

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Second Regular Session**

House Bill No. 8299



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**Introduced by Representative Josephine Y. Ramirez Sato**

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The island of Mindoro is considered a biodiversity hotspot and an important area of endemism. It is a biogeographical region that has social, economic, and ecological importance. There are at least seven (7) Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) that straddle the two provinces (Occidental and Oriental Mindoro) that serves as home to many endemic flora and fauna species with national and global significance. This include the Tamaraw (*Bubalus Mindorensis*), the largest wildlife mammalian species that can be only found in Mindoro.

At the start of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tamaraw population is estimated at 10,000. The species was noted to roam the coastal lowlands to mountain peaks. However, the outbreak of rinderpest (an infectious viral diseases of cattle) brought about by widespread cattle ranching in 1930s caused the population of tamaraw to decline. In 1969, the population was estimated to be at 100. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) included tamaraw in the Red List of Threatened Species and tagged as critically-endangered. The 2018 population count recorded 523 tamaraws are left in the wild. To date, three subpopulations of tamaraw are known to survive and are located in Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP), Mt. Calavite Wildlife Sanctuary (MCWS), and Aruyan-Malati Tamaraw Reservation.

The population increase of tamaraw can be attributed to the efforts of dedicated personnel of Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP). Formed in 1979 through Executive Order No. 544, the TCP (under the DENR) serves as the country's direct response to the threats faced by the species. Despite meager resources and unstable employment, the dedicated rangers of TCP strive to keep the tamaraws safe from poachers and hunters, and patrolling the 2,500-hectare strict protection zone within MIBNP.

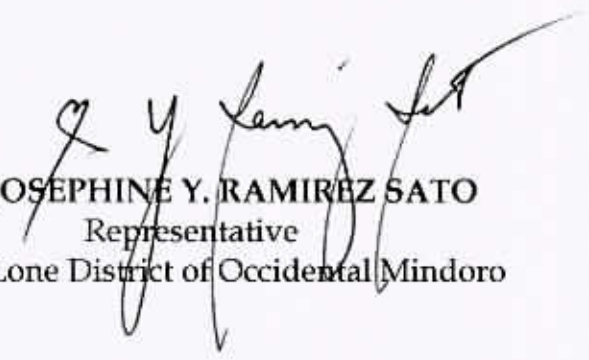
We are facing great challenges to ensure that the tamaraw will not go extinct. All stakeholders need to come together to ensure all are addressed. It is high time to find lasting solutions to the perennial critical issues such as inadequate habitat assessment, mapping of possible pests and diseases, lack of tamaraw specialists, availability of biotechnology to help in tamaraw reproduction, lack of research facilities, among others.

It should be noted that the concern on tamaraw is not limited to environment and biodiversity. It is also socio-cultural concern. The interaction of wildlife and human are deeply rooted in the culture of our indigenous people - the Mangyans. The recent research also found that most of the remaining population are within ancestral domains. The Mangyans sustainably thrive and in harmony with nature and the tamaraws.

In 2019, the local stakeholders in Mindoro created a technical working group with members coming from various LGUs and academe who agreed to advance cooperation in finding solutions to address the imminent threat of tamaraw's extinction. One of the targets of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) - the country's roadmap to biodiversity conservation - is that, *"By 2028, the conservation status of nationally and globally threatened species in the country from 2016 levels is maintained or improved."* This measure is a concrete contribution to help the country meet its target for wildlife conservation.

We, the people of Mindoro, and our partners in conservation believed that the only way for a sustainable future is to ensure our national, cultural, and natural heritage will be passed on to future generations. The passage of this bill and the institutionalization of the Tamaraw Conservation Program is a step in the right direction.

The approval of this bill is urgently requested.



JOSEPHINE Y. RAMIREZ SATO  
Representative  
Lone District of Occidental Mindoro

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**AN ACT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE THE TAMARAW CONSERVATION PROGRAM, CREATING ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AND IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

**SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the “**Tamaraw Conservation Management Act.**”

**SEC. 2. *Statement of Policy.*** - It is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balance and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. It is also the policy of the State to conserve and protect the country’s wildlife resources and its habitats, enhance biodiversity, and ensure provision of ecosystem services.

Towards this end, the State shall institute measures with due regard to local and national interest, Philippine commitments to international conventions, treaties and agreements for the protection and conservation of biodiversity, and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources.

**SEC. 3. *Creation of the Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council.*** - The Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council (TC3), hereinafter referred to as the Council, shall exercise the function of a governance, implementation and policy direction body.

The Council shall be Chaired by the Secretary of Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The Secretary can designate the Regional Executive Director

as his/her permanent representative. The Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services will serve as Co-Chairperson.

The Chairperson shall designate the following as members of the Council: PENROs of Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, CENRO's of Sablayan and San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, CENRO's of Roxas and Socorro in Oriental Mindoro, Protected Area Superintendent of Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP) and Mt. Calavite Wildlife Sanctuary (MWCS).

The Chairperson of the Council shall also invite representatives from the following key stakeholders of Tamaraw Conservation, to form part of Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council:

- 1) Provincial and Municipal Local Government Units of Occidental and Oriental Mindoro or their duly authorized representative(s);
- 2) Members of the House of Representatives (of the Congressional Districts in Mindoro) or their duly authorized representative(s);
- 3) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Occidental Mindoro/Oriental Mindoro provincial offices;
- 4) Indigenous Peoples (Buhid, Tau-Buid, Iraya, Bangon, and Alangan tribes);
- 5) At least one (1) from the academe;
- 6) Not more than three (3) Non-Government Organizations (NGOs);
- 7) Other stakeholder(s)

**SEC. 4. Powers and Functions of the Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council.** - In order to successfully implement the provisions of this Act, the Council is hereby vested with the following powers and functions:

- 1) Provide oversight function to the implementation of Tamaraw Conservation Management and Action Plan (TCMAP) and Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) activities;
- 2) Integration of TCMAP objectives and activities in the annual work and financial plans of each agency's represented in the TC3 (harmonization and synchronization of plans), and other agency's plans/frameworks (e.g. CLUP, FLUP, PA Management Plan);
- 3) Monitor and review implementation of TCMAP;
- 4) Provide administrative and political support to the implementation of projects and interventions under the TCMAP;
- 5) Create thematic or site-based group(s), as needed;

- 6) Invite municipal and barangay LGUs in case of certain issues affecting their areas of jurisdiction;
- 7) Engage with any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the Government, and on private entities and organizations for cooperation and assistance in the performance of its functions;
- 8) Arrange, negotiate for, accept donations, grants, gifts, loans, and other funding from domestic and foreign sources to carry out the activities and purpose of the Council and TCP;
- 9) Recommend actions to concerned offices in case of pressing issues and concerns;
- 10) Perform such other powers and functions as may be necessary in carrying out its functions, powers, and the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 5. *Tamaraw Conservation Technical Advisory Group.*** - The Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council, through the Chairperson, may engage the guidance and technical advice of the following offices/institutions on matters and concerns affecting Tamaraw conservation:

- 1) Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB);
- 2) Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA);
- 3) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group (AWCSG); and
- 4) Other experts from the academe and conservation organizations.

**SEC. 6. *The Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP).*** - The Tamaraw Conservation Program shall act as the implementing arm of the Council. The TCP shall be recognized as the TCP Office (TCPO) and shall perform the following functions:

- 1) Lead the formulation and implementation of TCMAP;
- 2) Prepare the Annual Work and Financial Plan (WFP) for the TCP based on the priority activities in the TCMAP;
- 3) Assist in the mobilization of resources to augment government resource financing of the TCMAP;
- 4) Develop activity proposals and project in pursuit of the strategies of TCMAP;
- 5) Create Quick Response Team (QRT), composed of TCPO, PAMO, LGU, and PNP, that will conduct law enforcement, investigation, and population surveys;

- 6) Recommend management interventions including policies and guidelines needed to address/resolve pressing issues and facilitate implementation of activities under the TCMAP;
- 7) Serve as Secretariat of TC3;
- 8) Initiate coordination mechanism and necessary arrangements with the PAMB, through its PASu, for collaborative conservation of Tamaraw populations within the protected areas and facilitate integration of harmonization of TCMAP with the PAMPs of concerned protected areas.
- 9) Manage the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm/TCRC in coordination with PAMO of Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural park (MIBNP);
- 10) Perform other duties that may be assigned by TC3.

**SEC. 7. *Organizational Structure of Tamaraw Conservation Program Office.***

- The TCPO will be under the supervision of the PENRO Occidental Mindoro pursuant to DAO 2005-26. Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR MIMAROPA Regional Office, in coordination with the Biodiversity Management Bureau, shall prepare the manpower requirements, including plantilla positions for the TCPO for submission to the Department of Budget and Management.

**SEC. 8. *Establishment of Tamaraw Conservation and Research Center (TCRC).***

- The TCRC is hereby established to provide science-based approach for the conservation of the Tamaraw. The TCRC shall:

- 1) Serve a national conservation research center for the Tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*) on the area of Conservation Genetics, Reproductive Sciences, Diseases Management etc.;
- 2) Promote conservation and research for the endemic species of Mindoro Island;
- 3) Subsume the operation of the existing Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm located in Sitio Canturoy, Barangay Manoot, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro, within Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural park to pursue the envisioned plan for an enhanced Tamaraw metapopulation management across Mindoro.

The TCRC shall be one (1) of the components of TCP. As a sub-center for biodiversity research, all research activities shall be coordinated with the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) and BMB.

**SEC. 9. *Tamaraw Conservation in Protected Areas.*** - The concerned PAMBs should actively manage Tamaraw populations within their respective protected areas ensuring adequate measures and interventions for the conservation of species as

identified in the TCMAP. Furthermore, consider Tamaraw as among the priorities for monitoring and as indicator for effective protected area management. The PAMB through the PASu, shall maintain close collaboration with the TCPO staff in carrying out Tamaraw conservation activities within the PA in accordance with the set standards and guidelines.

**SEC. 10. Appropriations.** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within three (3) months from the passage of this Act, the DENR shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

**SEC. 12. Separability Clause.** - If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 13. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby amended or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 14. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*