

# Mayor wants bones of beached whale preserved

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Cadianao, Province of Dinagat Island – The bones of a large whale that was washed ashore here Wednesday will be preserved by the local government, and will serve as one of the main attractions of the town.

This was disclosed by Cadianao Mayor Adolfo E. Longos, who said that the skeleton of the whale could become a major tourist draw for this sleepy mining town.

Longos said he will immediately work on the necessary papers that will allow the town to keep the skeleton of the whale.

He said he wanted to prevent the experience of officials of Bunawan, Agusan del Sur who were not able to bring back the remains of Lolong, which was acknowledged as the world's largest crocodile in captivity some years back.

That, according to him, deprived Bunawan of what could have been a major tourist draw.

Longos said it was the second mammal that was seen in his town after the carcass of a dead whale was also seen off the coast of Cadianao in 2002, although the mammal was not recovered because it was not washed ashore.

According to Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials, they have yet to determine the specie of the whale that was washed ashore in Cadianao last Wednesday.

It measured 6.3 meters long and was two meters wide.

“During the onsite visitation, a white feather hair-like assemblage was first observed that covers the entire body of the lifeless sea creature. We identified it under Cetacea order that could be possibly be a whale or porpoise due to the presence of a “blowhole” homologous with the nostril of other mammals,” said Agapito Patubo, provincial environment and natural resources officer of Dinagat Province.

But Bonifacio Jason, municipal environment and natural resources officer, believed the large whale could belong to the Bryde whale or Hump back breed even as marine biologist from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) took some specimen samples for laboratory testing in their central office in Manila.

Sufenia Chua, aqua-culture technologist of Cagdianao said a “tomb” was already being constructed for the carcass.

“At first we planned to bury it just beside the location where it was found, but the mayor decided not to move it because it might disintegrate,” Chua told The Manila Bulletin.

Already, a huge throng has come to the town to view the large carcass.

“Many have come to personally see the whale’s remains, (not minding) that it is already decomposing and that the smell is disgusting,” Chua said.

AA Yaptinchay, director of Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, a non-governmental organization advocating awareness on the conservation and protection of marine wildlife in the country said many sea creatures that have been affected by marine environmental destruction and pollution.

“There are potentially more than 30 marine mammals in the Philippines. However, populations of dolphins, whales and the dugong have declined due to threats such as poaching, bycatch, pollution, and habitat destruction, among others,” MWWP said.

Yaptinchay added more threats are apparent in Philippine seas, affecting already dwindling populations of marine wildlife. It is expected that vulnerable species will be affected by threats such as trash, habitat degradation, and increasing boat traffic.

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