

MINDORO

Biodiversity

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MINDORO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION INC.



January to March 2021



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The Chairman's Report 2020

COVID-19

The virus spared no one. The year 2020 had been challenging because of this pandemic, which has dramatically affected humans and all countries' economic status. However, the call for conservation marches on. Deforestation, wildlife trafficking, poaching and killing endangered species, converting wildlife habitats, and other illegal activities caused by humans in their desire for survival and economic development destroys biodiversity and the whole ecosystem. According to studies, biodiversity loss provides an opportunity for pathogens, including coronavirus, to spread between animals and people.

Amidst an unprecedented global crisis, it was a time for NGOs like MBCFI to reflect, re-strategize, and rebuild a more environmentally-responsible world. The need for conserving our natural resources, protecting biodiversity has been amplified, demonstrating immediate action to protect what is left.

This pandemic had changed our landscape and had significant impacts on our budget, our way of doing things, and our way of life.



Sebastian C. Quiniones, Jr.
Chairman
On Behalf of the Board of Trustees

ACHIEVEMENTS

The key performance indicators fell slightly short of our targets; since the start of quarantine, the constraints brought new learning every day and has taught us to adapt, giving us the ability to create workarounds to deliver what will allow us to endure in this environment.

During those uncertain times, everyone pooled their knowledge and helped the organization to survive, getting them into the best possible shape and state they can be, and did the extra mile to protect the organization, our colleagues, and consultants as much as possible.

We had identified and mapped many activities in 2020, but we had to revisit our work plan and budget and made necessary adjustments given the uncertainty of things.

On March 16, all of our staff moved to work from home, and we were very worried about the impact of dispersed working on our 2020 targets. The worries were unfounded.

We already had an aggressive digitization program and by the middle of the year, significantly more transactions were done online. MBCFI accelerated its plans to go 100% online, offering quick and safe transactions both for MBCFI staff and all its payees. This was achieved.

We start building the Mindoro Biodiversity Center during the 3rd quarter, knowing that unless this cornerstone for the future is built, the longer term sustainability of the organization will be at risk.

RESEARCH



Philippine Teak (*Tectona philippinensis*)

1. Study on Status and Distribution Philippine Teak on Ilin and Ambulong Islands, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro published in the Philippine Journal of Science
2. Lead the annual waterbird census on Naujan Lake National Park on January 16-17, 2020, with 2,808 individuals observed
3. Initial part of the socio- economic survey in Malasimbo, Puerto Galera conducted
4. Purposive search for Ilin Cloud Rat conducted
5. Lead the Ilin and Ambulong Islands Critical Habitat Management Plan Workshop
6. Requirements for the conduct of Tamaraw Dietary Analysis secured
7. RESEARCH safety protocols and report formats crafted
8. Technical reports reviewed
 - Mt. Halcon - 2017 to 2018
 - MIBNP - 2017
9. Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the Municipality of Naujan
- Completion and release for public access of the following:
 - a. **Philippine Red List of Threatened Species**
 - National Policy (DENR AO 2019-09)
 - Red List Scientific Journal Publication (Gonzalez et al., 2018)
 - Philippine Red List of Threatened Fauna Guide Book (DENR & BCSP, 2020)
 - b. **International Policy on Threatened Endemic Flying Foxes of Mindoro (IUCN Red List, 2019)**
 - *Desmalopex microleucopterus*
 - *Styloctenium mindorensis*



We refocused efforts to the MBCC and kept to agreed bottom line. Our indirect expense which is monitored for our PCNC accreditation was below the limit of 30%.

We are ensuring that all accreditations are renewed.

- THE NEED FOR
CONSERVING
OUR NATURAL
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PROTECTING
BIODIVERSITY HAS
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DEMONSTRATING
IMMEDIATE ACTION
TO PROTECT WHAT
IS LEFT.**

1. 4-Day Webinar on State of Philippine Biodiversity conducted
2. Social Performance Caravan in Shell Office conducted
3. Received Bronze Award in the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards for Innovation in Non-Profit/NGO Publications for "Mindoro TREASURES: Teaching Reference for Environment Awareness and Sustainable Use of Resources"

- [illegible]

3

TRUSTEES AND STAFF

Following an employment contracts review, the Executive Director and Execom had agreed on a structure which suits the current needs of the organization.

Staff morale and performance management was kept under tight watch by the Executive Director and Executive Committee and though there were challenges, the delivery has been sustained.



Sebastian C. Quinsion Jr.
Chairman



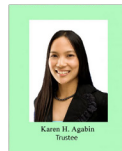
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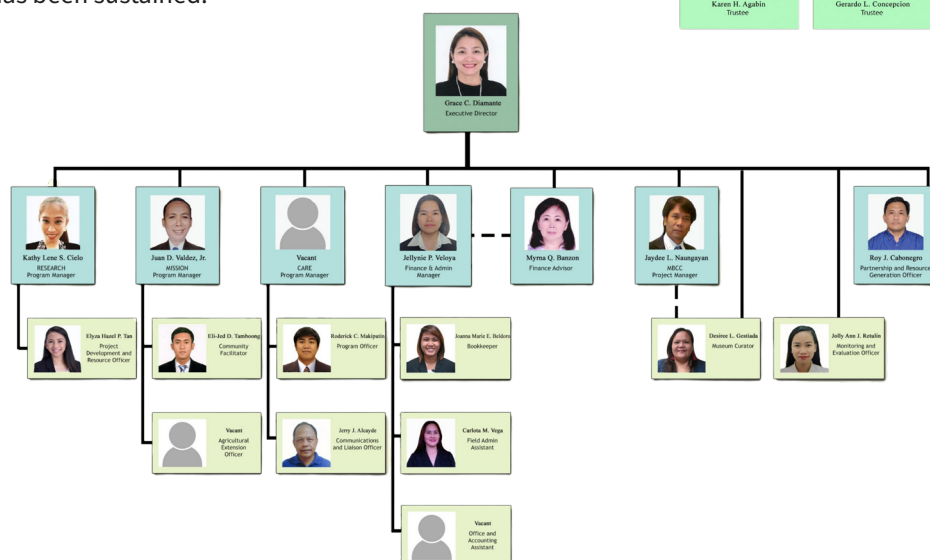
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STRATEGIC OUTLOOK FOR THE MEDIUM TERM

This crisis and economic disruption will be a real test of governance for the trustees and the MBCFI organization to move forward. Still, our 10-year plan positions us well for long-term growth and sustainability, reinforced by our lean and mean organization and bench strength.

For 2021, we are focused on several priorities, and we are taking action to make sure our organization remains strong throughout this period. We are confident that we will emerge to deliver against our long-term plan guided by our core values – honesty, integrity, safety, respect, equality, and humility.

In the recent development and availability of COVID-19 vaccines, our economy will hopefully soon recover. It has had an impact on everyone's mobility and social interaction. Thus, we need to continue to be innovative in running our campaigns to promote MBCFI and its programs.

MISSION

1. Mt. Halcon

- 2 conservation agreements with KAWARAS and SARIG renewed
- Conducted quarterly patrolling and biodiversity monitoring in Lantuyang and Bayanan, Baco, Oriental Mindoro
- Submitted 2019 patrolling reports to CENRO-Socorro for the renewal of their accreditation as Wildlife Enforcement Officers
- Training on design enhancement for nito weaving
- Re-accreditation of KAWARAS by the Sangguniang Bayan of Baco
- Resolution for the registration of cooperators woodlots (39.5 has.) secured
- Another People's Organization is formed: Nagkakaisang Mamamayan na Mangangalaga sa Halcon (NagMaMaHal) with 33 members

2. Mt. Calavite

- Conducted consultation meeting with SABACAP and PSU officers re: program exit

3. Ilin and Ambulong Islands

- Conducted consultation meeting with IAMBAG and NAGSAMAKAPA officers re: program exit
- Submitted 2019 patrolling reports to CENRO-San Jose for the renewal of their accreditation as Wildlife Enforcement Officers

4. Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park

- Conducted consultation meeting with PSBB, NTPK and NAGBAKAT officers re: program exit
- Submitted 2019 patrolling reports to CENRO-Sablayan for the renewal of their accreditation as Wildlife Enforcement Officers

5. Mt. Malasimbo

- People's Organization is formed: Matatag na Samahan ng Iraya para sa Pag-unlad (MaSiPag)

- 1 conservation agreement signed
- 20 nursery containing 10,000 indigenous wildlings established
- Bio-intensive gardens established
- Indigenous seedlings planted at the MBCC fenceline
- Site clearing and natural fencing activities conducted at MBCC



Members of newly formed MaSiPag

Safety and Well-being: Keeping our people and contractors safe and secure whether they are working from home, from the office, or onsite will always be a top priority.

New Environment: We decided to adopt alternative ways of working due to the current pandemic situation. MBCFI moves its main office in Calapan while we wait to complete the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Center (MBCC).

Localization: Hiring qualified locals to do conservation work for MBCFI and invest in building the workforce MBCFI needs for the future. We are supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs to provide the supplies and services required to establish to MBCC.

Transparency and Continuous Improvement: The uncertainty created by the pandemic has placed an even greater focus on trust in organizations, especially with NGOs, reliable information, and increased transparency. Our Monitoring and Evaluation processes will ensure this. Ongoing effort to improve all elements and processes of MBCFI. Policies need to be updated accordingly.

Partners: We need to establish new partnerships to provide funding and sustain our programs and support the establishment of the biodiversity center. This is a key thrust where all of the organization from staff to Board need to contribute.

Investing for the Future: Before the year ends, our work will find concrete fruition in our flagship project, the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Center, a physical embodiment of sustainability, benefitting present and future generations which will rise in Puerto Galera and is envisioned as a center for all things about Mindoro.

We are grateful to MBCFI's staff for finding creative ways to get things done and their tenacity that enabled the organization to meet most of the targets for 2020 despite the limitations they face. The team's resilience is a testament to their dedication and commitment to serve.

I would like to thank the staff led by the Executive Director, all the board members, especially the Executive committee, for meeting regularly and for their tireless work to find the best solution for MBCFI in these difficult times.

To our partners, contractors, and communities with whom we work regularly, thank you. The partnerships have helped bring about successes in last year's operations. I pray you feel the efforts we have made to better biodiversity in Mindoro.

A better, stronger, and more resilient MBCFI- that is our goal. It is clear that the future of conservation will be built on the connection between nature and humanity's actions. We look forward to playing our part in supporting Mindoro and its environment to recover from the pandemic's effects and to develop a sustainable future for us all.

Mabuhay ang MBCFI!

MINDORO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION CENTER

1. Contract signing for the construction of MBCC with A&P Konstruk
2. Issued construction "Notice to Proceed"
3. Site blessing and ground breaking activities conducted
4. 20% completion of Phase 1 with good HSSE record
5. Resolution issuance of Sangguniang Bayan of Puerto Galera in support of the MBCC Project
6. MOA between the Municipal Government of Puerto Galera inked
7. Museum storyline approved
8. Museum and Partnership
9. Development and Resource Generation activities conducted



MBCC site blessing (top) and ground breaking ceremony (bottom)

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **Memberships and Accreditations**
 - Newly accredited by the DOST
 - DENR re-accreditation
 - Renewal of membership with IUCN
 - Membership to Association of Foundations
 - Executive Director enrolled in a Leadership Development program
 - Regular participation in Protected Area Management Board (4 protected areas) and Regional Development Council meetings
2. **Partnerships**
 - UNDP - Together for Tamaraws Fundraising Campaign
 - DOST - Solar Panel for Research Laboratory at MBCC
 - MinSU - Memorandum of Agreement with MBCFI signed

Program Highlights



MISSION

- During a meeting at the Municipality of Baco last March, the Mayor's office offered financial assistance to KAWARAS as additional revolving capital worth sixty thousand pesos (Php 60,000.00) for their income generating projects. Through the assistance of MBCFI, the provision of this timely financial support was facilitated and given to the People's Organization.
- In Mt. Halcon, MBCFI assisted in the maintenance of 41 hectares of woodlot areas. Foot patrolling and monitoring activities in Mt. Halcon for the first quarter of this year were conducted, being mindful of the health and safety protocols imposed by the local government. Renewal of the conservation agreement with the local PO, Nagkakaisang Mamamayan na Mangangalaga sa Halcon (NagMaMaHal), has been secured to further strengthen our partnership with them.



Foot patrolling activity in Mt. Halcon

RESEARCH



2021 Waterbird Census in Naujan Lake

- MBCFI conducted the orientation for the participants of the AWC 2021 before the conduct of the actual survey. On the actual survey, MBCFI, through our volunteer Mr. Bob Natural, assisted the NLNP PAMO in the consolidation of data and bird identification.
- A socio-economic survey was conducted with household representatives in Dulangan, Puerto Galera. The survey participants consisted of 100 families from the local PO, MaSiPag, and other community members.
- Members of the RESEARCH team coordinated with the Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Office (PGENRO) to revisit the management plan of Mt. Halcon. In addition, they had a consultation with the community leaders and members in Paitan, Naujan to discuss the said management plan and the research in Mt. Gimparay.
- MBCFI participated in Protected Area Management Board meetings of NLNP, MIBNP, MCWS and ARNP during the first quarter of this year.

MBCC Museum

Last February, Ms. Desiree Gestiada, our Museum Curator, conducted the second round of consultation with the Pinagkausahan Hanunuo sa Daga Ginurang (PHADAG), people's organization for Hanunuo Mangyans as part of the preliminary steps in filling up the cultural content of the MBCC Museum. Ms. Gestiada requested for their feedback and approval to feature certain elements of their culture as part of the planned exhibits of the MBCC Museum, which aim to highlight the rich cultural treasures of the indigenous communities of Mindoro.



Ms. Gestiada with members of PHADAG during the consultation meeting

The MBCFI Way

Together for Tamaraws Project with UNDP



Photo by GDiamante

Dedicated rangers and wardens of the Mounts Iglit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP) and Tamaraw Conservation Programme (TCP) have been conserving the Tamaraw – the world’s rarest and critically endangered buffalo species – for a long time now. The wardens also serve as guides and porters for tourism and research expeditions. However, due to the closure of MIBNP following community quarantine measures, these wardens who help deter tamaraw hunters and poachers, have lost their jobs.

On February 12, 2021, a total of 32 wardens from MIBNP received two and half months worth of allowance for patrolling the core habitat area of the Tamaraw from the Together for Tamaraws campaign. This project was led by the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) project in the Philippines. This is also supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through its MIMAROPA Regional Office and Biodiversity Management Bureau.

The campaign was launched to give the conservation frontliners with much needed field allowances and food so they can continue protecting the Tamaraw and MIBNP. The distribution of allowances and food packs was conducted in partnership with MBCFI.

Donations have come a long way in securing their livelihood and providing nourishment to the frontliners who continue to protect the Tamaraws from extinction while braving all forms of hardship and threats amid the pandemic. These will not only help the families of the frontliners affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also help ensure the unique species of Tamaraw are protected.



The MBCFI Way

Seedling Propagation Training



Our MISSION Program Manager, Mr. Juan Valdez conducted a training on asexual methods for propagation of native plants on March 6, 2021 in a community in Malasimbo, Puerto Galera. This training was attended by 20 members of the newly formed local People's Organization (PO), Matatag na Samahan ng Iraya para sa Pag-unlad (MaSiPag).

Participants learned the splice and side grafting techniques, as well as the patch and shield budding methods for growing plants. After this capacity-building training, MaSiPag members agreed to establish a nursery of different fruit-bearing trees to have sufficient supply of rootstocks for grafting and budding of nursery crops.

Through this training, MBCFI hopes to empower the community members and prepare them for the establishment and maintenance of their own bio-intensive gardens.



Photo by JValdez



Photo by JValdez

MBCFI Celebrates its 13th Anniversary



This year, MBCFI celebrated its 13th anniversary! Despite the difficulties encountered brought by the pandemic, we were still able to push through and be resilient.

We have faced many challenges in the past year, but with challenges come opportunities – to learn, to innovate, and to be more compassionate towards one another.

Regardless of the hurdles that we may face, MBCFI will continue to uphold its core values and make relevant efforts in sustaining the conservation of Mindoro's natural resources in the "new normal."

The MBCFI Way

MBCC Construction Updates



By the first week of March 2021, around 30% of Phase 1 of the MBCC construction has been completed. Construction of buildings 1 and 2, and the utility room are currently underway, with auxiliary activities, to facilitate transport of materials to the construction area.

Daily Permit to Work Audits and weekly inspections for the facility, electrical and auxiliary works were also routinely conducted. First Time Right, materials management and environmental management inspections are regularly done.

Likewise, preparations for the museum exhibits and coordination with artifact donors and partner museums are being conducted by our Museum Curator, Ms. Des Gestiada.

While the construction activities for the MBCC structures are ongoing, operationalization procedures for the planned processes and activities of MBCFI are being drafted by the respective process owners.



YOU CAN SUPPORT MBCC BY DONATING.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://mbcfi.org.ph>



Species in Focus

Burke Pitcher Plant



Photo by BNatural

COMMON NAME:
Burke Pitcher Plant

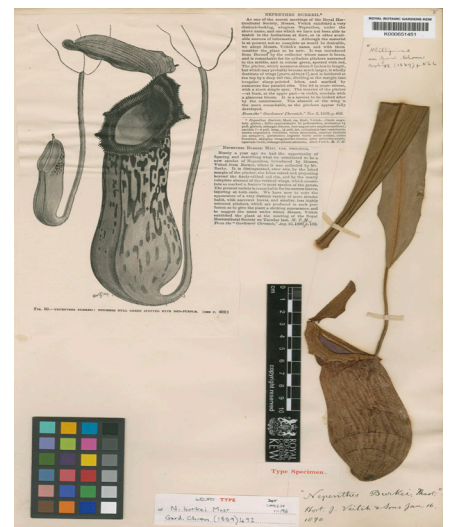
SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Nepenthes burkei Masters

CONSERVATION STATUS:
Not Assessed (IUCN)
Endangered (DENR, DAO
2017-11)

Named after David Burke, British plant collector, *Nepenthes burkei* Mast. is a tropical pitcher plant endemic to the Mindoro Island. This rare Philippine endemic pitcher plant only occurs in Mindoro and Panay Islands. It is said to be very closely related to *N. sibuyanensis* and *N. ventricosa* and has only recently entered wider cultivation.

Ecology: In Mt. Halcon, it usually occurs in the montane to subalpine forest and shrubs. It is mostly terrestrial or epiphytic and thrives in bright to shady conditions.

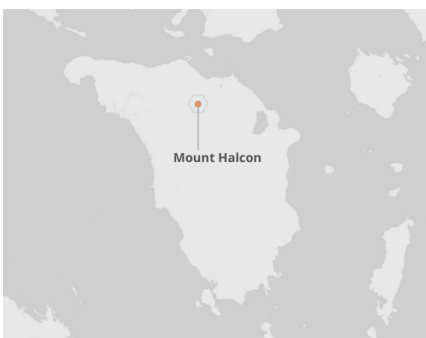
Threats and Recommended Conservation Actions: Comprehensive studies for this species as well as its range of occurrence are recommended for further understanding of its ecology, distribution and population. With the recent trend of plant collection, wild populations of this species may be of risk to poaching due to its rarity.



Nepenthes burkei Mast. collected in Philippines by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (licensed under <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Virtual Tour

Mount Halcon



Where in Mindoro

Naujan, Baco, San Teodoro (Oriental Mindoro)
Sablayan, Sta. Cruz (Occidental Mindoro)



Featured Place in Figures

Peak at 2,590 masl
18th highest mountain in the country
9/9 Difficulty (major climb)

Scan this QR Code
or click [here](#) to
view a 3D model of
Mt. Halcon



The peak of Mt. Halcon is the highest in Mindoro, towering at 2,590 meters above sea level. Bordering this mountain are the municipalities of Naujan, Baco and San Teodoro in Oriental Mindoro, and Sablayan and Sta. Cruz in Occidental Mindoro.

Among the different priority project sites of MBCFI and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) in Mindoro, Mt. Halcon is considered one of the most important sites for biodiversity conservation on Mindoro.

Mt. Halcon has the most number of threatened endemic faunal species, last pegged at 16 species. All nine endemic bird species of Mindoro are found in Mt. Halcon. The highly endangered Tamaraw is found on the south and west slopes of Mt. Halcon. This mountain is also the only known locality for the Mindoro climbing rat (*Anonymomys mindorensis*). Mt Halcon is the type locality of the island endemic Mindoro tree frog, *Philautus schmackeri*. A threatened butterfly species, *Euploea tobleri mangyan*, is known only from this area.

The mountain is also home to two of the eight ethno-linguistic groups in Mindoro Island - the Alangan Mangyans and the Iraya Mangyans. Mt. Halcon is known to Mangyans as "Siyaldang," which means Sacred Mountain.

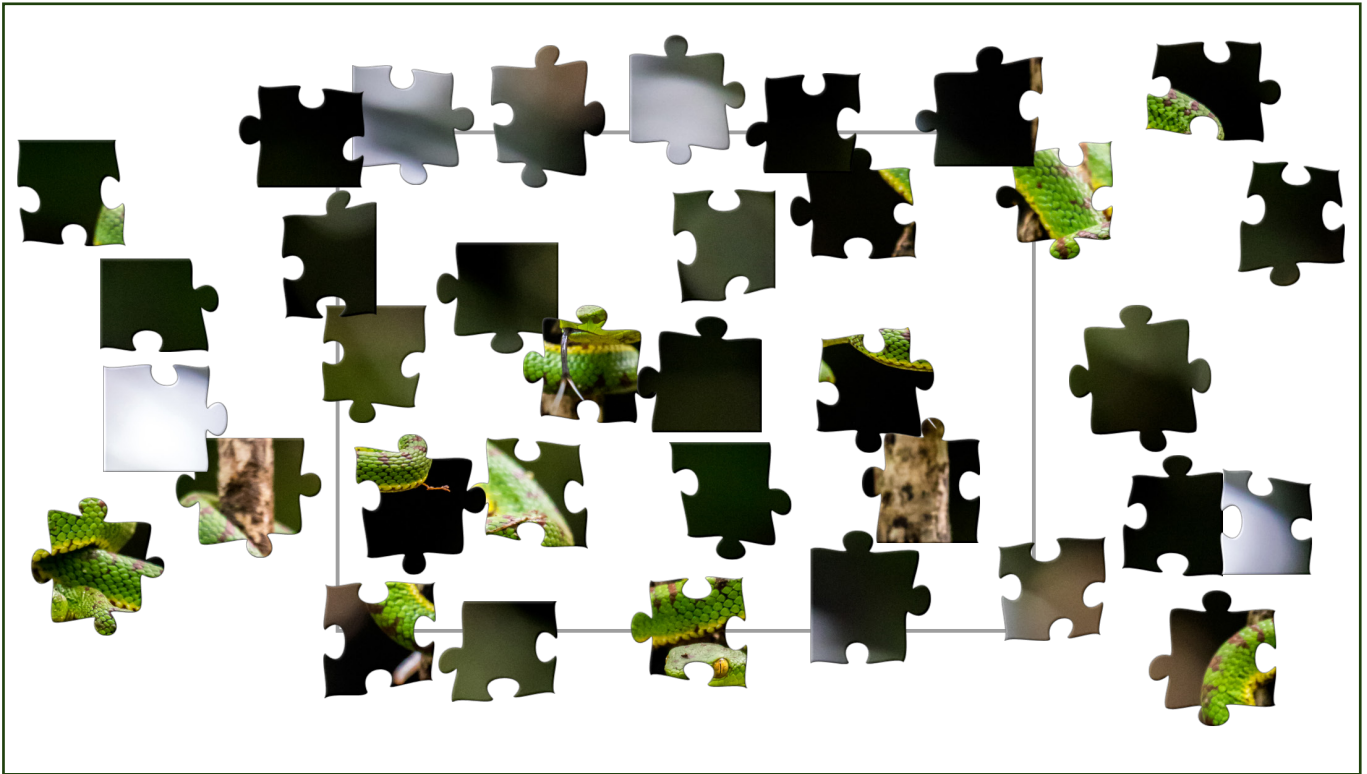
Mt. Halcon is the headwater of numerous river systems that serve as water sources for agricultural, industrial, and domestic uses. The remaining forests of Mt. Halcon serve as important habitats and watersheds and offer other ecological services. However, the biological and cultural significance of Mt. Halcon is now defined as highly vulnerable.

If left unattended, various issues and challenges may result to further erosion of the indigenous culture, more losses to biologically important resources, and extreme deterioration of natural environment and ecological services, among others. The protection of this critical watershed and KBA is of paramount importance to the sustainable development of the island.



Puzzle

Guess the Wildlife



CLUE #1

This species is a master of camouflage, using its color or markings in its natural environment.

CLUE #2

This species is known to have hemotoxic venom, or venom that destroys red blood cells.

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

These wildlife species are ecologically important for being part of the food cycle in a particular ecosystem. A healthy population of this type of animal ensures a healthy or balanced ecology by feeding on small animals, like rats. If their population goes down, rat population increases. This in turn can have an adverse impact in the local ecosystem.

Have you guessed it yet?

Stay tuned for our next newsletter to find out the correct answer!

You can also lay this puzzle online by clicking [here](#) or scanning the QR code below.



SCAN TO PLAY ONLINE



OUR VISION

Sustained conservation of Mindoro's natural treasures for future generations.

OUR MISSION

To lead scientific research and catalyze collaborative and participative conservation efforts in key biodiversity areas of Mindoro resulting in empowerment of Mindoreños through increased awareness and care.

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