

BFAR: Revive Davao Gulf council

Date: Sunday, June 04, 2017

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DAVAO. BFAR-Davao regional director Fatma Idris said that the Davao Gulf Management Council plays an important role in implementing the region's three-month observation of the Davao Gulf Close Season. (Contributed photo)

THE Bureau of Fish and Aquatic Resources (BFAR)-Davao intends to activate the Davao Gulf Management Council to fully guard the marine area in preserving its rich resources. BFAR-Davao regional director Fatma Idris said that the council is important in implementing the region's three-month observation of the Davao Gulf Close Season set every first day of June to August. The close season started in 2014. "We hope that the council (Davao Gulf Management Council) will be activated this time. Since it's a joint effort, with all the Local Government Units (LGU) representatives, there must be someone to oversee for the council," she said last Friday during the commencement ceremony of the close season at the BFAR-Davao office in R. Magsaysay St., Davao City. The council, Idris said, became inactive when President Rodrigo Duterte's term as Davao City Mayor ended. The death of the erstwhile city councilor Leo Avila also affected the council. Avila died last December 20, 2015. The council is a body assigned to ensure all activities within the gulf are for protection, conservation and development of all marine resources. "Hopefully, the next head would be coming from Davao City executives. Also, we are looking at Compostela Valley Governor Jayvee Tyron Uy since he also heads the Regional Peace and Order Council

(RPOC) in Davao Region,” Idris said. The council is composed of representatives from all national agencies, LGUs and non-government organizations (NGOs). Chair of Barog Katawhan Jerry Dela Cerna, meanwhile, said they submitted a resolution to the Office of the President that seeks to establish the Davao Gulf Management Authority, prohibits selling of juvenile fishes and other aquatic resources in the market and total ban of commercial fishing. Davao City Councilor Marissa Salvador-Abella, who chairs the committee of agriculture and food, said she will recommend to Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio the amendment of the implementing rules and regulations of the Fisheries Code of Davao City that seeks to include specific measurements for prohibition of catching and selling of juvenile species. "The inclusion of specific measurements will ensure that there will be no more excuses for fisher folks as well as vendors should they be apprehended if they violate the ordinance," Abella said, adding that unregulated fishing could be detrimental to the abundant marine resources in the gulf. This year marks the fourth year implementation of the Joint Administrative Order 02 of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior and Local Government. During the closed-season, the gulf is closed for fishing operations that use ring-net and bag-net gears regardless of the tonnage to boost fish production during the spawning season. It covers 21 coastal municipalities. The BFAR, in coordination with Philippine Coast Guard for Southern Mindanao, Maritime Unit of the Philippine National Police and Philippine Navy, is monitoring fishermen who are using ring-net and bag net in fishing. Last year, BFAR recorded only one violator of the administrative order. Based on BFAR's scientific studies, Davao Gulf is a key biodiversity area (KBA) in the Philippines. It is listed as one of the 34 biodiversity hot spots in the world. The area is also the feeding ground for 11 species of cetaceans, including sperm whales, killer whales, and bottle-nose dolphins and nursing ground for five endangered turtle species, including hawksbill, leatherback, and olive ridley.

Read more: <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/davao/business/2017/06/05/bfar-revive-davao-gulf-council-545686>

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