

## Introduction

The Philippines is separated from Taiwan by the Luzon Strait, from China by the South China Sea and from Indonesia and Malaysia by the Celebes Sea. The country consists of more than 7,000 islands divided into three main groups—Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao— with more than 235,000 sq.km of coastline. Most of the country's major islands are along important ocean shipping routes.

The country has 27 Important Bird Areas and 2 coastal Ramsar sites, one in Cebu and the other on the Sulu Sea. There are 150,000 hectares of mangroves spread between Palawan, Mindanao and Visayas and 27,000 sq.km of coral reefs, primarily in Palawan.

The islands of the Philippines are noted for their biodiversity, with one of the highest rates of both marine and terrestrial endemic species. More than 600 species of bird have been recorded in the Philippines, 194 of them endemic species and more than 60 are globally threatened.

### Avian Species

Endangered (including Critically Endangered): Chinese crested tern (*Sterna bernsteini*), Spotted greenshank (*Tringa gutifer*)

Vulnerable/Threatened: Spoon-billed pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*), Chinese egret (*Egretta eulophotes*), Philippine duck (*Anas luzonica*), Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*), Sarus crane (*Grus antigone*), silvery kingfisher (*Alcedo argentata*), black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*), streaked reed warbler (*Acrocephalus sorghophilus*)

Other Avian Species of Concern: Asiatic dowitcher (*Limnodromus semipalmatus*), Calayan rail (*Gallirallus calayanensis*), brown-banded rail (*Lewinia mirifica*)

### Marine Mammals

Endangered, Vulnerable or Threatened: Dugong (*Dugong dugon*), sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)

Other species of concern: Irrawaddy Dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*), Sousa (*Sousa chinensis*)

### Other Species of Concern

Endangered or Critically Endangered: Philippine freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*), saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), dugong (*Dugong dugon*), green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*), loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), leatherback turtle (*Dermodochelys coriacea*),

Threatened or Vulnerable: Whale shark (*Rhinocodon typus*).

## Regional Seas

South China Sea (northwest)

Sulu Sea (southwest)

Celebes Sea (south)

Philippine Sea (east)

Pacific Ocean (north)

## Past experience

There have been a number of oil spills in Philippine waters. The Solar 1 Spill in 2006 caused significant environmental

damage in Guimares and two spills involving the MV Princess of the Orient (1998) and MV Princess of the Stars (2008) affected the Visayas Islands, but no organized oiled wildlife response was initiated in any of these cases. Some areas remain affected. Concerns for artisanal fishing and tourism have previously taken precedence over oiled wildlife but overall response capacity is limited.

### **Response: the role of the authorities**

The Marine Environmental Protection Command (MEPCOM) unit of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is the lead agency for oil spill response under the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCOP), as revised in 2008. There is an Oil Pollution Management Fund (OPMF), established to cover clean up costs and damages, which is managed by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) which does include the terms 'Environmental damages or other reasonable measures of environmental restoration' (Chapter II SEC. 6f). The Philippines has MOAs with Thailand and Indonesia and is a member of the Sulu-Sulawesi Oil Spill Response Network and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Oil Spill Response Action Plan.

### **Oiled wildlife response**

#### Formal guidelines?

The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (DENR-PAWB) has an oiled wildlife response plan. This plan is currently under review for modification and not available online.

#### Response objectives and strategy

Plan not available for review at the time of writing.

#### Euthanasia or rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation is an accepted response, however, there is no capacity at this time to clean and rehabilitate oiled wildlife.

#### Impact assessment

DENR would likely be the lead agency in natural resource damage assessment.

#### Notification and early response

Unclear until the new oiled wildlife response plan becomes available.

### **Wildlife responders**

The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (DENR-PAWB) has primary oversight of response to oiled wildlife.

Two NGOs, the Animal Welfare Coalition (AWC) and the Philippine Society on Wildlife Research and Conservation (PSWRC), are also working to build capacity to respond to oiled wildlife incidents.

### **Cooperation between stakeholders**

DENR-PAWB would be the agency in charge. There are several NGOs working to build capacity but there does not appear to be any formal cooperation between the NGOs and DENR-PAWB at this stage.

### **Permanent facilities**

The Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau has a few rescue facilities, largely designed for handling animals from the wildlife trade, in or near major cities. None are set up for oiled wildlife response.

### **Current processes**

N/A

### **Documentation and references**

General references

ITOPF Philippines Country Profile

Republic Act # 9483, Oil Pollution Management Fund

([http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2007/ra\\_9483\\_2007.html](http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2007/ra_9483_2007.html))

Dr Van Joe Ibay, Animal Welfare Coalition and Philippine Society for Wildlife Research and Conservation (personal communication)

Important Bird Areas and Potential Ramsar Sites in Asia – Philippines

([http://www.birdlife.org/action/change/ramsar/ibas\\_ramsar\\_asia.html](http://www.birdlife.org/action/change/ramsar/ibas_ramsar_asia.html))

[http://www.oneocean.org/about\\_crmp/coastal.html](http://www.oneocean.org/about_crmp/coastal.html)

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