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ASAR: A native fishing gear used in the Cordillera Rivers

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The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), dubbed as the “Watershed Cradle of the North” caters to 13 major rivers, five of which are covered in the National Stock Assessment Program (NSAP) of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). In CAR, a native fishing gear known as asar, asal or kileb is being used by fisherfolk. It is a passive and size selective but not species-selective fishing gear. It takes advantage of the increased volume of fish trapped during the rainy season. Data on the history and origin of the asar were obtained through interviews with fisherfolk in Abra, Kalinga, Benguet, Apayao and Ilocos Sur. Data on fish composition and volume of catch were collected by NSAP-CAR in six landing centers along the rivers of Amburayan, Abra and Apayao-ABulug. In Abra, asar was constructed based on basbasan - a tool used to separate rice grains from its stalk. In Benguet, it was based on an old practice of filtering decaying materials in rice fields called asal. In Apayao, asar was introduced by Mr. Manuel Basilio, an Abrenian who migrated to Flora in 1964. NSAP data shows that 26 species of aquatic animals were caught by asar in the Cordillera Rivers in 2015. Asar as a gear contributed 5.5% of total inland capture fisheries in the Cordillera in 2015.

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