalikasan, kasama ang mga deputized eco-police ng Navotas City Environment and Natural Resources Office.

Ang mga kalahok ay nagmula sa iba't ibang bansa tulad ng South Africa, Tunisia, Ghana, Indonesia, India, Morocco, Vietnam, Albania, Tanzania, Taiwan, China at Brazil.

VICK TANES



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Sustainable, eco-friendly schools

OVER PHP300,000 in prizes and special awards await winners of the 2019 nationwide search for sustainable and eco-friendly schools.

Regional and national winners in the search's elementary, high school, and higher education categories will receive cash prizes, said information officer Hershey Calma of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), which is spearheading the activity.

She said schools will also have the opportunity to win the search's special awards for water, energy and green leadership.

"The search is open already, so we're inviting public and private schools with environment- and climate-friendly initiatives to join," Calma said over the weekend.

In 2009, EMB launched the biennial search to help raise public awareness and action on environmental protection and sustainable development, as well as highlight schools' role in achieving such goals.

The EMB defines sustainable and eco-friendly schools as those that ini-

tiate and integrate environment-related programs into their instruction, research, extension, and/or administration activities.

Calma said at the regional level, the winner in each of the search's categories will get PHP15,000 as prize.

She said winners from the regions will join the search's national finals, competing in their respective categories.

Prizes for the national winners in each category are PHP50,000 for the first placers, PHP40,000 for the second placers, and PHP30,000 for the third placers, she added.

EMB is already distributing posters about the search's 2019 edition.

Schools can contact EMB regional offices nearest them regarding further details about the search.

According to the EMB, schools have until April 26, 2019 to submit the search's required documents. Those documents include records of the schools' own environment- and climate-friendly initiatives, so EMB can validate these, Calma said.

Public elementary and high schools must submit the documents to their respective Department of Education Division Offices.

Private elementary and high schools, as well as public and private higher education institutions, must submit their own documents to the EMB regional offices nearest them, Calma added.

The EMB believes in documenting, encouraging, and recognizing schools' advocacies and activities for protecting the environment.

Promoting sustainability and eco-friendliness of schools nationwide is "enshrined as a priority to the Post-ASEAN Environment Year 2015 celebration, with the theme 'Empowering the Youth for a Green ASEAN Community,'" the EMB statement read.

It is also aligned to the road map for implementing Republic Act 9512 or the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008 under the National Environmental Education Action Plan for Sustainable Development (2009-2018).