

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7430**



Introduced by **HON. RUDY S. CAOAGDAN, DPA**

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING RA 9237 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MT. APO NATURAL
PARK (MANP) BY ESTABLISHING THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND
RESCUE CENTER INSIDE THE MANP TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE
DWINDLING POPULATION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill was filed to strengthen RA 9237 or the Mt. Apo Natural Park (MANP) due to the various challenges that have emerged in the area since the law was passed in 2003 due to rapid encroachment and conversion in the area from being a protected landscape to an agriculture settlement.

It proposes the establishment of the Mt. Apo Natural Park Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center that aims to bolster current conservation efforts on threatened local species found only in the MANP protected landscape.

According to the UNESCO (2009), Mt. Apo is touted as one of the richest botanical mountains in Asia and the Pacific region as it hosts hundreds of rare, endemic and threatened species of flora. It has been also considered as the Center for Biodiversity and Endemism of rare species in Mindanao, sheltering one of the highest land-based biological diversity in terms of flora and fauna per unit area.

However, with the continued unregulated anthropogenic human activities such as illegal logging, hunting/poaching, and conversion of forest land for agriculture and settlement, and drastic result of climate change made the wildlife fauna in the area faces grave threat of extinction, intense pressure and decline.

In order to prevent from extinction and vulnerability, a call to establish the wildlife conservation and rescue center is sought inside the Mt. Apo Natural Park (MANP). This is also in support to RA 9147 or the Wildlife Resource Conservation and Protection Act which was passed in 2001.

In view of the foregoing, I earnestly seek the approval of this measure.



HON. RUDY S. CAOAGDAN, DPA
Representative
2nd District, North Cotabato

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AN ACT
STRENGTHENING RA 9237 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MT. APO NATURAL PARK BY
ESTABLISHING THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RESCUE CENTER INSIDE THE
MANP TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE DWINDLING POPULATION OF WILDLIFE
RESOURCES, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This act shall be known as the “Mt. Apo Natural Park (MANP) Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center Act.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to conserve and protect the country’s wildlife resources and their habitants for sustainability and promote ecological balance, enhance biological diversity, and ensure the provision of ecosystem services of the wildlife population and preserve the existing for the future generations of the country.

SEC. 3. *Objectives.* – This Act is to conserve rarely sighted local species such as the *Sus Philippinensis* or the Philippine Warty Pig and the *Rusa Marianna* or the Philippine Brown Deer, located in the Mt. Apo Natural Park that faces grave threat of extinction, intense pressure and decline due to continued unregulated anthropogenic human activities such as illegal logging, hunting/poaching, and conversion of forest land for agriculture and settlement, that makes their population vulnerable to extinction. The objectives in the establishment of the MANP Wildlife Conservation and Rescue Center are as follows:

- a) To provide temporary and appropriate shelter for confiscated, donated and/or abandoned wild animals in the area;
- b) To provide isolation and quarantine facilities for confiscated, donated and/or

abandoned wild animals; and,

- c) To provide adequate care and maintenance for confiscated, donated and/or abandoned wild animals with ultimate objective of releasing/ putting back to the natural habitats those which are fit to survive.

SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following shall be construed as:

- a) Abandoned – wild animals intentionally left by keeper/owner (human) giving up responsibility for care and maintenance or left by “biological” parents (for animals);
- b) Critically endangered species – refers to a species or subspecies that is facing extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future;
- c) Confiscated – wild animals seized by the DENR personnel or turned over by other apprehending authorities;
- d) Derivatives – refers to a substance/ material extracted or taken from wildlife such as but not limited to blood, saliva, oils, genes, urine; a compound directly or indirectly produced from wildlife and/or products produced from wildlife and wildlife products;
- e) Domesticated – refers to any animal listed by the relevant authorities easily propagated and altered or selected for desirable characteristics and preferences for domestic use;
- f) Donated – voluntary and unconditional giving up of ownership, and free of charge turn-over of wild animals;
- g) Endangered species – refers to species or subspecies that is not critically endangered but whose survival in the wild is unlikely if causal factors continue operating;
- h) Endemic species – refers to species or subspecies which is naturally occurring and found only within specific areas in the country;
- i) Habitat – refers to place or environment where species or subspecies naturally occur or has naturally established its population;
- j) Indigenous wildlife – refers to species or subspecies of wildlife naturally occurring or has naturally established population in the country;
- k) Other wildlife species – refers to all non-threatened species that have the tendency to become threatened due to the destruction of habitat or other similar causes as may be listed by the Secretary upon the recommendation of the National Wildlife Management Committee;

- l) Protected Wildlife – refers to all wildlife falling under any category of threatened wildlife species and other wildlife species listed by the DENR, DA, PCSD and BMG that is not in the threatened list but are identified and listed by DENR, DA, PCSD and BMG as requiring legal protection;
- m) Quarantine – wild animals are kept in isolation to prevent spread or transmission of diseases;
- n) Rehabilitation – restoring the normal health of wild animals with previous injury or illness;
- o) Vulnerable species – refers to species or subspecies that is not critically endangered nor endangered but is under threat from adverse factor throughout their range and is likely to move to the endangered category in the near future;
- p) Wildlife – refers to wild forms and varieties of flora and fauna, in all developmental stages, including those which are in captivity or are being bred or propagated;
- q) Wildlife Rescue Center – refers to government establishment or designated repositories of abandoned, injured, donated, and confiscated wildlife for treatment, care and rehabilitation.

SEC. 5. *The Wildlife and Rescue Center in MANP.* – The Center shall be the central body tasked to manage the daily operations. It shall compose of an In-charge Chief with three (3) technical people with expertise in the field of veterinary medicine and other related course.

SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions.* – The Center shall have the following powers and functions in terms of management and operations:

- a) To accommodate, protect and preserve the local wildlife animals that are identified in this Act as most vulnerable to the effects of human encroachment and man-made disasters;
- b) To help maintain Mt. Apo's quest for a UNESCO World Heritage Site;
- c) To indulge partnership with the concerned national agencies and local government units (LGUs), academe, local dwellers and other stakeholders for a sustainable inclusive participation;
- d) To received grants, subsidies, donations or contributions from corporations, thrusts, foundations, associations and other sources from any private or government office, agency or corporation in the Philippines or abroad;

- e) To establish, maintain, operate and provide transparent reporting system to the national government concerns in order to achieve the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Manpower Requirement.* - The minimum manpower requirement in the operation of the MANP Wildlife and Rescue Center shall be under the supervision of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, are as follows:

- a) In-charge of the MANP Wildlife Rescue Center
- b) Veterinarian (resident or consultant)
- c) Animal caretakers
- d) Nursery caretakers
- e) Clerk
- f) Carpenter (optional)
- g) Medical Technologist (optional)
- h) Maintenance worker (optional)

SEC. 8. *Protected Area Management Bureau (PAMB).* - The PAMB shall oversee the operations of the Wildlife and Rescue Center in MANP with the same composition of the Executive Committee officials and members set in Section 10 of RA 9237. It shall serve as the oversight and advisory board of the Center where all decisions that requires policy approval and funding requirements needed shall be duly approved by the PAMB Executive Committee subject to the national government rules and regulations.

SEC. 9. *Powers and Functions.* The PAMB shall have the following powers and functions as oversight in the management and operations of the Center:

- a) To approved proposals that shall sustain the operations of the Center, subject to research and development evidences;
- b) To assist the Center to contribute to Mt. Apo's quest for a UNESCO World Heritage Site;
- c) To approved legal instruments in a form of memoranda and other agreements entered by the Center in partnership with the concerned national agencies and local government units (LGUs), academe, local dwellers and other stakeholders for a sustainable inclusive participation;
- d) To approved the received grants, subsidies, donations or contributions from corporations, thrusts, foundations, associations and other sources from any private or government office, agency or corporation in the Philippines or abroad;

- e) To approve the Center's establishment, operations and maintenance for the national government reporting requirements in order to achieve the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 10. *Partner Institutions.* – The Center shall establish coordination and partnership in terms of research and development (R&D), innovations, technical expertise, and other breakthroughs related to conservations with the following institutions: The University of the Philippines (UP);

- a) State Colleges and Universities (SCUs);
- b) Local Government Units;
- c) Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF); and
- d) Other Private institutions

SEC. 11. *Exemption from Taxes and Duties.* – The Center shall be exempt from the payment of customs duties and taxes on the importation of veterinary and other supplies or other farm inputs, equipment and machineries, research equipment, including its spare parts, for purpose of augmenting and upgrading local stocks and breeders, subject to the following conditions:

- a) That the dairy equipment and machineries, including its spare parts are not manufacture domestically in sufficient quantity, of comparable quality and reasonable prices; and
- b) That it shall be actually, directly and exclusively used by the Center in the production, propagation and rescue of wildlife animals

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within three (3) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources shall form an ad hoc Task Force to be composed of representatives coming from the PAMB members to formulate the Implementing Rules and Regulations within the ensuing period of three (3) months. Two representatives of the Congressional Commission on Environment and Natural Resources shall join the meetings of the ad hoc Task Force as observers.

SEC. 13. *Appropriations.* – The establishment, operations and maintenance of the Mt. Apo Natural Park Wildlife and Rescue Center shall be included in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) budget for the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper or general circulation.

Approved,