

Administrative Order
No. 76
November 23, 1987

**SUBJECT: Establishment of Buffer Zones in Coastal
and Estuarine Mangrove Areas**

Pursuant to the provisions of P.D. 705, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines, the following rules and regulations governing the Establishment of Buffer Zones in Coastal and Estuarine Mangrove Areas are hereby promulgated for the information and guidance of all concerned:

Section 1. Title. - This Administrative Order shall be known as the "Buffer Zones in Coastal and Estuarine Mangrove Regulations."

Section 2. Policy and Objectives. - To enhance the protective capability of the mangroves against strong currents, winds and high waves and to prevent siltation/ sedimentation of the nearby Marine Ecosystem, the State shall close certain mangroves or swamplands to any form of exploitation by establishing such areas as Buffer Zones.

Section 3. Definitions. - For the purpose of this Order, the following terms are defined:

- a. **Mangrove** in this Order includes the land area exposed during the lowest tide such as the mud flats or tidal flats.
- b. **Mangrove forest** refers to forest stands found in swampy tidal areas and composed primarily for mangrove and associated species.
- c. **Alienable or Disposable lands** refers to those lands of the public domain which have been the subject of the present system of classification and certified as alienable or disposable for fishpond development purposes.
- d. **Buffer Zones** are strips of 50 meters in mangrove or swampland areas throughout the country fronting seas, oceans and other bodies of water and 20 meters on both sides or river channels/banks maintained and developed to enhance the protective capability of the mangroves against strong currents, winds and high waves.
- e. **Fishpond Lease Agreement** is a privilege granted by the state to a person to occupy and possess in consideration of specified rental any public lands for the raising of fish and other aquatic products.

Section 4. Mangrove Areas to be Established as Buffer Zone.

The following are established as Buffer Zones in Coastal and Estuarine Mangrove areas:

1. Strips of 50 meters in all mangrove or swampland areas throughout the country fronting seas, oceans and other bodies of water, and 20 meters on both sides of river channels/banks.
2. Mangrove or swamplands classified and zonified as Alienable or Disposable for fishpond development whether or not covered by applications for fishpond development prior to the promulgation of this Order, but yet to be developed, are covered by this Order. These areas shall be reverted from A or D to the category of forest lands.

Section 5. Delimitation and Survey of Buffer Zones. The Forest Management Bureau shall cause the immediate delimitation and survey of Mangrove areas as Buffer Zones.

Section 6. Protection and Development of Buffer Zones. The protection and maintenance of established Buffer Zones shall be the responsibility of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau.

For areas which have already been converted into fishponds through an approved Fishpond Lease Agreement, the Lessee shall be required to afforest the tidal flats fronting their respective areas to at least 50 meters strip and the area along river channels/banks to at least 20 meters.

Section 7. Penal Provision. - Buffer Zones shall not be alienated nor disposed of but shall be retained for protection from strong currents, winds and high waves. Violations of any of the provisions of this Order shall be penalized in accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Section 8. Implementing Circulars and Instructions. The Director of Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau shall issue such circular or instructions as necessary for the effective implementation of this Order.

Section 9. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect immediately.

VICTOR O. RAMOS
Acting Secretary