

DENR focuses on protecting biological diversity in 2020?

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MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that for the new year, it aims to fulfill targets set in line with protecting the country's rich biological diversity.

As of October last year, the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) has assessed 52 caves, equivalent to 137 percent of the annual target of 38.

BMB, through the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife or Task Force POGI, also confiscated a total of 72 heads of different wildlife species, and 15.6 kilograms of agarwood (*Aquilaria* spp.) in different operations in the country.

Task Force POGI is a composite team of wildlife enforcers from various agencies including the BMB, National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police.

The bureau has issued a total of 7,926 wildlife permits, greatly surpassing the target of 4,026 by 197 percent. Examples of the permits issued are gratuitous wildlife farm, wildlife local transport, wildlife collector, import, export and re-export permits, as well as certificates of wildlife registration.

The high accomplishment was due to the fact that the issuance of permits is demand-driven, the BMB explained.

In 2019, the BMB maintained 42 wildlife rescue centers and 384 ecotourism facilities nationwide, accomplishing 89 percent and 98 percent, respectively, of the targets.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu reported that the DENR – through the BMB – is poised to achieve all its 2019 goals in terms of biodiversity conservation, with targets surpassing in the areas of cave assessment and issuance of wildlife permits as early as last October.

He said DENR never wavered in fully enforcing Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

The law aims to conserve and protect wildlife species and their habitats to promote ecological balance and enhance biological diversity, and regulate the collection and trade of wildlife species.

DENR

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