The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) is a partnership between Nations and organizations which strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world. The Initiative was founded in 1994 by eight governments: Australia, France, Japan, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

One of ICRI’s initiatives, the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) is a year-long campaign of events and initiatives hosted by governments and non-governmental organizations around the world, to promote conservation action and strengthen long-term collaborations for coral reef conservation.

IYOR aims to raise awareness of, and action regarding, the value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, threats to their health, and management solutions; and to facilitate public involvement in coral reef conservation-related activities in all countries.

Recognizing that a decade later, there is an urgent need to increase awareness and understanding of coral reefs, and to further conserve and manage valuable coral reefs and associated ecosystems, the International Coral Reef Initiative declared 2018 as the third International Year of the Reef during the 31st General Meeting (November 2016 in Paris, France).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Biodiversity Management Bureau is the focal point for the International Coral Reef Initiative in the Philippines and prepares the annual ICRI Report.
VISION
Philippine Biodiversity that provides natural resiliency and sustained benefits for all.

MISSION
To conserve and sustainably manage the country's biodiversity.

GOALS
- Preventing species extinction;
- Strengthening the implementation of NIPAS and fostering other effective area-based conservation measures;
- Promoting biodiversity-friendly practices;
- Mainstreaming biodiversity across local, sectoral and national development plans and programs

MAJOR FUNCTIONS
- Formulate and recommend policies, guidelines, rules and regulations for the establishment and management of an Integrated Protected Areas System such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and refuge, marine parks and biospheric reserves;
- Formulate an up-to-date listing of endangered Philippine flora and fauna and recommend a program of conservation and propagation of the same;
- Formulate and recommend policies, guidelines and rules for the conservation of the three (3) components of biological diversity: genetic resources, ecosystems and endangered species of Philippine flora and fauna;
- Assist the Secretary in the monitoring and assessment of the management of the Integrated Protected Areas System and provide technical assistance to the Regional offices in the implementation of programs for these areas.

MANDATE
- Establishing and Managing Protected Areas
- Conserving Wildlife
- Promoting and Institutionalizing Ecotourism
- Managing Coastal Biodiversity and Wetlands Ecosystems
- Conserving Caves and Cave Resources
- Information and Education on Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- Managing Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center
- Negotiating biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Monitoring National Implementation
Protecting our Reefs from Human-Induced Threats

- From Marine Debris
- Through Sustainable Fishing
- Through Sustainable Tourism
- From Unregulated Coastal Development and Other Land-based Threats

Saving our Reefs through Real and Impactful Solutions

- Through Education, Science and Capacity Building
- Through Good Governance
Name of Activity: IYOR 2018 Soft Launch during the Convention on Migratory Species
Date: 22-28 October 2017
Venue: Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City
What is IYOR?

IYOR is a global effort to increase awareness and understanding on the values and threats to coral reefs, and to support related conservation, research and management efforts.

Why take care of our Coral Reefs?

The International Coral Reef Initiative declared 2018 as the 3rd IYOR which encourages to:

- strengthen awareness globally about the value of, and threats to, coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
- promote partnerships between governments, the private sector, academia and civil society on the management of coral reefs;
- identify and implement effective management strategies for conservation, increased resiliency and sustainable use of these ecosystems and promoting best practices; and
- share information on best practices in sustainable coral reef management.
Name of Activity: International Year of the Reef Launching

Date: 12 February 2018

Venue: EDSA Shangri-La, Mandaluyong City

Organizer: Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description

In line with the celebration of the 3rd International Year of the Reef (IYOR), the Philippine Government, through the initiatives under the DENR- Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP), conducted the launching of the IYOR on 12 February 2018 at EDSA Shangri-La, Mandaluyong City. It did not just start-off the year-long celebration of this global event, but most importantly, it aims for a renewed partnership and cooperation among valued partners towards long term protection and conservation of our coral reef ecosystems.

The launching was attended by 175 partners from various relevant Government Agencies, Academy, Non-Government Organizations, International Organization, Private Sector and Local Government Units.

Moreover, Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the Biodiversity Management Bureau; Usec. Eduardo Gongona of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources; Dr. Edgardo Gomez, University Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines; and Secretary Roy Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, graced the event as inspirational speakers.

During the event, the 2018 IYOR Roadmap, which is the list of all the activities and commitments from the IYOR partners, was also presented.
DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu leads the partners for a toast to officially start the IYOR celebration of the Philippines.

Clockwise: Director Theresa Mundita Lim giving the opening message; Dr. Edgardo Gomez sharing the IYOR celebration history of the Philippines; Undersecretary Eduardo Gongona emphasizing the role of healthy reefs in relation to fish catch; IYOR Partners, composing of various agencies, supports the launching.

(more photos on this link: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DENRAGos/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1507248439373163)
Name of Activity   World Wetlands Day
Date               2 February 2018
Venue              Quezon City
Organizer          Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description

The Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) celebrated World Wetlands Day (WWD) on 2 February in Brgy. Sta Lucia, and in Brgy. San Bartolome, Quezon City. This year’s WWD theme is "Wetlands for a Sustainable Future – Making urban cities liveable”.

BMB in partnership with the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands (SCPW), DENR National Capital Region (DENR-NCR), Mother Earth Foundation and the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Division (EPWMD) of the Quezon City LGU, organized an educational outreach for the communities living near the Tullahan River, which is one of the major waterways in Metro Manila draining into Manila Bay. This event includes lectures on the Seven Environmental Principles, Importance of Urban Wetlands and Zero Waste Management to raise public awareness on the significant role of urban wetlands in sustaining ecological balance. The participants discussed and shared their ideas on how to contribute to wetland/s conservation efforts by working together as a community, with the government and other sectors.

Around 100 participants from the communities residing along Tullahan River joined the activity. Barangay officials also participated and listened to the suggestions and issues raised by the community members.

The BMB hopes that this celebration will instill awareness and promote initiatives not only for the community of Tullahan River but also for the rest of the country on the wise use of wetlands for a sustainable urban future.

Name of Activity  IYOR 2018 Launching
Date  19 February 2018
Venue  Quezon City
Organizer  DENR– Cagayan Valley Region (Region 2)

Description

In the region, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Region 2 launched and observed IYOR on February 19, 2018 at the DENR Region 2 Office. Conservation and Development Chief, Forester Sanrose M. Pulangco in his message during our Monday Convocation informed the DENR Officials and staffs that 2018 is the international celebration of IYOR and the significance of it in the conservation of the coral reefs. Meanwhile, Coastal Resources and Foreshore Management Section Chief Maria Salome G. Bonnit led the distribution of bag tags to the Officials and employees of the agency in order to put across the message of the coral celebration. Congruent to the objectives of the IYOR, the distribution of bag tags was aimed to raise awareness of the value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, threats posed on them, management strategies that can be done to counter these threats, and more importantly to facilitate involvement in the coral reef conservation.

Photos

Clockwise: CRFMS Chief handing IYOR bagtags to ARDT Taguba and ARDM Savella, DENR employees and their IYOR bagtags, CDD Chief delivering his IYOR message, CRMS Chief distributing IYOR bagtags
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<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan (MMK)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>05 April 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Malacanang Palace, Manila</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

The country’s most outstanding coastal communities were given the limelight on Wednesday, April 5, 2018, as they were awarded by no less than President Rodrigo Duterte in Malacañan Palace. Representatives of five coastal towns, the national finalists of the Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan (MMK) 2017, were welcomed inside Rizal Hall to receive trophies and plaques of award along with millions in pesos of fisheries livelihood interventions. They were joined by the outstanding farmers and fisherfolk awardees of Gawad Saka 2017.

The Municipality of Laguindingan, Misamis Oriental emerged as the 2017 Grand Winner and was awarded 30 million pesos worth of projects. For their consistent coastal management efforts, the Municipality of Cortes, Surigao Del Sur was inducted into the MMK Hall of Fame and was also awarded the same amount of interventions.

The first runner up, the Municipality of Palompon, Leyte, and the second runner up, the Municipality of Claveria, Cagayan, received fisheries livelihood interventions worth P 18 million and P 10 million, respectively. The Municipality of Calatagan, Batangas meanwhile received a Special Plaque of Award for being selected as a national finalist.

The Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan or the national search for the most outstanding coastal community is the DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources’ (BFAR) awareness and incentives program on fisheries resource protection and conservation. It seeks to award coastal towns that best exhibit several indicators namely the absence of illegal fishing; observance of a closed fishing season; declaration of a protected marine sanctuary; clean and trash-free coastal waters; and an effective mangrove protection and rehabilitation program.
Photos from the BFAR Information and Fisherfolk Coordination Unit
Name of Activity: The Digitization of Biodiversity Conservation in the Philippines

Date: 04 May 2018

Venue: Quezon City

Organizers: Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau and University of the Philippines-Technology Management Center

Description

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) together with the University of the Philippines-Technology Management Center (UP-TMC) organized a symposium showcasing the use of technology in implementing efforts to conserve critical habitats and protected areas as well as endangered species in the Philippines. The symposium forms part of the Philippine Government’s activities in celebrating the 3rd International year of the Reef.

Participated by representatives from the DENR regional and national offices, private companies, and academe (tertiary and secondary levels), the “Application of Technology in Saving the Philippine Reefs and Associated Ecosystems as part of the 3rd International Year of the Reef” provided an avenue for scientists, development organizations and young entrepreneurs to showcase their experiences on the development and application of technology in saving Philippine Reefs and associated ecosystems. Likewise, students from secondary and tertiary levels of education became informed of such initiatives which further inspired them to become agents of change in the society. Participants from the private sector, on the other hand, identified collaboration opportunities with DENR for corporate social responsibility programs (CSR) and campaigns that is aligned with environmental conservation.

The symposium featured seven topics, namely:

- Capturing Coral Reefs Ecosystem Services (CCRES): SESAMME, SYStory, Eco-Biz Challenge - The project aims to demonstrate the economic value of the coastal and mangrove ecosystem and how protection and conservation efforts using the different tools developed will greatly affect the communities and businesses alike.

The developed tools under the CCRES project are as follows:

SESAMME - An iPad application that can be used to capture information and for visualization of the interaction between the ecosystem components. It can also be used for focus group discussions on problem identification and activity procedures.

SYStory - An application that can both run for Androids and IOS, it can be utilized to visualize and assess the dynamics of coastal systems, which can be effective for policy reviews, impact evaluation, and community engagement. The application allows the user to simulate in ‘explore’ and ‘experiment’ functions.

Eco-biz Challenge - is an entrepreneurship competition that encourage and support aspiring entrepreneurs in El Nido to develop, pitch, and execute innovative business ideas for the benefit of the local economy and environment.
- The Greenfins Approach - The presentation shared the role of businesses in promoting proper etiquette among its staff and guests during diving and snorkelling centers. The Greenfins Approach is an innovative business model on promoting diving and snorkelling best practices that must be applied among the tourist areas in the country.

- Automated Rapid Reef Assessment System (ARRAS) - Antipara’s ARRAS system enables us to scan and map the coastal environment of the Philippines. With the use of their Shark scan, it is now possible to explore the coastal ecosystem 400x faster than the manual process. It also offers a more extensive and creative options such as Coastal Atlas, Area Survey and 3D modelling that is more substantive that the current manual and low technology options available in the market.

- Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) - Under the BFAR-USAID-NOAA Partnership, the VIIRS technology is being utilized to detect night light boat detection in the Philippines. It aims to protect our fisheries and aquatic resources by ensuring that no commercial fishing is being done in the municipal waters in different areas in the country. The system is also capable of sending daily reports via email and SMS to the authorities for proper action.

- LAWIN Forest and Biodiversity Protection System - the technology is being applied to automate the reports generation for the monitoring and protection of our forest areas especially in the protected regions. Developed by the USAID, DENR is able to properly manage the ecosystem and take immediate actions, with the community, against deforestation activities.

- Baited Remote Underwater Video Surveys (BRUVs) - BRUVS is an accepted worldwide technology that is being used by different institutes and academies in the Philippines to explore and study the marine life of our coastal areas. The technology enables us to have a more precise linear measurement of fishes and other aquatic animals in our ocean. In the Philippines, BRUVS is used to explore deeper reef areas and assessment of sharks and other pelagic fishes in our waters.

- Marine Turtle and Whale shark Tracking using Satellite Telemetry - an initiative of DENR and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), this presentation shared the use of satellite tags to track the movement of endangered species of green turtle, Chelonia mydas, and whale shark, Rhincodon typus, along the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape. This initiative cements the connectivity of marine protected areas based on the scientific evidence collected by the satellite tags.

UP TMC also prepared a presentation to introduce the center to the audience, presenting its purposes and objectives not only to UP Community but to the nationwide setting as well. The TMC is represented by its director, Prof. Edison Cruz and the center’s distinguished professor, Prof. Glen Imbang. Consequently, the DENR is represented by the Chief of the ICMP’s Marine Coastal Division of DENR-BMB, Ms. Nilda Baling. A brief presentation of the International Year of the Reef Celebration was also discussed, in which Mr. Vjorn Grimaldo, spearhead of the IYOR Celebration under the DENR-BMB.

The event was able to capture the interest of the community, academe and private institutions who are exploring relevant technologies in helping the government’s campaign in environmental preservation. Indeed, this landmark collaboration of UP-TMC and DENR-BMB paves the way for methodological management of technology in the environmental sector and continuing the collaboration between UP-TMC and DENR-BMB will provide an advancement to our country’s development and programs for our environment and ecosystem.
Photos

Above (Left - Right): Activity Poster, The organizers from University of the Philippines; Middle: The speakers and participants of the learning event; Below (Left-Right) Professor Edison Cruz from UP, Ms. Nilda Baling from DENR-BMB; A speaker responding during Open Forum.
Month of the Ocean 2018

The “Month of the Ocean” (MOO) is celebrated annually in the Philippines during the month of May by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 57 issued in 1999. Specifically, Section 2 of the said Proclamation mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to spearhead the observance of the MOO in collaboration with the different sectors of the society through the conduct of activities that shall highlight the conservation, protection and sustainable management of the country’s coastal and ocean resources.

The theme of this year’s Month of the Ocean is centered on the celebration of International Year of the Reef (IYOR). IYOR is celebrated every 10 years and this 2018, we mark the third celebration of IYOR. The tagline of IYOR 2018 is, “Together in Protecting Our Coral Reefs,” or “Together For Our Reefs” for short.

The tagline for IYOR 2018, “Together in Protecting Our Coral Reefs”, is integrated in the logo to highlight the theme for this year. The blue figures symbolically represent humans which are alongside each other. Collectively, the figures embody corals which are a main part of the coral reefs.
Name of Activity          Month of the Ocean 2018: Set To Sail
Date                      04 May 2018
Venue                     Apo Island, Negros Oriental
Organizer                 Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description

The protection and conservation of the country’s rich coral reef system takes center stage as the Philippines observes May as the Month of the Ocean (MOO), according to Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu. “The environmental and economic benefits of coral reefs cannot be overstated. Often called the rainforests of the sea, coral reefs are important for ocean health and human communities that live nearby,” Cimatu said.

Cimatu expressed hope the MOO celebration would help increase awareness on the threats to coral reefs and support for conservation, research and management efforts, especially since it coincides with the observance of the International Year of the Reef (IYOR).

IYOR, a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about the value and importance of coral reefs and threats to their sustainability and to motivate people to take action to protect them, was launched officially in the Philippines last February. The event was initiated by over 60 member countries of the International Coral Reef Initiative.

According to Cimatu, the Filipinos should take the lead in the protection of coral reefs considering that millions of Filipinos depend on them and other marine ecosystems for both food and income. He noted that some of the major economic sectors such as fisheries, tourism, trade and transportation are dependent on these ecosystems. “Healthy coral reefs support commercial and subsistence fisheries as well as jobs and businesses. They also provide shelter to coastlines from the effects of waves and tropical storms. They also provide shelter for many marine organisms,” Cimatu said.

BMB Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez said one of the highlights of the celebration is the conduct of a seminar on biodiversity-friendly livelihood for women residing in coastal communities in order to acquaint them with such alternatives. “The seminar aims to instill behavioral change among the participants and be the champions of ocean conservation in their homes or communities,” Rodriguez said.

This year’s MOO adopts the IYOR’s theme, “Together for Our Reefs.” The MOO celebration is pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 57 issued in 1999.

Above: DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu gives the opening message for the MOO 2018 launching; Below: DENR, together with the MOO partners
Name of Activity  Month of the Ocean 2018: Sea to Believe  
Date  12-13 May 2018  
Venue  Anilao, Batangas  
Organizer  Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Biodiversity Management Bureau  

Description  
In line with this year’s theme for the International Year of the Reef, the DENR Agos posted an online contest for the youth inviting them to submit creative visual pieces expressing why they care about the coral reefs. The winners of the contest joined a marine and dive camp for the youth which was held last May 12-13 in Anilao, Batangas. The partiseapants learned from a number of speakers who inspired them to appreciate marine biodiversity and to communicate their advocacies related to marine conservation. Aside from talks, the group learned skin diving and were able to immerse themselves in the reef of the epicenter or marine biodiversity in the world. 

Sea to Believe is about inspiring the youth to help in marine conservation through their skills, talent and creativity. The camp exposed them to the coral reef ecosystem, encouraging them to appreciate marine life. However, it also exposed them to the reality that our coral reefs and other marine habitats are in dire need of protection. 

We can’t wait to see what this batch of Sea to Believe campers will do for the ocean! For now, here are the highlights of the camp.  

Photos  

Clockwise: The campers getting ready for their skin diving session; Ms. Gela Petines during her talk; The campers during the skin diving session; A getting-to-know activity with the partners.  

(more photos on this link: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DENRagos/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1595996390498367)
Name of Activity: Month of the Ocean 2018: Hands-On-ARMS

Date and Venue: 21 May 2018 (Davao), 18 June 2018 (Palawan), 29 June 2018 (Batangas)

Organizer: Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau and DENR Regional Offices

Description

In line with the celebration of the 2018 Month of the Ocean (MOO) and the celebration of the International Year of the Reef (IYOR), the Biodiversity Management Bureau conducted an outreach event called “Hands-on-ARMS” to raise awareness and highlight the importance of marine biodiversity to the students of Davao, Palawan and Batangas.

ARMS stands for Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures. They are specialized underwater monitoring units which mimics the complexity of the reef. Small animals, called marine cryptobiota, settle onto these units, after which scientists will collect data to study on their biodiversity. ARMS units are also used to study the effects of climate change on reefs.

Hands-on-ARMS provides an opportunity for the participants to observe and experience first-hand the marine cryptobiota. Using simple hand lens and forceps, participants sorted and classified these small animals into their respective groups. They also experienced photography and microscopy allowing them to view the complexity of the animals’ body structures.

Photos

Above (L-R): Students listen to lectures on biodiversity conservation; A clearer look on the species at the Microscope Station; Students learn the interconnectivity of life through a “Web of Life” activity. Below (L-R): Sorting of marine life per phylum in the Motile Station; the kids at the Plate Photography Station; Students pledge to be champions of marine biodiversity

more photos on this link:

Palawan: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DENRAgos/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1633688063395866
Davao: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DENRAgos/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1601854326579240
Name of Activity: Month of the Ocean 2018: Sea Through The Lens
Date and Venue: May 2018
Organizer: Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description:

DENR-BMB held a Month of the Ocean Photo Contest in line with the celebration of the International Year of the Reefs (IYOR) 2018 with the theme, “Together for our Reefs”. The contest aims to support IYOR’s goals to respond to the urgent need in increasing awareness and understanding of coral reefs, and to further conserve and manage valuable coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

a) Winner: Jenny Jara (Category I-Together for our Coastal and Marine Ecosystems)
b) Winner: Jaime Singlador (Category II-Together in Protecting our Reefs towards Real & Impactful Solutions)
c) Winner: Daniel Ocampo (Category III-Together in Protecting our Reefs from Human-Induced Threats)
Name of Activity: CleanSeas Pilipinas Launching
Date: 26 May 2018
Venue: Luneta, Manila
Organizer: Biodiversity Management Bureau, Communities Organized for Resource Allocation (CORA), UNDP Philippines, SmartSeas Ph

Description:
On 26 May 2018, a national campaign to help everyone become the solution to pollution was launched - Clean Seas Pilipinas!

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Philippines, in collaboration with the DENR-BMB, Communities Organised for Resource Allocation (CORA), and other local partners, are organizing and running a campaign to highlight ways and solutions to reduce ocean plastics. The campaign coincides and supports the celebration of the International Year of the Reef and forms an integral part of United Nations Environment Programme’s Clean Seas: Turn the Tide Against Plastics campaign.

The #CleanSeas Pilipinas aims to establish a national network of partners working with communities and schools to organize, support, and sustain a campaign to reduce ocean plastics. #CleanSeas Pilipinas will target three main stakeholders: communities (local government leaders and people’s organizations), the private sector, and schools. In particular, the campaign aims to:

Objective 1: Help identify and convince national partners, both public and private, to support a grassroots campaign to reduce plastic wastes in coastal areas Philippines.

Objective 2: Help partner academic institutions develop and implement policies that would ban, reduce, or lessen the selling and use of PET Bottles, Plastic Straws, and Plastic Bags within school premises.

Objective 3: Help and encourage partner LGUs and communities improve their system of collecting, managing, and consolidating discarded/used fishing nets and other types of plastic waste.

Please follow CleanSeas Pilipinas on Facebook and together let’s #BeatPlasticPollution!
Clockwise: Launching of CleanSeas Pilipinas with UNDP, BMB, SmartSeas and CORA; Partners commit to beat plastic pollution; Ms. Taus sharing CORA’s share to the program; Public shows support to CleanSeas Pilipinas

#BEATPLASTICPOLLUTION

CleanSeas Pilipinas poster from the DENR Agos Facebook Page
Name of Activity: Month of the Ocean 2018: Biodiversity Festival
Date: 27 May 2018
Venue: Luneta, Manila
Organizer: Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description

Biodiversity Festival was set to culminate the Month of the Ocean celebration. Biodiversity Festival was filled with art, music and knowledge! The event, comprised of bazaars, booths, games, concerts, installation arts, workshops, and seminars and activities, aimed to foster a more mindful appreciation of the Philippine biodiversity and highlight the connectivity of resources to people.

This program also aimed to raise awareness and encourage change in behavior of people towards coastal and marine biodiversity conservation. There were talks on relevant issues about environmental management, particularly in the use of plastic and its impact to the environment.

Biodiversity Festival photos captured by DENR-BMB
Biodiversity Festival through the lens of DA-BFAR
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<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>Philippine Rise Expedition</th>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>10-29 May 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Philippine Rise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>Biodiversity Management Bureau</td>
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**Description**

The DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau participated in the 17-day scientific expedition to Benham Bank and Bicol Shelf. Kudos to our partners, University of the Philippines (Marine Science Institute and UP Los Baños), Philippine Navy (Naval Special Operations Group, Naval Meteorological and Oceanographic Center), National Coast Watch Center and to all other individuals and agencies involved for making this expedition successful!

#SecurePHRise #BenhamForTheFuture #PhilippineRiseMarineResourceReserve
Name of Activity: Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium
Date: 4-8 June 2018
Venue: Marco Polo, Cebu City
Organizer: Biodiversity Management Bureau and University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute

Description

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in partnership with the University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI), hosted a five-day international conference dedicated to coral reef protection. The 4th Asia-Pacific Coral Reef Symposium (APCRS) was held from June 4 to 8 at the Marco Polo Plaza Hotel in Cebu City. It was co-hosted by the Philippine Association of Marine Science, UP-Cebu, University of San Carlos, and UP-Mindanao.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the symposium comes at an opportune time as the world celebrates 2018 as the International Year of the Reef. Cimatu said the APCR event could “greatly contribute to better understand and appreciate science behind coral reef conservation.”

“More importantly, it can help us develop scientifically-grounded policies and programs that can address the challenges we are currently facing in terms of sustainably managing our coastal and marine resources,” he added.

According to Dr. Porfirio Aliño of the UP-MSI, the country’s hosting of the coral reef conference highlighted the importance of science and technology in conservation and good governance considering that the Philippines is the “center of the center of marine biodiversity” in the world and one of the leading scientific bastions in the Coral Triangle.

During the conference, the DENR—through Biodiversity Management Bureau Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez—presented its policies and initiatives on reef management in the Philippines. One of the highlights of the presentation was the DENR’s 12-year program on the seas called the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program. “By effectively reducing the drivers and pressures on coastal and marine ecosystems which led to its continuous degradation, the coastal and marine ecosystems’ condition will improve thereby enhancing ecosystem functions and services,” Rodriguez said.

With the theme “Coral Reefs of the Asia-Pacific: Working Together Amidst Contemporary Challenges,” the APCR event forged greater cooperation and concrete programs for collaboration to preserve and sustainably manage our common natural marine heritage.

The conference gathered together the champions of coral reef research and conservation in the Asia-Pacific region with the hope of inspiring the younger generation to continue the work of understanding and using wisely these resources.

Latest research techniques and emerging trends in marine biodiversity, coral reef ecology, geology, and restoration, ocean processes, and citizen science efforts were featured in the five-day event. Parallel sessions and workshops were organized by leading marine science institutions in the Philippines and abroad, as well as national and international conservation projects and programs. Speakers include conservation experts from Australia, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, and the United States.
Above (L-R): Philippine Senator Loren Legarda giving APCRS’s opening message; Coral advocates gathered in Marco Polo Cebu, BMB Director Crisanta Rodriguez updating the crowd on the government efforts towards coral conservation. Below (L-R): DENR Secretary officially closing the Conference, Actress and Singer Ms. Antoinette Taus sharing the importance of IYOR celebration in the farewell dinner of the Conference, Ms. Desiree Maano of DENR-BMB sharing the protected area database under CoRVA Project during the break-out session.

The delegates, organizers and speakers of APCRS (Source: APCRS Facebook Page)
Name of Activity  Coral Triangle Day
Date  9 June 2018
Venue  Boracay Island, Aklan
Organizer  DENR– Western Visayas Region (Region 6)

Description

The Coral Triangle Day is envisioned to be an annual, open-sourced event that brings together individuals, organizations, and establishments on one special day of the year to shed light on ocean conservation and the numerous ways to protect and conserve the Coral Triangle.

In line with the celebration of International Year of the Reef (IYOR) with the theme “End Plastic Pollution”, this year’s celebration will also highlight the provision of information needed to fundamentally change human attitude and behavior about plastics. Further, in support to the ongoing Boracay Rehabilitation Project, all sectors are encouraged to work together in order to address the different problems affecting our shorelines and coral reefs such as plastic pollution.

The activity aims to heighten awareness about the importance of corals and highlight the essence of 2018 Coral Triangle Day celebration. It will also emphasize the importance of addressing the issues and concerns of Boracay Island specifically on the exploitation of the coastal and marine resources through the conduct of a coastal and underwater clean-up drive.

The clean-up drive in Tambisaan Reef started by 10:00 AM and participated by local divers of Boracay. A total of two hundred twenty-eight (228) kilograms of non-biodegradable wastes was collected. Majority of the trash collected were glass bottles, used ropes, plastic wrappers, metals, and tires.

The top three (3) divers who garnered the highest kilogram of waste collected were given additional reward aside from the incentives. Rey Jaime and Julius Porras won first place gathering thirty-three (33) kilograms of wastes. Landed on the second place was the duo of Ronald Nunes and Galileo Solanoy with a close thirty (30) kilograms and Raymond Bernardo and Harry Sioson accumulated a total of 27 kilograms of garbage.
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<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>Manila Bay: Gawing MMK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>20 June 2018 (2nd leg on 24 September)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Manila Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources</td>
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**Description**

The Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) teamed up with the Office of Senator Cynthia Villar in organizing a series of inter-agency Manila Bay coastal clean-up that will cover parts of the National Capital Region and nearby towns in Central Luzon and CALABARZON in the coming months. With the theme “Manila Bay: Gawing MMK (Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan), DA-BFAR hopes to rouse public awareness and involvement on rehabilitation efforts being initiated in Manila Bay and in the long run, transform the Bay into a clean, thriving body of water where fisheries resources are sustainably managed and protected.

The agency is working closely with partner government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Coast Guard and other organizations to rehabilitate, restore and conserve the Bay following the Supreme Court’s Writ of Continuing Mandamus. “Our effort to restore Manila Bay is aligned with the Department of Agriculture’s main thrust under the leadership of Secretary Emmanuel Piñol. DA-BFAR seeks to ensure food sufficiency and improve the livelihood of the fisherfolk through the implementation of various coastal resource management programs like the Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan in the country’s major fishing grounds including Manila Bay,”

DA Undersecretary for Fisheries and BFAR national director Eduardo Gongona said. The first leg among the series of the coastal clean up happened in Kawit, Cavite on June 20 and will continue on different coastal areas surrounding Manila Bay until October 2018. The Mandamus Agencies were joined by local government units, private sector and youth volunteers at the clean-up site, which were divided into 16 areas each measuring 50 meters.

Aside from the coastal clean-up, participants also planted mangrove seedlings on a 200-square meter mangrove area still in Cavite. Among key personalities who joined the activity aside from Senator Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food and BFAR national director Eduardo Gongona are Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, Agriculture Undersecretary for Operations Ariel Cayanan, and district representatives and local government chiefs of Cavite.
Photos from DA-BFAR
Name of Activity  Sentinels of the Sea
Date  19-20 July 2018
Venue  Makati City
Organizer  Biodiversity Management Bureau, USAID and NOAA

Description

On 19-20 July, NIPAS MPA Managers from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao shall gather for the Culmination Activity of the NIPAS MPA Capacity Building Program Summit in Makati City, Philippines.

From 2015-2019, the DENR, together with USAID and NOAA, implemented a program for a network of NIPAS MPA Park Superintendent and Staff as well as Biodiversity Management Bureau and DENR Regional Office Staff.

The government-to-government partnership conducted a series of 6-day intensive hands-on interactive training workshops. Participants learn from both resource persons and from their fellow participants’ experience in the management of their NIPAS MPAs, as well from their field visit and exposure to other NIPAS MPAs and interactions with the stakeholders.

The mentors and participants of the series of NIPAS MPA Capacity Building Program
Name of Activity: Ocean and ARTivism
Date: 19-20 July 2018
Venue: Ayungon, Negros Oriental
Organizer: Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description

Participants of Social Marketing and Mobilization Training, an activity under the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program of DENR, joined AG Sano, a Filipino mural artist who has painted walls to promote the environment worldwide. The participants, who are national marine protected area managers are practicing environmental conservation through social mobilization, art and creativity.

The idea of the mural was to show how truly connected the community was to the ocean. The painting aims to inspire the local people of Ayungon towards lessening their use of single-use plastics. The children of the community also joined in the fun and learned more about the ocean!

DENR Team posed with AG Sano with the mural promoting ocean conservation
Name of Activity: Fish Conservation Week
Date: 17 September 2018
Venue: Makati City
Organizer: DA– Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

Description

The annual Fish Conservation Week Celebration of the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) opened on Monday, September 17, despite typhoon Ompong’s (international name: Mangkhut) torrential rains and wind that barreled through many parts of Luzon over the weekend.

The Fish Conservation Week, which was commemorated every third week of October in the past, is now part of the Maritime and Archipelagic Nation Awareness Month (MANA MO) celebrated every September each year by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 316 s. 2017.

On the 55th year of the Fish Con Week, the government, through the DA-BFAR, took to center stage the significance of safeguarding and conserving the fisheries resources of the municipal waters with the theme, “Kapag Karagatan ng Munisipal ay Inalagaan, Sasagana ang Yamang-Dagat ng Buong Sambayanan”.

“When we take care of the municipal waters, we take care of the entire Philippine fisheries,” Agriculture Undersecretary for Fisheries and BFAR national director Eduardo Gongona said. Adding that municipal waters are home to mangrove forests and coral covers—aquatic habitats essential to growth and reproduction of marine fisheries.

The marine municipal waters’ contribution to the overall performance of the Philippine fisheries sector is reflected on the data gathered by the Philippine Statistics Authority. In 2017, the municipal waters produced a total of 962, 146.84 metric tons with an estimated value of more than 75.3 billion pesos followed closely by commercial fisheries at 948, 281.45 metric tons amounting to 59.7 billion pesos.

As a way to sustainably manage the resources in the municipal waters, DA-BFAR is stepping up its partnership and cooperation with the local government who has mandate over these waters. In the last three years, the agency has since implemented conservation programs devised to holistically address the core challenges of fisheries in the municipal level.

One of these programs is the Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan (MMK): The National Search for the Country’s Outstanding Coastal Community. According to Gongona, MMK ensures the rehabilitation and protection of the municipal waters through its five components: (1) No Illegal Fishing, (2) Observance of Closed Fishing Season, (3) Declared Marine Protected Areas, (4) Clean coastal waters without any garbage or industrial effluence flowing to the sea, (5) Effective mangrove protection and rehabilitation program.
Aside from MMK, DA-BFAR is already on the final stages of the creation of management plans for commercially-valuable fish species like tuna and sardines, which will include both municipal and commercial fisheries.

Meanwhile, the Opening Ceremony of the 55th Fish Conservation Week started at 8:00 in the morning, at the DA-BFAR’s main office in PCA Compound, Quezon City. Among the highlights of the program are the launching of the Malinis at Masaganang Karagatan (MMK) Comics Coloring Book, and presentation of awards to groups and organizations whose work contributed greatly to the benefit of Philippine fisheries.

Through DA-BFAR’s marketing arm, local entrepreneurs were invited to set up booths to sell fisheries goods and products. The opening ceremony was capped off by the MMK Comics Coloring Contest whose participants are elementary students from nearby public elementary schools.

Photos from DA-BFAR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>IYOR Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizer</td>
<td>DENR-Ilocos Region</td>
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**Description**

**Province of Ilocos Norte**
- Mangrove planting at the municipality of Currimao, Ilocos Norte on September 18, 2018 which was participated in by personnel from CENRO Laoag.
- Coastal Clean-up in Barangay Gabu, Laoag City which was attended by the Gabu Barangay council and students and faculty of the college of Maritime Education (COME) of the Northwestern University
- Posters and slogans were installed adjacent to the Pangil Rock formations along the roads which highlights proper solid management.

**Province of Ilocos Sur**
- Coastal Cleanup was undertaken along the shoreline of Barangay Magsaysay, Santa on June 19, 2018, which was participated by CENRO-Bantay, PENR-Ilocos sur, together with the municipal officials of Santa, and local residents. During the event, assorted trash/waste such as plastic bags, plastic bottles, wrappers, straws and ropes were collected.

**Province of La Union**
- Mangrove planting during the World Wetland Day Celebration on February 2, 2018 which was participated by LGU, students and residents of Barangay Parian and Pudoc.
- During the Coast Watch summit, the local government of Bauang and San Juan conducted a coastal summit which focused on protecting the coastal and marine resources.
- In line with the celebration of Arbor Day, tree planting activity was conducted at the Agoo-Damortis Protected Landscape and Seascape.
- Information and education campaign was conducted at Pangao-aoan West Elementary School on June 20, 2018. The activity aimed to raise awareness in the conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources.

**Province of Pangasinan**
- SCUBASUERERO and Beach cleanup drive was carried out on May 27, 2018 at the Hundred Islands National Park (HINP), Alaminos city. The activities were participated by volunteers and stakeholders in maintaining ecological integrity of the marine ecosystem by collecting litters/debris at HINP and exposing to their social responsibility as end users of the coastal and marine environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>International Coastal Cleanup</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>22 September 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
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**Description**

The Philippines ranks first among the top 25 countries that participated in international coastal cleanup activities around the globe, according to the Ocean Conservancy 2018 Report. Over 200,000 volunteers from the country joined the International Coastal Cleanup in 2017, gathering more than 230,000 kilograms of trash from beaches and waterways or equivalent to over 1,200 kilometers.

1. Legazpi, Albay
2. Caraga Region
3. Zambales
4. Cebu
5. Eastern Visayas
6. Zamboanga Peninsula
7. Western Visayas
8. Metro Manila
9. SOCCSKSARGEN

More Photos: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DENROfficial/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1806699339447687
Name of Activity: SeaNiJuan
Date: 12 October 2018
Venue: F. Alindogan National High School, Batuan, Masbate
Organizer: DENR – Bicol Region (Region 5)

Description:

Forester Caryl Anne M. Barquilla who was also the Master of Ceremonies, provided a short background on the activity and discussed its objectives. She emphasized on the celebration of International Year of the Reef, an event observed every ten (10) years. She also thanked all participants because this activity would not be made possible without the presence of these participants who play the lead role in this activity.

A welcome message was given by Ms. Ana P. Bartolay, Supervising Ecosystem Management Specialist of Community Environment and Natural Resource Office San Jacinto on behalf of CENR Officer Mr. Herleo Pabercio. In her message, she expressed her deepest gratitude to the Teachers and Students who participated and supportive for all the activities by DENR. She also highlighted that this activity would be of great help in changing the perspective of some individuals especially the students who are still practicing some illegal activities. Likewise, may this event help the youth focus on creating awareness and discussing the importance of Marine Ecosystems and their vulnerability to long-term Climate Change. She ended his message by warmly welcoming everyone in joining the activity SeaNiJUAN, a Film Showing entitled “Chasing Corals”, an award-winning documentary directed by Jeff Orlowski showing a devastating and alarming case of coral lose through time-lapse photography.

After the film, CEO Titus Cañete and Forester I Caryl Barquilla conducted a post discussion. There were also questions asked to test if the students payed attention on the documentary. DENR Staff were amazed of how the students think of actions they need to do specially when they mentioned the future generation. They always made sure that these things will be in benefit of those generation.
Name of Activity  Redeployment of ARMS
Date  12 October 2018
Venue  Bongsanglay Natural Park, Batuan, Masbate
Organizer  DENR– Bicol Region (Region 5)
Description

Part of the global initiative on monitoring ocean acidification effects on marine biodiversity, Autonomous Reef-Monitoring Structure (ARMS) units were deployed in selected areas in the country, particularly in the Verde Island Passage (VIP). It was in 2012 that the first deployment was done and was retrieved in 2015. Last CY 2016, two (2) ARMS were deployed in the municipality of Batuan. One ARMS was retrieved on the same year for analysis of University of the Philippines- Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) and another was retrieved in year 2017. This year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Regional Office V (DENR RO5) together with Community Environment and Natura Resources San Jacinto (CENRO San Jacinto) conducted a redeployment of ARMS in Royroy Fish Sanctuary adjacent to Bongsanglay Natural Park, Municipality of Batuan in the province of Masbate last October 12, 2018. The ARMS Mimic the Coral Reefs, it is an excellent structure to determine biodiversity of the reef system which should be monitored regularly.

Photo documentation during the redeployment of ARMS
Name of Activity: SeaNiJuan and Launching of Mascot

Date: 19 October 2018

Venue: Pambuhan National High School, Garchitorena, Camarines Sur

Organizer: DENR– Bicol Region (Region 5)

Description:

On October 19, 2018, DENR Region 5 CDD Staffs headed by Foresters Emerin Dadea and Caryl Barquilla in coordination with CMEMP Focal Person Fe Marie Villamora, conducted the film showing activity to address the threats and factors that lead to degradation of coastal and marine environment. This was participated by Grade 10, 11 and 12 students of Pambuhan National High School.

It started with an Opening Prayer led by CEO Titus Cañete followed by the singing of our Philippine National Anthem followed by an Inspirational Message rendered by Forester Dadea. She expressed her gratitude for the active participation of Pambuhan National High School in their activity. In her message, she also emphasized that the Philippines is among the countries with highest community participation and students is one of the major stakeholders which is manifested by their enormous participation. Moreover, participants should also learn how to conserve our ocean and marine ecosystem after the movie and for them to think of actions that they can do now as students and as part of the stakeholders in the community.

Actual Film Showing activity and Post discussion by Titus Cañete and Caryl Barquilla

LAUNCHING OF MASCOT

This Mascot Barry, is a Lapu-Lapu species which is commonly called as “BARAKA”. It has been selected or identified by Brgy. Binagasbasan as one of the primary species that could be found within MPLS. This species has economic value and could be source of livelihood opportunities within the community.
Name of Activity | Boracay Reopening after the 6-month rehabilitation  
---|---
Date | 26 October 2018  
Venue | Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan  
Organizer | DENR together with various National Government Agencies  
Description

Secretary Roy A. Cimatu considers the successful rehabilitation of Boracay Island as the “single biggest accomplishment” of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 2018.

The DENR, along with several other government agencies, devoted much of its time, effort and resources this year to carry out President Rodrigo Duterte’s directive to clean up the world-famous island he once called a “cesspool.”

“What we have done in Boracay could well serve as one of the DENR’s best legacies. May nagawa tayo pero hindi tayo hihinto,” Cimatu told DENR employees during their recent annual gathering.

After seeing the results, Cimatu said that all the efforts poured into by the DENR and other government agencies during the six-month rehabilitation period were worth it.

Cimatu said he hopes to replicate the success of the Boracay rehabilitation in the heavily polluted Manila Bay.

“I am an optimist through and through, I am sure that Manila Bay will be better off in December next year,” Cimatu said.

Earlier, Cimatu said he was keen to have Manila Bay rehabilitated, restored and maintained to a level fit for swimming, skin diving and other contact forms of recreation.

He promised to employ the same strategy used in Boracay to rid Manila Bay of wastes and pollutants.

During the first phase of Boracay rehabilitation, hotels and resorts caught directly pumping out their sewage into the sea were fined and required to put their own sewage treatment facilities.

The Boracay wetlands, which play an important role in absorbing excess rainfall to prevent flooding and are home to native and migratory wildlife, were cleaned and recovered from illegal settlements and structures.

The inter-agency task force, which Cimatu chairs, will continue to rehabilitate Boracay’s ecosystems, which include a variety of native flora and fauna like the critically endangered golden crowned flying fox, molave, bankal, marine turtles, puka shells, mangroves and different species of birds.

The DENR hopes to maintain the sustainable tourism management approach in Boracay, which could serve as a model for other coastal areas in the country and the region.

Photos

Above: Drone shot of Puka beach after the coastal cleanup (Photo taken on June 4, 2018); Middle (Left-Right) Mangrove planting on May 30, 2018, Children of the Ati Tribe live in a government housing complex called the Ati Village located in Brgy. Manoc-Manoc; Below (L-R) Sec. Cimatu inspecting the waters of Boracay, The famous Puka Beach of the island

More Photos of the Rehabilitation: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DENROfficial/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1713969328720689
Name of Activity       ProCoast
Date                  01 November 2018 (Start of project)
Organizer            Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ),
                      Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Biodiversity
                      Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), Zoological Society of London
                      (ZSL) Philippines

Description

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), jointly implements with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) Philippines, the “Sustainable Coastal Protection through Biodiversity Conservation in Coastal Ecosystems Affected by Typhoons in the Philippines” (ProCoast).

This project, which commenced last November 1, 2018 and will run until October 31, 2021, is part of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

ProCoast will support the coastal and marine rehabilitation in selected areas in the Visayas through technical, policy advice and capacity development on rehabilitation of abandoned, underdeveloped and underutilized (AUU) brackish water ponds to mangrove forests and enhancement of Marine Protected Areas. This is in line with the DENR BMB Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP).

Centers of learning showcasing innovative coastal and marine rehabilitation practices will be established in the region to serve as learning platforms for local government units and other marine protected area (MPA) managers.
Name of Activity: Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) for International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2018

Date: 12 -13 November 2018

Venue: Guiuan, Eastern Samar

Organizer: DENR– Eastern Visayas (Region 8)

Description:

The Conservation and Development Division conducted a two-day IEC campaign about the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) on November 12-13, 2018 in the municipality of Guiuan, Eastern Samar. The workshop was participated in by DENR personnel from CENRO Sub-office Guiuan, Marine Rangers, students from Eastern Samar State University Senior High STEM class, and members of a Peoples’ Organization, named GMEA (Guiuan Integrated Micro-Entrepreneurs’ Association), and staff from the DENR Regional Office, under the leadership of Coastal Resources and Foreshore Management Section (CRFMS) Chief, Forester Melecia B. Sumbeling.

The workshop started with a prayer led by Marine Ranger Antonio Humbria, and the singing of the National Anthem conducted by a MAPE Teacher, Jun Basa of ESSU Senior High. Following this was an inspiring opening message from Mrs. Vivian A. Cuadra, Protected Area Superintendent (PASu) assigned to the Guiuan Marine Reserve Protected Landscape and Seascape (GMRPLS). She acknowledged the presence of several partners of DENR, such as the GIMEA and Marine Rangers, which are Peoples’ Organizations that share similar objectives as DENR. She thanked them for attending and being active when it comes to protecting the environment. She added that she would like to see people in the future who are conscious of the conservation, uses and benefits of coral reefs which is considered as the tropical rainforests of the seas.

The rationale of the IYOR launching was given by the Section Chief of CRFMS, Ms. Melecia B. Sumbeling. She said that coral reefs are the most diverse of marine ecosystems and provide tremendous goods and services to over 500 million people worldwide, yet coral reefs are in peril because of destructive fishing, overfishing, unsustainable tourism and the emerging threats of climate change. She emphasized that behavior change is the primary effort in all communication action, encouraging every sector and partnerships to rally for the protection of our coastal habitats, to achieve the goal of food security and climate change resiliency.

She said further that the challenges are overwhelming but with the active participation of every Filipino we will be able to still see the vibrance and fruitfulness of our coral reefs. DENR has already started various efforts to improve the condition of our coral reefs and improve strategies with its partners. She said further that DENR implemented CMEMP or Agos ng Buhay, which is a national effort that encompasses all marine ecosystems to holistically address the drivers and threats of coastal and marine degradation.

She also mentioned that it is important to note that protecting and conserving these wetlands does not only happen in our country but is a global effort and a responsibility of every citizen. This year’s team “Together in protecting our Reefs” connotes the
Importance of bringing together different minds and voices as a focal point of international input. She said that it is her fervent hope that this launching will revitalize commitment and partnerships in protecting the country’s coral reefs, and that it would inspire every organization, agency and institution of this country to actively partake and continue to support this activity from this year and beyond.

Following the rationale was an introduction to what corals are, as well as the importance and benefits that humans derive from having healthy coral reef ecosystems, discussed by Mr. Bror Ragnar Lorenzo Isagani R. Collander, Coastal Extension Officer of the DENR Regional Office. He first asked the participants on what they thought corals were — either animals, plants or stones/minerals. Most of the students got the more accurate answer, that corals are animals. Mr. Collander explained that corals are animals with plant-like symbionts and produce minerals as a by-product of food production. He said that coral reefs provide various services such as food, business, and medicine. Calcium supplements can be derived from the calcium carbonate skeletons of corals. He also said that 75% of all protein sources in the world comes from coral reefs, in the form of fishes, invertebrates, and other organisms.

Mr. Collander then proceeded to talk about Marine Debris, which is the most destructive type of threat to marine ecosystem in general, and coral reef ecosystems in particular. He discussed what marine debris is, and how it finds its way to the sea from its source. He discussed the effects that marine debris has on coral reefs and illustrated the intensity and magnitude of this threat. Next he narrowed down on how plastic products contribute to climate change. He said that for every 1L plastic water bottle produced, 250 mL of fossil fuel-derived oil is used, as well as a release of 100g of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

After the topics were all presented to the participants, staff of CENRO Sub-office Guiuan then proceeded to ask the participants some questions as a form of review or recap to the previous lectures discussed. This was done by Ms. Josephine Palacio. She asked the participants about several things, including what the acronym IYOR stands for, and what corals are made of. Prizes were given as incentive, to those who were able to answer correctly. These prizes were mugs and bag tags with the IYOR design.

Photos

Lectures conducted
Left: Ms. Josephine Palacio asks the participants several questions and gives away prizes to the first one to answer correctly. Right: The winners show off their prizes during a photo opportunity.

The DENR team together with the participants of the IYOR activity
Name of Activity  The Journey Towards the Protection of the Philippines Rise (A Gala Night and Photo Exhibit)

Date  19 November 2018

Venue  National Museum of Natural History, Manila

Organizer  Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Oceana Philippines, National Coast Watch Council, National Museum of the Philippines

Description

Philippine Rise Partners donated images of the Philippine Rise Marine Natural Reserve and the Benham Bank to be part of the collection of the National Museum of Natural History. The exhibit, called "The Journey Towards the Protection of the Philippines Rise," includes videos and photos of the marine biodiversity and reefscape of the Philippine Rise. It is now open to public for viewing.

Photos (Courtesy of Oceana Philippines)
Eleven countries bordering on the Seas of East Asia issued on Thursday a joint declaration affirming their commitment towards the conservation and sustainable development of coastal and marine resources in the region.

The Iloilo Ministerial Declaration entitled “East Asian Region Moving As One to Secure Healthy Oceans, People and Economies,” was adopted by environment ministers and heads of delegation during the 6th Ministerial Forum of the East Asian Seas Congress 2018 held in Iloilo City from November 27 to 30.

The 11 countries – Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, North Korea, Singapore, South Korea, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and the Philippines—are members of the Partnerships in Environmental Management for Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), an intergovernmental organization operating in East Asia to foster and sustain healthy and resilient oceans, coasts, communities and economies across the region.

PEMSEA, together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), facilitated the ministerial forum that was chaired by the Philippines, represented by DENR Undersecretary Rodolfo Garcia.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu hailed the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as “a reiteration and stronger call to action” among countries within the East Asian region.

“The Seas of East Asia are the most biodiverse marine areas in the world, yet they face severe threats from climate change and densely populated coastal communities,” Cimatu pointed out.

“The declaration, supported by the respective countries’ plans of action, will ensure that partner countries will work together in addressing complex issues faced by this region,” he added.

The Iloilo Declaration recognizes the significant value and critical contribution of coastal and marine ecosystems goods and services to securing food and jobs, helping to eradicate poverty, and building resilient coastal communities and blue economies in East Asia.

To achieve these benefits, PEMSEA member nations acknowledged the need to protect coastal and marine ecosystems from the impacts of climate change and other threats, including marine-related disasters, destruction and loss of habitats and natural coastlines, biodiversity loss and degradation, and overfishing and lack of food security.

The countries also took pride of PEMSEA’s pioneering work in the region to develop best practices in the design and implementation of the integrated coastal management (ICM) approach, as well as in developing knowledge and capacity to build climate smart policies and enable ocean-based blue economies.

The ICM approach addresses the governance of human activities affecting the sustainable use of goods and services generated by coastal and marine ecosystems; while the blue economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.
Under the declaration, East Asian countries strongly believe that “PEMSEA remains relevant and is well-positioned to continue performing its role as the regional platform to encourage the development of common policies, building capacity and orchestrating essential collaboration and scaled up actions alongside smart financing to deliver economic and social dividends, as well as protect biodiversity and address shrinking coastlines.”

“We are confident that PEMSEA will continue to facilitate regional cooperation to respond to the challenges within the context of the rapidly changing social, political, economic and environmental landscapes and encourage the region to move towards a Blue Economy and Sustainable Development of its coasts and oceans,” the declaration reads.

As part of their commitment to sustainable development, the countries will continue to work to achieve by 2021 the remaining targets set under the 2015 Da Nang Compact on ICM coverage of the region’s coastlines and the adoption and implementation of ICM national laws and policies in all countries in the region.

They also promised to regularly update the State of the Oceans and Coasts reports to highlight the contributions of coasts and oceans to economies, as well as to establish environmental, social and economic indicators to measure the development impact of initiatives on state of coasts, communities and economies.

Acknowledging the current strong momentum to tackle marine debris globally, the PEMSEA member nations agreed to significantly reduce or prevent marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based and sea-based activities, including marine litter and nutrient pollution.

The countries, through their representatives, also vowed to implement policies and programs for the sustainable management of coastal tourism destinations.

They likewise recognized the critical importance of regional collaboration in dealing with coastal and marine hazards like storm surges and tsunamis.

With respect to climate change, the PEMSEA member nations committed to implement adaptation and mitigation strategies to respond to the global phenomenon given the urgency and seriousness of its threats to the Sustainable development of countries and the region.

Moreover, the 11 countries vowed to continue their efforts to improve cooperation and engagement between PEMSEA and other nations, relevant international development organizations, the private sector, NGOs, academic and research institutions, and other stakeholders.

They promised to step up the cooperation with regional organizations to achieve the targets under the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).

“We are determined to continue working together as PEMSEA country partners to deliver our common objectives in line with the SDS-SEA and our regional and global commitments,” they added.

Finally, the countries declared that the biggest threat they face in the region is “ourselves, in the way we live our lives and the way we manage our resources.”

“We therefore strongly urge everyone to shift towards a mindset of responsible stewardship, and pledge to take bold steps to protect, manage and restore our coasts and oceans for our present and future generations,” they said.

“PEMSEA Country Partners are ready to engage citizens in East Asia and peoples in other regions to work together to secure our shared vision of healthy oceans, people and economy.”

Acting separately on environmental issues will only lead to complex problems that are very difficult for individual countries to solve. They are a pressing and urgent concern that we need to face together.

Secretary Roy A. Cimatu
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Addressing the opening of EAS-Congress 2018
EAS-Congress Centre, November 27, 2018

Youth has to be engaged now in policymaking because after all they are the future generations. They have to be exposed and know the problems they face today in the future.

Aimee Gonzalez
Special Assistant to the Secretary

The youth are our future champions (that will help) ensure a healthy environment to support and sustain our economy and social security.

Dr. Choo Tha Eng
Professor of Marine Science
Great Lakes Institute of Environmental Studies
EAS Congress 2018
November 27, 2018

While there are many challenges facing the region’s marine and coastal ecosystems and communities, there is nothing that cannot be handled by continuous dialogue and mutual cooperation.

Ola Ahmren
Chairman
International Seabed Authority

#SeasAsOne Moving as One with the Global Ocean Agenda
Photos

Above: The 70 EAS Congress Youth Forum delegates with the 50 students who participated in the Youth Forum Outreach Program; Middle (Left-Right): The new batch of country youth leaders, Group discussions during the breakout session; Below (Left-Right): Ms. Jenna Jambeck discussing about Marine Pollution, PEMSEA Network of Young Leaders (PNYL) Captain from the Philippines, John Carl Alonsagay
Name of Activity  BMB-BFAR Convergence
Date  22-23 November 2018 (Workshop)
Venue  Astoria, Palawan
Organizer  Biodiversity Management Bureau
Description

From November 22 to 23, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau conducted a workshop in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan to develop a BFAR-BMB Convergence Operational Plan.

The DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, primarily responsible for managing our Philippine fisheries and marine biodiversity, identified the need and value of moving forward together and committing to an enhanced convergence and complementation of policies, plans, and programs. With this shared commitment and synergistic direction taken by both Bureaus, a BFAR-BMB Convergence Operational Plan was developed to guide both agencies in concretizing and operationalizing how the two bureaus should work more effectively and efficiently together.
Name of Activity       Coral Triangle Initiative Senior Officials and Ministerial Meeting
Date                  9-15 December 2018
Venue                 Dusit Thani Hotel, Makati City
Organizer             Biodiversity Management Bureau

2018 proved to be a banner year for the Philippines as a member of the six-nation partnership to protect the Coral Triangle after making significant headway in effectively managing its marine protected areas (MPAs) and fisheries.

“The year 2018 was a good one for the Philippines in terms of our efforts and achievements as a member of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF),” said Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

CTI-CFF is a multilateral partnership of six countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and the Philippines—working together to sustain extraordinary marine and coastal resources in the region known as the “global center of marine biodiversity” by addressing crucial issues such as food security and climate change.

According to Rodriguez, the country has delivered on its commitment to create more MPAs with the enactment of Republic Act 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) Act, earlier this year.

The E-NIPAS Law has brought to 43 the total number of nationally-managed MPAs and 1,816 locally managed MPAs, all covering 1.4 percent of the country’s total sea area.

“One of the milestones of the Philippines is the legislation of additional 10 (nationally managed) MPAs under the (E-NIPAS Act),” Rodriguez said.

MPAs are areas in seas and oceans where human activity is regulated for conservation and protection of the natural resources within them.

Rodriguez also reported the full implementation of the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program, which covered activities such as habitat assessment for the NIPAS MPAs, MPA networking technical assistance for local government units, support to 25 MPA networks and some 200 biodiversity-friendly enterprises, and inclusion of ocean acidification baseline study in select MPAs.

She added that coastal stability assessment, mapping, impact monitoring, resiliency studies and updating of coral reef baseline data were conducted in the West Philippine Sea and the Philippine Rise, formerly known as Benham Rise.
Other accomplishments of the country in MPA management include the establishment of a two million hectare MPA in northeast Palawan, approval of MPA management plan for Davao Gulf, and creation of five-province MPA and MPA network within the Verde Island Passage, which has been dubbed as the “center of the center of marine shorefish biodiversity in the world.” The five provinces are Batangas, Marinduque, Romblon, Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro.

Rodriguez noted that effective MPA management is one of the five targets under the country's National Plan of Action (NPOA) for the CTI-CFF.

“Among the NPOA goals, that of the MPA truly mirrors how much we have achieved in terms of implementation and regional cooperation,” Rodriguez pointed out.

Aside from MPA management, Rodriguez said the country was also successful in adopting the ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM), another goal set by the Philippines in its NPOA.

She said the country had intensified its effort to combat illegal fishing nationwide, with the end view of improving food security and livelihood.

To strengthen law enforcement on the country’s coastal waters, Rodriguez said a Committee on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing was created through Executive Order No. 154.

Of the 24 EAFM programs initiated, Rodriguez said six have been completed while 18 are on-going.

The BMB chief said the Philippines also made progress on its 3 other NPOA goals, namely: establishment of seascapes, achieving climate change adaptation measures, and improved status of threatened species.

The Philippines also ends 2018 on a high note with its successful hosting of the CTI-CFF Ministerial Meetings and Senior Officials Meeting on December 9-15, which served as culminating activities for the country’s two-year chairmanship of CTI-CFF.

Rodriguez, meanwhile, called for continued support for the country’s initiatives to protect its coastal and marine resources.

“We look forward to the continued support of our development partners as we embark on the progress of the next Regional Plan of Action (RPAO). This then leads us to tackle issues on marine debris, nature-based ecotourism, blue carbon, and sustained financing for the CTI-CFF goals,” Rodriguez said.

Name of Activity: Celebration of International Year of the Reef
Date: 20 December 2018
Venue: Ayala Mall Legazpi, Albay
Organizer: DENR- Bicol Region (Region V)

Description:

In celebration of the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2018, the DENR PENRO Albay has undertaken various related activities regarding the conservation and protection of coastal ecosystems. The International Year of the Reef 2018 celebration was conducted at Ayala Malls Legazpi on December 20, 2018 in collaboration with the Office of the 2nd District of Albay and Team Albay Youth Organization (TAYO) Inc. Said activity was participated by PENRO Albay and Regional Office personnel, other partner agencies, students from various schools and mall-goers. IEC materials were also distributed to the participants prior to the program.

During the short program, DMO III/Chief-CRFMS Ma. Rosa Vida C. Onrubia warmly welcomed all the participants. She also gave a short message with regards to the importance of the marine ecosystems particularly the coral reefs. Likewise, SvEMS/ Chief-CDS Gemma C. Lavilla gave a short overview about the activity. She also discussed the brief history of the celebration.

Furthermore, representatives from the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) presented a lecture on “Energy-Saving”. They put emphasis on the effects of global warming particularly on marine ecosystems. Thus, they encouraged all the participants to save energy to reduce the effects of global warming.

Likewise, the mascot of Mr. Barry Baraka, the banner species of one of the marine protected area in Bicol Region, the Malabungot Marine Protected Landscape and Seascape was introduced to the participants. Baraka is a local term for Lapu-Lapu which is abundant in the aforementioned MPA.

Various short video clips were also shown during the activity to raise awareness on the importance of coastal and marine ecosystems and of nature as a whole. Moreover, informative printed tarpaulins about marine life were displayed in the area during the event. Interactive games were also done during the activity wherein participants were grouped and were given various tasks with regards to the conservation of coastal and marine habitats.

The activity was concluded with the launching of the official station ID of DENR PENRO-Albay. The half-day celebration of International Year of the Reef 2018 was accomplished successfully.
Ms. Ma. Rosa Vida C. Onrubia delivering her warm welcome remarks during the IYOR 2018

The participants during the International Year of the Reef 2018 celebration

The mascot of Mr. “Barry Barry Baraka”

Short videos clips showing
Name of Activity  International Year of the Reef 2018 Culmination Night
Date  31 January 2019
Venue  Diamoind Hotel, Manila
Organizer  DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau

Description

The Philippines had actively participated in the celebration of 3rd International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2018 with the theme, “Together in Protecting Our Reefs”.

IYOR, which happens every 10 years, aims to raise awareness of, and action regarding, the value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, threats to their health, and management solutions; and to facilitate public involvement in coral reef conservation-related activities in all countries.

The Philippine Government, through the initiatives under the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) of the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), conducted the launching of the IYOR on 12 February 2018 at EDSA Shangri-La, Mandaluyong City. It did not just start-off the year-long celebration of this global event, but most importantly, it aims for a renewed partnership and cooperation among valued partners towards long term protection and conservation of our coral reef ecosystems.

Throughout the year-long celebration, different agencies have conducted activities to address threats to coral reefs which includes marine debris, illegal fishing, unsustainable tourism and other land-based threats. IYOR Partners have also emphasized the need for science, education and capacity building in responding to the said threats.

One of the biggest, current threats to our coastal and marine ecosystems is plastic pollution. Thus, DENR, together with UNDP, SmartSeas and CORA, Launched the CleanSeas Pilipinas campaign last May 2018 which aims to identify local and national partners and academic institutions to mobilize Filipinos all over the country to reduce plastic waste.

Unfortunately, this has not always been the attitude of Filipinos; as one of the world-renowned destinations, Boracay, was a victim of unsustainable tourism, management, and pollution of all sorts- plastics, solid and liquid waste, or sewage. This called for an intervention and stricter enforcement of environmental laws in the island- from easements, to waste management, to sewage treatment. After the 6-month closure for rehabilitation, the island was opened again for tourists on October 2018.

Alongside the rehabilitation programs are opportunities for a fresh start with pristine ecosystems. Last year, the Philippines secured an opportunity to prove the value it places on the conservation of coral reefs. Philippines is fortunate to have shared with the world the Philippine Rise, which hosts some of the most expansive and pristine coral reefs of the country. With the declaration of the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve on May 2018, Filipinos are now, more than ever, responsible for its protection and management for the benefit of the present and future generations.
Also, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Biodiversity Management Bureau started a convergence through conduct of series of meetings and workshops together towards a stronger partnership and efforts.

Moreover, among the international conferences and events hosted by the Philippines on 2018 were the 4th Asia Pacific Coral Reef Symposium on May, East Asian Seas Congress on November, and the Coral Triangle Initiative Senior Officials and Ministerial Meeting on December.

To officially close the celebration, an IYOR Culmination Night was conducted on 31 January 2019 at the Diamond Hotel, Manila.

BMB Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez commended the partners who contributed in the National IYOR Roadmap and shared how IYOR did not only create a platform for sharing of ideas but also formed a community bound with a common vision and passion for the ocean.

DENR Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna presented the major accomplishments of the Philippines in line with celebration and thanked the partners on the concerted efforts towards coral reef management. He also called the support of the agencies present for the Manila Bay Rehabilitation which he considered as another opportunity for multi-sectoral cooperation, and ultimately for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into society and into the lives of everyday Filipinos.

Aside from the recognition of partners, the event also highlighted the launching of the Operational Plan of the convergence of BFAR and BMB. Undersecretary Eduardo Gongona of BFAR shared how timely is the convergence of the agencies, as bountiful fish catch is associated with healthy coastal and marine ecosystems. Dir. Rodriguez hopes the convergence will be a catalyst for a broader harmonization with other agencies working for the coastal and marine sector in the future.

“Although we are culminating the International Year of the Reef, our efforts must only progress, and not end with this global event. Let us continue to integrate the values of coral reef conservation into the development of the Philippines”, Undersecretary Cuna added.
Above: Undersecretary Cuna gives the opening message; Middle (L-R) Directors Rodriguez and Gongona for the convergence toast; Celebrities and DENR ambassadors Ms. Toni Taus and Mr. David Reyes as the event’s host; Below: The IYOR Philippines partners
IYOR Partners use the Social Media as platform in sharing the call towards reef conservation. Through out the year, the Philippine used the following hashtags:

#IYOR2018 #IYORPH2018 #TogetherForOurReefs

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Harbison Foundation
October 12, 2018

Fishers and local community members of the People’s Organization NURSHA celebrated 7 years of marine protected area management. NURSHA manages the Lamuzza Marine Park and Sanctuary in Siquijor del Sur. Their name is short for the Barangay names of Nurcia, Sibahay, Habag, of which team members reside.

Daghang salamat to NURSHA and the marine protected area network of Lamuzza Bay.

SMARTSeas PH #SMARTSeas #IYOR2018 #IYOR2018PH

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Greens Fins
November 16, 2018

World Sea TheFish, used to know why? The LAST infographic, this November/Festive 2018 campaign is out. Be part of the world of the must-knowing knowledge share, print, post, humbltly.

Print the complete version here: http://www.iyor.org/philippines

Thanks to Dive In - online Scuba Diving Magazine for their contribution on the creation of the infographic.

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Planet CORA
February 21, 2018

@PlanetCORA is extremely proud of the segregation skills of the students of St. Mary’s Baldawg! They even have their own existing segregation and recycling program taught to their amazing science teacher Potee De Castrol. @PlanetCORA will never stop working working hard to help all schools become more green and plastic free! Thank you again to all the students and teachers of St. Mary’s Baldawg! You are true Earth warriors! 😖❤️ “Save our planet do good times come on! it’s the segregation!” 📩 #CleanPollution #SaveOurOcean #IYOR2018

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AHKAN Center for Biodiversity
February 9, 2018

Happening Now: Sharing of lessons learned from the Experiential learning Activity on Collaborative Approaches to Protected Area Management: The Case of Barangay Province, Philippines

ACT Headquarters, Los Balos, Laugna, Philippines

ahkan.my@ahkan.ph

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IYOR Partners have also published articles/videos in line with the advocacy to sustainably manage our coral reefs. Find the links below to reach the stories.

Haribon Foundation

- "Reef Grief" article on Flipscience (https://www.flipscience.ph/plants-and-animals/reef-grief-urgent-ph-reef-conservation/)

Rare Philippines

- CNN Philippines features Rocky and Rare (http://cnnphilippines.com/videos/2018/06/14/Profiles-Rocky-Sanchez-Tirona.html)