

Donkey's ear abalone (*Haliotis asinina*) is the largest species of abalone found in the Philippines and has been a subject of SEAFDEC/AQD research and development due to its potential as a high-value aquaculture species. Photo by DEVCOM



aqd matters

March-April 2023

Newsletter of the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department, Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines

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SEAFDEC/AQD kicks off 50th anniversary celebration

THOUSANDS of people enjoyed the spectacle of SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department's grand motorcade and mall exhibition last 24–26 March 2023, as it kicked off its 50th anniversary celebrations.

The theme for this year's celebration is "50 years of championing science-based aquaculture technologies," which highlights the department's achievements in research, training, and technology transfer over the past 50 years.

On the 24th, the motorcade made its way from SEAFDEC/AQD's headquarters in Tigbauan, Iloilo to SM City Iloilo where a short event and a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the aquaculture exhibition

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A child points to the live aquarium display of pompano featured during SEAFDEC/AQD's golden anniversary kick off program at SM City Iloilo. The pompano is one of many species being studied at the research center. Photo by EV Antolino

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were held. The activity featured milestones and achievements of the research center through the years and brought together stakeholders and staff, both past and present.

A ribbon-cutting to formally open the aquaculture exhibition was led by Chief Dan Baliao along with the rest of SEAFDEC/AQD's Executive Committee, Former Chief Dr. Alfredo Santiago, Jr., and Dir. Remia Aparri of


the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Region 6.

During the event, Mr. Michael Cabugatan Jr. was awarded as the winner of SEAFDEC/AQD's anniversary logo-making contest and pocketed the USD 350 cash prize. His winning logo design was selected from a pool of over 70 entries and will be used as the anniversary's official logo.

Mr. Dante Beriong and Mr. Sammy

Rubido, both beloved local song-writer singers, also performed live to inspire and entertain the crowd.

In the aquaculture exhibition held until the 26th, thousands of visitors viewed live aquarium displays and scale models of the different species being studied at the research institution.

SEAFDEC/AQD was established in 1973. 

—NG ARMADA & RD DIANALA



Mr. Michael Cabugatan Jr. is the winner of SEAFDEC/AQD's anniversary logo-making contest. He received a cash prize of USD 350. Photo by EV Antolino



BFAR-6 Director Remia Aparri (left), Chief Dan Baliao (center), and SEAFDEC/AQD's former Chief Alfredo Santiago, Jr. (right), led the ceremonial ribbon cutting to formally open the aquaculture exhibition, Friday, 23 March 2023. With them were (from left at the back) AFD Head Ms. Amelita Subosa, TID Head Dr. Edgar Amar, Deputy Chief Dr. Sayaka Ito, RD Head Dr. Leobert de la Peña, and TVED Head Dr. Roger Edward Mamaug. Photo by JF Aldon



The kick-off program at SM City Iloilo brought together stakeholders and staff, both past and present, to witness the program highlighting the milestones and achievements of the research institution based in Tigbauan, Iloilo. Photo by EV Antolino



Dante Beriong (left) and Sammy Rubido (right) were invited to give live performances. Their performances showcased their exceptional talent and astounded the audience — a memorable experience for those who attended. Photo by EV Antolino



Oil spill-affected fisherfolks learn freshwater aquaculture



Dr. Frolan Aya lectures on broodstock management of catfishes and silver therapon to participants during the Training on Broodstock Management and Culture in Captivity of Indigenous Freshwater Fishes in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro. Photo courtesy of F Aya

Learning giant freshwater prawn culture in 5 days

SEAFDEC/AQD recently concluded its first session of the regular training course on “Giant Freshwater Prawn Hatchery and Grow-out Operations,” held 20–24 March 2023 at the Binangonan Freshwater Station in Rizal.

Thirteen all-Filipino participants attended the course and gained technical knowledge and skills on breeding, propagation, and culture of giant freshwater prawn “ulang” through a series of lectures and hands-on practical sessions.

“I learned the best things here at SEAFDEC/AQD, both in theoretical and practical aspects. Once I start my ulang production, I will definitely go back here to widen my skills and knowledge,” said one of the trainees, Art Gonzaga, who is a civil engineer.

Gonzaga also commended the quality of research done and technologies developed by SEAFDEC in terms of farming freshwater commodities. He was also grateful that these were packaged into training courses for dissemination to stakeholders. [a](#)

— JMD ARANAS



Dr. Frolan Aya, a SEAFDEC/AQD scientist who heads the Binangonan Freshwater Station (BFS), shared his knowledge on freshwater aquaculture with 30 fishpond operators and fish farmers in Oriental Mindoro province in the Philippines who were affected by a recent oil spill in the area.

The expert was the resource person for the Training on Broodstock Management and Culture in Captivity of Indigenous Freshwater Fishes at the Provincial Demonstration Farm in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro last 27 to 29 March 2023.

This three-day workshop aimed to impart information and skills on indigenous freshwater aquaculture technologies such as broodstock development, seed production, and nursery culture to oil spill-affected fisherfolk from four municipalities.

The training focused on commodities such as Naujan white goby (*Glossogobius* sp.), catfish (*Clarias* spp.), and silver therapon (*Leiopotherapon plumbeus*).

Dr. Aya lectured on the biology and reproduction, broodstock management, and hatchery and nursery operations of catfishes and silver therapon. The cost-benefit analysis of the silver therapon hatchery operation was also discussed.

Practical activities included sex identification of catfishes and silver therapon, hormone preparation for induced spawning, and a demonstration of injection or hormone administration.

The training course also included lectures and hands-on activities related to the production of Naujan white goby.

Lastly, Dr. Aya encouraged the participants to avail of the internship training on the culture of freshwater commodities, such as silver therapon, at the Binangonan Freshwater Station of SEAFDEC/AQD.

The training was organized by the Fisheries and Coastal Resource Management Division, Provincial Agriculturist Office, Calapan, Oriental Mindoro after a fuel tanker carrying 800,000 liters of industrial oil sank off the coast of Oriental Mindoro last February, causing a massive oil spill that covered more than 120 kilometers of shoreline and threatened the marine biodiversity and livelihood of locals. [a](#)

— NG ARMADA



The four graduates of the Session Three of the Training Course on Aquaculture Technologies for Manpower Development pose with TVED Head Dr. Roger Edward Mamaug (left), TID Head Dr. Edgar Amar (center) and Training Section Officer-in-Charge Mr. Caryl Vincent Genzola during the closing program held 3 March 2023. Photo by EV Antolino.

4 fisheries grad join SEAFDEC's pool of skilled aquaculturists



SEAFDEC/AQD continues to produce competent and well-rounded aquaculture professionals with the knowledge and abilities to meet the sector's challenges.

This year, four University of the Philippines Visayas' BS Fisheries graduates completed Session Three of the Training Course on Aquaculture Technologies for Manpower Development (ManDev).

"This batch is the third session of this training course and is attended by only four participants, but this does not make it any lesser than the previous batches of ManDev training courses. It also has its attributes of a training course that thoroughly prepares the graduates for the great responsibilities of life ahead," said Training and Information (TID) Head Dr. Edgar Amar during the closing ceremony held on 3 March 20223 at the TID Conference Room.

SEAFDEC/AQD trained graduates, namely, Rochelyn Rose Geca, Krizzian Hernando, Joan Tabaquira, and Edrose Jane Hilans, in seed production/hatchery and nursery, pond aquaculture and cage aquaculture at SEAFDEC/AQD stations in Dumangas, Guimaras, and Tigbauan.

The three-month training spanned from 14 Nov. last year to 3 March 2023.

"The course was designed in such a way that the trainees imbibe the values

and ideals that SEAFDEC/AQD is known for – hard work and excellence in aquaculture research and development. Your four-year academic education has provided you with great knowledge to start your career in fisheries. Still, I am certain that this training course has strengthened your technical foundations even more, having worked with various freshwater and marine commodities," Dr. Amar added.

Participating in the ManDev training is a significant opportunity for Geca, though it "is not easy or as smooth as we wanted it to be since it challenges us mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally," she said. "However, it helped us not just on the technical part, but also on the practical and the actual situation in the field."

Meanwhile, Hernando concurred: "As a product of an online class, there is a knowledge gap in my studies. ManDev provided me with the opportunity to learn things that I haven't learned in college."

Prior to beginning ManDev training, the graduates were subjected to stringent screening processes to ensure that they possessed the necessary skills and qualifications for the program. Following a 103-day training period, the four were assigned to a sequence of facilities in the research institution. [a](#)

Blood donation drive held at SEAFDEC/AQD to commemorate 50th anniversary

SOME 29 donors, mostly SEAFDEC/AQD employees, came to participate in the research center's blood-letting activity last 20 April 2023 as part of the year-long activities commemorating its golden anniversary.

The activity, which took place at the Multi-purpose hall, yielded 24 bags of blood from employees and some residents of Tigbauan, Iloilo.

Prior to the said activity, an online orientation on the Benefits of Blood Donation was held 17 April 2023 around 2:00 in the afternoon at the Training and Information Division Conference Room. The resource speaker was from Philippine Red Cross - Panay Chapter. [a](#)

— NG ARMADA

SEAFDEC/AQD stocks up on kawakawa, galunggong anew

MORE *kawakawa* (mackerel tuna) and round scad "galunggong" breeders found their new home at SEAFDEC/AQD as the research center continues to develop transport and broodstock development techniques for these two species.

Last 14 April 2023, 41 pieces of round scad (*Decapterus macrosoma*), weighing an average of 9.2 grams each, and nine kawakawa (*Euthynnus affinis*), weighing an average of 79.2 grams each, were transported to the Tigbauan Main Station from the *otoshi-ami* (fish trap) of the Barbaza Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Antique.

Prior to the transport, both species were subjected to a seven-day conditioning period to prepare them for confinement and the stress of collection. 📍



The galunggong are acclimatized first before they are released into the broodstock tanks to help reduce the level of shock, which can stress fish when introduced to a new tank. Photo by JF Aldon

— NG ARMADA



SEAFDEC/AQD's medical mission serves fisherfolks in Guimaras

SEVENTY fisherfolks from three barangays neighboring SEAFDEC/AQD's Igang Marine Station benefited from free medical services provided in a medical mission organized by the research center last 28 April 2023 in Nueva Valencia, Guimaras.

The beneficiaries consisted of 34 fisherfolks from Brgy. Magamay, 19 from Brgy. Igang, and 17 from Brgy. Pandaraonan who gathered at the Brgy. Magamay Covered Gym, the venue of the medical mission which was spearheaded

by SEAFDEC/AQD's Human Resource Management Section (HRMS).

To offer free consultations and medications, three volunteer nurses and six doctors from various hospitals and medical institutions in Panay Island generously lent their expertise.

In addition to the medical services, Dr. Joy Saquibal-Demetria, SEAFDEC/AQD's company physician, conducted a health seminar, and SEAFDEC/AQD donated first-aid kits to the three beneficiary barangays.

"This is our way of giving back to the community for the support SEAFDEC/

AQD received for the past 50 years," said Dr. Jon Altamirano, chairperson of SEAFDEC/AQD's 50th Anniversary Committee that co-organized the event alongside the HRMS and the Igang Marine Station.

HRMS Officer-in-Charge Sunshine Salonga expressed profound gratitude, on behalf of the working team, to all its partners for the successful medical mission, particularly the Department of Health-Antique, for providing additional medicines and vitamins. 📍

— NG ARMADA



A volunteer doctor carefully checks an elderly's vital signs during the medical mission at Nueva Valencia, Guimaras. Photo by NG Armada



Neg Occ seeks assistance from SEAFDEC to establish multi-species hatchery

REPRESENTATIVE Jose Francisco “Kiko” Benitez of the Third District of Negros Occidental filed House Bill 74, which calls for the creation of a multi-species marine hatchery in Talisay City’s Sitio Mambucog in Barangay Zone XVI.

“A multi-species hatchery is necessary to support aquaculture development and enhance seafood production in the district to benefit local fisherfolks and coastal communities,” according to the lawmaker.

To achieve this goal, the congressman paid SEAFDEC/AQD’s Tigbauan Main Station a courtesy visit on 27 April to solicit expert advice from Chief Dan Baliao and the Feasibility Study Team.

Benitez stressed that a multi-species hatchery is a must for the sustainability and growth of the district’s food production, particularly in E.B. Magalona, dubbed as “the blue crab capital,” where approximately five tons of kasag per day is produced and processed for export. It also produces oysters, sardines, milkfish, threadfin breams, and squid.

Chief Baliao expressed full support for the project and recommended that a site visit by the Feasibility Study team be conducted first to determine the appropriate and suitable area where the hatchery will be established.

Aside from House Bill 74, Benitez also obtained inputs from SEAFDEC/AQD concerning House Bill No. 69 or the Blue Economy Act, which seeks to establish a framework to



sustainably develop, manage, and protect the Philippines’ marine and water resources.

Before the SEAFDEC/AQD Executive Committee members, Benitez pointed out that there is a must to transform ocean-based industries into sustainable activities, to transition to blue economy, and to sustainable maritime economic activities that protect marine wealth and maritime heritage.

After the discussion, Benitez capped his visit with a tour of SEAFDEC/AQD’s newly-established Integrated Marine Finfish Broodstock and Multi-species Freshwater Hatchery. **a**

— NG ARMADA



aqd matters

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Issue editor:
NG Armada

Contributing writer-photographers:
JF Aldon, EV Antolino, JMD Aranas,
F Aya, RD Dianala,
K Hernando, RH Ledesma

Editor-in-Chief:
RD Dianala

Executive Editor:
JMD Aranas

Publications Review Committee:
Dr. LD de la Peña, Dr. JP Altamirano,
Dr. EC Amar, Dr. RE Mamauag, Dr. ND Salayo,

Circulation to friends of AQD:
E Nemiz

*For contributions and inquiries,
kindly email:*
devcom@seafdec.org.ph

KOICA’s partner org consults SEAFDEC/AQD for aquaculture project



A PARTNER organization of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) visited the Tigbauan Main Station of SEAFDEC/AQD on 21 March 2023 to discuss possible collaborations to further advance the aquaculture sector in the Philippines.

Kim Junho, a volunteer project manager for the KOICA-Aklan Aquaculture Project, met with members of the SEAFDEC/AQD feasibility study team and Executive Committee to discuss one of their intended projects, which involves the construction of a fish fry facility and a floating fish cage farm.

The target commodity is pompano since, according to Junho, it is a highly-sought fish with great export potential.

He sought the advice of SEAFDEC/AQD experts on maximizing the potential of their intended projects to boost their impact on the target community. **a**

— NG ARMADA

PSHS Southern Mindanao visits AQD for benchmarking



The faculty ask for suggestions and inputs from Dr. Leobert de la Peña and Dr. Edgar Amar on how to improve their immersion program. Photo by NG Armada

FACULTY from the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) Southern Mindanao Campus conducted a benchmarking activity at SEAFDEC/AQD's Tigbauan Main Station on 20 April 2023.

The team met with Dr. Leobert de la Peña, Research Division head, and Dr. Edgar Amar, Training and Information Division head, to gain suggestions and inputs on how to improve

PSHS's Science Immersion Program to provide students with better opportunities to learn about aquaculture and fisheries.

They also took a brief tour of the SEAFDEC/AQD Laboratory Facilities for Advanced Aquaculture Technologies to learn about the protocols followed by the research institution for laboratory management and equipment handling. 📷

— NG ARMADA

Cabadbaran City LGU eyes pompano culture as livelihood option

THE local government unit (LGU) of Cabadbaran

City, Agusan del Norte, is considering pompano culture as an alternative livelihood for its fisherfolk and to increase their fish production using their existing Norwegian fish cages.

To realize their project, two agriculturists of Cabadbaran City met with SEAFDEC/AQD Chief Dan Baliao on 13 April 2023 to seek technical assistance from the research institution.

During the meeting held at SEAFDEC/AQD's station in Tigbauan, Iloilo, Cabadbaran's City Agriculturist Maria Arceli Soria and Senior Agriculturist Christy Ihada discussed with Chief Baliao their interest in adopting



SEAFDEC's culture technology on pompano.

Chief Baliao agreed to help the Cabadbaran City LGU and will send a team to assess the suitability of their existing fish cages for

pompano culture. The Chief also suggested bringing the LGU's fish cage technicians to SEAFDEC's facilities for training.

The two institutions are still working out their

collaboration and will begin the project upon the signing of an agreement. 📷

— RH LEDESMA

NEWLY-HIRED EMPLOYEES



JOEL B. FERMIN
Genset Operator
Binangonan Freshwater Station
Research Division



SYDELLE TRESS D. DEL RIO
Civil Engineer
Engineering Section
Administration & Finance Division



JOSEPH M. TUSALEM
Driver
MEWASU, Engineering Section
Administration & Finance Division



JULY R. TORRECAMPO
Administrative Assistant
Human Resource Management Section
Administration & Finance Division

Community-based hatchery to boost production of giant ‘ulang’



Dr. Leobert de la Peña (left, center), head of the Research Division, and Dr. Frolan Aya (right, center) of the Binangonan Freshwater Station led the ribbon-cutting during the inauguration of the community-based hatchery in Brgy. Pipindan, Binangonan, Rizal. Along with them are Dr. Sayaka Ito (rightmost) and Dr. Nerissa Salayo (2nd to the left) and the members of the Pipindan Aquaculture Producers Association and the local government of the barangay. *Photo by JF Aldon*

PRODUCTION of the giant freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) locally known as ‘ulang’ in Laguna Lake is seen to receive a boost following the establishment of a hatchery under the Community-Based Sustainable Aquaculture Livelihood (CBSAL) Project in Brgy. Pipindan in Binangonan, Rizal.

This, after its completion this year, will provide an alternative income for the local fisherfolk association, cater to the high demand for post-larvae of the prawn, and stimulate its grow-out in lake cages and freshwater ponds. The hatchery will not only boost the economic growth in the area but also provide and promote sustainable aquaculture practices.

Established through the support of the Government of Japan Trust Fund (GOJTF), it is designed to hold 30 units of 8-liter-capacity larval rearing

tanks. It is equipped with a recirculating aquaculture system to maintain water quality.

“The Pipindan hatchery plays an important role as to resolve the problem in giant freshwater prawn production in Laguna Lake,” according to SEAFDEC/AQD Deputy Chief Sayaka Ito during the inauguration program held on 28 April 2023.

Due to the unavailability of post-larvae and distance of the post-larvae source, the community currently faces major constraints in culturing the giant freshwater prawn, which impedes the development of the freshwater prawn industry.

“It is now fully operational. By 2025, I expect the Pipindan Aquaculture Producers Association (PAPA) will be able to operate the hatchery on their own,” he added.

PAPA is the beneficiary of the CBSAL project.

Speaking during the program, which the local government of Brgy. Pipindan, PAPA, SEAFDEC/AQD, and GOJTF attended, Dr. Leobert de la Peña, head of the Research Division, commended the collaborators for their support on the project.

SEAFDEC/AQD played a significant role in establishing the hatchery, as Dr. Nerissa Salayo, the study leader of the CBSAL Project, advocated for the project’s realization.

To this end, Dr. de la Peña hopes the project will serve as an avenue and opportunity, especially in the Brgy. Pipindan community, to have a sustainable aquaculture livelihood and food supply. **a**

— NG ARMADA

Shrimp eyestalk ablation

SOME 32 female giant tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) broodstock underwent eyestalk ablation at SEAFDEC/AQD’s Shrimp Broodstock and Rearing Facility in Iloilo last 28 March 2023.

Eyestalk ablation, or removal of one or both eyestalks of a female shrimp breeder, is a common practice to induce spawning.

The ablated female shrimp were placed in tanks with males at an 8:5 female-to-male ratio to ensure fertilization of eggs.

SEAFDEC/AQD aims to continuously produce high-quality giant tiger shrimp seeds in line with its Oplan Balik Sugpo Program. **a**

— NG ARMADA

