

DENR 7: Protect wetlands

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THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 7 has urged the public to protect, preserve and maintain the wetlands in the region as it is crucial in combating climate change.

Wetlands provide protection against floods and serve as a natural water impounding area. They are also a source of food and water not only for humans but also for the animals, said Reginaldo Bueno, an officer at the DENR 7's Conservation and Development Division, during the "Kapihan sa PIA" forum last week.

In Central Visayas, Bueno said the DENR 7 has identified 56 inland wetlands and at least 316 across the country.

Bueno said the DENR 7 has declared some wetlands as protected areas such as Danao Lake in Camotes Islands and Lake Lanao in the town of Daanbantayan.

The DENR 7 observed on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023, the World Wetlands Day, a global awareness and effort to reverse the rapid destruction of wetlands across the world.

Republic Act 11038, or National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act of 1992, states that wetlands involve a variety of inland habitats such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes, and those in the coastal areas such as salt marshes, mangroves, intertidal mudflats and seagrass beds and also coral reefs and including other marine areas that are no deeper than six meters at low tide, as well as it considers human-made wetlands such as dams, reservoirs, rice paddies and wastewater treatment ponds and lagoons.

Sanctuary

One of the most recognized wetlands in Cebu is the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Lapu-Lapu City that supports a large concentration of migratory waterbirds in the country. It has been recognized internationally on Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance since 1994.

Lorenz Gideon Esmero of the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary said in the same forum

organized by the Philippine Information Agency Central Visayas that the migratory birds came from the northern hemisphere traveling the East Asian-Australasian Flyway before the cold and winter season.