

Davao to host Asia's 1st regional Bird Conservation fair



MANILA—Birdwatchers, conservationists and eco-tourism promoters from all over Asia and elsewhere have their eyes on the Philippines, which is hosting Asia's first-ever region-wide bird festival.

The Wild Bird Club of the Philippines said the First Asian Bird Fair will be held in Davao City from 24-26 September 2010, tandem with the 6th Philippine Bird Festival, the country's premier avian conservation and eco-tourism event. The milestone event is co-hosted by the Philippine Eagle Foundation and the Davao City government.

The First Asian Bird Fair-themed “Nurture Nature, Save our Future”—is a common initiative of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines, the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand, the Chinese Wild Bird Federation, the Wild Bird Society of Taipei, the Malaysian Nature Society and the Nature Society (Singapore).

The Asian Bird Fair, which highlights the respective bird festivals of the participating countries, seeks to enrich eco-tourism through birdwatching and promote the natural

and cultural heritage of host cities.

The Asian Bird Fair and 6th Philippine Bird Festival will be held at the Waterfront Insular Hotel Davao on 24-25 September. Entrance to the Asian Bird Fair exhibit area is free of charge, according to organizers.

Highlights of the fair include the Bird Conservation Forum and turn-over ceremony to representatives of the Chinese Wild Bird Federation, host of next year's Asian Bird Fair in Tainan City. International and Philippine delegates will also tour the Philippine Eagle Center and Eden Garden Resorts while in Davao.

WBCP president Michael Lu said the fair will include photo exhibits, presentations and fun activities for the young “and young at heart.” Children can also look forward to a guided tour at low tide of the tidal flats fronting the Waterfront Insular Hotel, where children can have a close look at marine species like fiddler crabs and mudskippers as well as spectacular views of herons, egrets and shorebirds.

Lu expects the event to draw bird watchers, conservationists, eco-tourism promoters, sustainable development providers, and nature lovers from around the country, Asia and Europe.

Alice Villa-Real, chair of the committee organizing the 1st Asian Bird Festival and 6th Philippine Bird Festival., said the latest initiative is a significant move to draw attention to pressing conservation issues.

“We can make a significant difference to protect the rich bird life and habitats of our islands, whilst promoting responsible enjoyment of nature and encouraging related sustainable businesses in the local communities,” Villa-Real pointed out.

International groups participating in the Asian Bird Festival are Chinese Wild Bird Federation, Bird Conservation Society of Thailand, Malaysian Nature Society, Nature Society of Singapore, Wild Bird Society of Taipei, Shanghai Wild Bird Society, Wild Bird Society of Tainan, Hong Kong Birdwatching Society, Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network, Borneo Bird Club, Hornbill Research Foundation, the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association, Bird Conservation Nepal and the Oriental Bird Club.

Local organizations joining are Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International, Katala Foundation, WWF-Philippines, Isla Biodiversity Conservation, Birding Adventure Philippines, Kaakbay, Malagos Garden Resort, Monfort Bat Cave & Conservation Foundation, Philippine Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, Philippine Wild Bird Photographers, My Zoo Foundation, Earth Island Institute, City of Alaminos (Pangasinan), City of Balanga (Bataan) and the Municipality of Candaba (Pampanga).

Event sponsors include the Philippine Eagle Foundation, the City Government of Davao, Team Energy Foundation, Primer Group, Aboitiz Power, Davao Light, Tanduy Distillers, Phoenix Petroleum Philippines, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Taiwan, Fauna and Flora International, Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri, Philippine Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, C. K. Lu Enterprises, Smart Communications, Department of Tourism, Waterfront Insular Hotel Davao, Grand Men Seng Hotel and NCCC Mall.