

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



23 MAY 17 P1:22

SENATE

S. No. 2211

RECEIVED BY

Introduced by **SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

**AN ACT
DECLARING THE MONTH OF JUNE OF EVERY YEAR AS THE "MARINE
TURTLE AWARENESS MONTH"**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In accordance with Article XII, Section 2 of the Philippine Constitution, which mandates that "The State shall protect the nation's marine wealth in its archipelagic waters, territorial sea, and exclusive economic zone, and reserve its use and enjoyment exclusively to Filipino citizens," this bill proposes the declaration of June as the "Marine Turtle Awareness Month." This aligns with our commitment to the preservation of our nation's marine wealth, particularly the endangered marine turtle species that inhabit our waters.

The Philippines is home to 5 of the 7 sea turtle species globally: the Green Turtle, Hawksbill Turtle, Loggerhead Turtle, Leatherback Turtle, and Olive Ridley. However, these species are all listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, denoting their endangered status. Despite decades of conservation efforts in the Philippines, we acknowledge that more needs to be done.

Sea turtles play essential roles in maintaining the health of our marine ecosystems. They help maintain healthy seagrass beds and coral reefs, facilitate nutrient cycling, contribute to the balance of marine food webs, and even aid in creating habitats for other marine life. Moreover, as an indicator species, changes in

sea turtle populations can help signal shifts in the environment and aid in identifying threats to marine biodiversity.

As an archipelago endowed with diverse marine ecosystems, the Philippines serves as a sanctuary for these sea turtle species. Their presence attests to our unique biodiversity and reinforces our constitutional obligation to protect and sustain our marine wealth.

This bill is a call to action, urging us to dedicate June each year to raising awareness of the essential role marine turtles play in our ecosystems, and emphasizing our shared responsibility to protect these magnificent creatures. The bill is a move towards the direction of preserving our marine biodiversity for future generations.

Hence, I seek for the early approval of this bill.


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

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

1 Section 1. The month of June of every year is hereby declared as the "*Marine*
2 *Turtle Awareness Month*".

3 All heads of government agencies and instrumentalities, including
4 Government-owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCC), Local Government Units
5 (LGU) and employers in the private sector, shall encourage and afford sufficient time
6 and opportunities for their employees to engage and participate in any activity
7 conducted within the premises of their offices or establishments in celebration of the
8 "Marine Turtle Awareness Month."

9 Sec. 2. The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, in coordination
10 with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall prepare and implement annual program of
11 activities pursuant to the observance of the "Marine Turtle Awareness Month."

12 Sec. 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
13 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

14 Approved,