

SCESAP, to promote education in the science and management of Marine ecosystems

Society for Coastal Ecosystem Studies – Asia Pacific (SCESAP) is a Japan based non-profit organization dedicated to help address glaring imbalances in the research and media attention given to each ecosystem as well as encourage more contribution in biophysical dynamics at the ecosystem level specifically in the Asia Pacific region. Five years after their conception, they are currently advancing albeit slowly and steadily.

This year marks their Third year holding the International Symposium. The symposium invited 150 scientists from all around Asia Pacific, and the United Kingdom to engaged in the conversations led by the plenary speakers, paper and poster presentations, and relevant workshops. It takes place from December 4 to 9 in the University of the Philippines Cebu with excursions to the University of San Carlos Marine Station and Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary.

According to SCESAP Head Local Organizer Dr. Perry Aliño, Cebu was chosen as the venue in order to highlight the Coral Triangle where the Philippines sits at its apex. The marine life found here is under great threat and scientific efforts have been made to manage these resources better.

“The Philippines is seen as the perfect example in providing hope amidst the declining stocks leading to illegal and destructive fishing. Local communities engage in the stewardship of their locally managed Marine Protected Areas (MPA). They learn from their mistakes and rise with gaining benefits.”, Dr Perry Aliño shares

For Asia-pacific to adapt to the impacts, there must be more of a focus on renewable resources especially with Blue Carbon Ecosystems like mangroves and seagrasses. Blue Carbon Ecosystems sequester carbon from the atmosphere and lock them in their biomass and sediments for a long period of time.

The biggest obstacles are the insufficient basis for sound management actions for seagrass beds and the lack of knowledge on mangroves in the Philippines. Due to this, more effective communication of science knowledge (citizen science) is required to enhance public appreciation of losses. An improvement in the communication aspect can lead the direction to be thought about more in order to develop capacities for younger members of the society – translating science is one of the many plans SCESAP has regarding the barrier in communication.

Another problem is the ways on how to effective control the hunting of marine life. Larger marine species play a huge part in the marine ecological ecosystem. SCESAP President Mutsunori Tokeshi states that local fisherman need to stop hunting said species.

We have to go beyond sustainable development in order to improve the studies that have been less prevalent in societal activities.