

DATE : 12-22-19

DAY : Sunday

# DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## BORACAY BAGS 'BEST ISLAND IN ASIA'

MONTHS of hard work and tireless efforts paid off for the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force as the tourist spot once labeled as a "cesspool" bounced back as one of the best islands in the world this year.

"We couldn't be more proud of what Boracay has become after one and a half years of rehabilitation," Environment Secretary and BIATF chairman Roy Cimatu said on Saturday.

The Conde Nast Traveler, which is recognized as one of the most distinguished and trusted authorities on lifestyle travel, named Boracay as "the best island in Asia" and one of the 30 best islands in the world for 2019.

Boracay did not make it to the prestigious list last year due to the ongoing rehabilitation, after being crowned as the world's best island for two consecutive years in 2016 and 2017.

This year's rundown of the best islands in the world was broken down into six parts: Asia, Australia and the South Pacific,

Caribbean and the Atlantic, Europe, North America, and the United States.

Cimatu said the government's efforts to restore Boracay are bearing fruit with the recognition from a global authority like Conde Nast Traveler.

According to Cimatu, the Boracay rehabilitation is now more than 80 percent complete. The BIATF has until May 2020 to finish the rehabilitation, or two years after it was created by President Rodrigo Duterte under Executive Order No. 53.

After one-and-a-half years of rehabilitation, Cimatu proudly announced that the water quality in Boracay's world-famous White Beach has greatly improved, with coliform count now in the range of less than 1 most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml) to 11.9 mpn/100ml which is way below the standard quality of 100 mpn/100ml for recreational waters.

**Maricel V. Cruz**



# Boracay voted best island in 2019

**By Joel dela Torre**

**FOLLOWING months of rehabilitation, Boracay Island has bounced back to become one of the world's best islands this year -- thanks to the hard work and tireless efforts of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) for successfully handling the job.**

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said a year and a half after the country's paradise island resort -- once labelled as a "cesspool" -- is now regarded as the best island in Asia and one of the 30 best in the world for 2019 by the Conde Nast Traveller.

Conde Nast Traveller is recognized as one of the most distinguished and trusted authorities on lifestyle travel.

"We couldn't be more proud of what Boracay has become after one and a half years of rehabilitation," Cimatu said.

Boracay did not make it to the prestigious list last year due to ongoing rehabilitation, after being crowned as the world's best island for two consecutive years in 2016 and 2017.

This year's rundown of the best islands in the world was broken down into six parts: Asia, Australia and the South Pacific, Caribbean and the Atlantic, Europe, North America, and the United States.

Cimatu said the government's efforts to restore Boracay are bearing fruit with the recognition from a

global authority like Conde Nast Traveler.

He said the Boracay rehabilitation is now more than 80 percent complete.

The BIATF has until May 2020 to finish the rehabilitation, or two years after it was created by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte under Executive Order No. 53 he issued last year.

After one and a half years of rehabilitation, Cimatu proudly announced that the water quality in Boracay's world-famous White Beach has greatly improved with coliform count now in the range of less than 1 most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml) to 11.9 mpn/100ml which is way below the standard quality of 100 mpn/100ml for recreational waters.

Cimatu said the rehabilitation efforts moved into high gear this year, focusing on strict implementation of environmental laws and regulations.

He said the task force is about to complete the demolition of all structures violating the 25+5-meter beach easement rule after tearing down the 10 remaining illegal structures along Bulabog Beach on November 10.

Also last month, the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group led by its general manager Natividad Bernardino served the notice to vacate to the owner of a commercial viewpoint located at a forestland on Mt. Luho for violating Presidential Decree 705 of the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.



## **Boracay cited as one of 30 best islands in the world**

Efforts to rehabilitate Boracay Island have paid off as it gained recognition as one of the best islands in the world this year.

"We couldn't be more proud of what Boracay has become after one-and-a-half years of rehabilitation," Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary and Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force chair Roy Cimatu said.

The Conde Nast Traveller, which is recognized as one of the most distinguished and trusted authorities on lifestyle travel, named Boracay as "the best island in Asia" and one of the 30 best islands in the world for 2019.

Boracay did not make it to the prestigious list last year due to ongoing rehabilitation, after being crowned as the world's best island for two consecutive years in 2016 and 2017.

This year's rundown of the best islands in the world was broken down into six parts: Asia, Australia and the South Pacific, Caribbean and the Atlantic, Europe, North America, and the United States.



### ***Boracay kabilang uli sa world's best islands***

Matapos ang ilang buwang pagsisikap ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) na isaayos ang isla ng Boracay na tinawag noong "cesspool," muli itong itinanghal na isa sa best islands sa buong mundo ngayong taon.

Ayon sa Conde Nast Traveler na kinikilala at pinagkakatiwalaan sa larangan ng lifestyle travel, ang Boracay ang

best island sa Asia at isa sa 30 pinakamagandang islands sa buong mundo sa taong 2019.

Noong isang taon ay hindi napasama ang Boracay sa listahan ng magagandang isla dahil sa isinagawang rehabilitasyon dito matapos ang dalawang magkasunod na taon noong 2016 at 2017 na kilalanin ito bilang world's best island. Ngayong taon ay hi-

nati sa anim na grupo ang pagkilala sa mga pinakamagandang isla sa mundo.

Ito ay ang Asia, Australia and South Pacific, Caribbean and Atlantic, Europe, North America at United States.

Sa ngayon ay may mahigit 80 percent na ang natapos sa ginawang rehabilitasyon ng pamahalaan sa Boracay. *(Angie dela Cruz)*



# Plastic: The largest predator in our oceans

**BY JANAYA WILKINS**

**LONDON:** Plastic pollution is currently the largest global threat to marine life. Each year, 10 million to 20 million tonnes of plastic ends up in our oceans, killing approximately 100,000 marine mammals and over a million seabirds.

Whilst the media has certainly helped raise awareness and inspire a change of attitude towards plastics, the amount of plastic in our oceans is still rising. As a result, vast numbers of sea species are now critically endangered and the need for urgent action has never been stronger.

## Marine debris

So, where does all this plastic come from? Well, around 80 percent of all marine debris, derives from land-based sources. This includes littering, illegal waste dumping and the improper disposal of products such as wet wipes, sanitary products and cotton buds.

And although more parts of the world are now turning their attention towards the issue, the amount of rubbish entering the ocean is rising, with one truckload of plastic entering the ocean every single minute.

The remaining 20 percent of marine debris is the result of ocean-based activity. This is mainly from the fishing industry, but also caused by boats that collect trash and dump it out at sea.

## Dwindling populations

Currently, there are more than 5 trillion plastic particles floating around the world's oceans and this number is continuing to rise fast. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the World Economic Forum, there could be more plastic than fish in the ocean by

2050 if we don't act now.

But what exactly would this mean for marine life?

The World Wildlife Fund states as many as 700 marine species are currently threatened by plastics. But whilst large numbers die from choking on shards of plastic, the chemicals in plastic such as petroleum and bisphenol, are proving just as deadly.

Recent studies have revealed that 50 percent of the world's coral reefs have already been destroyed, and another 40 percent could be lost over the next 30 years.

When plastic is ingested, these toxic chemicals are released and absorbed into the body tissue. Overtime, this can impact fertility and weaken the immune system. As a result, those feeding on plastic are breeding less and becoming increasingly vulnerable to diseases and infections, resulting in population decline.

This is particularly concerning for top marine predators such as dolphins, polar bears and whales, with studies revealing higher contamination levels among predators at the top of the food chain. Yet, this is not caused by ingesting plastic directly.

Instead, pollutants are accumulating in their bodies through a process called trophic transfer. This is where toxins consumed by smaller creatures such as plankton and krill are stored into their body tissue. Over time, these toxins are passed up through the food chain. In most cases, these toxins come from microplastics.

## The rise of microplastics

Microplastic are small plastic particles (less than 5 millimeters) and it's estimated there are between 15 trillion to 51 trillion of these individual plastic

pieces floating in our oceans.

In a recent study in the United Kingdom, scientists examined 50 stranded sea creatures, including porpoises, dolphins, gray seals and a pygmy sperm whale, and microplastics were found in the gut of every single animal.

And it's not just ocean creatures that are at risk. Microplastics have also been discovered in seafood, with research suggesting that each seafood consumer in Europe ingests an average of 11,000 plastic particles each year.

## How can we beat it?

Plastic pollution is a man-made



P-2

# Plastic: The largest predator in our oceans



Plastics are increasingly polluting the seas and oceans and threatening marine ecosystems. BUSANI BAFANA/IPS

disaster, and it won't go away by itself. To end plastic pollution, we must start by reducing our plastic consumption, particularly single-use plastics.

Much of the power lies with the large corporations and manufacturers, and they desperately need to realize their responsibility, and find other alternatives to plastic.

But you can still make an impact on a smaller scale, by reducing your own plastic consumption and encouraging others around you.

It will not be easy, since almost everything we buy is packaged in plastic. In fact, UK super-

markets alone produce 800,000 tonnes of plastic every year. But start by making small changes wherever possible.

Look for zero waste products like shampoo bars and deodorant sticks, or products made from plastic alternatives such as bamboo toothbrushes and glass milk bottles. Participate in a beach clean every time you visit a body of water.

There are also plenty of great charities working to help combat plastic pollution. Plastic Oceans, Project Aware and Changing Tides Foundation are just a few examples; but there are many more

out there to choose from! **IPS**

*Janaya Wilkins is the founder and chief executive officer of SLO active, the lifestyle brand dedicated to protecting the ocean by selling sustainable luxury ocean wear. SLO active are an exciting new social enterprise dedicated to cleaning up and protecting our ocean. They are cause-led, focusing on oceanwear and activism. For every piece bought, SLO active will donate to one of their ocean charity partners of your choice. They call it 'Earth to Ocean'. Learn more at <https://sloactive.com/>.*



12-22-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

## EDITORIAL

# Advancing people's welfare

**PRESIDENT Duterte's issuance of an executive order (EO) institutionalizing the government's diversity and inclusion program to advance the people's rights and welfare should be welcomed by all sectors of society.**

EO No. 100 calls for the establishment of a "Diversity and Inclusion Program (DIP)," which shall "consolidate efforts and implement existing laws, rules and issuances against the discrimination of persons."

The executive order aims to cultivate a supportive, collaborative, and inclusive environment to maintain equal opportunities and to recognize the diverse and empowered thoughts and perspective of all persons.

As envisioned, the DIP will provide a framework for agencies to identify and eliminate all barriers to equal opportunities in education and the recruitment, hiring, training, promotion and retention of personnel.

The program will also outline mechanisms for accountability in departments, bureaus, offices, agencies, state universities and colleges, government-owned or controlled corporations and local government units.

Likewise, the DIP will provide a process for seeking redress for discrimination-related complaints and a forum for other related concerns.

Under President Duterte, we see a government that is committed to protect the rights and welfare of all Filipinos, regardless of age, disability, national or ethnic origin, language, religion, political affiliation or belief.

Certainly, people cannot overemphasize the importance of the government guaranteeing full respect for human rights.

Of course, the government is on the right track in coming up with various programs and undertakings aimed at advancing the rights and welfare of the more than 100 million Filipinos.

In the view of many, including the ordinary citizens and unfortunate members of society not only in the metropolis but throughout the Philippines, EO No. 100 is seen to achieve its objectives.