

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1743

Introduced by: **REP. PROSPERO A. PICHAY, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to increase the penalty for violation of any provision of Republic Act No. 6147 declaring the monkey-eating eagle as a protected bird.

The Philippine Eagle is both a national and international pride. Found only in the Philippines on the islands of Luzon, Samar, Leyte and Mindanao, this bird ranks as the rarest eagle in the world next only to the Madagascar Sea Eagle. It is undoubtedly a creature of beauty and strength, gigantic, blue-eyed, with incredible crest of long lanceolated feathers, arched but narrow bill, and with very powerful legs and feet.

Scientists generally consider it the second largest eagle because of its weight (up to 8.0 kilos) and the size of its legs and feet are less than the world's largest, the Harpy Eagle of Central and South America. However, the Philippine Eagle's impressive height of more than one meter and with a wingspan measuring seven (7) feet, makes it second to none among eagles.

Numerous legislation about the protection of the Philippine Eagle were passed. On August 25, 1970, Administrative Order No. 235 was issued prohibiting any acts that disturb or harm the Philippine Eagle. On November 9, 1970, Republic Act No. 6147 was enacted making provisions for nest site sanctuaries and on May 8, 1972, Proclamation No. 1732 renamed the bird from monkey-eating eagle to Philippine Eagle.

On July 4, 1995, President Fidel Ramos signed Proclamation No. 615 declaring the Philippine Eagle, replacing the *maya*, as the national bird of the Philippines.

The Philippine Eagle is a symbol of all life in the rain forest. Just as this bird depends on the rain forests to survive, the earth's survival likewise lies on the preservation of the forests. If the eagle disappears, it means the support forest has disappeared. The survival of the eagle means the survival of our race.

Clearly, the eagle's disappearance is an environmental indicator – a warning that an ecological imbalance exists. The valuable watersheds, the forested mountains, and the home of the Philippine eagle are one and the same. As the forests decrease, the incidence of floods and droughts, and the number of dried up riverbeds increase too.

Too, laws prohibiting the harming, capture or killing of this bird has been very lenient. Despite the fact that the world price for an eagle is estimated at \$25,000, the penalties are pegged at P600.00 or six (6) months imprisonment.

It took a foreigner in the person of Charles Lindbergh to move the minds of the Filipino people and trigger initiatives for the preservation of the remaining population of the eagle. In 1979, a Philippine Eagle Conservation Program was put into operation. Its components include captive breeding operations, research and education campaigns.

Sadly, however, in spite of the save-the-eagle conservation program, the bird up till now is waging a desperate bid for survival. In 1979, the estimated total population of the Philippine eagle was 500. Today, the figures are down to an optimistic estimate of 300 heads – definitely an endangered specie and on its way to extinction.

It is the aim of this bill to put more teeth to the law, Republic Act No. 6147 by increasing the penalty for the killing, hunting, wounding or taking away of the eagle and destroying, disturbing or taking away of its nests and eggs.

In view thereof, approval of this bill is highly recommended.

PROSPERO A. PICHAY, JR.



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AN ACT

INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR THE KILLING, WOUNDING OR TAKING AWAY OF THE EAGLE AND/OR DESTROYING, DISTURBING OR TAKING AWAY OF THE BIRD'S NESTS OR EGGS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION FIVE OF REPUBLIC ACT NUMBERED SIXTY-ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN

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

SECTION 1. Section 5 of Republic Act No. 6147 entitled "An Act Declaring the *Pithecophaga Jefferyi* Commonly Known as Monkey-Eating Eagle as a Protected Bird in the Philippines, Providing for the Preservation of the Same and Authorizing The Appropriation of Funds For The Purpose" is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 5. Any person violating any provision of this Act shall be punished by a penalty of [*prisión correccional*] **PRISIÓN MAYOR** or by a fine of not less than [six hundred] **TEN THOUSAND** pesos [(P600.00)] **(P10,000)** nor more than [One] **FIFTEEN** thousand pesos [(P1,000)] **(P15,000)**, or by both such imprisonment and fine at the discretion of the court. In case of any subsequent offense, the court shall impose both the imprisonment and the fine. In case of insolvency, the corresponding subsidiary imprisonment shall be suffered."

SEC. 2. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,