

ADB Launches Philippines Flyway Project to Protect Wetlands and Migratory Bird Habitats

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The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched the Philippines Flyway Project, a new initiative aimed at strengthening the conservation and sustainable management of vital wetland ecosystems that support migratory bird habitats and local livelihoods.

The project, backed by a **\$3 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF)**, was announced during the **12th Meeting of Partners of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)**, hosted by the Philippines' **Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)**.

The initiative seeks to protect and restore wetlands that serve as crucial stopovers for migratory birds along the **East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF)**—one of the world's most important migratory routes—while promoting biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods, and climate resilience for millions of Filipinos.

"Wetlands in our region face mounting threats from reclamation, degradation, and urban expansion, and the EAAF is considered the most threatened of the world's major flyways," said **Scott Morris**, ADB Vice-President for East and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. "Through the Philippines Flyway Project, ADB and DENR are working together to protect, manage, and restore these critical ecosystems—helping communities and nature thrive."

Implemented by the **DENR**, the project will focus on three key wetland sites: **Candaba** in Luzon, and **Lake Mainit** and the **Sibugay Wetlands** in Mindanao. Activities will include habitat restoration, improved site management, capacity building for local stakeholders, and the promotion of sustainable livelihood opportunities that align conservation with community development.

The Philippines Flyway Project forms part of ADB's broader **Regional Flyway Initiative (RFI)**, launched in 2021 to mobilize **\$3 billion** over the next decade across 11 developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. The RFI aims to conserve priority wetlands along the EAAF and develop long-term financing models that enhance community resilience through **nature-based solutions** to extreme weather and climate events.

The Philippines hosts more than **20 migratory waterbird species** that depend on its wetlands for resting and feeding during migration. The country is also home to **10 Ramsar wetlands of international importance** and **seven Flyway Network Sites**, including the **Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its rich marine biodiversity.

By supporting wetland restoration and conservation, the project will contribute to both **biodiversity protection** and **climate adaptation**, helping local communities manage natural resources sustainably while safeguarding key ecosystems essential to regional ecological balance.

Founded in 1966, the **Asian Development Bank** works with 69 member countries—50 from the region—to promote inclusive, resilient, and sustainable growth across Asia and the Pacific through innovative financing and strategic partnerships.