

Palawan endorses RP's forest turtle study

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, May 1 (PNA) -- The provincial board of Palawan has endorsed the project study conducted by the Katala Foundation, Inc. on the Philippine Forest Turtle, one of the most endangered turtle species in the world.

Katala Foundation, Inc., a non-profit, non-stock, non-government organization, has been active in protecting and conserving wildlife, particularly the Philippine cockatoo and other threatened endemic wildlife in Palawan.

Vice Governor David Ponce de Leon, in his resolution filed in its regular session last Tuesday, acknowledged the study of the Katala Foundation on the forest turtle (*Heosemys leyensis*), a rare species of freshwater turtle that had been rediscovered in northern part of Palawan, particularly in Roxas and Taytay towns.

Ponce Leon said that there is a need to study and assess the conservation status and trends in population sizes of the said turtle and endemic Philippine reptile which is expected to contribute in the decision making process of whether or not the critically endangered status is still justified.

He cited that for many years prior to its rediscovery, it has been believed that this turtle species had become extinct as nobody could find it anymore in Leyte, the island where its scientific nomenclature was derived from.

The rediscovery of forest turtle has triggered a high demand in the international pet market despite the fact that any collection of or trade of the said species is illegal, Ponce de Leon disclosed. (PNA)

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