

DATE : 04 MAY 2019

DAY : Saturday

**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**

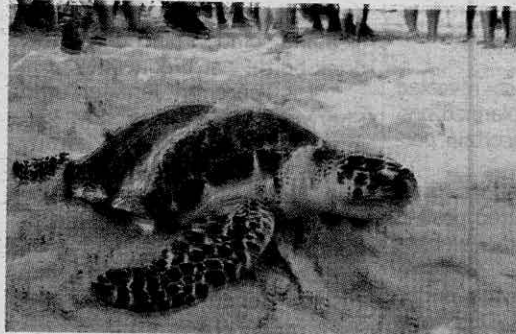


# Endangered turtles released in Boracay

Iloilo City – Three critically endangered sea turtles were released by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) personnel off the coast of world-famous Boracay Island in Malay town, Aklan province.

Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez of DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) and DENR-6 Regional Director Francisco Milla Jr. led Wednesday the releasing of three Hawksbill turtles back to their natural habitat.

The releasing of the turtles coincided with the start of Ocean's Month and the end of Boracay's Sustainability Week known as "Love



**ONE** of the Hawksbill turtles confiscated at Boracay Island is released back to its natural habitat during the highlight of this year's 'Love Boracay' event.

Boracay", which marks the first year when its massive rehabilitation kicked off.

The three turtles were confiscated

from illegal pet owners. They were nursed back to health at Boracay Oceanarium before being released last Wednesday. **(Tara Yap)**



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# High court orders gov't to protect China-occupied PH reefs in WPS

**By Dona Z. Pazzibugan**  
@dpazzibuganINQ

The Supreme Court on Friday issued a special order for the protection and rehabilitation of destroyed marine environment in three Philippine features in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) that were seized by China or surrounded by Chinese vessels.

The writ of kalikasan covered Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal, and Panganiban (Mischief) Reef.

In a special full-court session on Friday, the Supreme Court granted the petition of a group of Palawan fisherfolk and Zambales residents seeking to prevent environmental law violations within the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Panatag Shoal is part of Masinloc, Zambales, while Ayungin Shoal and Panganiban

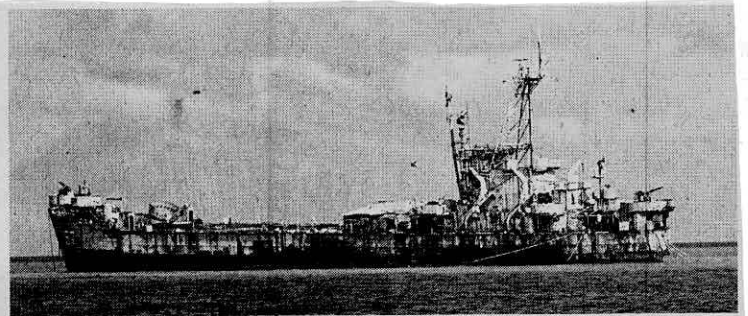
Reef are part of the municipality of Kalayaan, Palawan.

Abdiel Fajardo, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), said the issuance of the writ of kalikasan by the Supreme Court affirmed their position that the three reefs, which are all within the country's 370-kilometer EEZ, should be protected by Philippine authorities from further environmental degradation.

#### Within PH's EEZ

"This affirms at this juncture the Philippine position made before the international arbitral body that the disputed islands falls within the EEZ of the Philippines, and must therefore be protected by Philippine authorities as required by the Constitution and domestic environmental laws," Fajardo said.

The issuance of a writ of kalikasan also shows "that the Philippines, at least through the judiciary, is not waiving its



**OUTPOST** The BRP Sierra Madre was deliberately ran aground by the Navy in Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal in 1999 to mark Philippine territory. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

rights over them by acquiescing to the unilateral actions of another state," he added.

The IBP represented Kalayaan Palawan Farmers and Fisherfolk Association and residents of Sitio Kinabukasan in Cawag, Zambales.

Introduced by the Supreme Court under then Chief Justice Reynato Puno in 2010, the writ of kalikasan is a legal remedy that provides protection of

one's constitutional right to a healthy environment.

It invokes Section 16, Article II of the Constitution, which states the "state shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology."

The Palawan fisherfolk and Zambales residents named as respondents Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu; Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol; Justice Secretary Menardo Guevar-



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High court orders govt to protect china-occupied  
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ra; Eduardo Gongona, director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources; Vice Adm. Robert Empedrad, the Navy flag officer in command; Rear Adm. Elson Hermogino, commandant of the Coast Guard; Police Gen. Oscar Albayalde, chief of the Philippine National Police; and Police Brig. Gen. Rodelio Jocson, chief of the PNP Maritime Group.

**Illegal harvesting of clams**

The IBP filed the petition on April 16 after the Department of Foreign Affairs announced it would take legal action against China for illegally harvesting endangered giant clams and for destroying corals at Panatag Shoal.

The IBP said the government's inaction on the activities of Chinese fishermen in contested areas in the South China Sea violated the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, the Philippine Fisheries Code and Presidential Decree No. 1586, which estab-

lished the Environmental Impact Statement System.

The petitioners invoked the July 12, 2016 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration which dismissed China's sweeping claims over almost the entire South China Sea, including the West Philippine Sea.

The tribunal instead upheld that Ayungin Shoal, which is guarded by a tiny Philippine Marines contingent aboard the rusting Navy vessel BRP Sierra Madre but surrounded by Chinese vessels, and Panganiban Reef were within the Philippines' EEZ.

The arbitral tribunal said that while Panatag Shoal is a traditional fishing ground, Chinese-flagged vessels have destroyed the coral reef ecosystem by harvesting giant clams and other endangered species.

The tribunal said China's construction of artificial islands and structures in Panganiban Reef caused severe, irreparable harm to the coral reefs. INQ



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# SC to nat'l gov't: Protect WPS marine environment

Law graduates take photos as an LED wall in front of the Supreme Court building in Manila shows the list of passers of the 2018 Bar examinations yesterday.

KRIZJOHN ROSALES

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

The Supreme Court (SC) has granted a petition of fishermen and a group of lawyers for the issuance of a Writ of Kalikasan directing the government to actively protect the West Philippine Sea and stop the degradation of its marine resources by the Chinese.

In a statement issued yesterday, the SC said magistrates in special full session issued a Writ of Kalikasan to "protect, preserve, rehabilitate and to restore the marine environment" at the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Panganiban (Mischief) Reef.

The municipality of Masinloc in Zambales covers Panatag Shoal, while Ayungin Shoal and Panganiban Reef are in the Kalayaan Island Group in Palawan.

In issuing the writ, the SC granted the petition filed by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and fishermen from Zambales and Palawan last month.

Respondents in the case are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) represented by Secretary Roy Cimatu, Department of Agriculture (DA) represented by Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) headed by director Eduardo Gongona, Philippine Navy (PN) Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) commanded by

Admiral Elson Hermogino, Philippine National Police (PNP) led by General Oscar Albayalde, PNP Maritime Group represented by Police Brig, Gen. Rodelio Jocson and the Department of Justice (DOJ) represented by Secretary Merardo Guevarra.

The court said the writ should prompt the government to do

more to prevent violations of environmental laws in Philippine waters, specifically within the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

In filing the petition, the lawyers' group and the fishermen cited the government's inaction on the environmentally destructive activities of Chinese fishermen and forces in the West Philippine Sea.

They said the Chinese activities – including the construction of artificial islands and harvesting of endangered aquatic resources – were clear violations of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, the Philippine Fisheries Code and Presidential Decree No. 1586, or Establishing the Environmental Impact Statement System in the Philip-

pines.

They said that in its July 12, 2016 ruling, the Permanent Court of Arbitration based in The Hague declared that Ayungin Shoal and Panganiban Reef were indisputably within the Philippines' EEZ and that Panatag Shoal is a common fishing ground. China has refused to comply with the ruling, calling it a mere piece of paper.

Overall, the ruling invalidated Beijing's nine-dash

line claim covering almost the entire South China Sea and reaffirmed the Philippines' own maritime entitlements.

Critics of the Duterte administration claimed its appeasement of Beijing had emboldened the Chinese to assert more aggressively its massive maritime claim and seize more land features clearly within Philippine territory.

Earlier, reports emerged regarding the swarming of

Chinese vessels around Pagasa Island in the Kalayaan Island Group. The Chinese were also found to have harvested hundreds of endangered giant clams at Pag-asa.

When told of the Chinese activities, Malacañang vowed to file a protest. President Duterte reportedly raised the matter personally with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his recent Beijing visit for the Belt and Road Forum.



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# Groups welcome Canada's offer to take back trash

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Environmental groups welcomed Canada's offer to have its garbage in the Philippines re-exported to the North American country.

As reported earlier by Canadian media, Ottawa has sent "a formal offer" to the government of the Philippines to have the illegal garbage shipments that arrived at the Port of Manila from 2013 to 2014 returned

to the Port of Vancouver.

"While we are not aware yet of the terms and conditions, we welcome the offer made by the Canadian government as a very positive development that will hopefully result in the re-export of their garbage on or before the May 15 deadline," said Aileen Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition national coordinator.

"Our nation's persistence to get the garbage returned to the 'state of export' has raised na-

tional as well as global awareness about the responsibility of waste exporting countries to respect the rights of people in developing countries and for them to live up to their obligations as parties to the Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes," she added.

The Triple Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions is currently in progress in Ge-

neva, Switzerland from April 29 to May 10.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III gave the Bureau of Customs until May 15 to return the garbage to Canada following President Duterte's stern warning last April 23 against the long delayed repatriation of the illegal trash shipments.

"As this is a matter of public interest, we request the authorities to fully disclose the offer

made by Canada so the people can see and assess for themselves if the terms and conditions, if any, are in line with our national laws and Canada's obligations under the Basel Convention. There ought to be a complete inventory and accounting of Canada's wastes in the country," Lucero stressed.

From 2013 to 2014, a total of 103 shipping containers of mixed household garbage from Canada disguised as

scrap plastic for recycling reached Philippine shores. Twenty-six of these containers were illegally disposed of at a landfill in Tarlac in 2015 until exposed and halted by furious citizens and officials.

A waste characterization study conducted by the government in 2014 confirmed that 64 percent of the garbage shipments were residuals, which can no longer be recycled and should be properly disposed of.



***Editorial***

## Paghandaan ang baha

**D**ALAWANG linggo na lamang nanamnamin ang mainit na panahon sapagkat sabi ng PAGASA, sa huling linggo ng Mayo ay magsisimula na ang pagpatak ng ulan. At kapag umulan, tiyak na ang kasunod ay baha. At hindi lang basta baha ang nararanasan sa bansa kundi mapaminsalang baha. Kung tuyung-tuyo ngayon, babawiin ito at sobrasobra namang tubig-baha ang ibibigay sa mga tao na halos may mga malunod na.

Karaniwan na ang pananalasa ng baha at hindi ito maiwasan. Lahat ay magdaranas nito. Pero maaaring padaliin ang paghupa nito para kakaunti ang damages sa mamamayan. Isa sa maaaring gawin ay ang paglilinis ng mga imburnal, kanal at mga esterong sandamukal ang nakabarang basura. Ang mga basura ang dahilan kaya walang madaanan ang tubig. Namumutiktik sa basura ang mga drainages kaya sa kalsada humahantong ang tubig-baha. Matagal bumaba ang tubig sapagkat walang mapuntahan dahil sa tambak ng basura.

Ngayon ang pinakamainam na panahon para linisin ang mga baradong imburnal. Maging prayoridad sana ito ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) at ng Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA). May malaking papel ang MMDA lalo na sa mga estero na madalas pagtapunan ng mga basura. Kadalasang ang mga iskuwarter na nakatira sa mga pampang ng ilog at estero ang nagtatapon ng mga basurang plastic. Ang mga basura namang ito ang humahantong sa Manila Bay. Sa kasalukuyan, nililinis ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang Manila Bay. Pero mawawalan ng saysay ang kanilang paglilinis kung patuloy ang pagtatapon ng basura sa mga ilog at estero.

Maaaring malunasan ang pagbabaha sa Metro Manila kung madidisiplina ang mamamayan sa pagtatapon ng basura. Dapat maipamulat sa lahat na ang mga basurang itinapon sa kung saan-saan lang ay magdudulot nang malaking problema at lahat ay apektado.

Paghandaan ang pananalasa ng baha. Magsimula sa paglilinis ng baradong kanal at drainages at simulan din ang pagdisiplina sa sarili na huwag magtapon ng basura kung saan-saan.



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## Mt. Everest tambak ng basura

KAHIT na ang pinakamataas na bundok sa mundo, tambak na rin ng basura.

Sa unang dalawang linggong clean-up operation na ginawa ng grupo ng mga volunteer, umabot na sa tatlong metriko tonelada ng basura ang kanilang nahakot.

Ilan sa mga basurang

nakuha ng Everest Cleaning Campaign ay mga lata, bote, plastic at mga tinapon na climbing gear. Nakuha rin sila ng apat na bangkay.

Tumulong ang isang army helicopter sa paghahakot ng mga basura.

Taon-taon ay dinadayo ng mga turista

ang Mt. Everest upang umakyat sa pinakamataas na bahagi nito.

Noong 2014, hiniangan ng Nepalese government ang mga aakyat sa bundok na magdeposito. Makuha lamang nila ang deposito kapag nakapaghakot ng walong kilo ng basura sa Mt. Everest.





### **Manila Bay clean-up suportado ni Koko**

Sinuportahan ni Senador "Koko" Pimentel III ang malawakang clean-up ng gobyerno sa makasaysayang Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Pimentel, nang maglingkod siya bilang Rotary Club of Manila Bay president, marami silang pagsisikap

na ginawa para malinis ang Manila Bay bilang citizen volunteers.

"I join the Duterte administration's all out effort to clean-up Manila Bay," ani Pimentel sa kanyang Facebook account kamakailan.

"Now with the govern-

ment's all-out effort together with the support of thousands of volunteers, I am more confident of success that indeed the historic and scenic Manila Bay will be brought back to its former glorious state," dagdag ng senador mula sa Mindanao.



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## EDITORIAL

### FISHKILL SA DAGAT AT CLIMATE CHANGE

HINDI maganda ang fishkill na nagaganap sa dagat, partikular sa Zamboanga.

Nitong nagdaang mga araw, natatagpuan ang napakaraming isda na patay sa dalampasigan ng Zamboanga City makaraang bumaba ang lebel ng tubig dahil sa low tide.

Pinagbawalan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na kunin at ulamin ang mga isda upang mapigilan ang anomang masamang epekto nito sa kalusugan ng tao.

Ayon sa mga agrikulturista, maaaring kinapos ang mga isda ng tubig dahil sa kakulangan ng oxygen na likha ng sobrang init sa kapaligiran.

Iba naman ang nagaganap na fishkill sa mga fishpond dahil talaga namang namamatay ang isda sa mainit na tubig.

Ang mga isdang namatay sa Zamboanga ay itinuturing na naninirahan sa malalalim na parte ng karagatan bagama't may mga lumalapit naman sa mga dalampasigan.

Ang mga ito ang nahuhuli ng mga mangingisdang munisipal at deep-sea.

Wala pa talagang nakatitiyak kung ano talaga ang dahilan ng fishkill subalit magandang magsagawa ang mga kinaukulan ng malalim at malawak na pagsusuri.

Kung bahagi ang fishkill ng climate change na tumutungo sa pag-iinit ng mundo na nakaaapekto maging sa mga naninirahan sa karagatan, magandang maging aktibo tayo sa pagsunod at pagpatupad ng mga batas laban sa pag-iinit ng mundo.

Ang hindi pagsunog ng mga basura kundi pagtatapon ng mga ito nang tama ay malaking bagay nang tulong ng bawat isa laban sa climate change at pag-iinit ng mundo.