

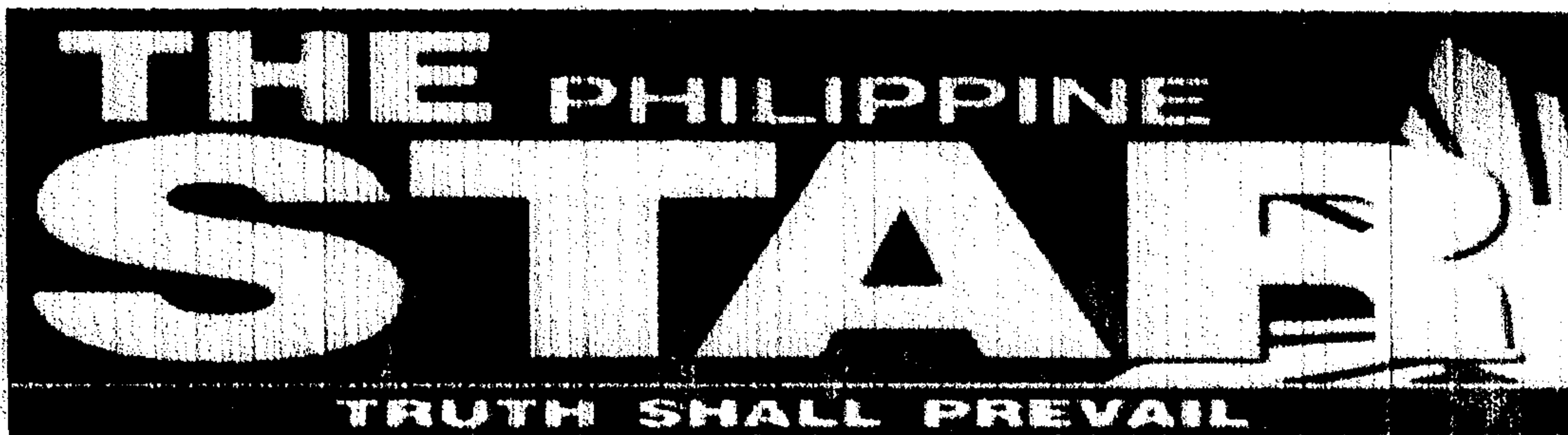
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 10 JUN 2016

DAY : Friday

DENR

IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SABANG, CORON

TO BE

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Photos by GEORGE TAPAN

THE DEPARTMENT OF Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is instituting measures to further protect the rich marine biodiversity within two of the country's most famous diving spots.

In two separate administrative orders, the DENR has declared the Sabang Bay in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro and the Coron Bay in Palawan as water quality management areas (WQMA).

This initiative is seen to boost efforts to protect the bustling biodiversity within the two water bodies from the unwanted effects of tourism activities. It brought the total number of WQMAs in the country to 25.

"Both Sabang Bay and Coron Bay are world-class diving sites with great visibility and masses of underwater life, making them as among the favorite destinations for tourists and diving enthusiasts," DENR Secretary Ramon Paje Jr. said.

He noted, "These latest WQMA designations are critical to effectively address development issues on safeguarding the areas' ecosystem qualities from the rapid growth of tourism activities in the towns of Coron and Puerto Galera, while sustaining the economic benefits for the local host communities."

As diving tourism and the associated residential and commercial developments "exert a considerable pressure on the ecological fabric" of the two bay areas, Paje said there is absolutely a need to ensure that their water qualities comply with the standards prescribed under Republic Act No. 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

He added that strong reliance on healthy and attractive coral reefs makes the tourism sector in Coron and Puerto Galera "particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change."

According to the environment chief, the WQMA designation would make the DENR, local government units, communities and other stakeholders identify the water quality problems, sources of pollution and the beneficial use of Sabang Bay and Coron Bay.

It would also help stakeholders determine what control measures to institute to effectively achieve water quality objectives or improvements.

The Coron Bay WQMA covers the bay itself and eight of the 23 barangays comprising the entire town of Coron.

An analysis of Coron's water resources and its distribution showed that the rivers travers-

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Sabang, Coron —



ing the town empty into a drainage area of 5.5 hectares located inside the eight coastal villages.

The aquatic views from the sunken World War II Japanese ships in Coron Bay are listed in Forbes Traveler magazine's top 10 best scuba diving sites in the world.

On the other hand, the Sabang Bay WQMA covers the bay itself, which is part of the world famous Verde Island Passage, and the whole Barangay Sabang covering 449 hectares.

West of Sabang Bay, separated by the Batan-

gas Channel, is the Muelle Bay which is the only bay in the Philippines listed in the "Club of the Most Beautiful Bays of the World" by the Paris-based Club Des Plus Belles Baies Du Monde in 2005.

Despite its relatively small size, Barangay Sabang is critical to the bay's overall water quality as 283 hectares or 63 percent of its land area serves as the drainage site for all the surface water from Puerto Galera's 12 other barangays.

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Group tells Duterte: Return trash to Canada

DAVAO CITY—Environment watchdog Ban Toxics has called on President-elect Rodrigo Duterte to ensure the immediate return of Canada's waste to that country and the ratification of two international treaties on hazardous materials—Basel Amendment and Minamata Convention.

"This is a golden opportunity for President-elect Duterte to prove his mettle when it comes to the environment," said Shalimar Vitan, Ban Toxics chief operating officer.

"As President, it is within his power to finally resolve the Canada waste crisis," said Vitan.

"He can also prevent future waste dumping by any country by ensuring the ratification of the Basel Amendment," he said.

Expressing strong outrage over the dumping of Canada's waste in Manila last year, Duterte urged the Aquino administration to file a diplomatic protest against the Canadian government for a 1,300-ton shipment of trash that landed in Manila from 2013 to 2014.

Duterte had called it a "derogation of our national dignity."

Ban Toxics said a formal protest filed at the Basel Convention Secretariat would compel Canada to repatriate the waste.

The group also called for the ratification of the Basel Amendment and Minamata Convention, treaties that control waste trade and mercury pollution, saying these treaties should be among the priority environmental agenda of the incoming President.

"The return of Canada's waste shipments, most of which are still rotting in Manila's ports, should also be top on his list," said a statement signed by Lea Guerrero, Ban Toxics program manager for communications and campaigns.

The Basel Amendment is an amendment to the Basel Convention that prohibits the export of hazardous wastes from developed to developing countries and which the Philippines ratified in 1993.

The Philippines has not ratified the amendment which addresses a loophole in the convention by additionally prohibiting the movement of all wastes, even those meant for recycling.

Ban Toxics is also calling on Duterte to push the ratification of the Minamata Convention to protect human health and the environment from mercury pollution.

The environment group pointed out that mercury, even in low doses, is extremely harmful to humans.

Once released, it persists in the environment and gets absorbed by organisms.

Although the Philippines signed the Minamata Convention, it has yet to ratify it. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been revising regulations on mercury use to enforce stricter measures.

"Mercury pollution is widespread in the Philippines," said Vitan. Mercury is widely used in small scale gold mining and dentistry, he said. *Germelina Lacorte, Inquirer Mindanao*

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Carbon neutral program launched

By TARA YAP

ILOILO – To further curb carbon footprint, the country's top foresters launched the Carbon Neutral Program at this province's summer capital - the mountain village of Bucari in the town of Leon.

Tom Valdez, president of the Society of Filipino Foresters Inc. (SFFI), said the June 5, 2016 tree planting activity is a response to the country's commitment to the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Of all possible areas in the country, Bucari was chosen by the SFFI for its ecological value and as an emerging eco-tourism site.

"Bucari is where the headwaters of Aganan and Sibalom rivers could be found. It is also a forest conservation site," said Livino B. Duran, Assistant Regional Director for Management Services of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Western Visayas (DENR-6).

"We are encouraging everyone to be mindful of their carbon footprint. We need to plant more trees to help sequester carbon emission

from the atmosphere," added Duran, who also serves as SFFI president for Western Visayas region.

For this month's Environment Month, another bureau of DENR-6 also spearheaded another carbon footprint reduction activity.

Atty. Jonathan Bulos, Regional Director of the Environmental Management Bureau in Western Visayas (EMB-6), said thousands of bikers intensified the Share a Road Movement during a June 3, 2016 ride in Iloilo City.

The activity was in partnership with the Iloilo Bike Council, Iloilo city and provincial governments, the regional offices of the Department of Tourism, and Department of Public Works and Highways in Western Visayas, Office of the Ombudsman-Visayas, John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime University (JBLFMU), SM City Iloilo, Robinsons Place Iloilo, and renowned environmental lawyer Antonio Oposa Jr.

"We must be cautious of our carbon footprint. How much we emit is how much damage to the atmosphere we inflict. Planting trees and riding bikes can reduce carbon footprint," added DENR-6 Regional Director Jim Sampulna.

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DENR officials purposely fudging on NGP 'score'?

SOMETIME last year, after the Commission on Audit released its findings that the National Greening Program (NGP) was a failure, I wrote President Aquino: If he wanted to save the remainder of the program, he must personally make surprise, random visits to NGP sites. I explained that previous presidents made the mistake of swallowing the rosy reports of their environment secretaries hook, line and sinker; as a result, it would be good if at least 5 percent of all the seedlings distributed by government under its tree planting programs since the presidency of his mother, Corazon Aquino, had grown into trees.

In response, I was given a copy of a memorandum from Marcial Amaro Jr., assistant secretary for field operations, to Ralph Pablo, OIC-Cordillera regional director, stating that per the secretary's instruction, he must bring me to any NGP site in the Cordillera that I wanted to see. Apparently, my letter was misconstrued: It was plain I was referring to the implementation of the NGP in general, not just in the Cordillera.

Anyway, I wrote Pablo to provide me with their list of NGP sites, together with the pertinent basic data, including the coordinates and the incidents of burning by year starting 2011. Pablo gave me the latter data, but said that for the list and individual plantation data, I must communicate with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices. Amaro's instruction was for Pablo to personally bring me to any NGP site in the Cordillera that I wanted to see, but here I was being directed to coordinate with two offices per province for data available in the regional office!

In response to my letter requesting the same data from the DENR-CAR, Ricardo Calderon,

NGP national coordinator, wrote that I will have to get the data on the NGP sites from the DENR website; and, instead of giving me the national burning incident data, Calderon explained that fires are force majeure. He then enumerated what they were doing to minimize the incidence. Well, it is impossible for Calderon not to know that the masterlist available in their website does not contain the coordinates.

That was not the end of it. When I requested Amaro to issue the same order that he gave Pablo to the regional directors of Regions 1, 2 and 3 so I would also be assisted in visiting sites in those areas, he told me he could not do so unless he first got an instruction to that effect from Environment Secretary Ramon Paje. Same situation, same need, but Amaro still wants me to write Paje for the same treatment from other DENR regions, which Paje thought was all right for the DENR-CAR to extend to me. If that's not stupidity, I do not know what is.

On second thought, I strongly suspect that these officials are just pretending to be stupid and that their actual intent is to hide the real score. In the case of the burning, the Cordillera data suggest that the national figure could be staggering. The data, as of March 2016, showed that 2,600 hectares had been burned. Multiply that by the budget for the seedlings and the planting per hectare at P10,000; that's a cool P26 million that went up in "smoke" in the Cordillera alone. No wonder, in his letter, Calderon pretended as if I was asking why the burning of plantations continues. Pathetic.

—ESTANISLAO C. ALBANO JR.,
casigayan@yahoo.com

The Manila Times

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Rescued eagle turned over to DENR

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga: A critically endangered Philippine eagle was turned over to the care of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office here after it was rescued by an upland farmer in a forest area in San Luis, Aurora province.

Joey Blanco, the DENR provincial chief in Aurora, said that the juvenile raptor was found by Eugene Nace last week in a trap locally known as a "silo", which is a type of snare used to catch monkeys.

"The eagle was found inside the forests of Aurora Memorial National Park (AMNP) known for its rich biodiversity. One of the eagle's claws was trapped in the 'silo' but the wildlife sustained no serious injuries in the ordeal," Blanco said.

According to biodiversity experts, sightings of Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*)

were once reported in the Sierra Madre mountain part of Aurora and the capture of one confirms the existence of the rare bird in the region.

"The Philippine eagle is endemic to the country and it is known to live in areas of Eastern Luzon, Samar and Leyte while Mindanao supports the bulk of the population," said Fred Sadueste, chief of the DENR Wildlife Enforcement Division.

He said that the intensified information, education and communications (IEC) campaign of the DENR has led to an increased awareness of people of the value of wildlife and the proper course of action when finding or capturing such, which is to call the attention of the concerned agency.

"We are planning to train more wildlife enforcement officers and deputize more locals to ensure the protection of wildlife in the Sierra

Madre mountain range and in the rest of Central Luzon," he said.

Francisco Milla, Jr., DENR regional director in Central Luzon, said the rescue of the Philippine eagle is very timely since this month, the DENR and the whole country is celebrating the Philippine Environment Month while last June 5 of this year the whole world celebrated the World Environment Day.

Research studies also show that in Mindanao, the Philippine eagle prey on flying lemurs (*Cynocephalus volans*), which are absent in Luzon, where the bird was found to prey on two endemic species of cloud rats, monkeys, monitor lizards, birds, palm civets bats and snakes.

The rescued raptor is now under the custody of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau where it will be cared for until it is fit to be released back into the wild. **PNA**

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Tacurong City holds 2nd Bird Festival

TACURONG CITY (PNA) — Bird lovers, environmental preservation advocates, local and foreign tourists and local government leaders converged here recently to celebrate the 2nd Tacurong Bird Festival.

"The conduct of this festival is our way of showcasing our eco-tourism gem — the Baras Bird Sanctuary, and also of promoting its conservation and protection," Tacurong City Mayor Lina Montilla told tourists as she welcomed them to Barangay Baras here.

Baras Bird Sanctuary is one of the ten most internationally important wetlands for water birds in the Philippines, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and

the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP).

For a ₱100 entrance fee, the festival goers were treated to a guided tour of the sanctuary and various art activities including face painting, plastic bottle recycling, origami, ball cap-making, coloring for toddlers and keychain painting.

The festival was also highlighted by a motorcade from the Tacurong City Hall to the Baras Bird Sanctuary.

The attendees signed a pledge of commitment for the preservation, protection, and promotion of the Baras Bird Sanctuary led by the city mayor.

The festival also hosted a forum. Speakers included Dr. Carmela P. Española of the Institute of Biology of UP Diliman who discussed on Ecosystem Function and Services; Forester Mangayao C. Macapodi, Chief of Conservation and Development Division of DENR Region 12 who tackled Endemism in Mindanao and Police Supt Felix N. Servita Jr., Chief of Regional CIDU 12, whose talk centered on Wildlife Act and Enforcement.

According to the Tacurong City Tourism Office, the 2nd Tacurong Bird Festival attendance improved by 100 percent from the previous year and attracted more visitors from the different parts of Mindanao including Sarangani, South Cotabato, and North Cotabato among others.

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Limiting Fishing - - - - -

Ocean-conservation advocacy group Oceana Philippines is pushing for sustainable management of the Benham Rise, and wants a particular area, the Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the 13-million-hectare underground plateau, to be a "no-take zone," effectively banning fishing in the area.

Tabios admitted that the use of FAD is not sustainable but said just the same, the practice is being used to increase fish production. He defended the use of FAD in the Benham Rise.

"It is a new fishing ground. But before the fishing companies go there, actually, they asked us to conduct test fishing. We conduct test fishing every year. There are times of the year that there are tunas there; highly migratory tunas, and there are times that the area is bare," Tabios said.

"But there are also deep-sea fish species, which we do not catch. We don't normally, or haven't actually, fished in deeper waters," he said.

According to Tabios, the BFAR has not explored deep sea portions in the Benham Rise.

"Normally, 100 meters deep *lang*. Deeper than that, we don't catch fish. Before you can start anything, like any regulatory, we want to gather more data through scientific exploration," he said.

"The National Stock Assessment Program is ongoing, and we are targeting the Benham Rise. We only have 100 sites. During the time of Director Asis Perez, he extended it to almost 500 areas, in order to get the data to determine the fish stock," he said.

According to Tabios, like any scientific endeavor, a series of year of scientific study is needed to get sufficient data.

"You need at least five years. This is important to come up with a definitive or accurate assessment. What we know for a fact is that we need to reduce some fisheries activities in the area," he said.

According to Tabios, there are already plenty of FAD installed in the Benham Rise.

"What we need to do is identify areas where they should be placed," he said.

He admitted that the use of FAD

must be applied, but precautionary measure can be institutionalized.

"There is a need to put in place a measure to prevent by-catch, particularly for marine mammals. The theory there is you have to be able to remove marine mammals that are caught accidentally during fishing expedition. You can scoop the fish, and later release the marine mammals. There is a way," he said.

The fishermen and fishing companies should be able to push for measures that will prevent non-target species, particularly marine mammals, he added.

"Right now, we still have no

rules. The implementing rules of RA 10654 were just adopted 10 years of last year. We still need to come up with rules for that. It says before we come up with a regulatory measure or framework, we need to come up with a series of stakeholders meeting. Of course, we have to draft the rules first, then start consultation in July," he said.

According to Tabios, during the consultation process, a multilateral technical working group, which includes other agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, is normally created.

"All the nontarget species need

to be protected. Sea turtles, whales and other species of fish that we are not eating should be spared," he said.

He said there is already an existing rule for sea turtles, which promotes the use of a turtle exclusion device, particularly among big commercial fishing vessels.

"The rule will not necessarily be for noncommercially viable fish only, but also for fish that are important to the ecosystem," Tabios said.

According to Tabios, the big fishing companies will be consulted after the BFAR conducted its assessment on how to promote the sustainable management of Benham Rise.

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INITIATIVES SERVICE

Finding 'mameng': PH losing reef fishes

By Anne Dominguez

THE PHILIPPINES will lose at least 59 reef fish species, including the *mameng*, *talakitok* and *maya-maya*, in the next 15 to 25 years due to overharvesting and illegal fishing, according to a study conducted by the environmental group Haribon Foundation.

"The belief we once had that the sea is of unlimited resource is not true ... The alarming loss of fishes is telling us that there's not much time left for action," Dr. Margarita N. Lavides, Haribon project manager, said in a statement released in time for World Oceans Day on Wednesday and Coral Triangle Day yesterday.

Results of the study conducted by Haribon in partnership with Newcastle University UK were recently published in Plos One, a "peer-reviewed open access" scientific journal of the US-based Public Library

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of Science.

"We are slowly losing once common, wide-ranging, yet inherently large vulnerable reef fishes [that] have very important ecological roles," Lavides said.

Path of extinction

Among the species vulnerable to extinction due to overpopulation, overharvesting and illegal fishing are the humphead wrasse (*mameng*), bumphead parrotfish (*taungan*), giant grouper (*kugtong*), African pompano (*talakitok*) and the mangrove red snapper (a type of *maya-maya*).

Mameng, a popular delicacy in most Asian restaurants, is priced at thousands of pesos apiece.

Ditto de la Rosa Jr., a research specialist at Haribon, cited the "often unnoticed" characteristics of the fishes, which could be a factor for the decrease in their populations.

"They grow large and age slowly [so] it also takes a long time for them to sexually mature," De la Rosa said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER. "Most of these fishes are caught prematurely so they are not given time to reproduce."

He cited as an example the case of the *lapu-lapu* (grouper). "They are caught when they measure 30 centimeters—the size of a plate ... so they are not able to produce eggs," he said. "That's the primary reason why they are getting extinct."

The *taungan*, the largest type of parrotfish in the world, grows to at least 1.3 meters and has a life span of up to 40 years,

while the *mameng* grows to at least 2 meters with a life span of up to 30 years.

Ecological effects

From 2012 to 2014, Haribon Foundation, Newcastle University and the Darwin Initiative 19-020 Project interviewed 2,655 fishermen around coral reefs. The face-to-face interviews were conducted with local partners off Lanuza Bay in Surigao del Sur province, Danajon Bank in Bohol province and Honda Bay and Palawan State University in Palawan province, and the city agriculture office of Puerto Princesa City.

The study noted the decrease of several species of fish from as early as the 1950s, adversely af-

fecting marine biodiversity and the immediate reduction in earnings of the fishermen.

Most of the disappearing species perform active roles in the maintenance of corals, according to Haribon.

The *taungan* helps the healthy growth of corals by eating and scraping algae and bacteria. The fish also feed on hard corals, consuming about 5 tons of reef carbonate every year. The reef carbonate turns into white sand.

The *mameng* helps regulate the population of poisonous crown-of-thorns starfish, which eat and ultimately destroy living corals.

The *kugtong* ensures balance among functional groups in coral reefs and sustains healthy

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Silangan Mindanao Mining gets ISO-certified

PHILEX MINING Corporation on Thursday said its subsidiary, which is developing the Silangan project in Surigao del Norte, obtained an International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification for environmental management system (EMS).

In a disclosure to the local bourse, Philex said Silangan Mindanao Mining Company, Inc. (SMMCI) received on Wednesday its ISO 14001:2004 Certification for EMS for its pre-mining development activities. It was issued by the Philippine unit of Certification International.

SMMCI said the certificate "affirms its adherence to processes that comply with strict and internationally recognized EMS in all stages of project development."

The Silangan project, expected to be operational by 2018, involves the development of Boyongan and Bayugo mineral deposits comprised of gold, copper, and silver. — **Janina C. Lim**

The Manila Times

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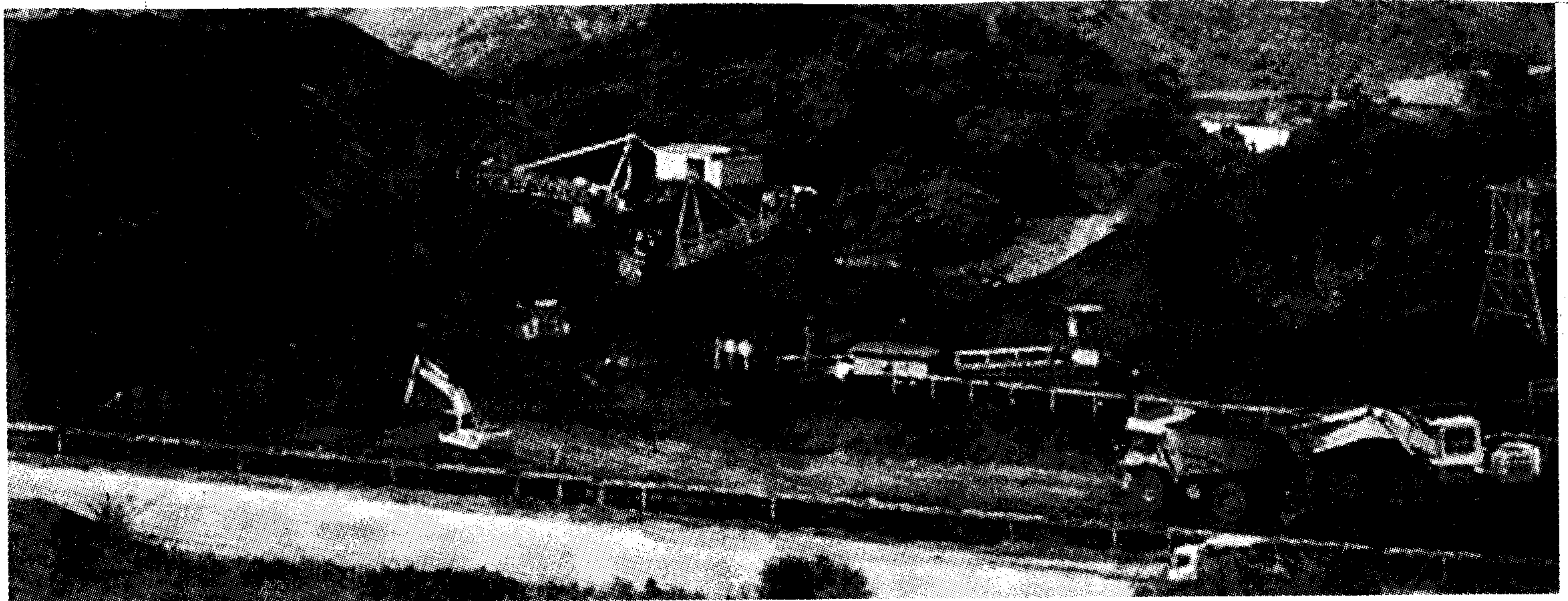
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■ SMPC mine in Barangay Semirara in Caluya, Antique

Semirara Antique mine granted amended ECC

BY VOLTAIRE PALAÑA
REPORTER

THE Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has granted the request of Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) for amendment of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) issued for the proposed Semirara Molave Coal Expansion Project located in Barangay Semirara in Caluya, Antique.

In a disclosure in Philippine Stocks Exchange (PSE) on Thursday, the company said that after the review and evaluation of the submitted Environmental Performance Report

and Management Plan and upon the recommendation of the EIA Review Committee (EIARC), the DENR has decided to grant the request.

The amended ECC allows a

larger total annual production rate of coal of 16 million metric tons compared with 12 million metric tons previously; expands the area of the Molave Pit at West Panian from 300 hectares to 400 hectares; the number of housing units the company is permitted to build from 700 to 1,100; and increases reservoir capacity to 10 million cubic meters from 8.98 million cubic meters.

The existing reservoirs include Sanglay 1, Sanglay 2, Casay, Himalian, and Binaroto.

SMPC was also enjoined by the amended ECC to produce a report detailing the impact of return brine within 60 days of the completion of the detailed design of the company's desalination plant, the DENR said.

Semirara Mining and Power

Corp., a subsidiary of DMCI Holdings Inc., is the country's largest coal producer, capable of producing eight million metric tons of coal per year, according to the company. It operates one mine (Panian) on Antique Island, with a significant amount of the coal extracted from the mine used as fuel for its two-unit (600MW capacity total) Calaca, Batangas power plant, which is operated through its subsidiary Sem-Calaca Power Corporation.

According to the company, the expansion of the coal operations in Antique will help support an expansion of its power assets, two 150MW units completed last year, with at least one additional 300MW unit scheduled for completion in 2017.

The Manila Times

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Contractual workers up in arms vs mining firm

BY WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL
REPORTER

THE incoming administration of President-elect President Rodrigo Duterte will have its first acid test soon in its declared war on illegal contractualization and destructive mining against one of the biggest and most influential mining companies in Palawan province in western Philippines.

Alan Tanjusay, policy advocacy officer of the Associated Labor Union (ALU) and spokesman for the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)-Nagkakaisa disclosed on Thursday that the mining firm, Citinickel Mines Development Corp. (Citinickel), is owned by one of the contributors to the presidential campaign of outgoing President Benigno Aquino 3rd in 2010 and also to that of Manuel "Mar" Roxas 2nd in the just concluded May 9 polls.

Citinickel has mining operations in over 2,212 hectares of land in the towns of Narra and Sofronio Espanola in Palawan.

Tanjusay said around 200 miners have decided to hold a legal strike starting on June 10 at the mine site in Barangay Bato-Bato in Narra

town for alleged contractualization, union busting and illegal termination of workers.

He added that the mine workers would be joined by local indigenous people, fishermen and farmers to express grave concern over Citinickel's violations of environmental laws to the detriment of local agricultural farms and sea corrals.

"The members of the union have reached a decision to resort to stage a legal strike after the law-prescribed series of government labor arbiter-supervised mediation talks between the unionized mine workers and the management of Citinickel Mines and Development Corp. to regularize its contractual workers, return of illegally dismissed employees and for blatant attempts to bust the union have failed to reach any

agreement last week," Tanjusay said.

The workers also accused Citinickel of intentional and malicious withholding of the salaries and benefits of dismissed employees, reduction of employees' salaries without prior notice and non-payment of separation and retirement pays to retired employees.

Citinickel started its operation in 2010.

It is owned by socialite Carolyn Tanchay, who, according to Tanjusay, also owns the high-end restaurant Dean and De Luca in New York in the United States, the 34-story The Ore Central building in The Fort in Taguig City (Metro Manila) and the Hardrock Aggregates.

Tanjusay claimed that it is open secret that Tanchay is a very close friend of celebrity and Kris Aquino-youngest sister of the President-and known to the community to be one of the campaign contributors in 2010 of the outgoing President, and as well as that of Roxas, who lost to Duterte by more than 6 million votes.

He said the workers also fear that Citinickel's labor and environmental abuses are allegedly being ignored and tolerated by the local government unit because the sole hauling contractor for the company is allegedly owned by Narra Mayor Lucena Demaala.

"With this high-end political connection, the political and legal odds against the striking lowly workers are so great that a victory in this endeavor is surrounded by impossibility. But this is all what they've got to fight for a decent job and a life of dignity," Tanjusay noted.

The local indigenous people, fishermen and farmers expressed their support to the grievances of striking Citinickel workers.

They said they are going to join the strike to also express grave concern over Citinickel's violations of environmental laws.

During the campaign, Duterte vowed to bring about needed change in the labor sector, particularly abolition of the prevalent practice of contractualization by big malls and other establishments, among other reforms.

It is estimated that more than half of the current 67.1 million Filipino workforce are contractual workers

Contractualization or "endo" (end of contract) or "555" is a work arrangement whereby workers are only hired for about 5 months or less than 6 months without security of tenure and monetary, non-monetary and social protection benefits.

Recently, Duterte warned mining companies against their destructive mining activities.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Unahin kayang kastiguhin ni Duterte ang minirg ni Eric Gutierrez?

'UNCOVERED'



NI MARLON
PURIFICACION

@marlonpuri

MABIGAT ang binitiwang salita ni incoming President Rodrigo 'Rody' Duterte laban sa mga ilegal mining sa bansa.

Bukod sa mga drug lord at kriminal ay magiging mahigpit din ang kanyang kampanya laban sa mga minero na walang pakundangan kung sumira sa ating kalikasan.

Bigla tuloy pumasok sa isip ko kung uunahin bang kastiguhin ni Duterte ang SR Metals Inc.

(SRM) ni Francis Eric Gutierrez (FEG) na kilalang financier' ng talunang presdential candidate na si Mar Roxas.

Kung matatandaan, si Gutierrez din ang 'inupakan' ni Duterte dahil ito ang nagpapahiram ng eroplano kay Roxas noong kasagsagan ng kampanyahan sa eleksiyon. Halos ito rin ang ituro na nagpa-umpisa umano ng 'tsismis' na may cancer si Duterte.

"That's why they could not stop the mining operations (of SRMI) because Roxas has been using their airplane," sabi pa ni Duterte nang patungkulan ang illegal na aktibidades ng pagmimina ni Gutierrez.

Pati ang natalong presidential candidate na si Senadora Grace Poe ay si Gutierrez din ang itinuturong nasa likod ng 'black propaganda' laban sa kanya, partikular na sa isyu ng pagiging ampon at dual citizen.

Tulad nina Duterte at Poe, binatikos na rin ni outgoing Vice-President Jejomar Binay si Gutierrez dahil ito rin umano ang nasa likod ng mga 'media ops' laban sa kanya bago pa man o noong kasagsagan mismo ng Senate hearing tungkol sa 'overpriced building.'

Kung tutuusin, hindi lang sa pulitika kontrobersiyal si FEG dahil kasosyo rin ito ni Liberal Party chairman for political affairs Caloocan Rep. Egay Erice.

Taong 2007 kasi ay pinagmulta na ang kompanya ni FEG ng P7 million ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at inatasan itong isara.

Umapela sa Court of Appeals si FEG na natalo hanggang umabot sa Supreme Court.

Hunyo 2014, kinatigan ng Kataastaasang Hukuman ang desisyon ng DENR at CA.

Ang catch dito President-elect Duterte ay hindi na nga pinatawan ng parusa ng SC ang kompanya ni FEG dahil sa ilegal na operasyon ng pagmimina noong taong 2007 hanggang 2014 ay

hanggang ngayon, patuloy ang pagmimina nito, partikular na sa Tubay, Agusan del Norte.

Tinatayang aabot sa dalawang milyong metric tons o higit pang tonelada ng nickel na nagkakahalaga ng bilyon piso ang sinasabing kinita ng bilyonaryong si FEG.

Kung pagbabasehan ang mga ulat sa pahayagan, mula Agosto 2006 hanggang Setyembre 2007 ay nakapag-angkat ng 1.8 million MT ng nickel ang SRMI at ang subsidiary firms nito na San R Mining at Galeo Equipment and Mining Corporation.

Sobrang laking 'pandaraya' ito mula sa 50,000 MT lamang o 150,000 MT ng pinagsamang tatlong kompanya ang pinapahintulutan ng pamahalaan taun-taon. Isang malaking halimbawa na sobrang nasalanta ang inang kalikasan.

Totoong may SC decision na laban sa kompanya ni FEG pero ang pinakakulang dito ay ang pagpaganagot sa kanila sa batas at ipahinto nang tuluyan ang

kanilang kompanya, ayon sa CARAGA Watch, isang environmentalist group na nangungunang umuusig sa SRMI.

Sinasabing mula taong 2010 o simula nang maupo sa Malakanyang ang Pangulong Noynoy Aquino, lalo pang lumobo sa bilyon ang mga ariarian ni Gutierrez.

Mayroon na raw itong walong jets o eroplano. Isang Citation Mustang na nagkakahalaga ng \$2.5 million, isang Citation CJ4 na nagkakahalaga ng \$9 million, isang Cessna Sovereign, \$19 million; apat na Cessna Caravans, na \$2.5 million bawat isa; at isang Bell 429 helicopter worth \$6.5 million.

Kung susumahin, aabot ito sa \$47 million o P2.3 bilion.

Ang unang jet, Cessna Mustang ni Gutierrez ay ginamit noon ni PNoy sa nagdaang 2010 presidential campaign.

Si Gutierrez din ang sinasabing nagprovide ng helicopter para sa aerial video of a Batangas eco-farm Binay. Lingid sa kaalaman

ng lahat, hindi nabusisi ng mga senador kung 'expired' ba noong mga oras na iyon ang lisensiya ng piloto at helicopter mismong ginamit para lumipad sa ere.

Samantala, kinatigan ng Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) ang kampanya ni Duterte laban sa ilegal o iresponsableng pagmimina.

Ayon sa COMP, tulad ni Duterte, tutol din sila sa ilegal na pagmimina at nag-alok pa ang grupo na handang tumulong sa papasok na administrasyon para masugpo ang ganitong uri ng iregularidad.

"With the good mayor soon taking on the highest mandate, the mining industry vows to work hand in hand with government to attain peace and order, economic stability and progress, and inclusive growth across the country," sabi pa ng COMP sa kanilang kalatas.

Tingnan natin ngayon ang kamay na bakal ni Duterte kung uubra ba kay Gutierrez.

Abangan!
* * *

PARTING SHOTS:

Gusto nating pasalamatang ang mga mababait na doktor at nurse ng Parañaque Doctors Hospital sa Better Living, Parañaque City dahil sa matiyaga nilang pag-aasikaso sa atin sa nakalipas na apat na araw.

Naratay po sa banig ng karamdaman ang inyong lingkod at taus-puso ang ating pasasalamat sa mga taga-PaDocs, partikular na kina Dr. Antonio Puti. Dr. Betty Mancao at Dr. Elsa Singh.

Gayundin kay Sir Vic Pena ng CT scan at x-ray department, Mark ng rehabilitation-therapy department, at mga nurse sa 7th floor na sina Gabriella Reyes, Kat Cequena, Kristine Doblado, Monica Faye Antigua, Ramil Silvano, John Paul Yu, KC Funcion, Junah Cadao at kay Ms. April.

Thank you sa inyo. Kayo ang mga taong masarap makilala at makausap pero ayaw ko nang balikan pa dahil ayaw ko nang ma-admit pa uli sa ospital.

Daghang salamat po uli sa inyo.

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BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Albay's Salceda reasserts stance against mining, smoking, plastics

LEGAZPICITY—Albay has firmly stood against mining, smoking and the use of plastic materials in the last nine years to protect its ecosystems and sustain the fight against the dangers they bring to people's health, and has instead focused on, among others, growing more forest covers, which had expanded from a measly 6,300 hectares to 53,000 hectares in the same period.

Now a global tourist destination, Albay has been declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) as a World Biosphere Reserve with its 257,000 hectares of diverse terrestrial and marine ecology pro-

tected by pioneering sustainable-development strategies.

Albay Gov. Joey S. Salceda said Albayanos have all the reasons to be staunchly protective of these gains, which were among the fruits of the development programs the province has pursued for nine years now, firmly backed by legislations, through the provincial board—Anti-Mining Resolution 020-2011 passed on March 14, 2011; Anti-Smoking Resolution 10-2012 passed on May 11, 2012; and Anti-Plastic Resolution 3 passed on March 4, 2011.

Since the whole of Albay is now a biosphere reserve, Salceda said any mining project is sure to disturb or

destroy its rich natural endowments and affect ecotourism, on which the province's booming tourism industry is largely anchored. Ecotourism has since become Albay's most successful program, which helped bring in some 1,417,646 tourists to the province in 2015. Albay won the Pacific Asia Travel Association's \$1-million CEO Challenge in the same year, as a global "new frontiers destination."

The province's sustainable development program, the Albay Green Economy, has earned praises from foreign leaders, among them French President François Hollande, and has been the subject of studies by other local governments. It has brought

the province significant harvests of awards and recognitions, among them as the country's First Green Eco Champion, conferred by the Green Convergence Philippines.

Following its declaration by Unesco as a World Biosphere Reserve, Albay launched a sustainable ecosystems management programs with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change. The program include the Sustainable Coral Reef Ecosystem Management Program, which initially covers three municipalities and one city in the province's third district along its west coast area. **PNA**



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MINING, YOSI BAWAL SA ALBAY

Matibay na nanindigan ang Albay laban sa pagmimina, paninigarilyo at paggamit ng plastik sa nakaraang siyam na taon para protektahan ang kapaligiran at kalusugan ng mga mamamayan. Kasabay nito, pinalawak ang kahuyan ng kagubatan sa 53,000 ektarya noong 2015 mula 6,300 ektarya lamang noong 2003.

Idineklara kamakailan ng United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ang Albay bilang World Biosphere Reserve, kasama ang 257,000 ektaryang mga lupain at tubigan nito.

Ayon kay Gov. Joey Salceda, may dahilan ang mga Albayano para pangalagaan ang mga nakamit nilang tagumpay na bunga ng mga pagsusumikap nila sa halos isang dekadang nakaraan, at naaayon sa batas.

At ngayong Biosphere

Reserve na nga ang Albay, lahat ng uri ng pagmimina ay tiyak na makasisira sa likas at mayamang kalikasan nito na umaakit ng libo-libong mga turista at nagpapalago sa ekonomiya ng lalawigan. Noong 2015 umabot sa 1,417,646 turista ang dumagsa sa Albay, na nabuslo naman ang Pacific Asia Travel Association's \$1 million CEO Challenge bilang isang "new global frontiers destination."

Umani rin ng papuri ang Albay Green Economy development program mula sa foreign leaders.

Kasunod ng UNESCO declaration, magkasamang inilunsad ng Albay at Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang ilang programa laban sa climate change. Kasama rito ang Sustainable Coral Reef Ecosystem Management Program sa kanlurang baybayin ng lalawigan at paunang sumasaklaw

sa tatlong bayan at isang lungsod nito.

Sa nakaraang siyam na taon, napalawak ng Albay ang forest cover o kagubatan nito sa 24,000 ektarya noong 2007; 44,891.16 ektarya noong 2010; at 53,000 ektarya noong 2015 mula sa mula sa 6,300 ektarya lamang noong 2003. Pinakamalakiki ngayon sa Bicol ang Pili plantation ng Albay.

Mula 2007 nang maupo siyang gobernador, pinatigil na ni Salceda ang lahat ng pagmimina sa Albay na nagpalakas naman sa turismo ng lalawigan.

Pinasimulan din ni Salceda noong 2007 ang pagbabawal sa paninigarilyo sa mga publikong lugar sa Albay.

Noong 2013, tinangka ng Albay ang "No Smoking" campaign na lumikha ng Guinness World Record sa pamamagitan ng pagbuo ng pinakamalakiking "Smoke Free" human logo chain, na sinalihan ng mahigit 13,000 katao. Malakas nitong naipahayag ang hudyat na "Game Over" sa mga global cigarette manufacturing companies.

Ang kampanya naman ng Albay laban sa paggamit ng plastik ay tampok sa taunang Karangalan Green Christmas Festival nito na naglalayong patuloy na isulong ang environment protection program at pioneering 'zero casualty' initiative ng lalawigan.

Ngayon, estriktong bawal na ang plastic at paputok sa Albay.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Nasa takes 23,000-foot view of world's coral reef

COCONUT ISLAND, Hawaii—Coral reefs have almost always been studied up close, by scientists in the water looking at small portions of larger reefs to gather data and knowledge about the larger ecosystems. But National Aeronautic Space Administration's (Nasa) Jet Propulsion Laboratory is taking a step back and getting a wider view, from about 23,000 feet above.

Nasa and top scientists from around the world are launching a three-year campaign on Thursday to gather new data on coral reefs like never before.

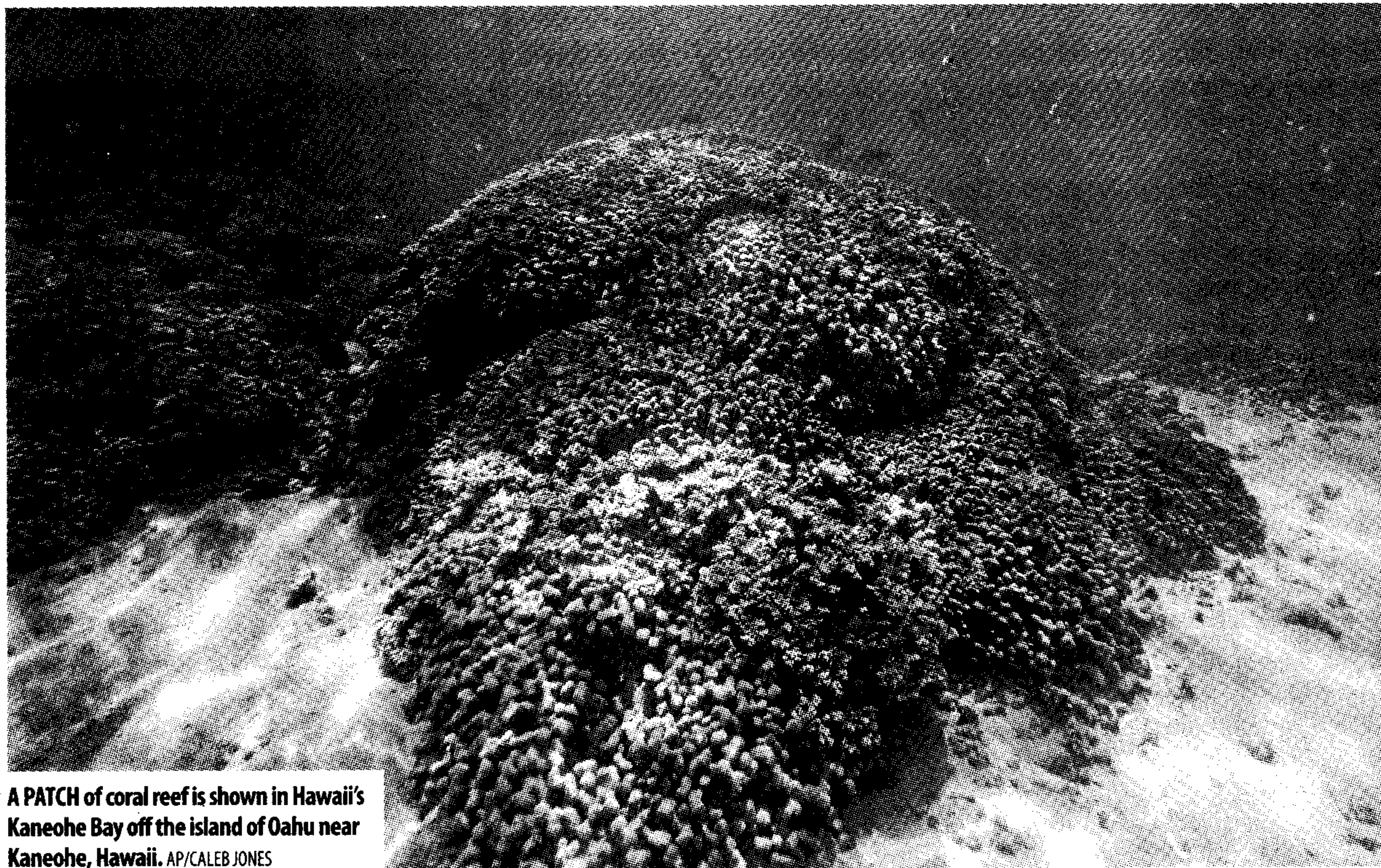
Using especially designed instruments mounted on high-flying aircraft, the scientists plan to map large swaths of corals around the world, in hopes of better understanding how environmental changes are impacting these delicate and important ecosystems.

The researchers hope to discover how environmental forces, including global warming, acidification and pollution, impact coral reefs in different locations by creating detailed images of entire reef ecosystems.

"Coral [Coral Reef Airborne Laboratory] is an airborne mission to survey reefs at select locations across the Pacific," Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences' Eric Hochberg, who is principal investigator for the project, told the Associated Press (AP) on Tuesday.

"The idea is to get a new perspective on coral reefs from above, to study them at a larger scale than we have been able to before, and then relate reef condition to the environment," Hochberg and the project's lead Nasa scientist Michelle Gierach were in Oahu's Kaneohe Bay with the AP on Tuesday to gather baseline data in the water.

While the primary science will be conducted using instruments that map the sea floor from above, the team must also take baseline measurements in the ocean to validate the data they get from the air, Gierach said. Her main role in the project



A PATCH of coral reef is shown in Hawaii's Kaneohe Bay off the island of Oahu near Kaneohe, Hawaii. AP/CALEB JONES

is to decipher the data gathered from the aircraft.

"PRISM, the instrument that we're using...is the state-of-the-art instrument for addressing coastal and in-water science questions," Gierach said. "Coral wouldn't be possible without an instrument like PRISM, it's really the heart and soul of the project."

Coral reefs drive many tourist economies around the world, but they provide much more than pretty places to dive and snorkel, Gierach said.

Reefs are critical habitat for the majority of the fish humans consume and also protect shorelines from dangerous storm surges and rising ocean levels.

Recently, scientists have developed pharmaceutical applications from coral reefs, including pain killers that aren't habit forming, Hochberg said.

"Just realizing that though you may not see a coral, that you may not have your backyard be within this beautiful environment that we're in right now, corals are impacting

you, they are globally important," Gierach said. "We have to understand how they're changing so we can make some managed decisions about their future."

Reefs are among the first ecosystems to be dramatically and directly impacted by global warming, according to the researchers.

The International Society for Reef Studies Consensus Statement on Climate Change and Coral Bleaching, published in 2015, said that over the past few decades, up to 50 percent of coral reefs have been "largely or completely degraded by a combination of local factors and global climate change."

Julia Baum, assistant professor of biology at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, has done extensive research on coral reefs and told the AP on Wednesday that the data gathered from this kind of project could prove highly valuable for international reef scientists and the conservation community.

"I'm a huge proponent of open

source data," Baum said. "To me, application of this technology to reefs holds great promise, but to fill that promise the data has made openly available to the scientific community." The Coral researchers said all data will be publicly available and will take about six months to process once captured.

Baum acknowledged that a coral-reef science has been limited by the lack of broad data sets like project plans to provide.

"As scientific divers we're limited by the depth we can work at and the amount of bottom time that we have while we're diving, so much of underwater marine science, especially on coral reefs, is a painstakingly slow process," Baum said. "This CO2 can't replace scientists in the water, but it can provide a very high-complementary type of data."

The Coral team will study the reefs of Hawaii, Palau, the Mariana Islands and Australia's Great Barrier Reef over the next three years. **AP**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Bleached-out ocean coral is a key distress signal

HUMANITY has reached a dubious and potentially terminal milestone—the last time there was this much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, dinosaurs were the dominant species and the first humans were still millions of years in the future. March was the 11th straight record-setting month for global temperatures.

Last month the UN convened a conference in Bonn, Germany, to assess the extent of global warming. The deteriorating state of one of nature's greatest creations may begin to persuade even the skeptical that we're experiencing something far beyond the typical warming cycle.

In recent years, the 1,400-mile Great Barrier Reef of northeastern Australia has been decimated by warming waters. The impact of warmer, more acidic oceans on the world's reef formations is particularly dramatic. Great stretches of barrier reef are being bleached white because the

warmer water is killing the algae that live inside and nourish the coral.

The spectacle of ghostly white reef formations in oceans where brimming colors and large clusters of sea life used to be should alarm us all. They represent the death and dying of a major part of the ecosystem. They are white coral skeletons that can't regenerate as long as the water remains warm and acidic.

Ninety-three percent of the Great Barrier reef is suffering the effects of bleaching, with 81 percent of the northern third completely bleached out. By any standard of measurement this is one of the world's greatest environmental catastrophes. As images of the devastated coral reefs enter public consciousness in the coming months and years, all of us have to ask ourselves how much of the natural world we're willing to sacrifice by our refusal to adjust dramatically downward our burning of fossil fuels. **TNS**

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China says important glacier is melting due to climate change

A GLACIER that is one of the largest at the source of China's Yangtze River is fast retreating because of climate change, state media said.

The Jianggudiru Glacier on Geladaindong Mountain in a remote part of the western province of Qinghai has shrunk 34 meters over the past six years, Pu Jianchen, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, told the Xinhua news agency.

The glacier started to shrink slowly in the 1970s, then expanded between 1989 and 1994 before retreating more quickly from 1995, Pu said, Xinhua reported late on Tuesday.

Yang Xin, president of the Green River Environmental Protection Association, told Xinhua the glacier retreated two meters a year in the 1980s and 1990s but about six meters a year over the past several years.

"This is direct evidence of global climate change," he said.

Pu said the Yangtze would get more water in the short term as that glacier and others melt, but eventually no more water would flow from them.

China, the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter, has promised to bring greenhouse gas emissions to a peak by "around 2030" as part of its commitments to a global pact to combat global warming, signed in Paris last year. — **Reuters**