

# Open fishing ends

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For a third consecutive year, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has implemented the closed fishing season for pelagic fishes in the Davao Gulf from June 1 to August 31, this year.

“We are reminding our fisherfolk that June 1 signals the end of the open fishing season in the Davao Gulf which lasted from September to May, and the start of the three-month close season” BFAR 11 Regional Director Fatma Idris said.

Joint Administrative Order No. 02 of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Interior and Local Government prohibited the catching of pelagic fishes in the Davao Gulf from June to August every year.

Under the terms of the Closed Season, fishermen or fishing companies will not be allowed to catch pelagic fishes using ringnet and bagnet. The ban also applies to small-scale to large scale commercial fishing with vessels from 3.1 gross tons (GT) to more than 150 GT.

The declaration of a closed fishing season was implemented by BFAR as a strategy to increase fish production in the concerned areas where the fishing ban is being implemented namely Davao, Zamboanga, Palawan and Zambales.

BFAR National Director and Undersecretary Asis Perez said they expect the country’s fish catch to increase and to grow bigger with the declaration of a fishing ban in these areas.

Asis said the closed season will give pelagic fishes a time to spawn and multiply which will ultimately benefit fisherfolk later on.

Before the Closed Season only 50 percent of the fishes caught were big but after the first year of implementation, he said, it has increased to 78 percent which means the pelagic fishes have successfully reproduced during the Closed Season and are ready for harvesting.

Among the pelagic fishes that have notably grown bigger in size after the close season are: Bilong-Bilong (*Mene maculata*) which has grown up to 19 centimeters in length after the closed season compared to its regular size of 11 cm.; Pirit (*Auxis rochei*) has grown in length from 8.5 cm to 23.5 cm. With an increased production of 40,000 in 2014 from the 15,000 during the previous year and Matambaka (*Selar crumenophthalmus*) with an increase in production of 170,000 in 2014 from 120,000 during the previous year.

Aside from its main goal of protecting the pelagic fishes in the Davao Gulf during their spawning season, the Closed Season is also being implemented to strengthen the country’s campaign against Illegal, Unreported and Uncontrolled Fishing (IUUF). **Lovely Carillo**

(Mindanao Daily Mirror)

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