

Plastic products kill dolphin

BY ROMMEL RAMOS, GMA News.TV

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MALOLOS CITY, Philippines - A dolphin which washed ashore in Bulacan about two weeks ago died over the weekend due to plastic products she ate near Bulacan shores.

The said dolphin - a female Risso's dolphin (*grampus griseus*) - was found by a fisherman in Bulakan town trapped among mangrove roots of the Matilakin village on June 20.

It was brought to the Ocean Adventure Park (OAP) in Subic Bay Freeport for treatment but on Saturday or nine days after being brought to the OAP.

Dr. Lemuel Aragonés - an OAP consultant and an associate professor at the University of the Philippines' Institute of the Environmental Science and Meteorology who had named the Risso's dolphin "Rissa" - said she died over the weekend despite treatment at an intensive care unit designed for her rehabilitation.

He said that the cause of death was due to occlusion (obstruction or closure of a passageway) caused by plastic products in the dolphin's stomach.

Aragones said that this disabled the dolphin from taking in food that caused weakness and eventual secondary complications.

He said that after Rissa died, they conducted a necropsy and found plastics in her stomach.

Aragones said that eating plastic caused the dolphin to lose strength and that it swam on the shallow area of the Bulacan Bay to breathe.

Aragones also said that there was a possibility that the dolphin was searching for food and ate what was available in the area which turned out to be plastic products which moves like a jelly fish or squid underwater.

Due to Rissa's eventual death, Aragonés called on local government units to strictly implement solid waste management and clean up local shorelines to save marine life. - **GMA News.TV**