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Don't hunt wild birds, DENR warns public

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources warned the public against hunting migratory birds amid the onset of migration season in the Philippines.

DENR Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and concurrent Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Ricardo Calderon said the annual bird migration season in the Philippines commences around September every year when migratory birds go on southward migration and ends when they go northwards to return to their breeding grounds in March of the following year.

The Philippines is part of the East Asian-Australasian Migratory Flyway, hosting a number of migratory birds in protected areas, such as the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecosystem Area, Naujan Lake National Park in Oriental Mindoro, and Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Cebu.

During the season, Calderon said the migratory birds stop briefly along wetlands – swamps, marshes, intertidal, coastal areas, rivers, ponds, lakes, as well as forests throughout the country, to rest and refuel for their onward journey.

The Philippines serves as habitat to more than 80 species of migratory birds that visit the country every year.

Migratory birds are major players in the ecosystem as they pollinate plants, disperse seeds, and consume insects and small mammals.

“We call on the public to help protect these birds. Hunting of wildlife including birds is illegal and is punishable under the provisions of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act,” Calderon said.

Violators may face a maximum imprisonment of two years and one day to four years and a fine of P30,000 to P300,000, he pointed out.

The DENR-BMB chief explained that certain migratory birds, such as wild ducks, gulls, and shorebirds are susceptible to avian influenza virus (avian flu).

The public is therefore further advised not to handle any wild dead birds that may be found near wetlands, he said.

“If you have knowledge of anyone who killed, inflicted injury, or is engaged in collecting, hunting, transporting, or trading of these birds, among other illegal acts as provided for under the Wildlife Act, or encountered any incidences of dead birds, please inform the nearest DENR field office, local government unit, or police officer in your area,” Calderon said.

Information can also be sent to the Biodiversity Management Bureau through telefax No. 02-89258946 or by email at wrd@bmb.gov.ph.

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/dont-hunt-wild-birds-denr-warns-public/#:~:text=Hunting%20of%20wildlife%20including%20birds,Protection%20Act%2C%E2%80%9D%20Calderon%20said.>