Philippines to keep massive crocodile in cage

Joseph Mayton | 12 September 2011

Philippines will not release massive crocodile, to keep it caged.

The local mayor of the Philippines town where hunters captured a massive saltwater crocodile will not be released into the wild, despite growing local and international calls by animal rights groups.

Bunawan Mayor Edwin Elorde said on Saturday that animal rights organizations should instead focus on preserving the area’s ecosystems.

Elorde said the safety of the residents of Bunawan, Agusan del Sur remains as the top priority of the local government.

The crocodile, named “Lolong”, the mayor said, posed as a threat to the community after it was suspected of killing a farmer.

Animal rights activists have called on the Philippines government to free what is believed to be the largest crocodile world from captivity. The 6.4 meter male saltwater crocodile is accused of killing two people and was captured last week.

The government then placed the animal in a fenced-in pond after it was captured, and officials are hoping to make the animal a tourist attraction.

But local and international animal rights advocates are angry over what they call blatant animal cruelty and abuse.

Maria, a 24-year-old Manila-based activist, told Bikyamasr.com that the treatment of the crocodile is “unacceptable.”

She argued that “the government should release the animal back into the wild where it belongs and stop the horrific idea that they can cage the animal, who did nothing wrong
except be a crocodile.” Maria said it was unfortunate that people were killed, but the reality, she said, “was this is the world we live in.

“As human habitat encroaches on wildlife’s areas, we are likely to see more death because there is no where for the animals to go and this is not their fault,” she added.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) senior Asia-Pacific campaigner Ashley Fruno on Saturday agreed that the reptile was better off being returned to the wild, away from human settlements.

“[The government] should do the compassionate thing and order this crocodile to be returned to his natural habitat, as taking him away to be locked up in an animal prison is just plain wrong,” she wrote.

Animals kept in cages are prone to psychotic behavior and its immense size and power could prove dangerous to visitors and those caring for it, she warned.

“While even those zoos with the best intentions can never replicate the natural environment of animals, how do they expect to come remotely close with a crocodile roughly two or three times the size of a regular adult?”

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