

**[DENR MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2007-02,
February 28, 2007]**

**GUIDELINES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF
CRITICAL HABITAT**

Pursuant to Sections 4 and 25 of Republic Act No. 9147, otherwise known as the "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act", Rules 25.1-25.5 of Joint DENR-DA-PCSD Administrative Order No.01, Series of 2004, and Executive Order No. 578 of 2006, the guidelines on the establishment and management of critical habitat for species under the jurisdiction of the DENR is hereby promulgated for the guidance of all concerned.

Section 1. Scope of Coverage. The provisions of this Memorandum Circular shall be enforceable within public lands for all terrestrial and wetland areas outside protected areas established under Republic Act No. 7586 (National Integrated Protected Areas System Act) as well as privately owned lands where threatened species are found.

Section 2. Definition of Terms. As used in this Memorandum Circular, the terms:

- 2.1 Critical habitats** – refer to areas outside protected areas under Republic Act No. 7586 that are known habitats of threatened species and designated as such based on scientific data taking into consideration species endemism and/or richness, presence of man-made pressures/threats to the survival of wildlife living in the area, among others;
- 2.2 Ecosystem** – means a dynamic complex of plants, animal and microorganism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.
- 2.3 Endemic species** – species or subspecies which is naturally occurring and found only within specific areas in the country;
- 2.4 Threatened species** – species or subspecies considered as critically endangered, endangered, vulnerable or other accepted categories of wildlife whose population is at risk of extinction.
- 2.5 Species richness** – refers to the number of species per unit area.

Section 3. General Considerations in the Establishment of Critical Habitats - For purpose of this Memorandum Circular, the presence of threatened species shall be the primary consideration in determining areas for establishment as critical habitats and this shall be made on the basis of best scientific data available. The following are the general considerations in the establishment of critical habitats.

- 3.1 Threatened species listed in DAO 2004-15 (Establishing the List of Terrestrial Threatened Species and their Categories, and List of Other Wildlife Species pursuant to RA 9147);
- 3.2 Areas used as a breeding, nesting, roosting, wintering, foraging and

- other activities by a natural population/individuals of a threatened species listed or not yet listed but are posing extinction;
- 3.3 Presence of man-made pressures/threats such as but not limited to logging, quarrying, mining, squatting/informal settling, and mineral exploration;
 - 3.4 Priority areas for conservation identified by the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priority Setting Program and other key biodiversity areas;
 - 3.5 Presence of other natural resources that has economic and social impacts on the area.

Section 4. Procedures in the Establishment of Critical Habitats.

4.1 Establishment of Critical Habitats by the DENR

The concerned DENR Regional/Field Offices (PENROs/CENROs) shall facilitate the establishment of critical habitats through its own initiative or upon the request of any of the concerned Local Government Unit (LGU), private individual/land owner, group, or other interested parties. Critical habitats shall be established thru the following procedures:

a. Identification/validation of the presence of threatened species

The presence of a threatened species within the proposed critical habitat shall be validated by competent staff of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Division/Sector/ Unit of the concerned DENR Regional/Field Office. The validation activity shall be coordinated with the concerned community. The DENR Staff may seek the participation of the community in the conduct of the activity.

The validation report must indicate the specific identity of the threatened species and must be supported by proper documentation such as photographs.

b. Population estimates and rapid habitat assessment

The DENR Field Office concerned shall create/categorize a Composite Team composed primarily of DENR Technical personnel and LGU representative to undertake the habitat and population assessment. Where necessary, experts from private sector, academe, NGOs, etc. may be invited as members of the Team. The habitat assessment is undertaken to gather pertinent information and determine the general status of the prospective critical habitat which shall serve as basis in the preparation of management plan.

The parameters for assessment shall include the following:

- i. Population estimate of threatened species found in the area
- ii. Assessment of other wildlife resources present in the area;
- iii. Status of vegetation and ecosystem type/s;
- iv. Presence or absence of area occupants/settlers;