

UCU LEADS BIODIVERSITY-BASED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT IN PANGASINAN

Urdaneta City University (UCU) is developing a watershed-management strategy that accounts for the unique diversity of aquatic species across Pangasinan. Recognizing that rivers, tributaries, and aquaculture ponds each host different communities of fish, invertebrates, and plants, UCU aims to design management practices suited to the ecological conditions of each area.

The initiative draws from regional biodiversity studies showing how species composition reflects ecosystem health. For example, a survey of the Chico-Agno River in Asingan recorded only four native fish species against eleven introduced ones—highlighting the need for location-specific management rather than broad, uniform interventions (thesis.dlsud.edu.ph). Using such findings as reference, UCU researchers are mapping local aquatic species, identifying native indicator organisms, and integrating biodiversity data into watershed planning and restoration projects.

A key component of this work is UCU's collaboration with Pangasinan State University – Binmaley Campus on aquaculture and hito culture. During a joint visit on June 27, 2023, UCU's Center for Research & Development and College of Engineering & Architecture gathered insights on sustainable aquaculture practices that reduce pollution and protect native species (ucu.edu.ph). These findings are now being applied to pilot systems that align aquaculture operations with local biodiversity goals.

UCU's plan also includes restoring riparian vegetation and creating small wetlands in areas where aquatic diversity is under threat. By combining biodiversity mapping, species monitoring, and community collaboration, UCU is advancing a watershed strategy that safeguards both aquatic ecosystems and local livelihoods in Pangasinan.

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