



Reaching out through Environmental Education to Filipinos
(and supporters of the Philippines here, there and everywhere)

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PRESERVING PHILIPPINE MARINE ENVIRONMENTS



Healthy coral reefs support countless species of marine life

Because of its geographical location, scientists have long considered the Philippines to be “the center of the center of marine biodiversity.” According to Dr. Kent E. Carpenter, Coordinator of Global Marine Species Assessment, “There is a higher concentration of species per unit area in the Philippines than anywhere else.” However, habitat degradation and destructive human activities, such as dynamite fishing, have wreaked havoc on these fragile marine environments.



Dead coral

Especially vulnerable are the coral reefs, which globally support an estimated 25% of all marine life. The first-ever comprehensive global assessment of coral reefs found that a third of reef-building corals around the world are threatened with extinction. “There is ample justification to prioritize the Philippines for conservation,” says Dr. Carpenter. “Conserving these habitats and diversity can help us understand the processes that govern marine biodiversity.”

Living so far from the Philippines, how can Filipino Americans support conservation efforts? A good start is being aware of and staying informed about the current crisis. But more crucial is supporting the efforts of Filipino environmental organizations like Pusod, which has been working for 12 years with communities to protect, preserve and enhance marine and other ecosystems.

The California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco has been partnering with Pusod to reinforce grassroots conservation efforts in Filipino coastal communities, and has chosen to feature a *living* Philippine coral reef as one of the permanent exhibits in its new building in Golden Gate Park. While showcasing the coral reef’s beauty and diversity, the Academy aims to generate awareness of the need to preserve and sustain marine habitats. “Once the viewers are hooked by the beauty of what they’re seeing,” says Dr. Meg Burke, the Academy’s Director of Education, “they become interested in learning more and helping to protect these resources.”

For information: www.pusod.org/reef

Photos courtesy of Mario “Sanny” Leviste



**THE PHILIPPINE CORAL REEF EXHIBIT
AT THE CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California
OPENS SEPTEMBER 27, 2008**

For information about the Academy:
www.calacademy.org

CORAL IS INTEGRAL