



PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

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For : All SUC Presidents/Heads

From : Dr. Tirso A. Ronquillo
President

Subject : **5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE WEST PHILIPPINES
SEA (5TH ICWPS)**

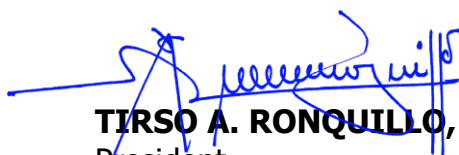
Date : May 13, 2025

This is to endorse the 5th International Conference on the West Philippines (5th ICWPS), organized by Western Philippines University (WPU). With the theme "*West Philippine Sea Matters: Sustaining a Healthy, Resilient, and Productive Sea and People*," the conference will take place from August 14 to 15, 2025, at Costa Palawan Resort, Puerto Princesa City.

The 5th ICWPS aims to showcase initiatives, research, and projects that promote the sustainable management and inclusive growth of coastal and marine areas in the West Philippine Sea. This conference serves as a platform for generating new insights through a systems approach, integrating multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives to deepen understanding of the WPS in the context of research and development. It also provides an opportunity for scholars, industry leaders, government agencies, non-government organizations, and students from universities worldwide to share findings, strengthen partnerships, and foster collaboration among academic institutions, research bodies, and industries.

The organizers have extended the deadline for abstract submissions until May 30, 2025. Presenters and interested participants may submit and pre-register through the link: <https://bit.ly/icwps2025reg>. Alternatively, they may visit the event landing page at <https://icwps.org/> for more information.

The conference briefer is enclosed for your ready reference. For further inquiries, your office may contact Mr. Abraham P. Cea, Conference Secretariat Chair, via email at icwps@wpu.edu.ph or through mobile at 0919-788-6397 or 0946-171-2498.


TIRSO A. RONQUILLO, ASEAN Eng.
President



5th ICWPS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA

14-15 August 2025 | TBA (Palawan)

West Philippine Sea Matters: Sustaining a Healthy, Resilient, and Productive Sea and People

Conference Registration Fee

Local Participants : Php 6,000 : Foreign Participants : \$200
Local Students : Php 4,000 : Foreign Students : \$150

Themes / Topics

Ecological Health and Biodiversity : Policy, Governance, and Diplomacy
Climate Change : Youth and Public Engagement
Sustainability and Resource Management : Economic Dimensions
Science and Technology for the Seas : Partnerships for a Productive Sea
Human Dimensions and Livelihoods :





Background

The West Philippine Sea (WPS), which encompasses the maritime areas within the western exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, is part of the larger South China Sea that is highly significant for its strategic location and abundant natural resources. It is rich in coral reefs, marine species, oil, natural gas, and minerals, making it a valuable area for fishing and energy exploration. However, environmental issues such as overfishing, coral reef degradation, and pollution are significant concerns. These issues profoundly impact the marine ecosystem, commerce, and people's economy.

Challenges remain on how to sustain and enhance the health and climate-resiliency of WPS, and to increase the production of the sea and its people. Global actions like the Paris Agreement acknowledge the need to protect all ecosystems, including the ocean. The Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group of G20 likewise recognizes the importance of ocean-related actions. The 2024 Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue emphasized the conservation, protection, and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems. The Glasgow Climate Pact of COP26 and COP27 underscored the critical role of the ocean and called for countries to include ocean-based actions in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

This INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA (ICWPS) aims to present initiatives, research, and projects in the West Philippine Sea relevant to the sustainable management and inclusive growth of coastal marine areas and their people. In this conference, we will hear ideas and applications on ecological health, climate-smart approaches, benefits, economic and human dimensions, and sustainable management of coastal marine and small islands, reflecting them to the changing times and climate. The participants will gain information on recent trends, growth areas in WPS and their field of research and beyond. The event offers researchers and practitioners a chance to interact and share their knowledge, experiences, challenges, and way forward for WPS sustainable planning and development.

This conference serves as a venue to gather new ideas through a systems approach integrating multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary information to widely understand the West Philippine Sea from the perspective of research and development. The conference also serves as a means for scholars, the business sectors, governments, non-government organizations, and students from Universities across the globe to share their projects and research results, so that they can foster relations among universities, research institutions, and industries. The conference hopes to increase research impacts and enhance participants' networks, especially the young and early careers. We will think through such opportunities to use science as a basis to facilitate environmental conservation, climate-smart seas, food security, income generation, policies, and develop industries in different parts of the sea.

Being adjacent to WPS, Western Philippines University institutionalized hosting the international conference on the West Philippine Sea every two years. The conference offers many invited keynote, plenary, and oral and poster presenters from the Philippines and around the world.

Oral and poster presentations of studies, interventions/projects, and marine spatial plans in the less known or unknown portions of the West Philippine Sea are preferred. Culture, socioeconomic, and coastal community studies in the West Philippine Sea areas are welcome. Studies conducted outside the West Philippine Sea, which could serve as case studies, action research, or models relevant to and can be duplicated in the sustainable development of the West Philippine Sea will be accepted.

Conference Registration Fee

Local Participants:	Php 6,000
Local Students:	Php 4,000
Foreign Participants:	\$200
Foreign Students:	\$150

**Note: Registration covers two lunches and six snacks at the venue (August 14-15, 2025), while the participants will shoulder accommodation*





Submission of Abstracts

Researchers, extension practitioners, community development workers, faculty members, and students can submit their papers for oral and poster presentation.

Representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), communities, local government units, and the private sector in the Philippines and other countries are invited to present their experiences related to the conference's theme.

Interested participants for both oral and paper presentations must submit through the following link or scan the QR code:

bit.ly/icwps2025reg



Topics of papers for presentation and poster displays should be consistent with the theme and topics of the conference.

Abstracts of oral papers and posters must:

- Not exceed 300 words.
- Have the following format:
 - 12pt, Times New Roman, Microsoft Word).
 - Indicate title, author(s), and their corresponding affiliations, and e-mail address(es)

Important Dates

	Deadline
Submission of Abstracts	May 30, 2025
Notice of Acceptance	June 30, 2025
Submission of the accepted electronic copy of the poster and PowerPoint slides for oral presentations	August 1, 2025
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First Call	January 2025
Second Call	March 2025
Third and Final Call	May 2025

Tentative Flow of Activities

DAY 0	Arrival of Participants
DAY 1	Registration Opening Program Plenary Session (AM/PM) Poster Exhibit (PM) Paper Presentation (PM) - Welcome Dinner
DAY 2	Plenary Session (AM/PM) Continuation of Paper Presentation (Parallel Sessions) PM Closing Program





Fields of Interest

1. Ecological Health and Biodiversity

- Restoring and Preserving Marine Ecosystems and Biodiversity
- Marine Life

2. Climate Change

- Ocean Acidification, Temperature Rise, and Rising Sea Levels
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Coastal Communities
- Resilient Marine Protected Areas and Marine Spatial Planning
- Environmental and Anthropogenic Resilience

3. Sustainability and Resource Management

- Sustainable Fisheries Management
- Blue Economy Opportunities: Growth and Conservation
- Marine Pollution and Waste Management: Marine Plastics Litter

4. Science and Technology for the Seas

- Innovations and Emerging Marine Research and Technology
- Mapping and Marine Resource Management
- Renewable Energy from the Sea

5. Human Dimensions and Livelihoods

- Coastal Communities: Livelihoods and Adaptation Strategies
- Traditional Knowledge and Practices in Marine Stewardship
- Food Security and Production through Healthy Seas
- Gender and Development, Women, and Elders

6. Policy, Governance, and Diplomacy

- Legal Frameworks and Governance in the West Philippine Sea
- Maritime Boundaries and Cooperation
- Maritime Good Governance and Strategies
- Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU) Trading
- Environmental and Fisheries Law Enforcement (in Disputed Waters)

7. Youth and Public Engagement

- Educating the Next Generation: Ocean Literacy and Advocacy
- Role of Media and Public Campaigns in Protecting the West Philippine Sea
- Citizen Science: Empowering Communities in Marine Conservation

8. Economic Dimensions

- Sustainable Tourism in the West Philippine Sea: Best Practices
- Sustainable Fisheries Best Practices
- Maritime Trade and Coastal Resilience
- Marine Conservation and Economics

9. Partnerships for a Productive Sea

- Collaborative Efforts (Governments, NGOs, Private Sector, etc.)
- Protection of Shared Marine Resources
- Alliances for the Blue Economy

Publication

Interested authors may submit papers for publication in "The Palawan Scientist", the official scientific journal of Western Philippines University. The deadline for submission of full papers is on December 2025. Please visit the website www.palawanscientist.org for complete details about the Guide for Authors and other related information.



**5th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA**
***West Philippine Sea Matters: Sustaining a Healthy, Resilient, and Productive
Sea and People***

**14-15 August 2025
Puerto Princesa City, Palawan**

Dr. Kent E. Carpenter
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Kent E. Carpenter is a professor of biological sciences at Old Dominion University, in Norfolk, Virginia, who is notable for having two fish species named in his honor, *Paracheilinus carpenteri* Randall and Lubbock 1981, popularly known as "Carpenter's flasher wrasse", and *Meganthias carpenteri* Anderson 2006,[3] popularly known as Carpenter's Yellowtop Jewelfish. Dr. Carpenter earned his Bachelor of Science degree in marine biology at Florida Institute of Technology in 1975 and his Doctor of Philosophy degree in zoology at the University of Hawai'i. His research emphasis is in the systematics and evolution of marine fishes. His work in marine biogeography for the Indian Ocean and west Pacific Ocean has led to work in marine conservation and comparative phylogeography using population genetics, with a special interest in the Philippines.

He is also a long-term collaborator with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Species Identification and Data Programme for Fisheries, producing identification guides for regions such as the western Pacific and the western and eastern Atlantic Oceans. He has done fieldwork in the Caribbean, West Africa, and the Philippines. In addition to research and teaching responsibilities, he is also the coordinator for the IUCN Global Marine Species Assessment, completing the first global review of every marine vertebrate species, and of selected marine invertebrates and marine plants, to determine conservation status and possible extinction risk for about 20,000 marine species.

Dr. Danilo B. Largo
Plenary Speaker

Dr. Danilo B. Largo is a Full Professor at the University of San Carlos (USC) in Cebu City, Philippines, where he manages the Innovation and Technology Support Office and leads the Marine Biology section within the Department of Biology. He earned his B.S. and M.S. in Marine Biology from USC, and later obtained an M.S. and Ph.D. in Aquatic Environmental Science from Kochi University and a joint program between Kochi and Kagawa Universities in Japan.

Dr. Largo's research focuses on seaweed biology, particularly the cultivation and industrial applications of brown seaweeds like *Sargassum*. He has developed a land-based hatchery technique for mass propagation of *Sargassum* seedlings, aiming to produce alginate—a valuable hydrocolloid used in various industries—and to contribute to climate change mitigation efforts. His contributions extend beyond academia, impacting industries related to food, pharmaceuticals, and environmental sustainability.

Atty. Jay L. Batongbacal
Plenary Speaker

Jay L. Batongbacal is a lawyer with degrees in Political Science and Law from the University of the Philippines, as well as Master of Marine Management and Doctor in the Science of Law, both from Dalhousie University (Canada). At present, he is a full Professor at the University of the Philippines College of Law and serves as Director of the Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea of the U.P. Law Center. He has worked extensively on maritime affairs since 1997, carrying out research, consultancy work, and teaching, with numerous national and international publications to his credit. Dr. Batongbacal was legal advisor to the Philippine delegation that successfully pursued the Philippines' claim to a continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the Benham Rise Region before the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the successful application before the International Maritime Organization for the designation of the Tubbataha Reef Natural Park Particularly Sensitive Sea Area. He has been included among the UNESCO/IOC List of Experts for UNCLOS Annex VIII Special Arbitration on Marine Scientific Research. In 2022, Dr. Batongbacal completed a Taiwan Fellowship Program at the National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei, Taiwan and a Fulbright Advanced Research and Lecturing Fellowship at the US Naval War College in Rhode Island, USA. He has since returned to continue teaching basic courses in Obligations & Contracts and Property Law, and is conducting "experimental game-based learning" with two elective courses, The Law of the Sea and Natural Resources Law.

Dr. Rene Abesamis

Plenary Speaker

He earned his Ph.D. in Marine Biology from James Cook University in Australia. His research focuses on marine fish ecology, management, and conservation. In 2024, Dr. Abesamis was awarded the Pew Fellowship in Marine Conservation for his work on enhancing local capacity to identify and protect climate-resilient coral reefs in the central Philippines. He has also developed MPA-FishMApp, a citizen science app that simplifies monitoring of coral reef fish density and biomass in marine protected areas. Dr. Abesamis has published extensively on topics such as reef fish connectivity, larval dispersal patterns, and the impacts of marine protected areas.

Carey Bonnell

Plenary Speaker

Carey Bonnell is a VP Sustainability & Engagement at Ocean Choice International LP. Carey has gained broad experience in the area of fisheries development and sustainability starting initially with his early upbringing in a small fishing community on Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula. He began his career in 1997 as a technical assistant at the Fishing Technology Unit, progressing through educational roles with the Marine Institute and the College of the North Atlantic including a one-year international work placement with MI in the Philippines in 1998. In 2000 Carey moved to Nunavut and progressed through various positions from Director, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister and Acting Deputy Minister of the Government of Nunavut's Department of Environment. Following the operation of an independent fisheries consultancy in 2004, he joined the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation early in 2005 as an Industrial Liaison Officer and was promoted to the position of Managing Director in January 2007. In January of 2010 Carey was appointed as Head of the School of Fisheries within the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University and held that position for 8 years. In February of 2018 Carey was appointed VP Sustainability & Engagement with Ocean Choice International which is the position he holds today.