

Crocodile Caught in Cuyapon, Kabacan Cotabato



Cuyapon, Kabacan North Cotabato – Due to rising temperature, grassfire and economic activity within its natural habitat forced wild animals, including fresh water crocodiles to wander even in areas inhabited by humans, as in the case of a 80 kilos crocodile found in a remote village of this barangay. The 8-foot long crocodile (*Crocodylus*

Mindorensis) was captured by inland-fishermen, led by Mamangkas Mamatong last Monday April 11, 2016. According to Mamatong, that he was initially shocked to see the huge reptile inside his fish cage in the Liguasan marshland feasting on the fish that was earlier trapped inside the indigenous fish trap. He then alerted his relatives and villagers and jointly seized the crocodile which tried to resist captivity but later on yielded. Mamatong and villagers thought at first of making money out of the catch by selling it to interested buyer. However, upon intercession DENR (Department of Natural Resources) and some local officials and the group has decided finally to turn over the reptile to USM (University of Southern Mindanao). Dr. Cayetano C. Pomares of USM-Kabacan treated the reptile while it was at the provincial Crocodile Rescue and Breeding Center. Pomares said the captured crocodile was among the remaining reptiles in the Maguindanao marshland, also known as Liguasan. He estimated that there are only about 150 to 200 crocodile left in the marshland. According to Pomares, the on and off grass fire in the dried up portion of the marsh also forced reptiles to migrate to other areas where food are available. He attributed the

migration of crocodiles outside of its natural habitat due to increasing of water temperature and receding water level in the marshland.

During the turnover ceremony of said crocodile under the temporary custody of Brigadier Gen. Noel S. Clement of 602nd Bde. Brigade Phil. Army, Camp Lucero Carmen in the presence of the team headed by Forester Michael Bao of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The said officials appeal to fisher folks and those living near the marshland



Putting out of crocodile on its temporary cage

not to capture or harm crocodiles. Bao added, “helping to protect our wild life assures our next generation to witness this kind of animals in future”. Dr. Pomares said further study will be conducted on the captured reptile for research purposes before it will be release back to the wild.

DENR and USM officials named the crocodile as “Silangan” since it was captured in the eastern side of the 288,000 hectares Liguasan marshland.