

Tackling Plastic Pollution: A Closer Look at the Calao River in Santiago City, Isabela

SANTIAGO CITY, ISABELA — In a relevant new study, Jedy Ann Dulnuan, a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences 4 student under the supervision of Goldyn Anne A. Comisario, faculty member of the Institute of Fisheries- Isabela State University Echague have turned their attention to the Calao River, one of the many waterways impacted by plastic pollution in the Philippines. Conducted between March and May 2023, this assessment aims to shine a light on the pressing issue of macroplastic litter in the river, highlighting the need for community awareness and action.

Monitoring the Plastic Flow

To get a better understanding of the situation, researchers installed booms at various sampling sites along the river to capture floating plastic debris. These booms acted like nets, allowing scientists to collect and analyze the litter that drifted near the water's surface. The findings were concerning. Both sites along the Calao River showed significant contamination, particularly alarming in March 2023 when the water level was higher. During this peak time, the density of macroplastic litter was at its highest, indicating a troubling influx of plastic waste.

What's in Our Water?

The assessment revealed a disturbing array of plastic types. The most commonly found items included:

- Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET): Often used in plastic bottles.
- Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE): Commonly found in shopping bags.
- Polystyrene: Frequently used for food containers and cups.
- Junk Food Wrappers: A clear sign of consumer habits impacting the environment.
- Plastic Fragments and Bottles: Indicators of long-term pollution issues.
- Glass: While not plastic, its presence highlights a broader litter problem.

These findings are not just numbers; they represent everyday choices and their consequences on our environment. From the wrappers of snacks we enjoy to the bottles we discard, this litter accumulates and impacts the river's ecosystem.

Community Impact and Next Steps

The results of this assessment are more than just a call to action; they serve as a reminder that everyone plays a role in the health of our rivers and oceans. The plastic that ends up in the Calao River can affect local fish populations and, by extension, the communities that rely on these fish for their livelihoods.

Community members and local leaders are urged to engage in conversations about reducing plastic use and enhancing waste management practices. Initiatives like river clean-up drives and educational programs can foster a culture of environmental stewardship.

Looking Ahead

As in-depth researches continue, the hope is that the findings will not only raise awareness about plastic pollution but also inspire actionable change within the community and beyond. Addressing plastic waste is not just an environmental issue; it's about protecting our health, preserving our natural resources, and ensuring a sustainable future for the generations to come.

In the fight against plastic pollution, every small effort counts. The Calao River assessment is a crucial step toward understanding the problem and taking meaningful action to safeguard the environment for all.