



for a living planet®

BIOTA FILIPINA

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Nature Savored in November

They came, they saw, and they contributed.

Wildlife enthusiasts flocked to Greenbelt the whole month of November to support Savour Nature '05, a fundraiser and environmental awareness campaign by WWF-Philippines.

Savour Nature is held annually for the benefit of WWF's conservation projects nationwide. As the challenge of helping the environment gets bigger, more and more people are showing their eagerness to help Mother Earth.

However, a lot of individuals, and mostly urban dwellers, do not know how to make a difference. Savour Nature gives ordinary folks a chance to take part in

exciting activities that suit their lifestyle while pitching their own share in maintaining a living planet.

Every peso donated to any of the Savour Nature events, every warm body recruited as a WWF member, and every mindset altered towards environmental stewardship helps WWF protect our valuable and fragile natural resources. It also sustains the organization so it could carry on its mission to leave our children a living planet.

The screening of BBC's "Deep Blue" launched Savour Nature '05 with breathtaking images of the raw and untamed beauty of marine wildlife. More emotional than factual in its focus, "Deep Blue" plunged the audience into the most mysterious and misunderstood



Some of the mouth watering dishes offered during the Food Night.

realm of the planet—the ocean.

Critically acclaimed photographer Gutsy Tuason also joined the festivities with a solo photo exhibit featuring twenty of his favorite marine shots. It was his first exhibit for an environmental organization and a true testament of his passion to help protect the sea.

It was also hard to miss the Panda Booth that lounged at Greenbelt 3, attracting the early Christmas shopping crowd. WWF merchandise like pillows, bags, caps, patches and pins quickly became collectibles for the Panda logo devotees.

But the icing on the cake was still the much anticipated food night that featured 17 mouth-watering

dishes from 15 of the best restaurants in Greenbelt. The night was capped off with an exciting raffle: an iPod shuffle, P20,000 gift certificate from Jewelmer, roundtrip for two to Hong Kong and any destination in the Philippines, were given away to the lucky winners.

Savour Nature '05 was brought to us by Ayala Land Inc. together with Chikka.com. SN '05 was also made possible by Breakfast, The Lifestyle Network, Jam 88.3, Technomarine, DME/Mobius, Cebu Pacific, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Yehey.com, Cathay Pacific, Apple Center, HSBC, GWAPI, ClickTheCity.com, www.PinoyExchange.com, Men's Health, 24/7, and Circuit. •



Part of Gutsy Tuason's photo exhibit, "Borrowed Vision".



The Panda Booth

The few, the proud, the humpback whale survey volunteers

In the Philippines, the seasons are measured by the coming of giants.

The arrival of massive sea turtles, stealthy whale sharks, and magnificent humpback whales signal the return of summer. These marine creatures are lured to our warm and nutrient rich waters like clockwork—it is time to feed, time to breed, and time to give life.

But even before the sea glistens under the searing tropical sun, WWF-Philippines began recruiting volunteers to study these precious creatures. In its 7th season, the Humpback Whale Research and Conservation Project (HWRCP) has selected dedicated, hardworking individuals who were looking to expand their horizons while actively protecting the environment.

Information taken from the annual surveys is vital for the conservation and understanding of the humpbacks in the North Pacific. For the volunteers who donate five months of their time, it promises to be a rewarding and a life altering experience.

Since 2000, the HWRCP has been studying this population of humpback whales in the Babuyan Islands, north of Luzon. They migrate to the Philippines to breed in its temperate waters before returning north to their feeding grounds in Russia and Alaska.

The HWRCP will soon formulate a conservation plan for the protection of the natural resources of the area. Striking a balance between the needs of people and the needs of wildlife is crucial for protecting the dwindling numbers of humpbacks worldwide.

Conservation work in Babuyan is demanding. WWF Project Manager Elson Aca, a former HWRCP volunteer himself, admits, “While on survey, volunteers can expect long hours out on the water, beneath the hot sun and on volatile seas. The tasks involved include taking photographs and videos of interactions with marine mammals, listening for humpback whale vocalizations, and collecting and recording environmental data.”

He added that time off the boat is devoted to organizing data, maintaining equipment and conducting information and education activities in the local communities.

“The job is tough, but the sense of fulfillment is immense. You will get a chance to observe humpback whales and 13 other cetacean species in their natural habitat. You will be part of a team that is helping to advance the study of marine mammals in this country,” said Aca.

Although the exact dates for the 2006 survey are yet to be finalized, the survey team may leave Manila in early February, returning by the first week of May. Individuals that were selected as survey volunteers were expected to shoulder training costs, transportation to and from the research site, and personal insurance. Volunteers who are not based in Manila also arranged for their own accommodation and living expenses while in Manila.

Once the volunteers have successfully completed their training they are deployed in the field. The project supplies food, lodging and other survey-related expenses. Accommodations for the survey team will

be in private homes with team members expected to help out with household chores. For convenience, fussy eaters will not be catered for.

There is no electricity on the islands, although some homes have their own generators. Water for drinking and washing is drawn from deep wells. There are very few paved roads in Babuyan. Farm machinery, motor-bikes, and trucks used by the municipal government are the only vehicles on the islands.

Only about 6 volunteers were selected to join the survey team. Let us all wish our volunteers the best of luck! •

Survey volunteers get to participate in research work, video and photo documentation, and community information and education activities.



Whale shark ecotourism contributes to Philippine economy

Donsol, the Philippines – Swimming with whale sharks is contributing to the economy of the Philippines. According to government statistics, some 7,000 tourists traveled to Donsol, some 500km southeast of the capital, Manila, in 2005 to visit the “gentle giants”, earning some PHP35 million (or US\$623,000).

The revenues accrued in the Philippines, however, are only a fraction of the whale shark tourism earnings of Ningaloo Reef in Australia and Gladden Spit Marine Reserves in Belize. Ningaloo generated US\$7.8 million over a two-month period, while Belize profited US\$1.35 million in just six weeks.

The whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is the world’s largest living fish, measuring up to 14m and weighing in at 125 tons. Despite its name and enormous size, the whale shark is not a whale, but classified in a

family of its own — Rhincodontidae — with its closest relatives being leopard sharks and nurse sharks.

“The influx of tourists increases every year and this opens economic opportunities at the grassroots levels,” said Ruel Pine, WWF-Philippines’ Community-based Ecotourism and Coastal Resource Management Project Manager.

“Whale shark ecotourism has created 300 jobs in the municipality related to tour services, ranging from whale shark spotters to van drivers. However, out of the revenue earned over the six-month ecotourism season, Donsol’s local economy only retained 20 per cent in terms of shared benefits.”

A new WWF business plan development study shows that the capacity of ecotourism to generate income and employment for the local economy in



Donsol was significantly reduced as a result of inadequate tourist facilities and other infrastructure.

“The study will assist policy-makers and implementers to improve the financing structure that will ensure investment for coastal rehabilitation, which in turn will enhance the value of ecotourism and its management,” Pine said.

“The much-needed business plan will help prevent economic leaks locally by identifying and supporting more community-based enterprises.”

WWF-Philippines, together with the Philippines Department of Tourism, is encouraging households to join home-stay programs, and is looking into diversifying the local tourism portfolio.

WWF-Philippines is calling for an improvement to the pricing structure when visiting whale sharks so that generated income can go back into conservation activities. Currently, the local government invests little in marine conservation. WWF is also working with local fishing communities on a fisheries management plan which will address such marine issues as illegal fishing and the exploitation of fishery resources — issues that could effect the whale shark’s habitat and overall future in Donsol’s waters.

END NOTES:

- Whale sharks are found throughout tropical waters and have been seen in many parts of the Philippines, particularly in Donsol, some 500km southeast of the capital, Manila. Tourists flock to Donsol between the months of January and June, the time when the

spotted giants usually appear. Tourists are allowed to swim with them as long as they follow strict rules.

- The waters around Donsol are part of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas ecoregion, one of WWF’s Global 200 ecoregions — a science-based global ranking of the world’s most biologically outstanding habitats and the regions on which WWF concentrates its efforts.



Tourists in Donsol snorkeling with whale sharks.

Species of the Month

English/ Common Name: Great Crested Tern

Scientific Name: *Sterna bergii*

Family: Laridae

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

The Great Crested Tern like other terns are migratory birds. It has a pale yellow bill and darkish grey upper body. It has a forked tail, short legs and webbed feet, but the most noticeable part of their body is their black cap and shaggy crest. About 45 centimeters in length, they make sounds or calls that are described as a sharp 'kirrik'.

They are not like other shorebirds that peck at the sand for food; they dive into the sea to catch their prey.

During the breeding season, they migrate to tiny, remote or uninhabited areas like the islands in the South China Sea. Their nests are shallow, which are laid on open flat grounds. Egg laying is synchronized within the breeding group with one or two eggs hatching at the same time.

As evaluated by BirdLife International, the great crested tern is listed in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as LC or Least Concern. This indicates numbers have not declined by more than 30% in ten years or three generations.



Environmental Halloween

Have you ever seen children dressed as toxic waste, garbage and pollutants during Halloween? It may not be your typical Halloween costume but the students of Centro Montessori International School were garbed just this way. Fifty-seven students, together with their teachers, were all each dressed up as a threat to the environment during their Halloween party last October 14.

WWF also dressed up for the occasion, coming as a marine mammal by-catch, illegal fishermen and poachers. WWF facilitated fun-learning lectures, environmental games and informed the students about climate change and its effects on people, flora and fauna.

After the lecture, the students with the most memorable costumes were given special prizes from WWF.

A first-grader wearing a cigarette butt costume was awarded first prize. The second prize was given to another student with a car battery head gear, and the third prize went to a boy dressed as human trash.

**A note from the EE Officer regarding costume parties: Halloween has always been celebrated with scary masks, chocolates and candies -- but do you realize that the scariest part of celebrating the event is the waste that will be thrown away? So the next time you celebrate Halloween, Mardi Gras, or other costume parties, please throw the candy wrappers and other papers (like the ones we use to make our costume) in the trash bin properly. Segregate the biodegradable materials from the non-biodegradable so we could also celebrate the integrity of our environment. •



Top: Best in Costume winner with WWF's EE Officer and RE BII Campaign consultant.
Left: Winners of the Best in Costume

My Nature Trip: Pick of the Month Winner



Siquijor by Rebecca Filler, *WWF-Philippines member*

A brief & unplanned trip to Siquijor last May with a bunch of friends turned into a wonderful adventure of discovery. It certainly opened my eyes to the many hidden treasures that the Philippines has to offer.

One of the amazing places we visited was the Kambugahay Falls, located in the heart of the island. Cleverly hidden beneath lush greenery, and accessible only by way of man-made steps & a bamboo railing, it is definitely a must-see. We had to walk down some 30 feet (slipping & sliding down was more like it) to get there. But the sight that greeted us below was certainly worth the trek. Two levels of little waterfalls falling into deep pools of clear blue water. Surrounded by a myriad of trees & the sounds of nature, it was a veritable paradise.

It was easy to get lost in the beauty of the place. Despite the absence of changing rooms, we quickly put on our swimsuits and took a dip in the cold but incredibly clean water. We could have stayed there forever, sitting under the waterfalls, lazily pondering the meaning of life...

And yet there were still other places to see. The island is also home to many ancient structures that have stood the test of time, and are now considered historical landmarks, like the San Isidro Labrador church and monastery. The white sandy beaches are picture perfect and clean, and not at all over-crowded; the mangrove clusters that line part of the coastline and are a vital part of the ecosystem.

Who would have thought that this little island off the coast of Dumaguete could hold so many delightful sights? Although famous for its stories of *mangkukulam* (witches) and witchcraft, Siquijor certainly has so much more to offer, especially for those who will take the time to discover. •

Conservation Circle Partners

Travel Agencies

Acropolis Travel Agency

Discount on selected local and international packages

Contact Person:Weng

Contact Numbers: 9297039 or 9203903

Dumaguete Outdoors Tours and Services

10% discount on unbound and outbound tours

Contact Person: Michelle Villanueva

Contact Details: 2256079,

e-mail:dumagueteoutdoors@eudoramail.com or

Branch: 3-A Noblefranca St., Dunaguete City

Theme Parks

Enchanted Kingdom

10% discount on Enchanted Kingdom Day Pass Tickets purchased at Makati Sales Office

Contact Person: Christine

Contact Details: 830-2111 to 16; 812-7232

Restaurants

Bizu Patisserie

Get a free WWF "Rainforest" cake for a minimum order of 2 entrees

Branches: Alabang Town Center, Glorietta 4 and Greenbelt 2

El Nido Boutique and Art Café

5% on souvenirs, food and drinks for Cash

Branch: Sirena St., Buena Suerte, El Nido, Palawan

Shops and Centers

Columbia Sportswear

Free Columbia merchandise (350 ml bottle, key ring or pedora hat holder) for every P3,000 worth purchase of regular priced items

Branches: Gateway and Podium

Animal House

3% to 10% discount on products and services for Cash payments only

Contact Person: Michael Kaw

Contact Details: 7268112,

email: anihouse@skyinet.net

Branches: New Manila, Makati, Pasig, Alabang, SMH, Chinatown, SM Megamall, SM Bicutan, Greenhills and Market Market

Maxi Toy lab

5% discount on all products subject to certain restrictions

Branches: Shangrila Plaza Mall, Glorietta, ATC and Outleyard

Alfredulla Corporation

10% discount on decorative animal figures

Contact Person: Jeffrey Bosales

Contact Details: 2459999,

www.alfredulla.com

Papemelroti

5% discount on originally priced items (min. CASH purchase of Php100)

10% discount on Roces branch only

Branches: SM North EDSA, SM Fairview, Ali Mall, Cubao, SM Centerpoint, SM Southmall, Alabang, Glorietta



Conservation Circle Partners

2 (Makati), Roces Ave. (Q.C.), Robinson's Place Manila, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall.

Scuba Ventures Dumaguete

15% discount on diving equipments and courses
Contact Person: Andre Montenegro
Contact Details: (035) 2257716,
e-mail: scuba_inc@yahoo.com
Branch: Ponce de Leon Compound, Tubod, Dumaguete City

Ocean Colors

15% discount on regular items
10% discount on specialty courses
5% discount on major dive trips
10-15% discount on Open Water and Medic First Aid courses for atleast 3-5 people
Free Discover Scuba Diving
Contact Person: Chester Lee
Contact Numbers: 8901785 or 8904142

Play Underground

15% discount on Membership Fees and Party Rental Rates
Free Gear Rental for Rock Climbing
Branch: Powerplant Mall

Southbay Badminton Center

Waived player's fee
Contact Person: Marivic Campillo
Contact Number: 8079576
Branch: Villongco St., West Service Road, Sucat, Parañaque

Aqua Soft water refilling station

Discounted rate on water bottles and refilling
Branch: National Road, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi

A Different Bookstore

5% discount for regular priced books.
Branches: Eastwood City, Glorietta and Podium (Ink and Stone)

Hearts on Hands

10% discount on Arts and Crafts workshops
Contact Person: Fay Gaddi or Mary Grace Ramos
Contact Details: 9229137 / 9219693
Email: fay.gaddi@mayniladwater.com.ph

VX Boulder Climbing Gym and Training Center

Discount on regular climbing day passes
Contact Person: Dennis Diaz
Contact Details: 9342774
e-mail: vx_boulder@yahoo.com

Conservation Circle Partners

Hotels/Resorts

Lagen Island Resort

10% discount on published rates with free half day guided tour, complimentary glass of wine and welcome fruit platter

Contact Person: Len Ayson

Contact Number: 8945644

Email: holiday@elnidoresorts.com

Miniloc Island Resort

10% discount on published rates with free half day guided tour, complimentary glass of wine and welcome fruit platter

Contact Person: Len Ayson

Contact Number: 8945644

Email: holiday@elnidoresorts.com

L' Fisher Hotel

30% discount on room rates for Cash

20% discount on room rates for Credit Card

Contact Person: Kristine Villaruz

Contact Details: Email: lfisher@globelines.com.ph

Branch: Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

Atlantis Beach Resorts Philippines

20% discount on accommodation and diving

Contact details: (035) 4252327

e-mail: dumaguete@atlantishotel.com

Branches: Dumaguete and Puerto Galera

Aqua One

15-20% discount on Scuba Equipment

5% discount on Scuba Courses and Dive Tours

Free Intro Dive

Contact Numbers: 8992831 to 32

Astoria Plaza

Php 3,000 NET for 1 bedroom Suite

Php 4,500 NET for 2 bedroom Suite

10% discount on Café Astoria (bar and restaurant)

10% discount on weekend social banquet functions

10% discount on Streetscape Spa Center

Contact Person: Vivian Ng

Contact Details: (02) 6871111

Branch: J. Escrive St. (former Amber Ave.) Ortigas

Business district, 1600 Pasig City

Diamond Head Hotel and Convention Center

30% discount on rooms based on published rates

10% discount on water sports (once available)

Contact Person: Roger Begre

Branch: Baloy Beach, Bo. Barretto, Olangapo City

Discovery Suites

10% discount on Local Residents package

Contact Details: 6852222,

e-mail: rsvn@discovery.com.ph

Branch: Ortigas

The Marikina Hotel

10% discount on accommodations

10% discount on Food and Beverages except on promo items

Contact Person: Ed Endaya

Contact Numbers: 9988290 / 9988342 to 45

Branch: Pio Del Pilar St. cor. Tangerine St. Brgy. Concepcion II, Marikina City

Conservation Circle Partners

Oceana

10% discount on accommodations during weekends

30% discount on accommodations during weekdays

Contact Person: Tere

Contact Number: 6426215

Branch: Puerto Galera

The Pearl Manila Hotel

Php 1,900 NET for Superior

Php 2,450 NET for Junior Suite

Php 3,350 NET for 1 bedroom Suite

Php 4,250 NET for 2 bedroom Suite

Php 7,000 NET for Splendour Penthouse Suite

Php 8,500 NET for Oriental Penthouse Suite

Php 8,500 NET for Palazzo Suite

Php 10,000 NET for Enchantment

10% discount on Streetscape or massage services

10% discount on Food only

Contact Person: Mary Ann Valenz

Contact Details: 4000088,

e-mail: fo@pearlmanila.com.ph

Branch: Gen. Luna St. corner Taft and UN avenue, Ermita, Manila

Puerto Del Sol Beach Resort and Hotel Club

10% discount on Local Rates for all room types (Mansion Villas, Casitas, BAhay Kubo) of non-peak season

5% discount on Local Rates during peak season

Contact Person: Rene Isidro

Contact Details: 6378963,

e-mail: csr@puertodelsol.com.ph

Branch: Bolinao, Pangasinan

Robbinsdale Hotel

Php 1,200 NET for Standard Room

Php 1,500 NET for Deluxe Room

Php 2,000 NET for Junior Suites

Php 2,500 NET for Two-Bedroom Suite

Php 300 for Extra bed/Person

10% discount on facial and massage

10% discount on food and beverage minimum

Php 1,000 on food purchases

Contact Person: Grace Enriquez

Contact Number: 7162581 local 234

Branch: 14 Araneta Ave., Quezon City



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Contributors: Louella Beltran, Obel Resurreccion, Vicson Chua,
Rebecca Filler

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lyn Co, Obel Resurreccion, Vicson Chua, Rebecca Filler, WWF /
Javier ORDÓÑEZ

For comments or suggestions:

Phone: 63 2 920 7923 or 26

Fax: 63 2 426 3927

E-mail: kkp@wwf.org.ph