



BORACAY REGIONAL SECTION	
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TO: BORACAY TASK FORCE IATF AND SB FOR ENVIRONMENT HONORARY MAYLYNN "NENETTE" GRAF

Regarding, Sound levels and our protected areas and fruit bats

Environmental greetings

Boracay Island, 17th of May, 2022

Last January the FFF sent a letter to follow up on the status of the protection of the roost sites of our Boracay Fruit Bats. Until now we have not received any official government response. In line with this we would now like to address the sound protection of our last remaining Bats on the island. We are aware that both the Boracay Interagency Task Force, as well as our honorary SB member Ms. Nenet Agiurre Graf, are all ending their duties this June 30th. Therefore we are reaching out to you to make an action to protect the sound levels allowed in the areas where our Fruit Bats are still regularly roosting, as a step in the process to protect our wildlife, as you have been part of the time working towards this in the last few years.

Since 2018 we have tried to establish the critical habitat areas, and we know that we cannot settle this before your offices ends, however we are requesting your good offices to bring up the matter of sound protected zones, starting at the ROCK in Diniwid- formerly Westcove- and continuing to the start of Punta Bunga.

Until now we have a colony of Common Island Flying Foxes - *Pteropus hypomelanus*, that since years have an established roost site during amihan season in the trees between Balinghai Beach Resort and Balinghai New Coast Beach, and they move between the different roost site trees there. Last December 11, 2021 we counted 24 individuals in this colony, in their regular roost site in Balinghai Beach Resort, and that was very positive news as that means they have grown during the pandemic year from 11 individuals in the previous year, 2020, to 24 in the last year, which is good news. That means that this small colony is stable in its roost site.

However, as the island has gone back to regular tourism, which we think is so nice, unfortunately the party boats of the island all go to this area, dock and play music louder than anywhere else on the island. They even have megaphones and shout as people party. This happens on a daily basis.

This in turn stresses the bats, and they do fly outs- which is a clear indication of stress as these mammals are nocturnal.

In the plan of former DENR Secretary Cimatu, and the DENR team, this area is part of the proposed protected critical habitat sites.

We understand that the beach areas of Punta Bunga and Bunyugan can not be part of the protected areas as its private properties and already established hotels, however we urge the DENR to make a noise-free zone, from Diniwid Rock to Balinghai end rock near punta bunga, so that we can protect the roost sites of our last remaining common island fruit bats, as they are crucial to the health of island environment.

In practicality, that means boats cannot play any music in these areas, and need to go further offshore if they want to play- the minimum of 500 meter and has to be lower than 60 decibel reaching the shore. Currently they play a minimum of 120 decibels 25 meters from the roosts. We know these are prime snorkeling grounds, but yes the boats cannot have music in these areas as it disturbs the bats. It's good environmental practice if the boat men instead tell the tourists that we try to be quiet in these areas to protect the wildlife we have- that's a good island environmental PR image!

We plead for your important impact here, to make an ordinance in this matter before your term ends. Let us at least start protecting parts of these areas by making them noise-free zones.

FRIENDS OF THE FLYING FOXES

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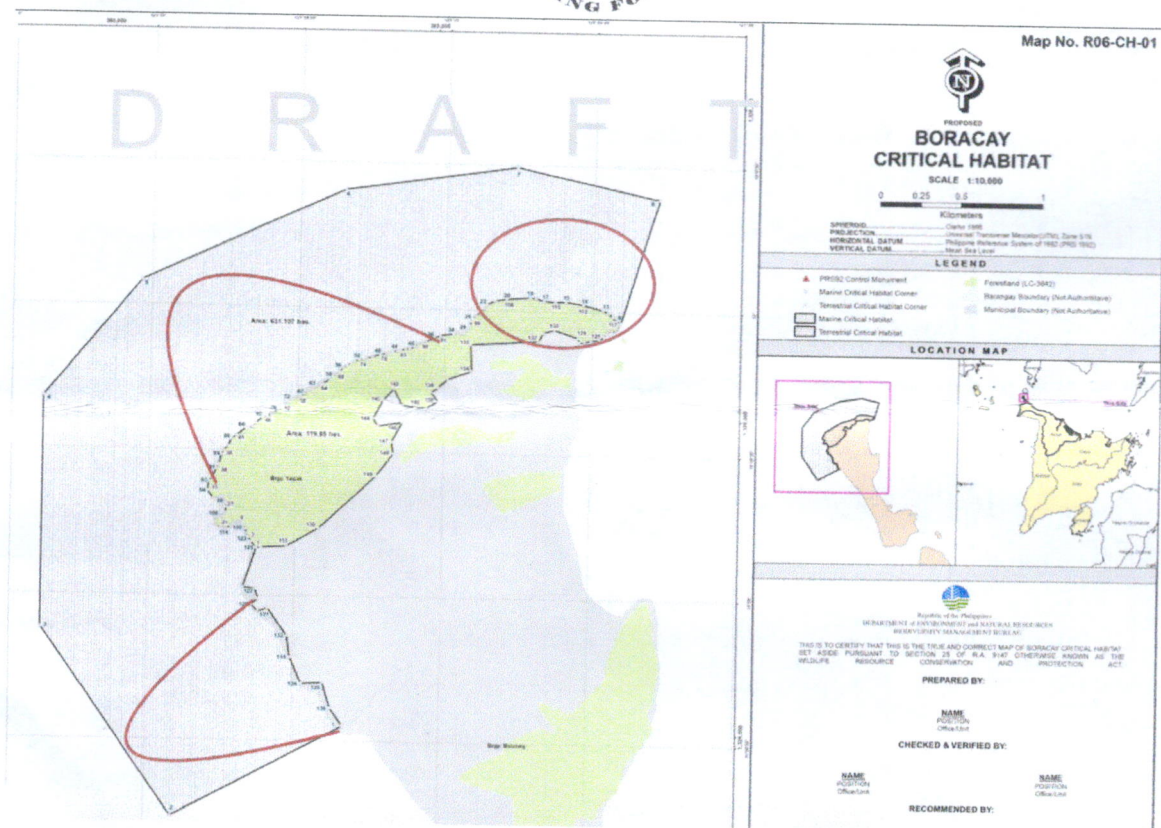


Image 1: Map of Proposed Critical Habitat [for DENR] with red markers[by FFF] that indicate areas proposed for Noise-free Zones

Four (4) years have passed since DENR secretary Roy A. Cimatu came to Boracay and made the promise and statement that “the DENR will establish the roosting and feeding areas of Boracay Bats, including the endangered Golden Crowned Flying Fox, as a critical habitat.”

Let's start to fulfill part of this promise, as the environment was one of the reasons Boracay was closed in 2018.

It is essential that we protect the last remaining forest patches in Boracay, as we know development is always a constant factor, and thus for us to secure our island's biodiversity and protect our remaining forest and its natural wildlife. We believe we should set an example in the number one tourist destination of the country, and we should establish and protect the areas and make the declaration of the areas as a

It is the crown jewel of Philippine tourism and the future of our island that is at stake!

It's for them, it's for us, it's for you!

Yours in conservation,


JULIA LERVIK
FFF President

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CC- See list attached below***

*** This letter has also been cc sent to the following :

CC: **Mr. Livino Duran**

CC: Datu Tungko Saikol, BMB Director

CC: Director Ma. Lourdes Ferrer, Director for Policy and Planning

CC: Natividad Y Bernardino General Manager, Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group

cc Atty. Theresa M. Tenazas BMB – DENR,

cc Mr. Anson M. Tagtag BMB-DENR

CC:DENR Boracay Rhodel Lababit

CC: SB Chairman on Environmental Committee Ms. Nenette Aguirre Graf

CC Brgy Captain Yapak, Hector Casidsid

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