

## **Digital technology to aid in protecting biodiversity – DENR**

Romina Cabrera - The Philippine Star

MANILA, Philippines — In commemoration of World Wildlife Day last March 3, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Lozaga is pushing for the use of digital technology to aid in biodiversity protection.

Digital innovations can be leveraged to combat illegal wildlife trade and support biodiversity in the country alongside collaboration with partners, according to Lozaga.

“We should maximize the advantages that these digital technologies have to offer in various applications in the implementation of our plans and programs on environmental protection and conservation,” she said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) chief opined that regulators and law enforcers can be better equipped to implement laws and regulations using newer technologies.

She noted that wildlife crime has become more well-planned and fast-moving, circumventing established procedures for trade.

She emphasized that the DENR is promoting the use of electronic permitting systems called “eCITES PH” that can prevent fraud in wildlife trade through paperless transactions.

The DENR is also developing a mobile application for monitoring and reporting wildlife crimes through its Wildlife Agency and Citizen Law Enforcement Reporting Tool or WildALERT.

Lozaga said the DENR is also collaborating with the Philippine Space Agency to use space technology, artificial intelligence and machine learning to map out mangrove areas in the country.

She added that the country and the world is facing the triple crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, and that all members of the public should serve as ambassadors for wildlife protection and conservation.

“Let us be the voices that cannot be heard in order to create awareness and to protect and take active part in conservation and prevention of illegal wildlife trade,” she said.