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What is a biodiversity hero?

By [BusinessMirror](#)

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A hero is an individual who is admired for extraordinary achievements, courage, or noble qualities. When asked who their heroes are, many people in the Philippines think of Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio and Apolinario Mabini.

Every country has heroes they look up to—King Naresuan the Great of Thailand, Lim Bo Seng of Singapore, Gen. Aung San of Myanmar, King Chao Anouvong of Lao PDR, Gen. Raden Sudirman of Indonesia, Oknha Son Kuy of Cambodia, Awang Alak Betatar of Brunei Darussalam, Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaysia and the Trung sisters of Vietnam.

Some of these heroes are admired for fighting for their countries' independence, some are known for helping institute reforms that change the lives of people for the better and some played key roles in nation-building.

In the biodiversity arena, there are men and women who are devoting their time to curb biodiversity loss and help bring biodiversity closer to everyone.



The BusinessMirror asked people from Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) member-states to share their views on what a biodiversity hero is.

Below are parts of their views:

- Biodiversity heroes and heroines are people of all ages, from all walks of life, who work tirelessly to protect the environment and all its creatures because of their unflinching love for Mother Earth. They are committed to the conservation of nature by bringing about awareness through their actions—thus giving our planet a voice. These actions are intertwined with their daily lives, and can be as simple as saying “no” to using plastic straws and bottles, starting a from grassroots campaign in their community to protect their

forests to leading a national movement against coal mining. Most important, biodiversity heroes and heroines have the innate capacity to inspire others to sacrifice what they can to do the same.—*Kitsie Torres, DVM, project development officer, Centre for Sustainability Philippines.*

- A biodiversity hero is a person who has dedicated his or her life to nature, providing inspiration for the community and providing significant contribution to biodiversity-conservation efforts. A biodiversity hero spreads awareness about the values of biodiversity and the sustainable preservation of natural heritage.—*Sulviah Darmuh, forest extension, Lorentz National Park, Indonesia.*
- Biodiversity simply means variability among living organisms. However, it has a greater definition, and it should be viewed in the wider context of environmental stability. A biodiversity hero is someone who truly understands its definition. Understanding its definition means knowing its significance to humanity and the planet. Recognizing biodiversity's importance means taking actions to help conserve and protect biodiversity. A biodiversity hero could be a scientist, a professional, or a simple individual who has proven his utmost dedication for conservation. A biodiversity hero is someone who believes in collaborative efforts in creating a positive impact for biodiversity. Biodiversity conservation must be the greatest concern of all as it is being threatened due to habitat loss and degradation, overexploitation and unsustainable use, invasive alien species, pollution and climate change. Thus, our planet needs a hero who will transform everyone to become champions for biodiversity. —*Adriane B. Tobias, forester, ambassador for SGD#15—Life on Land, 2030 Youth Force in the Philippines.*
- Biodiversity heroes are people who dedicate their lives to preserving biodiversity with all of their heart and soul. Sometimes they are not aware that they are heroes because they only think of the best that they can give to preserve biodiversity.—*Elisabeth Devi Krismurniati, Coordinator, Elephant Training Center, Way Kambas National Park, Indonesia.*
- A biodiversity hero is someone who will be looked to by others because of his or her actions and advocacy, and from there will ignite the interest of people to respond to the global call to protect and conserve nature. This person aims to comply with the role of us, humans, to be the stewards of nature through his or her work in his or her field. Moreover, this individual fulfills the responsibility of sharing the consciousness that we should all be involved in biodiversity conservation. He or she is a reason of enkindling more actions

until we see the world lighted up by fiery passion to love every living thing on earth. —
Patrick Angelo Narciso, BS Geology student, University of the Philippines, scholar, Hyundai New Thinkers Circuit.

- A biodiversity hero can be an environmental activist who closely follows what is happening with biodiversity. He or she raises concerns when lives are affected by the changes in biodiversity. A biodiversity hero helps find new strategies to conserve biodiversity.—*Lihuy Hok, law student, Royal University of Law and Economics, exchange participant, AIESEC Global Volunteer Program.*
- A biodiversity hero is someone who is passionate about taking care of the animals and adoring nature. —*Aiko Isabel S. Asuncion, Incoming Grade 4 student, Morning Star Montessori School Inc.*

Heroic acts for biodiversity

On August 8 Asean will introduce 10 Asean Biodiversity Heroes—outstanding individuals from the 10 Asean member-states who have contributed significantly to biodiversity conservation and advocacy efforts in their respective countries and the region. The heroes will be the faces of biodiversity conservation in the Asean region—individuals that people can identify with and will inspire others to take action for biodiversity in their own spheres of influence. This will be one of the commemorative activities for the 50th anniversary of Asean.

According to the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), a biodiversity hero may be a local government leader who has successfully adopted and implemented a biodiversity action plan; a conservation worker who has implemented significant conservation initiatives to bring together the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, local communities and modern science, or a media practitioner or publisher who helps bridge the communication gap between biodiversity experts and the general public.

A biodiversity hero may also be a biodiversity advocate whose conservation project has resulted in positive change in communities; a youth leader who is engaging fellow youth in performing simple but significant conservation activities; a park manager or worker who has dedicated his or her life to protecting a heritage park or a protected area; or a company CEO who is actively implementing a business and biodiversity initiative and transforming the way his or her company manages and invests in nature.

The Asean Biodiversity Heroes recognition program is supported by the Philippines's Department of Foreign Affairs, the European Union, through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean project, and the Hari Foundation Inc. The ACB serves as awards secretariat.

To know more about the Asean Biodiversity Heroes, visit heroes.aseanbiodiversity.org or <https://www.facebook.com/ASEANBiodiversity/>. Share your thoughts on biodiversity heroism by sending an e-mail to heroes@aseanbiodiversity.org.

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