

## **Desires of the Untamed:**

### **The youth call on wildlife protection**

Deafening roars marked with superiority and territorial attributes covered the entire jungle. Mammals with tusks and fangs are on both legs marching towards the river, free and unharmed. In front of them is the crystal clear water which is home of the finest coral reefs and marine creatures. These are only few scenarios someone might witness in the untouched wilderness.

But in a blink of an eye, everything was disrupted. Their skins are no longer theirs. Their fangs and heads became trophies to display. The vast forest and seas were robbed from them. Without them knowing, their lives became someone else's and the wild's death became the continuous birth of life's highest form---humanity.

Recently in Kerala, India, a wild soon-to-be-mom elephant met her gruesome death after eating a pineapple stuffed with explosives. She was not able to bear the hideous bone fractures and died after succumbing to extreme pain. In spite of India's grave note on this cruelty, the fact that wildlife remains vulnerable through these years has never been eradicated.

Drastic changes are constantly happening in the wildlife. According to World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Earth's population of wild vertebrates have declined by 58% from 1970 to 2012. Terrestrial populations have declined by 38%, marine

populations have receded by 36%, freshwater populations have dropped by 81% and by 2050 we may lose up to 90% of coral reefs. These figures are alarming, and knowing the observable fact that some illegal human activities are continuously being practiced around the world such as exploitation and habitat destruction makes it more perilous.

In times like this, people begin to cry about the loss of quality of life yet, every day we contribute to its degradation even on our smallest irresponsible ways. Without us knowing, the threats to wildlife are also threats to us. This is because we benefit a lot from the wilderness such as source of helpful medicines and the maintenance of nature's ecological equilibrium hence our loss too.

Yes, it is true that numerous groups are already fighting for the voiceless creatures but it is clearly evident that they needed more gentle hands to uphold the cause. A single voice is neither weak nor strong, but altogether it may create an impact especially with the help of the fatherland's hope---the youth.

According to a paper published by International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology, "Youth are backbone of the nation and have a role to play in environmental and conservation efforts that will improve livelihoods" (Kawalekar & Pundalik, 2017, p. 16732). With their courageous behaviour and lively well-being, the youth hold a strong power to

change the future thus it is essential to cultivate a generation of conservationists among them. The question now is, “How?”

The youth is much active and adaptable to changes. They can start the movement of protecting the wildlife by envisioning the concept of scuba divers being one of the effective wildlife advocates. The latter is said because of one main thing: scuba divers have not only witnessed the beauty of marine life but also its frailty and deterioration. When all people understand this, the spark of hope might become a blaze of flame.

Awareness of wildlife’s current situation plays a big role on protecting it. The young ones being able to realize this can further influence other people. If teens and fresh minds are able to comprehend this, the adults must too. All must feel connected to the nature and with that the call of responsibility to protect the environment will be greater than being idle amidst its slow disappearance.

In addition, more awareness programs mean more opportunities for younger people to experience and to connect more with the wildlife they are trying to protect. Programs can be about revitalizing the natural habitats of the animals, providing a clean water source for them, or even simply conducting tree plantings and condemning extreme use of hazardous pollutants and pesticides.

On the other hand, the youth is equipped with much knowledge on the current technology. This will serve as their weapon in cultivating eco-friendly

machine and environmental researches that will contribute a big help to the field. Aside from having great minds that can craft discoveries, the youth is much eligible to persuade their pact to religiously practice reduce, reuse, and recycle. That may sound simple but the impact of it is infinite.

The bigger picture about wildlife protection is that, it is a global responsibility. Such that Philippines has its Republic Act No. 9147 or also known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act that implements ways, frameworks, and strategic plans and programs for the wildlife. However, this will be ineffective if even the people will never have an initiative to help and work.

Sometimes, it is excruciating to ponder that in order to have and sustain life, death is inevitably necessary. In which humans tend to be more superior. They have the ability to save the wildlife but on the other hand, they can also allow it to go extinct. The choice will always be on us: present convenience or sustainable development.

However, let us not wait for the loud roars of the jungle to finally become whispers. Let us preserve the homes of our dear animals as we conserve the resources we have. Let us not wait for the time that the only remnant of our wildlife left is the ivory carved from the tusks of dead mammals. If humans cannot interfere with the wildlife without harming them, the wildlife might be better off untouched and abandoned. Nevertheless, these are the only desires of the untamed---freedom and protection.