

Wealth in the mudcrab traps

TUE, NOVEMBER 15, 2016 BY THE MINDANAO DAILY MIRROR



PANABO CITY – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) gathered around 60 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), senior citizens, fisherfolk and womenfolk for a three-day hands-on training on Collapsible Mudcrab Traps Construction held at the Mariculture Park Training Center in Barangay Cagangohan in Panabo City last month.

“This training will help us earn additional income. It is a big help especially for most of our members who do not have jobs because it is hard to find work if you have a disability, the discrimination is still there,” said Leonido Rivera, president of the Federation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Panabo, Davao del Norte.

The Federation which Rivera heads has 1,300 individual members, mostly underemployed or jobless. He said making the crab traps is doable even for those with disabilities who can sell the traps or use them to get crabs for consumption or for sale.

“The training aims to capacitate womenfolk, PWDs, senior citizens and fisherfolk on the construction of environment-friendly fishing gears,” BFAR Davao Region Director Fatma Idris said. The training is in support to the agency’s Gender and Development Program and Rural Fisheries Development.

Daisy Ladra, BFAR aquaculturist and project implementer, said the participants are among the most marginalized sector in society who could benefit from new skills such as making of collapsible mudcrab traps.

Mudcrabs or mangrove crabs, which are highly in-demand all over the country because of their taste and price, are usually gathered using the traditional trap known as “bubo” which is made of indigenous materials.

“All sizes of crabs are marketed from live to frozen and the biggest export buyer is the HongKong with 13MT from 2010-2014,” Ladra said. If the country wants to benefit from mangrove crabs, she said, and then we need to increase production from crab culture in fishponds and mangrove areas. We also need to introduce new fishing gears catch crablets as seedstocks for the aquaculture industry, she added.

Ladra said crab culture and capture needs to be intensified in low producing areas like Region IX and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Davao and areas with fishponds or aquaculture as these regions are the gateway to the nearest markets in Malaysia and Singapore.

Data shows fishpond production of mudcrabs in Region IX at only 234 Metric Tons (MT), ARMM at 85MT and the Davao Region at 2.62MT.

She said the current prices of mud crabs in the local market is relatively higher than fish and mollusks and is projected to increase in the world market.

Trainor Joel Lutao, aquaculture technician of BFAR Cebu, said the collapsible traps technology originated from Japan after World War II. However, the technology being used in the country now comes from Thailand.

“The use of artisanal fishing gears and technology is encouraged under the implementation of Responsible Fishing Operation under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing (CCRF),” he said.

He said collapsible crab traps are not only easy to make but they are also durable, user-friendly and environment-friendly.

“Only up to 20 traditional traps can be loaded in a boat compared to collapsible traps where as many as 100 pieces can be loaded in a boat,” he said. The collapsible mud crab traps can be used anywhere even in mangroves, rivers or even fishponds so it is very practical.

Lutao said one collapsible mud crab trap will require a capital of P130 for materials alone including wires, ropes and net. However, he said, this can be sold at P200 each.

Each collapsible crab trap can hold five pieces of crabs depending on the size. “Now that they know how to make the traps they can place this in mangroves, open sea or abandoned fishponds and get a yield of up to two kilos during ordinary days or up to 10 kilos during peak season,” he said. **Lovely A. Carillo**

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