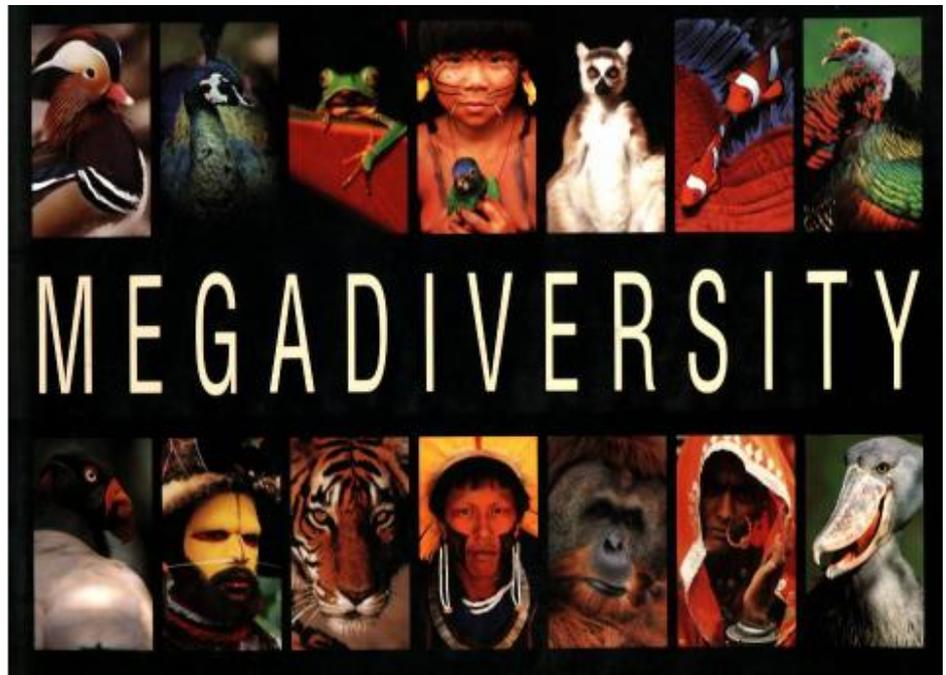


6.0 PERLAS DEL MAR

Somewhere in the great ocean there is a group of islands so rich as so beautiful it is called the Perlas del Mar (Pearls of the Sea). The name of the country is like the name of its people: *Perlas* (pearls).

While small in land area, it is one of the handful of countries in the world that hold almost all of the life-forms – the biological wealth -- on Earth.



This is the cover of a book entitled MEGADIVERSITY. It is about the 18 countries on Earth that hold almost all of the biological wealth (plant and animal lives) on Earth. One of these countries, represented here as a fish – is the group of islands called *Perlas*.

We all learned in grade school biology of the man called Charles Darwin his theory of the evolution. He did his studies in a group of islands called Galapagos, off the coast of Ecuador in South America. This group of islands is so rich in the biological life of plants and animals that when Charles Darwin did his studies there, he developed the theory of the evolution of life-forms on Earth contained in his book *Origin of the Species*.

Well, how does *Perlas* compare to the Galapagos Islands? Is it 10%? Half as rich? Maybe equally rich?

Not quite.



Tarsier: A kind of lemur, nocturnal in sleeping habit, that can only be found in *Perlas*, and nowhere else on Earth

“It is reasonable to think of the *Perlas* as the Galapagos Islands multiplied **TENFOLD**”

(L. Heaney, PhD and L. Regalado “Vanishing Treasures of the *Perlas* Forests”)

But the person boasting about the wealth of *Perlas* is not from that country. It was a professor of a museum of natural history of one of the world’s most prestigious universities.

In ten hectares of the forests of the Philippines, there are more species of trees than the entire continent of North America.

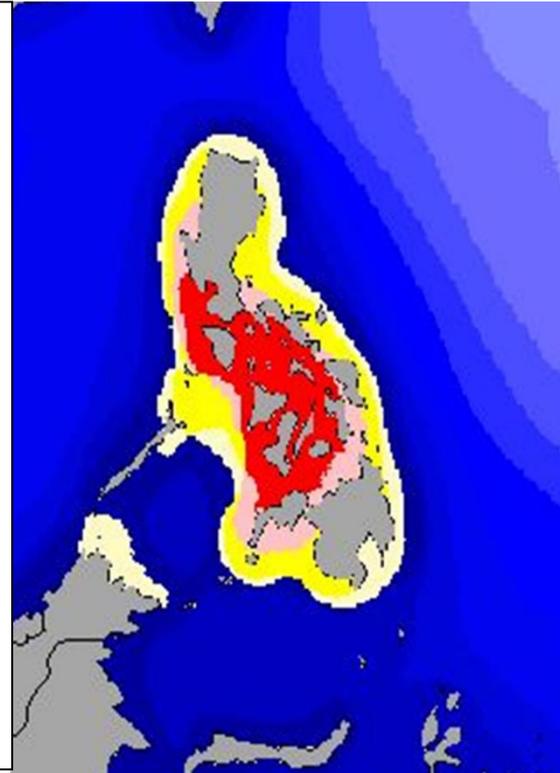
The *Perlas* people even know about it.

If the land is rich, the sea is even richer. Scientific studies have shown that the Philippine seas is the richest, repeat, the richest marine waters on earth.

It is in fact known as the 'Center of the Center of Marine Biodiversity on Earth"

The central seas of the *Perlas* group islands is the 'center of the center of marine biodiversity on Earth'.
(Kent Carpenter, PhD, ___ title of the article)

___ note, put arrow to indicate location of Manila Bay.



In a mere ___ ten hectares of the *Perlas* seas, there are more species of corals than the entire Caribbean seas and the entire Great Barrier Reef of Australia put together, an area of ___ 700 million hectares. (___ check with Ed Gomez and Angel Alcala).

But its incredible wealth is such a secret that the *Perlas* people do not even know about it. In fact, they have done everything to destroy their coral reefs and marine wealth.

All in the name of economic progress and development.