

The 6th Annual International Ecosystem Services Partnership (ESP) Conference held in Bali from 26-31 August 2013 focused on the practical application of the ecosystem services concept in planning, management and decision making, and the development of case studies.

During a post-conference professional training session on “Mainstreaming the value of water and wetlands into decision-making”, a “Spotlight on Asia” roundtable was organized to discuss local management and stakeholder issues with regard to water and wetlands and the potential benefits of communicating nature’s values to decision-makers at local, regional and national levels.

Ms. Marlynn Mendoza shared her experiences working for the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Philippines.



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UNEP-TEEB: What are the main threats/pressures to water and wetlands in the Philippines?

Marlynn Mendoza: Many government offices have jurisdiction on issues related to water and wetlands. Activities have been initiated and implemented on water and wetlands without consultation or coordination between and among government agencies. At times, this has resulted in negative consequences on wetlands or wetland resources, such as for example the reduction in the population or the extinction of local species because of the introduction of alien species for food production or cure for diseases.

UNEP-TEEB: What is the potential contribution of TEEB and the ecosystem approach to promote wetland wise management in your country?

Marlynn Mendoza: TEEB and the ecosystem approach can contribute to the wise use of wetlands by encouraging a review of existing policies that have an impact on water and wetlands and maybe the organization of a functional committee to promote protection. The committee should be multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency. Also, TEEB and the ecosystem approach should help disseminating information on wetlands in education and public awareness campaigns. This is essential to appreciate and understand their multiple values, including the ecosystem services they provide. TEEB and the ecosystem approach can also help argue for the need to assess and classify wetlands, which is key to better informed management decisions. Moreover, the TEEB approach will help ensure that the benefits provided by wetlands are enjoyed by many and not only by a few, thereby ensuring inclusive growth. It could also help the process of creating a national framework for the protection for wetlands and also the establishment of management plans for specific sites.

UNEP-TEEB: Can you provide an example of a good practice related to wetland wise management in your country?

Marlynn Mendoza: One example is the Tubbataha Reef Natural Park - a Ramsar site - which was being degraded by overfishing and the use of massively destructive fishing methods. In order to protect the reef, the area was declared a protected area. A no-take policy and a user fee were established. The area will be a fully-fledged protected area under the National Integrated Protected Area System.

Another example is the Taal Lake protected landscape and seascape, which was affected by eutrophication and resulting die-off of fishes. In order to address this problem, many fish cages owned by rich people all over the lake were removed, management zones were established and harmonized plans were created, with the collaboration of different categories of stakeholders.