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About This Special Issue

The scientific community responded enthusiastically to our Call for Papers for the Special Issue on Philippine Biodiversity Conservation that was first made in the first quarter of 2020. A total of 62 manuscript submissions were received and peer-reviewed, of which 44 (77.19%) were eventually approved for inclusion in this particular issue.

Forty-two (42) of the featured articles have corresponding authors who are based in the country and a total of 133 reviewers (domestic: 44.36%) generously shared their valuable time and expertise in the manuscript evaluation process. The average duration of review from receipt of the manuscript by the Editorial Office to the final decision by the Editor-in-Chief was 15.85 weeks.

Based on the affiliation of their corresponding authors, the following higher education institutions (HEIs) contributed the highest number of articles: University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños (8), UP Diliman (6), and UP Mindanao (3). Seventeen (17) articles are co-authored by scientists and researchers from at least two collaborating HEIs while 15 are outcomes of joint public-private research partnerships. Three and two articles have contributors who are working in non-HEI government agencies and non-government organizations, respectively. The research findings reported in this issue cover a wide range of topics in biodiversity science with experimentation and data gathering conducted in 74 provinces out of the total of 81 in the Philippines—a tropical and archipelagic country that is located in the Pacific Rim of Fire.

This collection provides us with an earnest reflection for gauging the state of biodiversity research in the country at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, as carried out primarily by Filipino investigators. The scientific information that it is making available to stakeholders will serve as a critical resource and as a veritable reference guide for the next generation of scientists and researchers who will continue the work that has been started by their predecessors. An accurate understanding of the complex dynamics of biodiversity conservation is essential in our continuing search as a people for more effective laws, regulations, and communal practices that will enable Philippine society to achieve a level of socio-economic development that is equitable and sustainable for all sectors across time.

On behalf of the Journal Editorial Board and the Publisher, I wish to thank Dr. Victor Amoroso, Dr. Mariano Roy Duya, and Dr. Ian Kendrick Fontanilla for their invaluable technical advice as Guest Editors of this Special Issue. Our gratefulness is also extended to National Scientist Angel Alcala for generously agreeing without hesitation to write the Foreword, and to all manuscript contributors and reviewers who have made this project worth doing.

This Special Issue also pays tribute to the pioneering contributions of National Scientist Edgardo Gomez (1938–2019) and Professor Perry Ong (1960–2019) in the development of biodiversity research in the country. Their untimely passing has left a chasm that could only be transcended slowly and deliberately by their junior colleagues and *protégées*.

CAESAR SALOMA

Editor-in-Chief