

The Philippines now has 415 classified caves

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has classified 51 caves to guide communities on their responsible management. Prior to this, 364 caves had already been classified by the agency according to their characteristics.



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“As with other natural resources, caves are natural treasures that we need to protect for the enjoyment of future generations, because they are important wildlife habitats and possess significant geological, cultural, historical and archaeological values,” DENR Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje said in DENR Memorandum Circular No. 2015-08.

The memo circular was pursuant to Republic Act No. 9072, also known as the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act. The law tasks the DENR to formulate, develop and implement a cave management program to conserve and protect the country’s cave resources.

Seven caves were categorized as Class I for their delicate and fragile geological formations and threatened species. These include the Nical Cave in Dasol, Pangasinan; the Sung Wan and Kaping Caves in Tayabas City, Quezon; and the Burial Cave in Caraga, Davao Oriental.

Class I caves are limited to mapping, photography, educational and scientific purposes, and are closed for ecotourism activities.

The memo circular categorized 36 Class II caves. These have sections with hazardous conditions and high quality ecosystems that are highly sensitive to human activities, making it necessary to close these sections either seasonally or permanently except for experienced cavers and guided tours or visits.

Class II caves include the Capilan Bat Cave in Sultan Kudara, Licup Cave in Samal Island, Davao, and Guano Cave in Bangui, Ilocos Norte.

Class III caves have no known threatened species within them or significant archaeological, geological, natural history, cultural and historical values. Such caves are open to inexperienced yet guided visitors. They may also open to guano extractors and birds' nest collectors, if any.

Eight caves were categorized as Class III, which include Balite Cave in Samal Island, and six Punta Diwata Caves in Carmen City, Agusan del Norte.

The distribution of the newly classified caves are as follows: six in the Ilocos region (Region I); nine in CALABARZON Region (Region 4A); 19 in the Davao region (Region 11); three in South Central Mindanao (Region 12); 14 in the Caraga Region (Region 13).

With the classification, BMB personnel in the respective DENR field offices will coordinate with the Protected Area Management Board, concerned local government unit or land owner in the preparation and implementation of a management plan on related activities within the caves.

– [From the Department of Environment and Natural Resources](#)

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