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Hope shines anew for Laguna de Bay

By

[Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

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Conclusion

Knife-fish infestation

Fishers, as well as fish-pen and fish-cage operators, continue to complain about knife-fish infestation. The knife fish, a carnivorous fish, lays their eggs that stick to the bamboo poles of fish cages and fishnets. Upon hatching, they easily enter the fish pen and fish cage and feed on *bangus* and tilapia fingerlings.

According to Renato Francisco, they estimated that knife-fish infestation reduces potential *bangus* and tilapia harvest by as much as 60 percent. Knife fish, although edible, is not a very popular fish, and sells from P15 to P25 per kilogram. Those who catch knife fish sell them to traders in Malabon, who use it in making fish balls.

Jaime C. Medina said the Department of Agriculture (DA) is also helping address the knife-fish infestation in the lake.

“It is important for these programs against knife fish to continue. The DA pays for every knife fish caught in the lake by the fishers,” he added.

Fish-stock replenishment

To boost the income of small fishers who fish within the lake’s open waters, Medina is pinning hope on the DA’s program, called “Project Basil”, or “Balik Sigla sa Ilog at Lawa” Project. Part of the project is to release 25 million fingerlings. Laguna de Bay is among the priority.

He said native fish would be released by the DA as a part of the program. This includes *ayungin*, *biya* and other native fish, he added.

“We are eyeing to register the fishers, too. We want illegal fishing to stop,” he said.

According to Medina, hopefully as the Laguna Lake Development Authority, with the help of the DA, cushions the impact of knife-fish infestation, the lake’s native fish will recover and, soon, replenish the lake with enough fish stock to sustain fish production.

Fighting pollution and getting rid of the pesky knife fish, he said, will be a priority under his watch. With the support of stakeholders, there is always hope for Laguna de Bay, he added.

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