

## CONSERVATION □

## Preserving the eco-system

WITH 850 species of birds, the Philippines boasts of a bird life richer than scenic Java, the Celebes, Borneo or New Guinea. It has 225 species of mammals and Asia's richest array of flowering plants and ferns, including some 900 species of orchids.

Within the memory of Filipino grandparents, the country's terrestrial wildlife was even richer. Having lived with and seen this wildlife around them, they tell you about the great variety of birds, small mammals, reptiles, cimmarrons, tamaraws, deer and wild pigs that used to roam the country's lush tropical environment. This great abundance of wildlife was still apparent 15 years ago, when the Philippines exported game animals to the tune of US\$200,000.

The number of wildlife has dwindled today, which Filipinos terribly regret. Now, more than ever, they recognize the need to conserve and protect the little that has remained with them. Luckier than most other countries, the Philippines has not yet lost a single species of its wildlife.

National efforts in the conservation of wildlife have been total and intensive, embracing control and protection of natural resources and organisms and rarely, if ever, engaging in the extermination of species even if they be of the parasitic and predatory nature.

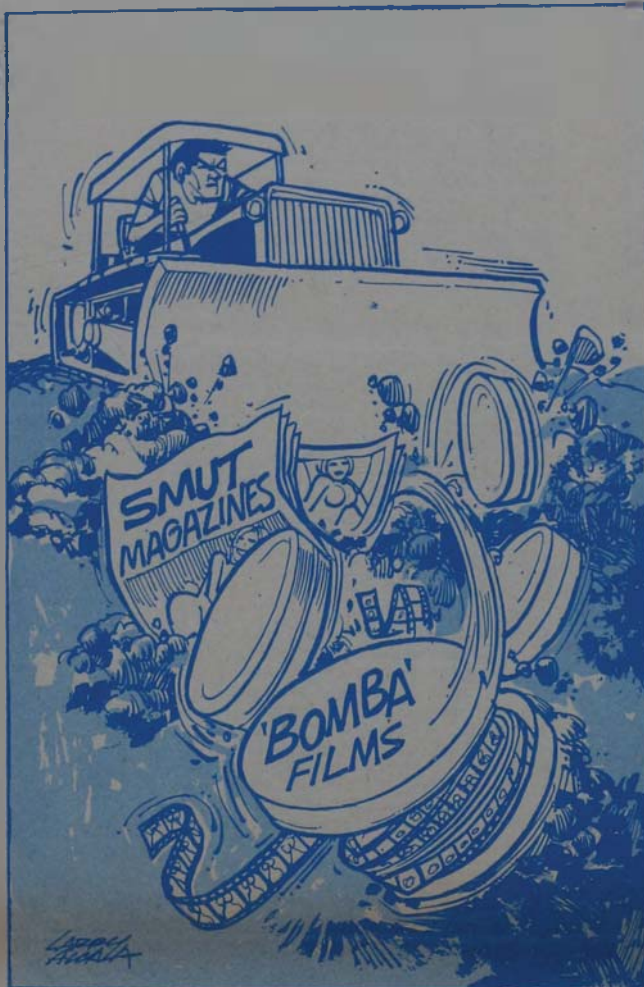
In ecology, this is what biologists would call "development of an ecosystem"—ecosystem being the sum total of all living and non-living parts that support a chain of life within a selected area. A lake, a forest, a pond and the sea are examples of an ecosystem. It is the basic functional unit which deals with the organisms and the nonliving environment, each influencing the properties of the other and both being necessary for maintenance of life.

An archipelago of 7,100 islands, the Philippines has a unique problem of being variably sensitive to basic environmental imbalances. There are no two islands that are the same and as such, each island partakes of a nature different from the rest. Nevertheless, conservation programs have been geared toward a concerted management of its total ecosystem.

The Philippine ecosystem involves the relationships of natural resources both renewable and nonrenewable with the abiotic or nonliving things on which plants or the forests, watersheds and parks are dependent for the manufacture of their foods. Thus, government efforts to conserve the nation's forest resources are dictated not only by economic reasons but also by an independent appreciation of their role in the total national ecosystem. The Philippines has over 15 million hectares of forest. To ensure its continued existence, the Philippine government has limited the exportation of logs and launched a massive reforestation program. It has also enacted laws to protect watersheds from logging and mountain farming and engaged in preserving the fertility of soil.

The Philippines is fortunate to be endowed with a rich variety of flora and fauna which can be found in its national parks. There are 55 national parks (with a combined land area of 293,272 hectares) all over the country. Covered with lush forests, they provide an ideal habitat for all forms of wildlife.

In a move to conserve this precious heritage, President Ferdinand E. Marcos has proclaimed parts of Palawan as bird and animal sanctuaries and efforts are now underway to develop extensive areas as wildlife preserves throughout the country—from Quezon to the Bicol region and Mindoro in Luzon, Samar and



Leyte islands in the Visayas and in several other areas in Mindanao. At the same time, areas have been proclaimed as national parks—the Sierra Madre of the Cordillera mountain and Buswanga, which is part of the Calamian island group in Palawan.

For some years now, the Philippine wildlife conservation program has been focused on the tamaraw and the monkey-eating eagle, the two most threatened of the 12 wildlife facing extinction in the Philippines.

The tamaraw conservation program was started in 1969 when President Marcos, in his first term of office, declared the areas of two mountains on Mindoro Island as sanctuaries for the tamaraw. At the same time, the President ordered a team of Parks and Wildlife officers to study and formulate an effective protection program for the tamaraw.

The following year, the monkey-eating eagle program covering eight provinces in Mindanao was launched with



the same basic purpose as the tamaraw program's. The program was deemed urgent since the monkey-eating eagle population level had been critical. Were the program delayed by two or three years, the monkey-eating eagle would have been extinct by now.

The Philippines is also active in the international wild game preservation program which seeks to maintain proper ecological balance. Through various agencies engaged in environmental development, the government has invited internationally known ecology experts like Charles Lindbergh to lend their expertise not only to the conservation of Philippine wildlife but also to the promotion of an international program on ecological development.

The government is also pushing through two projects designed to conserve and propagate further Philippine wildlife. The projects involve the setting up of a wildlife stock farm near Manila and the integration by the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Research (PCAR) of a national research program for parks and wildlife management.

Using simplified methods (footprint and fecal count) the census-takers observed a significant growth of wildlife population particularly the Philippine deer, wild hogs, monitor lizards, monkeys, wild cats, civets, and avians like Philippine kalaw (hornbill), yellow vented bulbul, zebra dove, moped oriole, Philippine kingfisher, and mountain sunbirds.

The setting up of a game stock farm near Manila is not a new idea. In May 1966, President Marcos asked the parks and wildlife office to prepare a project study for a wildlife stock farm near Manila.

The game stock farm will be developed on an eight-hectare site in Tanyag, Rizal, a few kilometers east of Manila. The P2,750,000-worth project will be funded by the Natural Parks Development Committee chaired by Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos. □

## Code of Conduct

ANY PERSON IN THE SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD:

- I. Respect and uphold the Constitution and laws of the Republic of the Philippines.
- II. Observe the highest standard of morality, integrity, honesty, loyalty and devotion to the public welfare.
- III. Perform his tasks thoroughly, faithfully and efficiently.
- IV. Be physically and mentally fit for public service and live within his income.
- V. Expose corrupt practices in the public service without fear or favor.
- VI. Serve the public courteously, justly and impartially regardless of kinship, friendship, social standing, religious or political difference.
- VII. Discharge duties promptly without thought of gifts, benefits or any remuneration which may influence the proper performance of official functions.
- VIII. Engage in no business with the government or with any private party, either directly or indirectly, which will be inconsistent with his position as a public servant.
- IX. Divulge no confidential information coming to him by the nature of his office or duties.
- X. Uphold, respect and observe these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust which he should neither violate, nor should he allow suspicion to arise that such trust has been abused or betrayed.

## A soldier's code

I. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

II. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL FIGHT ALL FORCES THAT WOULD DESTROY THE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE.

III. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL OBEY THE LAWS, LEGAL ORDERS AND DECREES OF MY LAWFUL SUPERIORS AT ALL TIMES.

IV. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL UPHOLD THE SUPREMACY OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY OVER THE MILITARY IN WAR OR IN PEACE.

V. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL LIVE AND DIE IN THE TRUE FILIPINO TRADITION OF VALOR AND HONOR, DUTY AND LOYALTY.

TO ALL THESE, I PLEDGE MY LIFE, MY TREASURE AND MY SACRED HONOR.