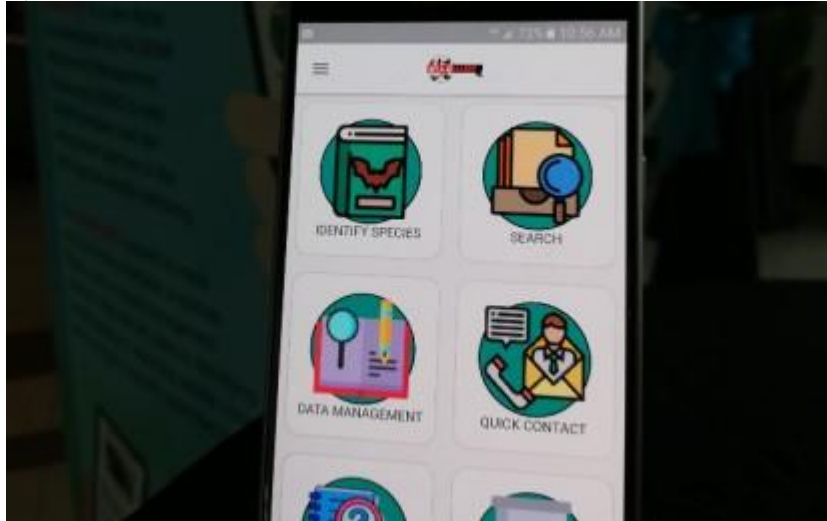


New app to help DENR fight wildlife trafficking

By Christine Cudis March 3, 2020, 2:38 pm



WILDLIFE ALERT. In an effort to automate the operations of the DENR as well as law enforcement officers in apprehending wildlife criminals, the DENR, in partnership with USAID, launches a filtering app called WildALERT. It aims to aid the frontliners, forest rangers and police to identify wildlife species and submit tips/reports. *(PNA photo by Christine Cudis)*

MANILA – The Department Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Biodiversity Management Bureau and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have developed a digital tool that aims to help forest rangers and law enforcement partners in the fight against wildlife trafficking.

The application, named WildALERT, is a system made up of a mobile interface, a species library, and a report management platform that will identify wildlife species.

Developer John Calanday, in an interview Tuesday, said the app envisions to providing necessary and immediate information for the DENR assets on the ground who are on the lookout for wildlife criminals.

“The 200mb app can be used offline for identification and they can submit a report to nearby police officers or law enforcement officers for help to apprehend,” he said.

The app is an easily accessible offline digital reference for DENR personnel and law enforcers to help them correctly identify various species of wildlife.

Currently, it has 480 species in its library, which is easily searchable using the app’s filtering tool.

This feature, he said, is very useful for identifying unfamiliar species by narrowing down descriptive categories.

The species library is also publicly available online at wildalert.ph.

It is now being used for pilot testing by selected DENR officials and law enforcement officers and is targeted to be available nationwide among DENR officials, including forest rangers by April 2020.

Calanday said they are gearing to make it accessible to the public by next year so everyone can contribute to the protection of wildlife in the country.

In a media interview at the sidelines of the World Wildlife Day celebration, DENR Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo Jr. said "prosecution of wildlife crimes is science-based".

Hence, he said it is appropriate that the frontliners gain an information tool that will help them assess their report.

"In highly-critical situations of reporting wildlife crimes and managing reports submitted from the field, not everyone is capable of identifying. It is vital when we file cases," he said.

Wildlife law enforcers can report poaching, trafficking and illegal trade of wildlife using WildALERT.

Through the app's reporting feature, photos and key information can be recorded, geo-tagged, and submitted to the WildALERT report management platform.

Reports are then accessed and managed by the DENR field units and the Biodiversity Management Bureau for appropriate action.

App users can also access a directory of DENR offices across the Philippines for incidents requiring immediate action. *(PNA)*

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1095377>