

Philippines work to save giant clams

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A new effort is under way in the Philippines to stem the declining population of the world's largest clams, called taklobos.

A "clam garden" was built about 250 feet off the shore of Pico de Loro Cove in Batangas to provide new habitat for the giant clams, which can reach five feet in diameter and weigh up to 570 pounds, The Manila Times reported Thursday. The reseedling was accomplished using clams brought from Bolinao, Pangasinan, the newspaper said.

The conservation project is a joint effort of the Hamilo Coast, SM Investments Corp. and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The clams, *Tridacna gigas*, have been in steady decline in recent years because of over-harvesting for food and for the pet and curio trade, the newspaper said.

The bivalve mollusks, which used to thrive in the Indian and Pacific oceans, can live to more than a hundred years old. The taklobos "filter feeders" that improve water quality by removing planktonic debris. They also serve as dwellings for small fishes and crustaceans.

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