

**STRANDED MARINE DEBRIS AND MANAGEMENT ON
THE BAZARTETE COASTLINE:
RELATING TO THE MANGROVE ECOSYSTEM IN
LIQUIÇA MUNICIPALITY OF TIMOR-LESTE**

ALZIRA DE JESUS DOS SANTOS



**MASTER PROGRAM
COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF FISHERIES AND MARINE SCIENCES
IPB UNIVERSITY
BOGOR
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Bogor, July 2025

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SUMMARY

ALZIRA DE JESUS DOS SANTOS: Stranded Marine Debris and Management on the Bazartete Coastline: Relating to the Mangrove Ecosystem in Liquiça Municipality of Timor-Leste. Supervised by ARIO DAMAR, SIGID HARYADI and ABILIO DA FONSECA

Timor-Leste's coastal regions are resource-rich, but marine pollution is becoming more of an issue and unmanaged plastic and other waste from neighbouring cities are leaking into the coastal environment, exposing mangrove trees in Bazartete, Liquiça Municipality. Timor-Leste as a small island developing state (SIDS), faces challenges in managing solid debris, especially plastic waste, which endangers public health and marine biodiversity. Debris, especially large plastic waste, often blocks mangroves, which are vital for fish habitats and shoreline protection. This changes sediment conditions and hinders seedling growth. The buildup of marine debris in Bazartete seems to affect benthic organisms, decrease species diversity, and contaminate the soil and water.

This study aims to analyze the types, abundance and composition of marine debris in the mangrove ecosystem of Bazartete, Liquiça Municipality, assesses its impacts on macrozoobenthos and mangrove regeneration, evaluates current waste management practices, and proposes strategic recommendations for sustainable marine debris management and ecosystem mitigation in the area. Data collection was conducted in the period between 6 September 2024 to 30 October 2024 by applying survey techniques and direct primary data collection at three stations the research location. The data analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

This study found that plastic is the dominant type of marine debris across all research stations, with Tibar with the highest levels abundance by weight (86.52 gr/m²), density (1.62 items/m²), and volume (3.00 cm³/m²), while debris composition overall included seven categories: plastic, metal, glass, rubber, fabric, organic, and other inorganic materials, indicating a widespread pollution issue particularly impacting macrozoobenthos ($r = -0.3352$) and to a lesser extent mangrove seedlings ($r = -0.0594$). Although community awareness and participation in cleanups are relatively strong, marine debris management in Bazartete remains ineffective due to weak infrastructure, institutional gaps, and lack of integration with mangrove conservation, thereby requiring seven strategic, ecosystem-based interventions to strengthen sustainable coastal management in Liquiça Municipality.

Keywords: Coastal area, Liquiça Municipality, macrozoobenthos, mangrove's seedlings, marine debris

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RINGKASAN

ALZIRA DE JESUS DOS SANTOS: Sampah Laut yang Terdampar dan Pengelolaanya di Pesisir Bazartete: Hubungannya dengan Ekosistem Mangrove di Provinsi Liquiça, Timor-Leste. Dibimbing oleh ARIO DAMAR, SIGID HARYADI dan ABILIO DA FONSECA

Wilayah pesisir Timor-Leste memiliki kekayaan sumber daya alam, namun kini menghadapi ancaman serius akibat polusi laut. Di Bazartete, Liquiça, hutan bakau tercemar oleh sampah plastik dan jenis limbah lainnya yang tidak terkelola dan berasal dari pemukiman sekitar. Sebagaimana negara kepulauan kecil yang sedang berkembang (SDIS), Timor-Leste masih menghadapi tantangan besar dalam pengelolaan sampah padat, khususnya sampah plastik, yang berdampak buruk terhadap kesehatan masyarakat dan keanekaragaman hayati laut. Sampah, terutama plastik berukuran besar, sering terperangkap di antara akar bakau, menghalangi pertumbuhan bibit dan mengganggu struktur sedimen. Penumpukan sampah laut di kawasan ini diduga menyebabkan penurunan keanekaragaman species, merusak organisme bentik, serta mencemari tanah dan perairan di sekitarnya.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis, kelimpahan, dan komposisi sampah laut yang terdampar di ekosistem mangrove di Kecamatan Bazartete, Kabupaten Liquiça, menilai dampaknya terhadap komunitas makrozoobentos dan regenerasi mangrove, mengevaluasi praktik pengelolaan sampah yang telah diterapkan, serta merumuskan rekomendasi strategi pengelolaan sampah laut yang berkelanjutan dan upaya mitigasi terhadap ekosistem di wilayah studi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan pada periode 6 September 2024 hingga 30 Oktober 2024 dengan menggunakan teknik survei dan pengumpulan data primer langsung di tiga stasiun lokasi penelitian. Data dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif.

Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa limbah plastik merupakan jenis sampah laut yang paling dominan di semua stasiun penelitian, dengan Tibar mencatat akumulasi tertinggi berdasarkan berat (86,52 gr/m²), kepadatan (1,62 item/m²), dan volume (3,00 cm³/m²). Komposisi sampah laut secara keseluruhan mencakup tujuh kategori—plastik, logam, kaca, karet, kain, organik, dan anorganik lainnya—yang menunjukkan tingkat pencemaran yang meluas dan berdampak negatif terutama terhadap komunitas makrozoobentos ($r = -0,3352$) serta sedikit memengaruhi regenerasi semai mangrove ($r = -0,0594$). Meskipun kesadaran masyarakat dan partisipasi dalam kegiatan pembersihan cukup tinggi, pengelolaan sampah laut di Bazartete masih belum efektif akibat lemahnya infrastruktur, kurangnya koordinasi kelembagaan, serta tidak terintegrasinya konservasi mangrove dengan sistem pengelolaan limbah. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan tujuh strategi berbasis ekosistem dan pemberdayaan masyarakat untuk memperkuat tata kelola pesisir yang berkelanjutan di Kabupaten Liquiça.

Kata kunci: Wilayah pesisir, Provinsi Liquiça, makrozoobentos, anak-anakan mangrove, sampah laut



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ALZIRA DE JESUS DOS SANTOS

Thesis
as one of the requirements to obtain
a Master of Science Degree
in the Coastal and Marine Resources Management Study Program

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PREFACE

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God Almighty. Praise and thanks are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ for His abundant wisdom, grace, and blessings, which have enabled the completion of this scientific work. This research was carried out from September to October 2024 under the title: *"Stranded marine debris and management on the bazartete coastline: relating to the mangrove ecosystem in Liquiça Municipality of Timor-Leste"*. The study was conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Science Program in Coastal and Marine Resources Management at IPB University.

This research was motivated by a growing concern for the impacts of marine debris on the fragile mangrove ecosystems along the Bazartete coastline. Recognizing the importance of mangrove in supporting biodiversity, protecting coastal areas, and sustaining livelihoods, this study seeks to assess the extent of stranded debris and explore appropriate management strategies that can support environmental conservation efforts in the region.

My wishes to extend my gratitude to the Archipelagic Island States (AIS) forum, supported by UNDP and IPB University Indonesia, for their support and opportunity. Deep appreciation is also given to Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL), particularly Department of Fisheries and Marine Science, for providing essential research equipment and academic input, along with the generous assistance from the staff of the Marine Science Program (MSP) who kindly facilitated additional equipment during fieldwork.

I would like to express sincere and heartfelt appreciation to all those who have contributed to the successful completion of this research. Special thanks go to my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Ir. Ario Damar, M.Si., Dr. Ir. Sigid Hariyadi, M. Sc, and Abilio da Fonseca, Ph. D for their invaluable guidance, feedback, and support throughout the research process. I also appreciate to the external examiner Dr. Gatot Yulianto and Dr. Zairion (Associate Professor), and it is also Professor Dr. Luky Adrianto, Professor Dr. Hefni Effendy, Dr. Fery Kurniawan, Dr. Sebastian C.A Fers, and all lecturer in IPB University.

To my friends who stood by my side during the research, offering encouragement, assistance, and companionship and especially to my family for their endless patience, moral support, and love, words cannot fully express the depth of gratitude. I hope that this scientific work will not only benefit those who engage with it academically but also contribute meaningfully to efforts in marine conservation and environmental management in Timor-Leste and beyond.

Bogor, July 2025

Alzira de Jesus dos Santos



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
LIST OF APPENDICES	iv
I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Research Questions	3
1.4 Research Objective	3
1.5 Research Benefit	3
1.6 Scope of Research	5
1.7 Research Framework	5
II LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1 Marine Debris: Definition and Sources	7
2.2 Types of Marine Debris	7
2.3 Parameters that Influence Marine Debris	8
2.4 Natural Parameters that Influencing Marine Debris Distribution	8
2.5 Transport and Accumulation of Marine Debris	10
2.6 Mangrove Ecosystems: Ecological Importance and Vulnerability	10
2.7 Mangrove Ecosystems: Definitions and Functions	11
2.8 Impact of Marine Debris on Mangrove Ecosystems	11
2.9 Marine Debris and Mangrove Ecosystems in Timor-Leste	12
2.10 Waste Management in Timor-Leste	13
III METHOD	14
3.1 Time and Location of Research	14
3.2 Methodological Frameworks	15
3.3 Materials and Tools	16
3.4 Data Type and Sources	17
3.5 Data Collection	17
3.5.1 Marine Debris Assessment	17
3.5.2 Ecosystem Effect Assessment	18
3.5.3 Strategy Socioeconomic and Management Assessment	19
3.6 Data Analysis	20
3.6.1 Stranded Marine Debris	21
3.6.2 The Effect of Marine Debris to Mangrove Ecosystem	22
3.6.3 Community Perception of Current Waste Management	24
3.6.4 Strategies Development for Marine Debris Management	24
IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	26
4.1 Results	26
4.1.1 Research Site Description	26
4.1.2 Marine Debris Stranded in Mangrove Ecosystems Ecologically	26
4.1.2.1 Marine Debris in Relation to Environmental Conditions	26
4.1.2.2 Types of Marine Debris	29

4.1.2.3 Abundance of Stranded Marine Debris	29
4.1.2.4 Composition of Stranded Marine Debris	31
4.1.2.5 Density of Mangrove Species	33
4.1.2.6 Density of Macrozoobenthos Species	34
4.1.2.7 Sea Water Quality	35
4.1.2.8 Substrate Quality	36
4.1.2.9 Correlation Between Marine debris and Mangrove Ecosystems	37
4.1.3 Community-Based Management and Strategic Recommendations	38
4.1.3.1 Existing Management and Community Perceptio	38
4.1.3.2 GAP Analysis and Strategy Recommendations	41
4.2 Discussion	43
4.2.1 Ecological of Marine Debris on Mangrove Ecosystems	43
4.1.3.2 Strengthening Community Roles for Effective Management	46
V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS	49
5.1 Conclusion	49
5.2 Suggestions	50
REFERENCES	51
APPENDICES	57
BIOGRAPHY	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Research materials and tools	17
Table 2 Interviewed for waste Management Assessment	20
Table 3 Interpretation of Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	24
Table 4 GAP Analysis of Marine Debris Management	41

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Research Framework	6
Figure 2 Map of research location and sampling site in mangrove	15
Figure 3 Methodological framework of field work	16
Figure 4 Sketch of transect determination in marine debris and mangrove	18
Figure 5 Sketch of transect placement for macrobenthos	19
Figure 6 Conditions of Station1 Tibar	27
Figure 7 Accumulated debris at station 1 (Tibar).	28
Figure 8 Conditions of station 2 (Ulmera)	28
Figure 9 Condition of station 3 (Mota-Ikun)	29
Figure 10 Abundance of weight of marine debris that stranded	30
Figure 11 Abundance density of stranded marine debris	30
Figure 12 Abundance of volume of stranded marine debris	31
Figure 13 Percentage of weight composition of marine debris	32
Figure 14 Percentage of density composition of marine debris	32
Figure 15 Percentage composition of the volume of marine debris	33
Figure 16 The density species of mangrove's trees in each station	34
Figure 17 The density of type mangrove's seedlings in each station	34
Figure 18 Total species of macrozoobenthos individual per meter square	35
Figure 19 Sea water quality in the coastal waters	36
Figure 20 The average percentage of substrate texture in each station	36
Figure 21 Correlation of marine debris weight to macrozoobenthos	37
Figure 22 Correlation of marine debris density to density of mangrove seedling	38
Figure 23 Management of marine debris	39
Figure 24 Personal actions and attitude of coastal community	40
Figure 25 Coastal community's recommendations and support	40
Figure 26 Activities taking sampling	61
Figure 27 Interview with the respondents	61

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 . Social Questionnaire Sheet for Key informant	57
Appendix 2 Questionnaire Sheet for Coastal Community dan Fisherman	59
Appendix 3 Documentation of Field Sampling and Data Collection	61
Appendix 4 Equipment and Materials Used for Sampling	62
Appendix 5 Quantification and Abundance of Marine Debris	63

