

DENR calls for forest habitat conservation to preserve PH Eagle

By Marita Moaje

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MANILA – To ensure the conservation of future generations of Philippine eagles and their territories, and allow new generations to thrive and co-exist with other threatened wildlife, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), calls on all Filipinos to help protect forest habitat.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, DENR Assistant Secretary and concurrent BMB Director Marcial Amaro Jr. said that as the country celebrates the 25th Philippine Eagle Week (PEW) from June 4 to 10, the department looks back at its achievements in conserving the iconic and critically endangered Philippine eagle for a quarter of a century now.

Amaro said that by conserving national patrimony, the DENR-BMB improved and harmonized conservation efforts and has put forward strategies to curb the direct and indirect threats to Philippine eagle populations.

He said relevant conservation actions include habitat restoration, law enforcement, management of captive and wild populations, research, and conservation education.

“The habitats conserved locally and protected by communities significantly contribute to environmental stability and security of human well-being, in the looming threats of climate change,” Amaro said.

However, Amaro said more work needs to be done to ensure the survival and viability of the prized raptor which is considered a “national treasure.”

He said the Philippine eagle, whose scientific name is *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, is continually being threatened by hunting and loss of habitat.

In line with the celebration, several activities were held that include an art exhibit showcasing artworks depicting the Philippine eagle by Filipino artists, among others.

Amaro said the artists themselves even paid a registration fee that will be donated for the installation of a water system to a community that helps protect a Philippine eagle habitat in Davao City.

In September last year, DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga called on lawmakers to prioritize the passage of proposed measures to help strengthen Republic Act (RA) 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Loyzaga said the support of lawmakers in the amendment of RA 9147 is crucial in advancing collective efforts and initiatives to sustainably manage the country's wildlife resources.

The Philippine eagle is endemic to the Philippines and is the largest forest raptor in the country.

Found in the islands of Luzon, Samar, Leyte, and Mindanao, the majestic bird has been classified as critically endangered under Department Administrative Order 2019-09 or the Updated National List of Threatened Philippine Fauna and Their Categories, and by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Its uniqueness, strength, and love of freedom reflect the qualities of the Filipino people, that in 1995, the critically endangered Philippine Eagle became a national emblem through Proclamation No. 615. (PNA)