



# EARTH ISLAND INSTITUTE

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DepEd-SDO of Bulacan Office of the SDS

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JUN 07 2021  
By: [Signature]

June 6, 2021

## THE PRINCIPAL

Schools Division Offices  
Department of Education

Warm Greetings from Earth Island Institute Philippines!

Earth Island Institute is an international environmental organization that promotes awareness and grassroots environmentalism to protect, conserve, and restore nature. EII grows environmental leadership through education and advocacy work. Our projects, publications, and initiatives support the biological and cultural diversity that sustains the environment.

This coming June 9, 2021, in celebration of "Coral Triangle Day 2021" we will be launching an online activity entitled "**SEAyasatin: A webinar about Coral Reefs and the recent sightings of pygmy blue whale in the Bohol Sea**". This activity aims to promote awareness, conservation, and protection of the marine environment amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**In line with this, we would like to invite your teachers and students to this webinar event.** It will be streamed live on Earth Island Institute Philippines Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/earthislandph>). All participants are encouraged to like, share and comment their names and school they belong. Also, they are free to ask questions on the topic thru the comment box. Our expected audience will be coming from Marine Wildlife Advocates, Environmentalists, Students, and members of the Academe.

Attached herewith are the following documents for your reference and approval:

- a. Concept note
- b. Indicative Program

Please feel free to contact us at [savedolphinsph@gmail.com](mailto:savedolphinsph@gmail.com) should you be interested or have any questions in this regard.

We look forward to your affirmative response. Thank you and more power to you!

Sincerely yours,

**Robert Ray V. Medrano**  
Environmental Education Staff  
Earth Island Institute Philippines

Reproduction No. 177, s. 2021

**ZENIA G. MOSTOLES, Ed.D., CESO V**  
Schools Division Superintendent  
Schools Division of Bulacan

# **SEAYasatin: A webinar forum about Coral Reefs and the recent sightings of pygmy blue whale in the Bohol Sea**

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 pm**

## **PROGRAMME**

**1:00-1:10 PM**

**Zoom Admission**

**1:10-1:20 PM**

**Opening Remarks**

**1:20-1:35 PM**

*Understanding the importance of Coral Reefs to the Marine Biodiversity*

**Ms. Clarissa Rebonton**

Siliman University

**1:35- 1:45 PM**

*"Bughaw" the pygmy blue whale of the Bohol Sea*

**Ms. Jo Marie Acebes, DVM, Ph.D**

Senior Museum Researcher, Zoology Division

National Museum of the Philippines

### **Panel of Reactors**

**1:45 - 1:50 PM**

**Mr. Matthew Vincent Tabilog**

Mangrove Matters PH

**1:50 - 1:55 PM**

**UP SARIBUHAY**

**1:55 - 2:00 PM**

**Mr. Javier Vilchez**

UP Marine Biological Society

**2:00 - 2:10 PM**

**Open forum**

**2:10 - 2:15 PM**

**Synthesis and Call to Action**

**Ms. Trixie Concepcion**

Regional Director, Earth Island Institute Asia Pacific

**Mark Louie Aquino**

Moderator



# SEAyasatin:

A webinar about Coral Reefs and  
the recent sightings of a pygmy  
blue whale in the Bohol Sea

Wednesday, June 9, 2021  
1:00 – 3:00 PM

zoom  LIVE / earthislandph

Image courtesy of Jo Marie Acebes/BALYENA.ORG

### Rationale:

The Coral Triangle is a region in the Western Pacific Ocean. This marine area includes waters from the Philippines in the north, traversing towards Malaysia, Indonesia, and other countries in the Western Pacific. Named for its diversity of coral species, the region's reef is home to over 2000 species of fish and marine turtles. The coral reef system supports a multi-billion dollar industry for tuna and other types of fish.[1]

In the Philippines, our coral reef area is home to an astonishing diversity of marine life. There are over 400 scleractinian or stony and hard coral species, 12 are endemic in the country. [2]

A pygmy blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda*) was spotted in the Bohol Sea last month. This marine animal, named "Bughaw" by marine researchers, has been confirmed as a subspecies and was seen again after centuries.[3] This only shows that we still have a healthy marine environment that should be preserved and protected for future generations.

However, overfishing, destructive fishing techniques, sedimentation, marine plastic pollution, domestic and industrial waste are the main factors in reef degradation in the Philippines.

The challenge is to develop sustainable solutions that will protect our coral reefs, marine biodiversity, as well as improve the living conditions of the inhabitants within the Coral Triangle Area.

In celebration of the Coral Triangle Day this coming June 9, 2021, the Earth Island Institute PH would like to present **"SEAyasatin: A webinar about Coral Reefs and the recent sightings of pygmy blue whale in the Bohol Sea"**

The activity aims to raise awareness about the importance of coral reefs, the threats, rehabilitation, and protection. Plus a brief background on the recent sightings of a pygmy sperm whale named "Bughaw" in the Bohol Sea. With guest speakers from the Siliman University and Balyena.org.

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### Notes:

[1] World Wildlife Fund. (n.d.). CORAL TRIANGLE. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/places/coral-triangle>. Retrieved May 28, 2021, from <https://www.worldwildlife.org/places/coral-triangle>

[2] Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). Habitat: PHILIPPINE CORAL REEFS. [www.bfar.da.gov.ph](http://www.bfar.da.gov.ph). Retrieved May 27, 2021, from <https://www.bfar.da.gov.ph/habitat.jsp?id=4>

[3] Acebes, J. M. V., Silberg, J. N., Gardner, T. J., Sabater, E. R., Tiongson, A. J. C., Dumandan, P., Verdote, D. M., Emata, C. L., Utzurum, J., & Yaptinchay, A. A. (2021). First confirmed sightings of Blue Whales *Balaenoptera musculus* Linnaeus, 1758 (Mammalia: Cetartiodactyla: Balaenopteridae) in the Philippines since the 19th century. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, 13(3), 17875-17888. <https://doi.org/10.11609/jatt.6483.13.3.17875-17888> (Original work published March 26, 2021)

### Objectives:

- To raise public awareness on the importance of coral reefs in marine ecology, the current threats, calls for rehabilitation, and its protection.
- To explore and develop sustainable solutions that will protect our coral reef and Marine biodiversity that seek to improve the living conditions of the fisherfolk communities.
- To inculcate environmental protection and conservation among the youth.