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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# Cimatu explains why Boracay task force needs to stick around for one more year

Published March 18, 2021, 4:45 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

The task force leading the charge in rehabilitating Boracay Island in Aklan has asked President Duterte to extend its life for one more year.



(Tara Yap / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu bared Thursday, March 18, that the Boracay Interagency Task Force (BIATF) is proposing a one-year extension after “unforeseen events” caused delays in the completion of the massive rehabilitation of the world-renowned island.

“The term extension of the BIATF will end next month. Since the BIDA (Boracay Island Development Authority) Bill is still pending in both Congress, we are proposing that our President will allow the task force to continue its work,” Cimatu said during a press briefing.

“This is to ensure smooth transition of management and turnover of responsibilities to the incoming body,” the secretary added.

The proposal for extension was “unanimously endorsed” by the task force and has been submitted to the Office of the President, Cimatu further said.

The DENR chief explained that the rehabilitation works were supposed to be completed this year as per original plans. However, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic struck the country in 2020, interrupting the task force’s time line.

Among the rehabilitation-related targets the task force failed to achieve was the relocation of informal settlers occupying the forest timberland.

“There are civilians living there who are not supposed to be there but because of the pandemic, we were not able to relocate them and therefore we let them stay there for the meantime as a gesture of humanitarian consideration amid the pandemic,” Cimatu said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/18/cimatu-explains-why-boracay-task-force-needs-to-stick-around-for-one-more-year/>



# Boracay task force to ask Duterte to extend term

By: [Nestor Burgos Jr.](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 06:06 PM March 18, 2021

ILOILO CITY -- The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) will ask President Duterte to extend its term for another year.

In a virtual press conference after a meeting of the BIATF in Boracay on Thursday, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, BIATF chair, said the extension is necessary because the bill creating the Boracay Island Development Authority (Bida) is still pending in Congress.

The BIATF was formed to supervise the island's rehabilitation when it was closed to tourists from April 26 to Oct. 2, 2018.

Its term was supposed to end on May 8, 2020, but the President extended it for another year or until May this year.

Bida is intended to replace the BIATF as a permanent body to ensure the island's sustainable development.



# Boracay task force pushes for one-year term extension

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Mar 18, 2021 6:14:15 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, March 18) — Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Thursday said the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force has submitted to the Office of the President a proposal to extend its term for another year.

"This was presented in the task force today and we unanimously endorsed this proposal for the extension of the term of the task force for another year," he said in a briefing

"Isinubmit na actually namin ito to the President," he added.

[Translation: We already actually submitted this to the President.]

Cimatu noted that the extension will help in the smooth transition once the proposed Boracay Island Development Authority Bill (BIDA) is approved by Congress. The pending measure pushes for the creation of BIDA that will "promote and accelerate the sustainable development and balanced growth" of the island.

The task force headed by Cimatu was formed in 2018 through Executive Order No. 53 to lead the rehabilitation of the island after it was closed for six months. It was supposed to be dissolved after two years, but Executive Order no. 115 extended the task force's validity to May 8, 2021 to allow the body to complete critical projects in Boracay pursuant to the Boracay Action Plan.

Meanwhile, Cimatu said the two-year target for the improvement of Boracay was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For one, they have not yet relocated informal settlers and workers to mainland Malay due to humanitarian consideration, he said.

"Pagkatapos ng (After the) pandemic, we will look for a place for them, then we will assist them in moving out," he added.

There are also plans to partner with a private firm for the construction of a dormitory-type building for affected workers, Cimatu said.

On road works, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it is currently 70% complete, while there are still pending works on demolition, solid waste, and sewage management.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/3/18/boracay-task-force-one-year-term-extension.html>



# Boracay rehab: Malay LGU needs P117M to settle waste disposal debt

Published March 18, 2021, 6:53 PM

by [Betheena Unite](#)

Two years since the dismantling of illegal structures on Boracay Island began, the local government unit (LGU) of Malay, Alkan still owes the hauling and garbage collecting service provider about P117 million.

This was among the crucial matters discussed during the Boracay Interagency Task Force (BAITF) meeting Thursday, March 18, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Usec. Benny Antiporda said.

“We all know that on the closure of Boracay, which lasted for six months, wherein massive demolition of illegal structures were made and we know that there’s a lot of debris that was disposed of. During that time, the local government of Malay had a hard time in settling the disposal fee even until now, so the Malay LGU is seeking for the response of the DENR,” Antiporda said during a press briefing.

“Until now, we have yet to settle that so a while ago we talked about it and we will come up with the budget proposal for DBM (Department of Budget and Management) for approval,” the official said.

According to Antiporda, the Malay government needs the P117 million to cover for the cost of almost two years worth of garbage collecting service under the rehabilitation effort.

Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Bautista said every year, the local government of Malay allocates P50 million for hauling and P38 million for the operation of the landfill.

“But in the previous years, the P50 million and P38 million is not enough to pay the cost of the operation because of the closure that increased the solid waste,” Bautista said.

The local chief executive, however, clarified that despite the unsettled payment, Boracay Island has remained zero-waste since 2019.

All solid waste, including debris from illegal structures, are “transported every day” to Caticlan, he added.



# DENR task force to prioritize clearing of water hyacinths in Pasig River, Laguna Lake

By DENR Published on March 18, 2021

MANILA, Mar. 18 -- The Department of Natural Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is considering to tap fisherfolk in controlling the growth of water hyacinths or water lilies in major waterways, particularly in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

The problem on the proliferation of water hyacinth was among the issues tackled when Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda met with members of the Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF) last March 11 to discuss the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The proliferation of the invasive water species is known to cause major obstruction to smooth flow of navigation along waterways.

Antiporda, who is the head of the Manila Bay APTF, directed the members of the task force to prioritize the removal of the water hyacinth in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

A sub-committee on water hyacinth was then created to control and minimize the growth of the water plant while the Manila Bay APTF will also look into the possibility of employing the services of local fisherfolk to harvest water lilies.

"We want to make a drastic change in the quality of water in Manila Bay," Antiporda said as he stressed the objective of the task force, which is to complement the actions of DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu as chair of the Manila Bay Task Force.

"To see is to believe, to smell is to believe and to test is to believe," he said, reminding its members of the task force's three main goals, which are also the parameters in saying that we already won our Battle for Manila Bay.

Antiporda pointed out that one of the task force's target is to ensure that no floating debris will be seen along Manila Bay and its tributaries.

"With the improvement of the water quality, there should also be no foul odor coming from the bay," Antiporda said.

"Most important is the drastic change of the water quality in Manila Bay," he emphasized.

He also instructed the Manila Bay (APTF) members to establish an effective monitoring system that has "complete standard operating procedure with corresponding timeline" to ensure the compliance of "environmental polluters."

"We need to double up our effort in running after them. We will deal with them head-on," Antiporda stressed. (DENR)



# Fisherfolk to help control growth of water lilies in major waterways

Thursday, March 18, 2021 Cory Martinez13

**FISHERFOLKS** will be tapped in helping the Department of Natural Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in controlling the growth of water hyacinths or water lilies in major waterways, particularly in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

Benny Antiporda, DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns, said the problem on the proliferation of water hyacinth was among the issues tackled during his recent meeting with members of the Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF). The meeting was held to discuss the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

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# DENR offers waste disposal training for LGUs

By Catherine Teves March 18, 2021, 5:17 pm



**MANILA** – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is offering technical assistance that will enable local government units (LGUs) without appropriate waste disposal facilities to properly handle trash.

DENR's regional offices nationwide are available to guide such LGUs on establishing respective residuals containment areas (RCAs), where residual waste (trash that can't be composted and recycled) may be stored before being transported to appropriate disposal facilities.

"LGUs can seek our regional offices' help in coming up with RCAs," DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said in a recent interview, anticipating a further need for the facilities amid DENR chief Roy Cimatu's order to close down all open dumps nationwide this month.

Open dump is a "disposal area wherein the solid wastes are indiscriminately thrown or disposed of without due planning and consideration for environmental and health standards," according to Republic Act (RA) 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

RCAs need not be expensive and complicated as the structures can just be 20-square meter strategically located areas enclosed by galvanized iron sheets only, Antiporda said.

"An LGU can establish its RCA within a week," he said.

Residuals to be temporarily stored in RCAs must be inside sacks and other bags that don't leak.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) said residuals are solid wastes that are non-compostable and non-recyclable.

Among residual wastes are sanitary napkins, disposable diapers, worn-out rugs, ceramics, plastic-lined cartons and candy wrappers, the NSWMC explained. They must be "disposed of ecologically through a long-term disposal facility or sanitary landfill."

Antiporda reiterated the need for waste segregation, noting this will enable LGUs to recover waste for composting, recycling and reuse so there'll be less trash to dispose of.

Compostable waste alone already accounts for some 52 to 58 percent of solid waste, he said, highlighting how segregation can reduce volume of trash for disposal.

DENR will continue monitoring LGUs' compliance with waste segregation which the law requires.

In January 2021, Cimatu ordered the closure of all open dumps in the country by the end of March.

"Such closure is long overdue," Antiporda said, noting that a ban on open dumps has been ordered for years but they continue operating. **(PNA)**





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Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/18/denr-offers-waste-disposal-training-for-lgus/?fbclid=IwAR2y5jvApv3OAU13YA8gQsLJGndneUGlzbBiO4jte4iBas38Bxmk9wCSLpY>



# Lone sanitary landfill in Antique already operational

By Annabel Consuelo Petinglay March 18, 2021, 1:25 pm



**CLOSURE OF OPEN DUMPSITES.** Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu (left) joins San Jose de Buenavista Mayor Elmer Untaran during the groundbreaking of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office building on Wednesday (March 17, 2021). Untaran said they are now able to comply with the order of the DENR for the closure of open dumpsites. *(PNA photo by Annabel Consuelo J. Petinglay)*

**SAN JOSE DE BUENAVISTA, Antique** – Antique province's sole sanitary landfill here is already fully operational, in time for the order of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to close all open dumpsites this month.

"We have already closed our open dumpsite in Barangay Pantao," Mayor Elmer Untaran said in an interview on Thursday, adding that since last January they already been using the sanitary landfill for residual wastes.

The sanitary landfill, constructed in January 2020, through a PHP20 million fund from the office of Lone Antique Rep. Loren Legarda, is also located in Barangay Pantao.

Untaran said he was glad about the functional sanitary landfill as Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has already directed the closure of all open dumpsites by end of March.

Cimatu announced during the groundbreaking ceremony of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in Barangay Maybato Sur on Wednesday that he directed Undersecretary Benny Antiporda for the closure of all open dumpsites last January.

He said the DENR would assist local government units (LGUs) with no such facility and could not afford to put up one during their transition mode "and for the eventual putting up of the sanitary landfill."

Cimatu is hopeful the LGUs would abide by the directive.

However, Untaran said that they could not accommodate wastes from other municipalities.

The other 17 municipalities are still using open dumpsites.

"The residents of Pantao might not like that the waste of the other neighboring towns would be dumped in their barangay," he said. **(PNA)**



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Source: [https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/18/lone-sanitary-landfill-in-antique-already-operational/?fbclid=IwAR00hWPZ82h6MBg02r9q0cS5hCp46gyTZJk5\\_k\\_ZFU2SYUoPrWRI5N5BOCc](https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/18/lone-sanitary-landfill-in-antique-already-operational/?fbclid=IwAR00hWPZ82h6MBg02r9q0cS5hCp46gyTZJk5_k_ZFU2SYUoPrWRI5N5BOCc)



# DENR constructs Central Material Recovery Facility in Marawi

By Lou Ellen L. Antonio Published on March 18, 2021

MARAWI CITY, Mar. 17 (PIA)--To intensify its effort to push for the minimization of wastes in the city, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources through its Environmental Management Bureau in Region 10 gears up for the construction of a central material recovery facility in Barangay Dulay.



*Abdul Hamid Batugan, Solid Waste Management - Task Force Bangon Marawi project management office chief, shares that the central material recovery facility is unique because of its mechanization features. (PIA ICIC)*

With 1,500 square meters floor area, the facility is part of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) project of the DENR as the lead agency for the Subcommittee on Land Resource Management of Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM).

Abdul Hamid Batugan, SWM-TFBM project management office chief, shared that the facility is unique because of its mechanization features.

"Kakaiba ito kasi halos lahat mechanized. Mechanized ang water treatment facility at may mechanized na magcater sa waste kasi merong equipment and machinery na gagamitin don," he said.

[It's unique because almost everything is mechanized. The water treatment facility is mechanized and there is a mechanized caterer for the waste because there are equipment and machinery to be used.]

With funds from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management – Marawi Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Program, the SWM project also includes the procurement of equipment which include five quester dump trucks, nine mini dump trucks, two units six-wheeler garbage collector, nine skid loaders, one case crawler-type excavator, one waste handling dozer, one vibratory roller, and two wheel-type excavators.

Meanwhile, the machinery includes 12 rapid composters, four plastic shredders, four glass pulverizers, and one unit plastic densifier.

Batugan further explained that the facility will cater to non-residual waste which can be recovered or recycled while the bulk biodegradable waste will be catered through the sanitary landfill to be constructed in Barangay Sugod.



*Aerial photo of the administration building, overhauling area, warehouse and storage, and powerhouse with supply, delivery, and installation of 100-KVA standby power/generator set constructed in the 2.2 hectares land for the Task Force Bangon Marawi Solid Waste Management Project. (Angelo Dologmandin/PIA ICIC)*

The biodegradable waste, according to him, can be used as a soil conditioner which will eventually become a fertilizer. The recovered plastics or bottles, on the other hand, can be transformed into bricks through the facility.



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources through its Environmental Management Bureau in Region 10 is also set to distribute 72 customized bins with four compartments for segregation intended for the returned barangays in Marawi City. (Lou Ellen L. Antonio/PIA ICIC)

Batugan also called for the cooperation of the residents to properly segregate their wastes and encouraged them to establish composting pits in their backyards.

"This project hindi lang kailangan mag-comply o mag-execute ay ang LGU o NGA but all of us especially the stakeholders. Sana iyong lahat na basura na pwede irecover is magkaroon ng segregation at home. We are assuring na this project is for Marawi City... for safety and magkaroon ng rehabilitation," he added.

[This project should not be solely executed by LGU or NGA but all of us, especially the stakeholders. I hope all the garbage that can be recovered, there is segregation and home. We are assuring that this project is for Marawi City ... for safety and to have rehabilitation.]

The facility is just one of the infrastructures constructed in the 2.2 hectares land for the TFBM SWM Project. Completed infrastructures include an administration building, overhauling area, warehouse and storage, and powerhouse with supply, delivery, and installation of 100-KVA standby power/generator set.

DENR is also set to distribute 72 customized bins with four compartments for segregation intended for the returned barangays in the city. (LELA/PIA ICIC)



# DENR-12 sets survey to address barangay boundary conflicts

By Allen Estabillo March 18, 2021, 3:40 pm



**BOUNDARY SURVEY.** Lawyer Felix Alicer, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region 12 executive director, presents in a meeting in Koronadal City on Wednesday (March 17, 2021) the initial map of barangays in Malungon town, Sarangani in preparation for an upcoming survey to properly delineate their boundaries. Four barangays in Malungon have been selected as pilot areas of the initiative. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-12)*

**GENERAL SANTOS CITY** – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 12 has chosen at least four barangays in Sarangani province as pilot areas for its political boundary survey this year.

Lawyer Felix Alicer, DENR-Region 12 executive director, said Thursday the initiative aims to address the boundary conflicts affecting the concerned barangays through the proper delineation of their respective land areas.

He said the preparations are underway for the launching of the pilot survey in Barangays Talus, Kawayan, Banate and Malalag Cogon in Malungon.

Alicer, along with personnel from the agency's survey and mapping division, met with officials of Malungon town in Koronadal City on Wednesday to in preparation for the conduct of the surveys.

DENR-12 presented during the meeting the initial map of the land area and boundaries of the four barangays.

The official said the upcoming survey will specifically determine the metes and bounds of the barangays, which he cited as vital in the delivery of services to communities.

"You cannot manage what you cannot measure," he said in a statement.

Alicer clarified that the agency will not pinpoint and establish the boundaries but will guide and assist the concerned local government units in identifying their borders.

He said the completion of the political boundary survey will eventually pave the way for the establishment of barangay boundary monuments in the said areas.

The agency is targeting to also later launch the survey in other areas in the region that have pending conflicts with barangay boundaries.

Malungon Mayor Ma. Theresa Constantino lauded the DENR-12 for providing its assistance in addressing the overlapping and conflicting boundaries of their barangays.

She expressed full support to the initiative and assured the cooperation of the municipal government and the concerned barangays. **(PNA)**



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Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/18/denr-12-sets-survey-to-address-barangay-boundary-conflicts/?fbclid=IwAR0trGCei7tfizASMn34NBcR3YtqHZ33fd3rgqkaWZPP5XLFIYkREY6MfLI>



# Pondo para sa Manila Bay rehab, tumaas ng 16% ngayong taon

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#)

-Mar. 17, 2021 at 3:12pm



Makakatanggap ng mas mataas na pondo ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay ngayong taon.

Ayon kay Anakalusugan Partylist Rep. Mike Defensor, dati ring DENR Secretary, ₱1.56 billion ang itinaas sa pondo para sa development, updating at implementasyon ng Operational Plan ng Manila Bay Coastal Management Strategy.

Mas mataas ito ng 16% kumpara sa ₱1.35 billion budget na inilaan para sa rehabilitation ng Manila Bay noong nakaraang taon.

Paliwanag ng kongresista, ang operational plan ay salig na rin sa 2008 mandamus ng Korte Suprema na nagbibigay direktiba sa DENR at 12 iba pang ahensya na ibalik sa Class B Level ang tubig sa Manila Bay na ligtas na malalanguyan ng publiko.

Paliwanag ni Defensor, ang fecal coliform level sa Class B coastal waters ay hindi dapat bababa sa 200 most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters (ml) ang Class B coastal waters.

Noong nakaraang buwan, inihayag ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu na sa 21 monitoring stations sa paligid ng Manila Bay, bumaba sa 4.87 million MPN per 100ml ang fecal coliform level mula sa 7.16 million MPN per 100 ml fecal coliform level noong 2020.

Ang coliform level naman sa beach nourishment project o iyong bahagi na nilagyan ng dolomite sand ay bumaba na sa 523,000 MPN per 100 ml mula sa 2.2 million MPN per 100 ml.

Source: [https://rmn.ph/pondo-para-sa-manila-bay-rehab-tumaas-ng-16-ngayong-taon/?fbclid=IwAR1nITY\\_IOXJu-nCLqCWFGK7Y3sLrlWCuDRk8CuNNNoJT8e6tFtY0vtCad8](https://rmn.ph/pondo-para-sa-manila-bay-rehab-tumaas-ng-16-ngayong-taon/?fbclid=IwAR1nITY_IOXJu-nCLqCWFGK7Y3sLrlWCuDRk8CuNNNoJT8e6tFtY0vtCad8)





# DoST-FPRDI, DENR-FMB to develop mobile app for wood identification

By [The Manila Times](#)

March 19, 2021

## Have you ever wondered what tree species your wooden furniture is made of?

Soon, your curiosity will be satisfied and you will be able to easily identify a piece of wood by just using your smartphone. This will be made possible through a mobile app being developed by the DoST- Forest Products Research and Development Institute (DoST-FPRDI) and DENR-Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB). This joint project by the two agencies aims to quickly and accurately identify selected wood species through a Wood Identification Mobile Phone Application using Android OS.

According to DoST-FPRDI's Mario DR. Ramos, the project will use XyloTron, a machine-vision-based wood identification system developed by the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory. XyloTron uses image analysis, statistical processing software and the wood imaging device Xyloscope in capturing and analyzing the wood's cross section.

"The project goal is to make sure all locally traded timber and timber products are correctly identified. Through the mobile app, a person can verify whether a piece of lumber is legally sourced or not," explained Ramos.

"The app will identify initially 30 commercially traded wood species in the Philippines, which include endemic, exotic and imported trees. As it can be used offline, the app is reliable even if the user is off-the-grid," he added.

The mobile app project is funded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations under its European Union Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU-FLEGT) Programme and is expected to be completed by June 2021.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/03/19/public-square/dost-fprdi-denr-fmb-to-develop-mobile-app-for-wood-identification/853191/>



# Lab Notes | Mangroves 101: Why we need to #SaveTaliptip

Agham National | March 18, 2021

**MANGROVES 101**

**MANGROVES** are... flowering trees found along low-oxygen areas and slow-moving waters.

65 of the world's 110 species of mangroves are found in the Philippines.

**TALIPTIP, BULAKAN: HOME OF MANGROVE FORESTS**  
Fishing in this area in Bulakan is the main source of livelihood for the residents.

**MANGROVES PROVIDE PROTECTION**

- Prevent erosion by holding on to the soil
- Captures carbon from the atmosphere and stores into the soil.
- strengthens soil by obstructing waves and diminishing heights of winds

**THEY ARE ALSO A NATURAL HABITAT**

Mangrove Forests serve as both a home and a food source to many organisms.

Without Mangroves, FLOODING WILL BE MORE FREQUENT.

It also serves as a nursery habitat for invertebrate and juvenile species.

Without Mangroves, Hundreds of Species will be without a home.

**THE CURRENT SITUATION**

**THE THREAT OF AEROTROPOLIS**  
San Miguel Corporation is planning to build the BULACAN AEROTROPOLIS PROJECT in Taliptip, Bulakan, Bulacan.

**2,500 HECTARES WILL BE RECLAIMED**  
2500 hectares of fishing and mangrove areas will be reclaimed which will impact the region.

**MORE THAN 600 TREES WILL BE GONE**  
As of 2018, 600 mangrove trees are cut in order to make way for the Aerotropolis.

**NO TO AEROTROPOLIS. NO TO RECLAMATION.**

**UNCERTIFIED!**  
San Miguel Corporation has yet to show the required Environmental Compliance Certificate to the public

**DESTRUCTIVE!**  
Mangrove forests grow very slow, making San Miguel's replanting projects ineffective to repair what they will destroy.

**WITH THE PROJECT, BULAKENYOS WILL LOSE JOBS AND BE DISPLACED.**  
Small-scale fisherfolk will lose their main source of livelihood. Affected families in Bulacan will face home eviction without assurance of proper compensation during the pandemic.

**#SaveTaliptip.**

AGHAM  
AGHAM YOUTH UPD

By AGHAM YOUTH DILIMAN

Last March 15, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) organized a public hearing for the San Miguel Corporation (SMC) Aerocity project. Agham Youth UP Diliman questions the intentions of the public hearing as the fisherfolk of Taliptip have already been displaced while SMC is still adamant on the continuation of the project despite the many environmental threats it poses.

We describe below the mangrove ecosystem that will soon be replaced by a destructive reclamation project if it pushes through.

A special place where the sea and the forest meet, mangrove forests are found in tidal swamps mostly in the tropics. The trees that make these forests are able to grow in extremely salty conditions by either excreting the absorbed salt from their leaves or storing them in their tissues. These forests also provide the link between freshwater and saltwater as they are found in the vicinity of the mouths of rivers and estuaries.



The dense thickets of the mangrove forests provide a habitat for all kinds of organisms. Above water, its branches provide a place for migrating birds to rest and perch, and below water, the dense maze of roots provide nursery grounds for organisms such as juvenile fish and shrimp larvae. Crabs found near the roots feast on fallen leaves, and oysters, sea slugs, while filter feeders feast on the bacteria and excess nutrients found in the water and submerged soil – hence, these organisms are important for water purification [2].

But mangroves, as they barricade the coastline, also provide protection for land and the humans that live on it. They stand firm against the hazards and calamities of natural phenomena that occur along the shore – storm surges, floods, high tides – as their maze of roots and trunks break the strength of the waves, along with the flow of large debris carried by these waves [2]. In the same way, their branches and trunks break strong winds [2].

A mangrove forest can be found near the highly urban Metro Manila is Barangay Taliptip – and this particular mangrove forest is in danger of disappearing all in hopes of building an aerotropolis project that claims to helps the government decongest Manila and generate livelihood and tourism in the province.

As San Miguel Corporation boasts of the construction of a seemingly glamorous Aerotropolis spanning 2,500 hectares supposed to provide jobs and economic growth, SMC continues to actively ignore the destruction they will bring once these forests are cleared and the marine area reclaimed [1].

Once the aerotropolis is built, the hazards of the storm surfaces and high tide would be more pronounced – especially since we're in the Philippines, a country hit by tens of typhoons a year. And this will only get worse as storms get more violent and sea levels rise due to climate change – and in fact, destroying mangrove trees release tons of carbon dioxide due stored in their soils.

Not only will it equate to a loss of a marine sanctuary, but it will result and has already resulted in the loss of livelihood of local communities that depend on the wealth of the coastline. While Bulacan's public officials and representatives of SMC insist that the said project brought excitement to the individuals living in the area, the fisherfolk and residents of Sitio Kinse are proof of otherwise. They resisted relocation until they finally agreed to turn over their land ownership titles in December last year [3].

Despite the opposition by environmental groups, and the people of the community themselves, San Miguel Corporation shows no signs of stopping. Villagers around the area continue to be evicted in exchange for P250,000 – barely enough to compensate for the loss of jobs, source of food, and home in the time of a pandemic [4]. Groups that warn of the dangers of this construction are branded as communist rebels. And the DENR, supposedly an institution to guard against environmental destruction, refused to issue a copy of the environmental impact to the affected communities.

SMC continues to live in the neoliberal illusion that the aerotropolis will have a positive impact on Bulacan as it will provide more jobs – ignoring the fact that people will rely more on the food and resources of these marine sanctuaries. And even if the aerotropolis provides jobs, the workers from Bulacan employed in that airport will no longer have a home to go to once they see their towns and villages flooded and in disrepair due to natural calamities.

Thus, we call on everyone to join the opposition against the construction of the aerotropolis. We must send the message to San Miguel that we will not back down. We shall stand firm in defense of the environment, community, and livelihood.

#### References

[1] <http://www.ecologic.org/actions-issues/about-the-region/what-is-a-mangrove/>



[2] <https://www.nature.org/media/oceansandcoasts/mangroves-for-coastal-defence.pdf>

[3] <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1369504/last-batch-of-talipitip-residents-move-in-to-new-homes-ahead-of-airport-construction>

[4] <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/06/18/2021859/pandemic-forces-talipitip-fishers-demolish-homes-crumbs-compensation>

*This was first posted last August 25, 2020 on Agham Youth's UP Diliman Facebook Page. Agham Youth is a student organization established in March 1999 in recognition of the need for a renewal of the advocacy for the development and utilization of science and technology that shall be of service to the broad masses of the people. There are established chapters within multiple universities including UP Diliman, Ateneo de Manila, UP Manila and PUP. Lab Notes: critical views and incisive analysis on issues in the Philippines, charting ways in making science and technology serve the people.*



## Vibrant garden

posted March 18, 2021 at 10:55 pm



Colorful plant holders enliven this eco-garden at Brgy. Ulango, Tanauan, Batangas. It is an entry to the Search for the Best Ecological Garden and Solid Waste Management Practices in Urban and Semi-Urban Barangays organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Calabarzon.



## NBI ARRESTS 5 for illegal quarrying

March 18, 2021 2 min read

MANILA — In line with the relentless campaign of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) against environmental crimes, operatives of NBI-Environmental Crime Division (NBI-EnCD) arrested five individuals for disposing and extracting boulders and minerals from Balanac River, Laguna without necessary permits.

NBI Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Director Eric B. Distor identified the subjects as Barangay Balanac chairman DENNIS OLIPANO, MICHAEL ABAD MARTINEZ, RANDY DELOS REYES MARTINEZ, DANILO NORIEL SATERA, and ABNER DAVAC CABREGA.

OIC Director Distor said that the operation stemmed from a report regarding an alleged illegal quarry operation in Bgy. Balanac, Municipality of Magdalena, Province of Laguna.

Operatives conducted series of surveillance operations to verify the veracity of the information and they were able to confirm the ongoing quarry operation at the said area.

They were also able to transact with the seller, the chairman of Bgy. Balanac, DENNIS OLIPANO, who agreed to sell four (4) truckloads of boulders for a price of Php 17,000 per truck.

On March 11, 2021, a joint team of NBI-EnCD, DENR-Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force (EPETF), DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and Philippine Army 1st Infantry Battalion was formed to conduct the operation.

At around 2 p.m. that day, the above-mentioned subjects were arrested for disposing and extracting boulders and minerals from Balanac River, Laguna without necessary permits from DENR-MGB or the PMRB-Laguna.

Seized from the operation are four (4) trucks with a total estimated value of P6 million and 30 cubic meters of boulders and fabricated screens with an estimated value of P43,000.

Subjects were presented for inquest proceedings before the Office of the Prosecutor, Department of Justice, Manila for violation of Section 103 of RA 7942 (Philippine Mining Act of 1995) and Section 3 (e) of RA 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act). (Kiara Lauren Ibanez/BENJAMIN CUARESMA/AI/MTVN)

Source: [https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/18/nbi-arrests-5-for-illegal-quarrying/?fbclid=IwAR1sg\\_xAJQ9AFPet7X85PmS9hJH4DBjoi6Y9cnWNSMAmRUEra0iE2G7Z4Gg](https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/18/nbi-arrests-5-for-illegal-quarrying/?fbclid=IwAR1sg_xAJQ9AFPet7X85PmS9hJH4DBjoi6Y9cnWNSMAmRUEra0iE2G7Z4Gg)



## Laguna village chair, 4 others nabbed for illegal quarrying

March 17, 2021 2 min read

**MANILA** – Authorities arrested a village chief and four others for illegal quarrying at the Balanac River in Magdalena, Laguna, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said on Wednesday.

NBI officer-in-charge (OIC) director Eric Distor said the suspects, Barangay Balanac chairperson Dennis Olipano, Michael Abad, Randy delos Reyes, Danilo Noriel, and Abner Davac were arrested in a sting operation by the agency's Environmental Crime Division (EnCD) on March 11.

The operation stemmed from information on the alleged quarry operations in the area as operatives were able to transact with Olipano who agreed to sell four truckloads of boulders at PHP17,000 per truck.

A joint team composed of members of the NBI-EnCD, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Philippine Army 1st Infantry Battalion conducted the operation.

Seized from the suspects were four trucks with a total estimated value of PHP6 million and 30 cubic meters of boulders and fabricated screens with an estimated value of PHP43,000.

The suspects will be charged with the violation of Section 103 of Republic Act (RA) 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and Section 3 of RA 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. **(PNA)**

Source: [https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/17/laguna-village-chair-4-others-nabbed-for-illegal-quarrying/?fbclid=IwAR1xSnOYHGUOmZwkZrJtKhMG6FuJpcH9qffWpUD2v6bBK6OCrYb\\_gpPP3Tg](https://maharlika.tv/2021/03/17/laguna-village-chair-4-others-nabbed-for-illegal-quarrying/?fbclid=IwAR1xSnOYHGUOmZwkZrJtKhMG6FuJpcH9qffWpUD2v6bBK6OCrYb_gpPP3Tg)



# LGUs, Bulacan residents push for Bulacan airport's immediate construction

By [The Manila Times](#) March 19, 2021

Local officials, residents, and various stakeholders expressed their full support for the immediate construction of the new Manila International Airport in Barangay Taliptip, Bulacan, Bulacan, emphasizing that the game-changing project to be built by San Miguel Corporation, will further unlock the economic potential of Bulacan province, provide jobs to millions of Filipinos, and help the country recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando, Bulacan Town Mayor Vergel Meneses, and officials and residents of Barangay Taliptip and Barangay Bambang voiced their support for the P740 billion project during the public hearing, conducted by Environment Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The local officials and residents said they were formally consulted and have carefully weighed the proposed airport's benefits for the province and its residents, including measures to mitigate perennial flooding in the province.

Gov. Fernando said it would help the province adding that the place is poised to become a global destination for tourism with the construction of the airport.

Mayor Meneses, for his part, said that the town of Bulacan is lucky to have a strategic location that is fit for a modern airport that will address congestion problems that has affected many air travelers at the country's current gateways

He highlighted that Bulacan took into careful consideration the economic development, job opportunities, and new businesses that the airport project will bring. The town's council issued a formal decision to support the undertaking in October 27 last year.

Barangay captains Michael Ramos and Jesus Cruz of Taliptip and Bambang, respectively, pointed out the timeliness of the project, citing that many of their residents are experiencing poverty due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The proposed airport will be located in the said barangays.

Ramos said that San Miguel has shown its commitment and support to his barangay, particularly the relocated residents, even prior to construction. He added that even prior to construction, residents have already been provided skills training and livelihood opportunities.

A total of 364 beneficiaries benefited from SMC's cash assistance. The company gave 277 owners of non-concrete houses or shanties were given P250,000 each, while owners of concrete houses were given the appraised value of their homes, multiplied by two, plus P100,000. Cash assistance was also provided to 87 others who were disqualified, for a total of 364 beneficiaries.

Under a partnership between San Miguel Corporation and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (Tesda) partnership, a total of 58 former Taliptip coastal residents were able to complete training in different courses geared towards employment during airport construction and full operations, and to open businesses that will cater to the airport and the surrounding communities.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/03/19/public-square/lgus-bulacan-residents-push-for-bulacan-airports-immediate-construction/853161/>





# City-wide cleanup drive set tomorrow

By [Mary Ruth R. Malinao](#)(The Freeman) - March 19, 2021 - 12:00am



Among the areas covered for the cleanup are Mahiga Mouth, Tinago Tejero Bridge- Kamputhaw River, T. Padilla Market - Kamputhaw Bridge, Ermita Coast, Guadalupe River mouth, Pasil Coast, SRP Tower, Il Corso Coast.

STAR/File

CEBU, Philippines — The Cebu City government is set to hold a cleanup drive tomorrow, March 20, 2021, in the city's riversides and coastal areas.

Reymar Hijara, subcommittee chairperson of the Coastal Management Task Force (CMTF), said this will be the third city-wide cleanup operation, with a theme "Clean Cities, Healthy Citizens."

At least 2,500 volunteers both from the city government and public and civic groups are expected to join the activity.

The participants were already assigned in the different barangays of the city.

Hijara said the opening ceremony will be at the Il Corso Mall at South Road Properties at 5:30 a.m.

Expected to attend the ceremony are Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella, Vice Mayor Michael Rama, and Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, among others.

Hijara added city councilors will also be participating in the activity, stating that they already have their assigned barangays.

Among the areas covered for the cleanup are Mahiga Mouth, Tinago Tejero Bridge- Kamputhaw River, T. Padilla Market - Kamputhaw Bridge, Ermita Coast, Guadalupe River mouth, Pasil Coast, SRP Tower, Il Corso Coast.

Since the fight against COVID-19 is still ongoing, all participants are required to follow the minimum health protocols, such as wearing face masks, face shields, gloves; maintaining a two-meter distance from each other; and assigning focal persons for each site to serve as health and safety protocol marshal.

They must also bring trash bags/sacks, protective clothing, drinking water, shovel, and rakes, among others.

Personnel who are 22 to 59 years old, without pre-existing illnesses, are the ones allowed to join the cleanup activity.



The cleanup activity will not be more than an hour and a half.

Participants are reminded to disinfect and sanitize themselves upon leaving the cleanup site and before entering their homes.

Heavy equipment for the garbage collection such as dump trucks and backhoe, to name a few, are also being prepared by the City Engineering Office, Department of General Services, and Department of Public Works and Highways. —**KQD (FREEMAN)**



# Another Irrawaddy Dolphin Dies In Negros, Extinction Of Local Sub-Population Feared

Conservation groups are sounding the alarm following the death of another Irrawaddy dolphin in Negro Occidental. Scientists believe only 10 to 13 of the species remain in the region.

Janvic Mateo Thursday, March 18, 2021



Photo courtesy of Mavic Matillano/World Wide Fund-Philippines shows Irrawaddy dolphins in Malampaya Sound, Palawan, one of the three sub-populations in the Philippines. Conservation groups are calling for immediate action after another dolphin died in Negro Occidental this month.

Unless drastic conservation measures are immediately adopted, a local population of a rare dolphin species may soon forever vanish from its natural habitat in Western Visayas.

On Sunday, March 14, fisherfolk discovered an Irrawaddy dolphin struggling with a big shark at the Guimaras Strait, off the coast of Bago City in Negro Occidental.

The dolphin, named “Fuji” by marine scientists because of her unique sheared cut dorsal fin, later died due to severe wound it sustained in the incident.

“This recent death adds urgency to enacting policies to save what is left of the Irrawaddy population,” said Trixie Concepcion, regional director of Earth Island Institute Asia Pacific (EII). “We need political will to implement our laws designed for the Irrawaddy’s health and welfare.”

Known for their blunt snout and rounded forehead and flippers, the Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*) is classified as “endangered” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Like other marine mammals, Irrawaddy dolphins play an important role in the marine ecosystem, with EII noting that “as the top predator, they maintain the balance in the sea by preying on the ‘big predatory fish’ as well as the weak and ailing fish.”

While found in different parts of the Indo-Pacific Region, there are only three sub-populations known in the Philippines, located at the Malampaya Sound and the [municipality of Quezon](#) in Palawan and the Iloilo and Guimaras Straits in Western Visayas.

The populations are critically endangered, according to EII, with the pod in Western Visayas believed to have only 10 to 13 of the species left.

The death of Fuji marks another blow to efforts to protect the local sub-population of the dolphins, most of which are regularly seen near the river delta and coastal waters of Bago City and Pulpandan municipality in Negro Occidental.



Since 2019, three other Irrawaddy dolphins have died in the area, including a juvenile last Sept. 25.

Aside from natural threats, Irrawaddy dolphins are also affected by boat strikes, plastic pollution and industrial and household waste. Conservation groups also raised concern over the proposed Panay-Guimaras-Negros bridge.



A large chunk of flesh was torn away from the body of 'Fuji,' the latest Irrawaddy dolphin that died in Negros. The wound is suggestive of a shark attack, according to the Earth Island Institute that released the image. Photo courtesy of Dhorlyn Dela Cruz

## Urgent action needed

Last December, the EII launched an [online petition](#) calling on government agencies to work together and take action to save the Irrawaddy dolphins.

As of this week, almost 10,000 scientists, environmentalists, animal welfare advocates and other concerned Filipinos have already joined the petition, which was addressed to the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the local government units of Bago and Pulupandan.

It called for declaration of the entire habitat of the Irrawaddy dolphins as a marine protected area, which would ensure the protection of the areas where they are known to thrive.

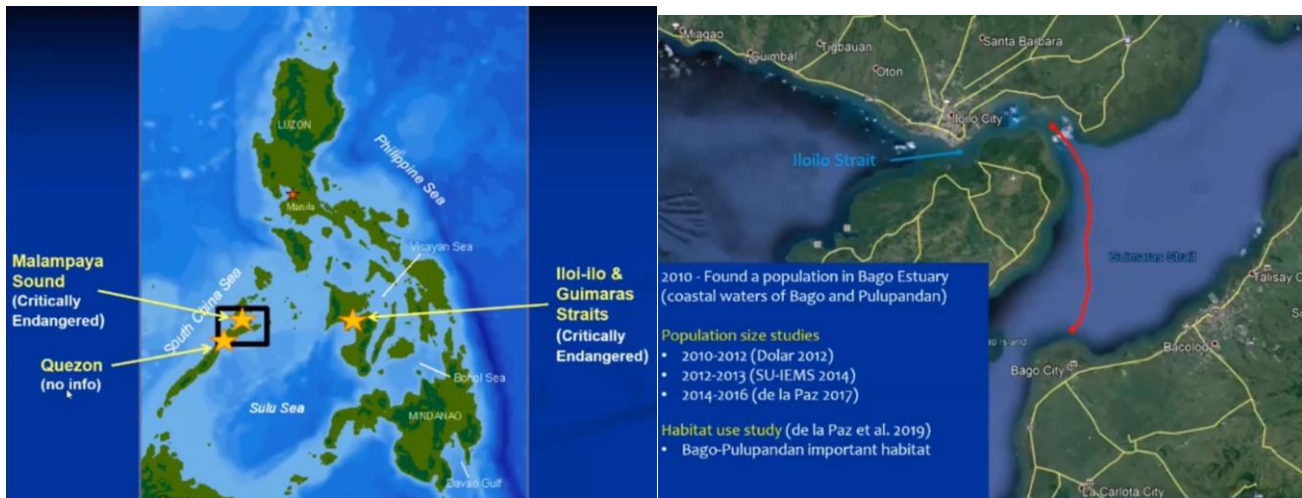
The petition also pushed for the designation of some areas as “no-boat” or “slow-boat” zones, as well as the prohibition on fishing or regulation of the use of fishing gears that sometimes result in death of the dolphins.

Fisherfolk who would be affected by such declarations, it said, should be provided immediate livelihood support.

The petitioners also asked the local governments of Bago, Pulupandan and the entire Negros Occidental to convene, finalize and implement management plans for the conservation of the Irrawaddy dolphins.

They said that there should be intensive, regular and year-round monitoring of the Irrawaddy dolphins and their habitat, including all waters emptying into the Guimaras and Iloilo Straits.

“Declaration of a critical habitat is the first step to saving the Irrawaddies,” the EII noted. “The more important task is to create and implement a management and conservation plan designed to allow the Irrawaddy population to recover.”



Marine scientist Louella Dolar from the Silliman University presents the known locations of the sub-populations of the Irrawaddy dolphins in the Philippines. Screenshots from Saving Waddy webinar organized by Earth Island Institute and Oceana.

Last January, EII and Oceana convened a stakeholder gathering to discuss the situation of the Irrawaddy dolphins.

Participants, which include representatives from the government, academe and marine wildlife and animal welfare groups, underscored the need to strategize and plan for the conservation of the dolphins.

Louella Dolar, marine scientist from the Silliman University, noted the success of Myanmar with its conservation efforts, citing the possibility for it to be adopted in the Philippines.

The effort, which involved the establishment of marine protected areas and the “collaborative fishing” between the dolphins and fisherfolk, increased their population from 29 to 79.

“This latest death brings down the population of our Irrawaddy dolphins to a very critical level,” Concepcion said. “Now, more than ever, we need to double our efforts and press our government agencies to declare the Irrawaddy area as a critical habitat and implement conservation plans now.”



# EcoWaste coalition insists proper disposal of used face masks should form part of the minimum public health standards amid surge in COVID-19 cases

By Ecowaste Coalition Published on March 18, 2021

QUEZON CITY, Mar. 18 -- As COVID-19 cases in the country continue to swell, a waste and pollution watchdog pressed the government to duly integrate the proper disposal of used face masks as part of the minimum public health standards (MPHS) that all citizens should observe.

Through a press statement, the EcoWaste Coalition urged the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) to expand the anti-COVID MPHS being propagated by the authorities to include the safe disposal of used face masks and other COVID-related discards.

Resolution No. 102 issued by the IATF last March 11 provides for stricter MPHS to arrest the surge in COVID-19 cases, but overlooks the need for proper disposal of used face masks and other common protective stuff, the group said.

On the level of individuals, the following measures are to be observed as per Resolution No. 102: a) wearing of face masks and face shields appropriately; b) increasing the frequency in hand-washing for at least twenty (20) seconds each time; c) ensuring the observance of social distancing and proper ventilation, and reducing time of interaction, if any; and f) reinforcing correct information on COVID-19.

"We strongly suggest that used face masks, face shields and other protective materials should be safely managed and disposed of at all times. This should also form part of the MPHS to safeguard public health and the environment from these potentially infectious discards, which are also polluting our streets and oceans," said Jove Benosa, Zero Waste Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

The recent discovery of discarded face masks entangled in the coral reefs of Anilao, Batangas should have prompted the IATF, the EcoWaste Coalition said, into instituting measures to ensure that used masks and other COVID-19 waste do not end up contaminating and harming marine life.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu had earlier said "the recent discovery of disposable face masks, plastic face shields, and other household healthcare wastes in our reefs is alarming. These wastes will harm both marine life and divers."

The EcoWaste Coalition also emphasized the urgency of cities and municipalities adopting new or strengthening existing ordinances that will forbid and penalize the improper disposal of soiled face masks and other COVID-related waste.

"Local ordinances, if effectively enforced, will encourage citizens to safely manage and dispose of COVID-related waste instead of throwing them anywhere and everywhere," said Benosa.

At the very least, used face masks should be wrapped on a used paper and discarded in a closed yet separate bin, must be properly labeled, and not simply thrown on the streets where they can end up in storm drains and eventually into the rivers and oceans.



The improper disposal of used face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) can also put waste workers, including street sweepers, trash haulers and waste pickers, at risk of being exposed to the coronavirus, which can remain in inanimate objects for days, the EcoWaste Coalition said.

To reduce the consumption and disposal of single-use face masks, the group suggested non-medical frontliners should opt for reusable cloth masks as these can be washed and safely reused.

“By opting for reusable or washable face masks, we avoid generating non-biodegradable and non-recyclable garbage that only adds to the worsening plastic pollution crisis,” Benosa said, stressing that “limiting people’s use of medical-grade masks will ensure adequate and steady supply for individuals who need them the most.” (Ecowaste Coalition)



# Make proper face mask disposal part of minimum health protocols, says environmental group

Published March 18, 2021, 10:55 AM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

The prevailing minimum public health standards (MPHS) are incomplete until it includes the proper way of disposing single-use face masks.



**FACE MASK PROBLEM** — Environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition finds single-use face masks littering the coast of Rosario, Cavite in July, 2020 (Photo from EcoWaste Coalition)

The EcoWaste Coalition made this stand Thursday, March 18 as it urged the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) to expand the anti-COVID MPHS to include the safe disposal of used face masks and other COVID-related discards.

“We strongly suggest that used face masks, face shields and other protective materials should be safely managed and disposed of at all times. This should also form part of the MPHS to safeguard public health and the environment from these potentially infectious discards, which are also polluting our streets and oceans,” Jove Benosa, Zero Waste Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition, said.

The recent discovery of discarded face masks entangled in the coral reefs of Anilao, Batangas should have prompted the IATF into instituting measures to ensure that used masks and other COVID-19 waste do not end up contaminating and harming marine life, the environmental watchdog said.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu had described the face mask discovery at Anilao reef as “alarming”.

The EcoWaste Coalition also emphasized the urgency of cities and municipalities in adopting new or strengthening existing ordinances that will forbid and penalize the improper disposal of soiled face masks and other COVID-related waste.

“Local ordinances, if effectively enforced, will encourage citizens to safely manage and dispose of COVID-related waste instead of throwing them anywhere and everywhere,” said Benosa.

At the very least, used face masks should be wrapped on a used paper and discarded in a closed yet separate bin, must be properly labeled, and not simply thrown on the streets where they can end up in storm drains and eventually into the rivers and oceans.

To reduce the consumption and disposal of single-use face masks, the group suggested that non-medical frontliners should opt for reusable cloth masks instead.

“By opting for reusable or washable face masks, we avoid generating non-biodegradable and non-recyclable garbage that only adds to the worsening plastic pollution crisis...limiting people’s use of medical-grade masks will ensure adequate and steady supply for individuals who need them the most,” Benosa said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/18/make-proper-face-mask-disposal-part-of-minimum-health-protocols-says-environmental-group/>





## City's garbage problem solved

posted March 18, 2021 at 11:40 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

Dagupan City—After barely a year, the city government here has cleared more than half of the city's decades-old mountains of garbage occupying a four-hectare open dump near the shoreline of the Tondaligan Beach in Barangay Bonuan Boquig.



*Dagupan City's open dump, before it was closed in September 2019 (top photo), and how it looked as of February 2021 after it was rehabilitated.*

This was after Mayor Brian Lim stopped the dump's operation in January last year and ordered its rehabilitation to comply with the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, which prohibits the operation of open dumps.

Residents, including judges, prosecutors, lawyers and employees in the nearby Hall of Justice and other government offices thanked Lim for his decisive action, saying it was "a win for the environment."

Lawyer Danilo Fernandez, who had just retired last month as clerk of court, said since the middle of last year, the foul odor from the dump had vanished and the flies that swarmed the nearby eateries had disappeared.

Between July 2013 and June 2019, the Tondaligan Beach, the city's main tourist attraction, turned into an "ecological disaster zone" after the city administration at that time continued to defy the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' repeated orders to close the dump.

As a result, the dump grew wider from two hectares to four hectares, spilling leachate into the Tondaligan Beach and its stench reaching the halls of the trial courts and other government offices about 300 meters away.

Frequent fires were also reported during the period because of spontaneous combustion while residents near the area complained of flies invading their homes.

Bernard Cabison, the city's waste management division chief, said that what used to be a garbage maze had been flattened, enabling him and the other workers in the area to now see and appreciate the beauty of the Tondaligan Beach from their office.



Cabison said that, after the dump was closed last year, the mountains of garbage in the area were hauled to a sanitary landfill outside of this city. The dump site was expected to be totally cleared by the end of this year, Cabison said.

The mayor said part of the rehabilitation plan was the establishment of a “residual containment area,” where biodegradables are shredded and composted.

“This is to minimize the volume of the garbage that we haul out of Dagupan City. By doing that, we also reduce hauling expenses because there will be less volume of garbage,” said Lim.



# Marine conservationist urges Filipinos to control plastic and medical waste

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Mar 18, 2021 11:20:28 PM



Photo courtesy: Anna Oposa/Facebook

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, March 18) — A marine conservationist appealed to fellow Filipinos to observe zero-waste habits during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Save Philippine Seas co-founder Anna Oposa emphasized plastic and medical waste like face masks should be disposed of properly, as these tend to pollute the seas and other marine resources.

"Some medical waste is absolutely necessary (to throw away) for safety and hygiene. But also there are ways that we can still continue to reduce our waste," Oposa told CNN Philippines' The Final Word on Thursday.

The Filipina marine advocate said just like any other trash, face masks polluting the oceans can be mistaken by marine animals for food, which can lead to their death.

Oposa encouraged the use of reusable face masks, or extend the use of masks if hygienically possible. She urged Filipinos to avoid littering these on the streets as well.

Oposa also called on government officials and other stakeholders to invest in building facilities that will process medical waste in the country.

"We did not anticipate that we will be producing this much waste. But we need to catch up in terms of investments," she said.

Oposa also appealed to the public to control plastics usage, as shoppers turn to online purchases.

"It's hard to be plastic-free in a time like this. But what I try to do with all the e-commerce waste that I have is to collect them, I clean them, and I dry them. I bring them to a plastic waste collection point," she said.

In April last year, the Asian Development Bank estimated that Metro Manila would generate 280 metric tons of medical waste per day during the pandemic.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission issued guidelines on the proper handling and management of all COVID-19 related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities, while ensuring the occupational health and safety of waste workers.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/3/18/Marine-conservationist-urges-Filipinos-to-control-plastic-and-medical-waste.html>



# Recycling gone digital: New local app helps Filipinos manage waste amid pandemic

By Catalina Ricci S. Madarang - March 18, 2021 - 9:24 PM



Image by Sigmund via Unsplash

A new waste management application was launched to help Filipinos collect and recycle their trash.

Called **Trash Panda**, the application is an “on-demand recoverable waste collection and coaching” service wherein it helps Filipinos find facilities where they can send their trash for recycling and processing.

It was developed by **Circula Recoon**, a startup company that advocates for an eco-friendly lifestyle to people.

As of writing, it is only available to Android users. The company is still working for it to be available to iPhone users and other platforms.

In its Google Play page, Trash Panda listed down the following services:

- Positive impact for the environment
- Get cashback from recycling facilities
- Learn to overcome waste management challenges.

It also pointed out that the items to be collected should be sorted out well and are clean.

“Please ensure that all items to be collected for recycling are clean, dry, and free from oil, food/beverage residue and strong smells. Items of similar types are to be placed in bags, containers, or stacks per type. The Trash Panda collectors reserve the right to refuse the collection of items that are not cleaned and prepared as instructed,” the page [read](#).

Being new to the market, it is only available in the following areas:

1. Makati
2. Mandaluyong
3. Manila
4. Marikina
5. Parañaque
6. Pasay
7. Pasig
8. San Juan
9. Taguig
10. Cainta in Rizal

On Thursday, Trash Panda shared infographics indicating the types of products and items they collect and accept to help their users segregate their waste.



**Trash Panda**  
18 hours ago

Book Trash Panda collection services for recoverable waste. Book now!  
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<https://tinyurl.com/TPforAndroid>  
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**1 Prepare your segregated recyclable items for collection**  
Know your recyclables

**Paper and Cardboard**  
Sort your paper and cardboard according to type

- Notebooks and books for disposal, old magazines, pads and flyers or brochures (matte or glossy)
- Bulky box cartons, box packaging for food or ingredients, and box packaging for toiletries
- White office pap (Coupon Bond)
- Newspaper or news prints

Flatten all box cartons. Fold large cartons into smaller sizes.

**1 Prepare your segregated recyclable items for collection**  
Know your recyclables

**Paper and Cardboard**  
Sort your paper and cardboard according to type

- Paper bags (not oily or food-contaminated)
- Colored paper (including yellow pad paper), and text papers
- Paper board (like cartolina, illustration board)

**1 Prepare your segregated recyclable items for collection**  
Know your recyclables

**Used Beverage Cartons** (including for cream and other B)

Make sure all cartons are drained of their contents, don't forget to rinse the insides and dry. Unbind the cartons and flatten vertically, don't forget to cap the cartons.

70 likes, 16 comments, 145 shares

Environmental groups recently raised the alarm over the rise of plastic pollution in the country, citing improper disposal of face masks.

Last March, the **Department of Environment and Natural Resources** received reports about the discovery of disposable face masks, plastic face shields and other household healthcare wastes in reefs.

Environment Undersecretary **Benny Antiporda** called on the public to use yellow trash bins dedicated for these coronavirus preventive materials be placed as remedial measures.

“These (quarantine and medical) facilities are required to put up a treatment facility and get a hauling permit, so monitoring medical wastes comes easy with these sectors,” Antiporda [said](#) in a statement.

**EcoWaste Coalition** recently called on the **Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases** to expand the proper disposal of face masks and other COVID-19-related wastes in their minimum public health standards.

“We strongly suggest that used face masks, face shields and other protective materials should be safely managed and disposed of at all times. This should also form part of the MPHS to safeguard public health and the environment from these potentially infectious discards, which are also polluting our streets and oceans,” said Jove Benosa, Zero Waste Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/trends-spotlights/2021/03/18/187920/recycling-gone-digital-new-local-app-helps-filipinos-manage-waste-amid-pandemic/>



# Republic Cement partners with Colgate-Palmolive to reduce plastic waste

March 18, 2021 | 12:02 am



CONSTRUCTION solutions provider Republic Cement and Building Materials, Inc. has inked an agreement with hygiene product maker Colgate-Palmolive Philippines, Inc. to reduce the amount of plastic waste, which ends up in landfills and waterways.

“We are excited to be a part of their journey and we are confident that through our shared commitment towards sustainability, we will be able to help support Colgate achieve their goals in the Philippines,” Republic Cement President and Chief Executive Officer Nabil Francis said in a press release on Wednesday.

Under the memorandum of agreement, which was signed on Dec. 18, 2020, both firms have committed to using Republic Cement’s resource recovery arm ecoloop to co-process plastic waste from Colgate-Palmolive.

Co-processing aims to recover the thermal and mineral properties of qualified waste materials for manufacturing cement.

Arvind Sachdev, Colgate-Palmolive Philippines president and general manager, said the firm aims to create a healthier and sustainable future by “developing recyclable, reusable and compostable products; changing behavior through waste management education, and by collecting and recycling plastic to help eliminate waste.”

Republic Cement said it holds a license from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to use and dispose of qualified waste through cement kiln co-processing, where waste materials are processed at high temperatures.

“This breaks down complex materials into simpler compounds and the energy or mineral content of wastes are completely recovered and utilized in the process of producing cement. Emissions from the process are filtered and monitored in compliance with DENR standards,” it said.

In December, Republic Cement said its ecoloop was planning to co-process a minimum of 10 million plastic sachets or bags per day by 2021 in a bid to alleviate the country’s waste problem.

Republic Cement is owned by Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. and Irish building materials company CRH plc. — **Angelica Y. Yang**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/republic-cement-partners-with-colgate-palmolive-to-reduce-plastic-waste/?fbclid=IwAR0P4iDfcpfrwMtLZEeTgML5nE9Xn0xKakbX18JL3F3wAuOvjGRkFrIWk p0>



# Mondelez strengthens commitment towards zero waste to nature

By [BUSINESSMIRROR](#)  
MARCH 19, 2021



In response to the problem of improper waste management, which leads to plastic ending up in oceans and landfills, the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS) and its member companies have committed to build and execute a strategy to manage plastic wastes. This will help ensure that by 2030, none of the members' plastic packaging waste will end up in nature.

Launched in January 2020, PARMS members, along with her affiliates and partners, formally signed a "Zero Waste to Nature Ambisyon 2030 (ZWTN 2030)" commitment. Years before the declaration, individual corporate members have been taking concrete action on addressing this problem including shifts to recyclable packaging and engaging in post-consumer waste recovery projects in partnership with local governments, NGOs, and community members. Most of the members have set targets that by 2025 or 2030, all their packaging will be recyclable, including snacks maker Mondelez Philippines.

Mondelez Philippines is the maker of Filipino's favorite snacks products like Eden Cheese, Cheez Whiz and Toblerone. In line with the abovementioned goal to make 100 percent of its packaging recycle-ready, the company has recently pledged that by 2025, it will reduce its global use of virgin plastic for rigid packaging by 25 percent or reduce virgin plastic use in overall plastic packaging by 5 percent in 2025. This goes hand in hand with targeting to have 5 percent recycled content by weight across plastic packaging globally by the same period.

"More recently, we have launched our global Sustainable Futures platform," shares Atty. Joseph Fabul, Country Manager for Corporate and Government Affairs of Mondelez Philippines. "Through this we aim to incubate, finance, and build partnerships in the impact investment space through co-funded climate projects and a new social venture fund. We aim to partner with like-minded investors, increase our impact on the world and support self-sustaining projects. Locally we have started exploring this platform through our project with The Plastic Flamingo to collect and recycle 40,000 kilograms of plastic into lumber to turn into shelters." The PARMS ZWTN 2030 Pledge is one of the ways the Company is tracking its performance versus its commitments.

Image credits: [Contributed Photo](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/03/19/mondelez-strengthens-commitment-towards-zero-waste-to-nature/>



## Zero plastic wastes

posted March 18, 2021 at 10:28 pm



The Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability and Mondelez Philippines agree to build and execute a strategy to manage plastic wastes. This will help ensure none of the PARMS members' plastic packaging waste will end up in nature by 2030. PARMS members, along with affiliates and partners, sign a 'Zero Waste to Nature Ambisyon 2030' commitment.





# MMDA to turn waste into eco-bricks via new facility

By Raymond Carl Dela Cruz **March 18, 2021, 12:49 pm**



**RECYCLING FACILITY.** MMDA chairman Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. (2nd from right) inspects the new granulator and brick-making facility at the Vitas Pumping Station in Tondo, Manila on Thursday (March 18, 2021). The facility will recycle waste collected from Metro Manila waterways into bricks, hollow-blocks, compost, and other by-products. *(Photo courtesy of MMDA)*

**MANILA** – The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will soon turn waste in Metro Manila waterways into bricks through a new granulator and brick-making facility in one of its flood control facilities.

Inaugurated at the Vitas Pumping Station in Tondo, Manila on Thursday, the facility will turn bio-waste and plastics collected in MMDA pumping stations into by-products such as bricks, hollow blocks, concrete barriers, and compost materials.

Both the granulator and brick-making facility are part of the MMDA's Metro Manila Flood Management project that aims to improve flood management in the region.

During the inauguration, MMDA Chair Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. said the facility, made possible through a Department of Science and Technology (DOST)-approved Filipino patent, will prolong the service life of landfills through the reduction of solid waste.

"Through our initiatives under the Metro Manila Flood Management project, we will be able to reduce the risks to vulnerable communities due to flooding and excessive waste," Abalos said.

The facility, he said, will also reduce the damage caused by waste dumped on waterways to MMDA pumping stations.

The waste collected at the facility will initially be disinfected, sorted, and segregated, after which biodegradable and plastic waste will go through a bio-waste granulator while glass waste will go through a bottle-crushing machine.

These plastic and glass materials will then be processed into bricks, hollow blocks, or concrete barriers while biodegradable waste will be turned into either compost or charcoal. **(PNA)**



# MMDA launches first granulator, brick-making facility to reduce metro waste

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:30 PM March 18, 2021



Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chairman Benhur Abalos inspects the equipment that reduces Metro Manila's solid waste. Image: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

MANILA, Philippines – The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) installed on Thursday its first granulator and launched the brick-making facility, saying these will lessen solid waste in the waterways that usually end up at pumping stations.

During the inauguration ceremony at the Vitas Pumping Station in Tondo, Manila, MMDA Chairman Benhur Abalos said that the facilities will not only reduce waste but also prolong the service life of landfills.

He explained that both the granulator and brick-making facility, which were both approved by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), will collect the biowaste and plastic in pumping stations to be converted into by-products such as bricks, eco-hollow blocks, eco-concrete barriers, and bio-waste compost materials.

“It is my ardent hope that through our initiatives under the Metro Manila Flood Management Project, we will be able to reduce the risks to vulnerable communities due to flooding and excessive waste generation,” Abalos said.



Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chairman Benhur Abalos checks on the solid waste materials being segregated by the equipment during the launching of the granulator and brick-making facility for Metro Manila. Image: Courtesy of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Abalos said that the installation of the said facilities would avert damages of pumping stations brought by garbage being dumped on waterways.

He also vowed to continuously collaborate with foreign and local stakeholders to ensure that all the efforts for this project will be sustained.



The MMDA chairman said that the waste collected will be disinfected first before initial sorting done by the personnel. Sorted wastes will then be loaded to inclined belt conveyors and will undergo final sorting and segregation.

Biodegradable and plastic waste will be granulated on the bio-waste granulator equipment while glass materials will be crushed through a bottle-crushing machine, he explained.

Biodegradable waste will either be composted or turned into charcoal briquettes while plastic and glass materials will be processed either into bricks, hollow blocks or concrete barriers, Abalos added. *Liezelle Soriano Roy, INQUIRER.net trainee*



# PH Covid-19 recoveries rise to 561.5K

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor **March 18, 2021, 5:35 pm**



**MANILA** – At least 439 more patients have recovered from the coronavirus disease, pushing the country's overall Covid-19 recoveries to 561,530 on Thursday.

In its 4 p.m. case bulletin, the Department of Health (DOH) said the figures represent 87.6 percent of those who tested positive for the virus that has so far beaten the illness.

The agency also reported 5,290 new confirmed cases and 21 new deaths.

These figures brought the overall tally of active cases to 66,567 and the death toll to 12,887.

The DOH said about 93.3 percent of the active cases are mild, 3.7 percent are asymptomatic, 1.2 percent are severe, 0.64 percent are moderate, and 1.2 percent are in critical condition.

"There were four duplicates removed from the total case count as these were two recovered cases. Moreover, six cases previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths after final validation," it added.

According to DOH data on Thursday, about 5,635 or 14.1 percent of 39,865 who were tested turned out positive for Covid-19.

Currently, there is a 21,400-bed capacity dedicated to patients with Covid-19.

Available are 51 percent of 1,900 intensive care unit beds, 60 percent of 13,500 isolation beds, and 68 percent of 6,000 ward beds.

About 72 percent of 2,000 ventilators are available for Covid-19 patients' use.

The agency also urged the public to continue observing the minimum health standards, especially when going outdoors -- the proper wearing of face masks and face shields, avoiding cramped places where physical distancing is impossible, and avoiding staying outside for a long period. **(PNA)**



# Why airlifting rhinos upside down is critical to conservation

By Rebecca Cairns, CNN

Updated 0051 GMT (0851 HKT) March 18, 2021



Photos: Why airlifting rhinos upside down is critical to conservation

**(CNN)**Swinging above the African savannah, an upside-down rhino suspended from a helicopter looks comically surreal. But for the black rhino, flying to new territory is no laughing matter -- it's about survival.

Most rhino translocations are carried out with trucks, but some remote locations can't be reached by road. So ten years ago, conservationists began using helicopters, on an occasional basis, to move rhinos to and from inaccessible terrain. The rhino is either placed on its side on a stretcher, or hung upside down by its legs.

Conservationists like the upside-down airlift because it's faster, easier and less expensive than the stretcher option, but until now it hasn't been clear how being flipped affects the rhinos.

Seeking to find out, the Namibian government asked a research team at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine to look into the practice. The [results](#), published in January, were surprising. "We were anticipating that the rhinos would fare worse hanging upside down," says Robin Radcliffe, a senior lecturer in wildlife and conservation medicine.



Black rhinos are critically endangered, but their numbers are recovering.

Instead, Radcliffe and his team found that although it looks like an uncomfortable experience, upside-down flying is the better option for rhino health.

The right way up is upside down

Namibia is home to a [nearly a third](#) of Africa's black rhinos -- one of two rhino species found on the continent.

Starting in 2015, the Cornell team suspended 12 black rhinos -- each weighing [between 1,770 and 2,720 pounds](#) -- upside down from a crane, and placed them in a side-lying position for comparison.



The researchers measured biomarkers for respiration and ventilation, and found that the rhinos had higher blood oxygen levels when upside down.



For the study, the research team from Cornell suspended 12 black rhinos from cranes. Radcliffe says the upside-down position allows the spine to stretch which helps to open the airways. Additionally, the team found that when lying on their side, rhinos have a larger "dead space" -- the amount of air in each breath that does not contribute oxygen to the body.

The difference between the two postures was small, but because the strong anaesthetic used on the rhino causes hypoxemia -- low oxygen levels in the blood -- even a minor improvement makes a difference to the rhino's welfare.

### Airlifting rhinos

Whether on their side or upside down, airlifting a rhino requires two helicopters: a small one to dart the rhino with a sedative, and a larger one to carry the animal. When the rhinos are lifted lying down, the stretcher adds additional weight, and the process takes longer -- according to Radcliffe, it can take a team of six up to 30 minutes to position and secure the rhino on the platform.

By contrast, attaching ropes to the animal's legs and feet can take just minutes.



Securing a rhino to a stretcher takes up to half an hour.

Radcliffe says it both reduces the expense -- together, two helicopters cost around \$4,000 per hour -- and improves the wellbeing of the animal, by cutting the sedation time. The rhinos are sedated with opioid tranquilizers that are 1,000 times stronger than morphine and pose one of the biggest risks to the animal, whether it's being moved by road or air, says Radcliffe.

### Why do conservationists move rhinos?

Black rhinos live in desert, shrubland and savannah across Africa, with the [biggest populations](#) in Namibia, South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe. In the 1960s, more than 100,000 black rhinos lived in the wild, but 30 years of aggressive poaching wiped out [98%](#) of the animals. By the mid-1990s, just 2,354 black rhinos remained.

Since then, careful and targeted conservation efforts have more than doubled black rhino numbers to around 5,600.

But while the population is growing, the black rhino isn't out of the woods yet, says Jacques Flamand, leader of the World Wildlife Fund's [Black Rhino Range Expansion project](#).

Rhinos are a "density-dependent" species, says Flamand, which means if there are too many in one area, their numbers will decline unless some are translocated elsewhere. Moving rhinos also helps to ensure a diverse gene pool, he says. "We wouldn't want a black rhino bull to mate with his daughter or mother, which in nature would be unlikely due to the emigration of males, but in the fenced reserves, is a real risk."



Jacques Flamand, pictured, says the upside-down airlift is his preferred way to translocate rhinos. He has been using the method for a decade.

And rhinos are still pursued by poachers, who target them for their horn, which is highly prized as an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine and for jewelry and ornamental carvings. In some cases, rhinos are rescued from poaching hotspots and moved to areas where they can be monitored and protected.

In Namibia, government wildlife conservancy programs move rhinos to farms and reserves in remote communities. Local people are trained as game guards and rhino rangers, which helps boost the local economy and keeps the animals safe, says Simson Uri-Khob, CEO of Save the Rhino Trust Namibia.

In 2020, rhino poaching in Namibia was [down 40% from 2019](#), which Uri-Khob credits to stronger community involvement: "We have more boots on the ground compared to previous years."

Will we see more flying rhinos?

Currently, the majority of rhinos are transported by road, and most airlifts involve journeys of around 30 miles, in trips lasting 20 to 30 minutes, says Radcliffe.

But airlifting rhinos is likely to become more common in the future, he says, as more rhinos are moved to rugged, inaccessible areas such as Namibia's northern Kunene region.



Airlift translocations enable researchers to relocate rhinos to hard-to-access areas, like Namibia's northern Kunene region.

"Namibia had the foresight to recognize that this type of transport will only increase in the future and that we should better understand the safety of the rhinos themselves," Radcliffe says.

He and his team hope to conduct research on longer airborne translocations, and investigate the impact of flight on brain activity and blood flow. Additionally, "we know they do fine short-term, but we would like to monitor the rhinos after upside-down translocation, to see how they do long-term," he says.

Radcliffe hopes his research will lead to better protection for these endangered animals. "What we can do as conservationists is to make sure that we provide the best security and the best management so that rhinos can recover," says Radcliffe. "We have an obligation as global citizens to protect these animals."

Source: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/03/17/world/rhino-airlift-upside-down-hnk-spc-intl/index.html>

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