

Researchers create marine biodiversity database

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The world's epicentre of marine biodiversity is under threat. Researchers in the Philippines are developing a marine biodiversity database to help identify local hotspots requiring urgent management.

The Philippines hosts the highest diversity of shore reef fish species in the world. Human activities and [climate change](#), however, pose a serious threat. Around 10% of the diversity of reef fish and their associated species have disappeared from the Visayas region in central Philippines in the last five decades, with an estimated 2% of total species lost per decade. Much of this is due to high fishing pressures: coastal communities in the Philippines are highly dependent on reef fish for their food security and livelihood.

To address this issue, researchers at the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute are creating a large database using existing information from their archives. Their aim is to compile and analyse archival data to identify local biodiversity hotspots requiring urgent management. The database will fill in information gaps related to diversity trends, issues and threats, as well as the status of management efforts in these areas. Initially, the researchers are focusing on consolidating information on marine fishes but will eventually expand this to include other marine taxa, particularly focal research organisms being studied in the institute. The researchers will also explore the potential of their database to support decision-making in biodiversity conservation.

Once the database is established, the [researchers](#) will focus on enhancing it using reference collections and information generated by ongoing programs from institutions across the Philippines. The team hopes that the identification of data gaps will help guide future research directions.

Provided by University of the Philippines Diliman

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