



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



Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 139

Introduced by Representative Arnan C. Panaligan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to institutionalize the Tamaraw Conservation Program in order to prevent the extinction of the Tamaraws and the deterioration of its habitat and address critical issues and challenges affecting its protection, preservation and conservation.

This bill is similar to the measure sponsored by former Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato during the Eighteenth Congress. It was approved by the House of Representatives and transmitted to the Senate but did not become a law. During the 19th Congress, this bill was refiled but it was not taken during the plenary session.

The Island of Mindoro is one of the major biogeographical regions in the country that has social, economic, and ecological importance. The island comprising the provinces of Oriental and Occidental Mindoro is home to many endemic flora and fauna species with national and global significance including the Bubalus Mindorensis or Tamaraw. This critically endangered mammalian species belonging to the water bovine family are only to be found in the Island of Mindoro. These dwarf water buffalo are regarded as the largest endemic land mammal in the Philippines and plays a critical role in maintaining balance in the forest and grassland ecosystems of the Mindoro Island.

In 2000, the Tamaraw was officially listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In 2018, the population count recorded 523 Tamaraws left in the wild, and to date, metapopulations of tamaraw are found in Mt. Cavalite Wildlife Sanctuary, Aruyan-Malite Tamaraw Reservation and in Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park where today's 80 percent of its population may be found.

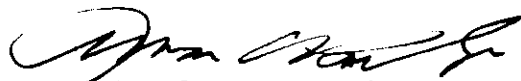
This bill institutionalizing the Tamaraw Conservation Program and its implementation mechanism intends to provide for a holistic and a multi-sectoral

intervention and solution addressing the primary threats to the species particularly poaching, disease prevention from domestic cattle to tamaraws and management of invasive species affecting its habitat. Further, it is aimed to address the inadequate habitat assessment, mapping of pests and diseases, and the lack of research facility and technology to help Tamaraw reproduction.

As a socio-cultural concern, this measure aims to enhance the interaction between the wildlife and Mindoro's indigenous people, the Mangyans, by strengthening the collaboration efforts in integrating conservation measures to the communities' cultural and development needs for the recovery of the tamaraws that are found in their respective ancestral domains.

Considering the great challenges that are faced by the Tamaraws and its habitat, I believe that it is only through the enactment of a law that will protect, preserve and rehabilitate the population of this critically endangered species that we can be assured that the concept of intergenerationality and our rights for healthful ecology, as enshrined in our Constitution, be upheld.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is urgently requested.


ARNAN C. PANALIGAN



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 139

Introduced by Representative Arnan C. Panaligan

1 **AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE TAMARAW CONSERVATION**
2 **PROGRAM, CREATING ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AND**
3 **IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM, AND PROVIDING FUNDS**
4 **THEREFOR**

5
6 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in*
7 *Congress assembled:*
8

9 SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "Tamaraw
10 Conservation Management Act. "
11

12 SECTION. 2. Declaration of Policy. t is the policy of the State to protect and
13 advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with
14 the rhythm and harmony of nature. It is also the policy of the State to conserve and
15 protect the country's wildlife resources
16 and its habitats, enhance biodiversity, and ensure provision of ecosystem services.
17

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

1
2 SECTION 3. Creation Of the Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council -
3 The Tamaraw Conservation Coordinating Council, hereinafter referred to as the
4 Council, is hereby created and shall be the body charged with the formulation of
5 policies and management of programs pertaining to the conservation of the
6 Tamaraw (*Bubalus Mindorensis*) and its current population in the country.

7
8 The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
9 (DENR) shall serve as the Chairperson of the Council. The DENR Regional
10 Executive Director for Region IV-B may be designated as the permanent
11 representative by the DENR Secretary and the Assistant Regional Director for
12 Technical Services shall serve as the Vice- Chairperson of the Council.

13
14 The Chairperson shall invite representatives from the following to serve as
15 members of the Council:

- 16 a. One (1) each from the Provincial governments of Occidental Mindoro and
17 Oriental Mindoro;
18 b. One (1) each from concerned municipal government offices;
19 c. Members of the House of Representatives from Congressional Districts of
20 the provinces of Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro;
21 d. One (1) each from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Offices
22 in Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro;
23 e. One (1) each from the Indigenous Peoples tribal groups of Buhid, Tau-Buid,
24 Iraya, Bangon, and Alangan;
25 f. One (1) each from the academe in Occidental Mindoro and Oriental
26 Mindoro;
27 g. Three (3) locally-based conservation non-government organizations
28 (NGOs); and
29 h. One (1) from the local Chamber of commerce.

30
31 SECTION 4. Powers and Functions of the Council. -For the effective
32 implementation of the provisions of this Act, the Council is hereby vested with the
33 following powers and functions:

- a. Oversee the implementation of the Tamaraw Conservation Management and Action Plan (TCMAP) and the Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP);
- b. Integrate and harmonize TCMAP objectives and activities in local development plans, management plans, and the annual work and financial plans of the offices and agencies represented in the Council;
- c. Monitor and review the implementation of TCMAP;
- d. Provide administrative support to the implementation of projects and interventions under the TCMAP;
- e. Create thematic or site-based groups, as needed;
- f. Coordinate with LGUs for issued affecting their areas of jurisdiction;
- g. Coordinate with other government agencies and instrumentalities, the private sector and civic organizations for cooperation and assistance in performance of its functions;
- h. Arrange, negotiate for, accept donations, grants, gifts, loans, and other funding from domestic and foreign sources to carry out the activities and objectives of the TCP; and
- i. Perform such other functions as may be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Tamaraw Conservation Technical Advisory Group. To ensure science-based interventions and decisions on the conservation of Tamaraws, the Council, through the Chairperson, shall create a Tamaraw Conservation Technical Advisory Group to be composed of representatives from the following:

- a. Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB);
- b. Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau;
- c. Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA);
- d. International Union for Conservation of Nature Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group; and
- e. Other experts from the academe and conservation organizations.

SECTION 6. The Tamaraw Conservation Program Office. – The Tamaraw Conservation Program Office (TCPO) is hereby created. It shall act as the implementing arm of the Council and shall perform the following functions:

- a. Lead the formulation and implementation of TCMAP;
- b. Prepare the Annual Work and Financial Plan for the TCP based on the priority activities in the TCMAP;
- c. Assist in the mobilization of resources to augment financing of the TCRAP;
- d. Develop project proposals and activities in pursuit of the strategies of TCMAP;
- e. Create a Quick Response Team, in coordination with the Protected Area Management Office, the concerned local government units, and the Philippine National Police for the conduct of law enforcement, investigation, and population surveys;
- f. Recommend management interventions including policies and guidelines to address or resolve pressing issues and problems;
- g. Serve as secretariat of the Council;
- h. Initiate coordination mechanism and necessary arrangements with the Protected Area Management Board through its PASu, for collaborative conservation of Tamaraw population within the protected area and facilitate integration and harmonization of TCMAP with the management plan of the concerned protected area;
- i. Manage the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm located in Sitio Canturoy, Barangay Manoot, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro, in coordination with the Protected Area Management Office of Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park;
- j. Lead in the implementation of the TCP's Work and Financial Plan in coordination with stakeholders, such as local governments, the Protected Area Management Board and Protected Area Superintendents concerned;
- k. Prepare and submit quarterly and annual reports on Tamaraw conservation to be submitted to the Secretary of DENR through the Regional Executive Director and the BMB; and
- l. Perform other duties as may be assigned to the Council.

SECTION 7. Organizational Structure of the Tamaraw Conservation and Research Center. - The TCPO shall be under the supervision of the DENR Region IV-B Office and shall be headed by the PENRO of occidental Mindoro. Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR Regional Executive Director

1 for Region IV-B, in coordination with the BMB, shall prepare the manpower
2 requirements, including plantilla positions for the TCPO to be submitted to the
3 Department of Budget and Management.

4
5 SECTION 8. Establishment Of the Tamaraw Conservation and Research
6 Center. -The Tamaraw Conservation and Research Center (TCRC) is hereby
7 established to ensure that all conservation policies and activities undertaken by the
8 TCPA are based on empirical data findings from scientific studies and research.
9 The TCRC shall:

- 10 a. Serve as the national conservation research center for the Tamaraw in the
11 areas of conservation genetics, reproductive sciences, and diseases
12 management:
- 13 b. Promote conservation and research for the endemic species of Mindoro
14 Island; and
- 15 c. Take over the operation of the existing Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm within
16 Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park to pursue the envisioned plan to strengthen and
17 expand Tamaraw meta-population management in the entire Mindoro Island.

18
19 The management and operation of the TCRC facility shall be lodged with
20 the TCPO. All research activities shall be coordinated with the ERB and BMB.

21
22 SECTION 9. Tamaraw Conservation in Protected Areas: The concerned
23 Protected Area Management Board shall monitor and manage the Tamaraw
24 population within the protected areas, ensuring the introduction of adequate
25 measures and interventions for its conservation. The PAMB, through PASu, shall
26 collaborate closely with the TCPO in carrying out Tamaraw conservation programs
27 and activities within the protected areas.

28
29 SECTION 10. Appropriations. - The Secretary of the DENR shall
30 immediately include in the Department's programs the implementation of this Act,
31 the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

1 SECTION 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within six (6) months
2 following the effectivity of this Act, the DENR shall, after consultation with
3 concerned government agencies and other institutions, promulgate rules and
4 regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

5
6 SECTION 12. Separability Clause. If any provision or part hereof is held
7 invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise
8 affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

9
10 SECTION 13. Repealing Clause. Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
11 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation
12 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed,
13 modified or amended accordingly.

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

17
18 Approved,