

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

July 2021 SUMMARY

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



19

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



138.10

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



58.83

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



196

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



37

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



82

Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



7

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY RASA ISLAND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

JULY 2021

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I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES, CONSERVATION TARGETS AND METHODS

Rasa is a small coral island of 8.34 km² land area situated in the Sulu Sea, just offshore of the Municipality of Narra, Palawan, Philippines (Fig. 1). About 1.75 km² are covered with coastal forest, mangrove (5.60 km²), cultivated areas (predominantly coconut; 0.39 km²), 0.60 km² are barren or sparsely vegetated sand and coral outcrops. In February 2006, the island became a Wildlife Sanctuary through Presidential Proclamation 1000 and since a Protected Area Management Board manages the Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary (RIWS). In 2008, RIWS was chosen as Top 13 Bird Watching Sites in the Philippines by the Department of Tourism.

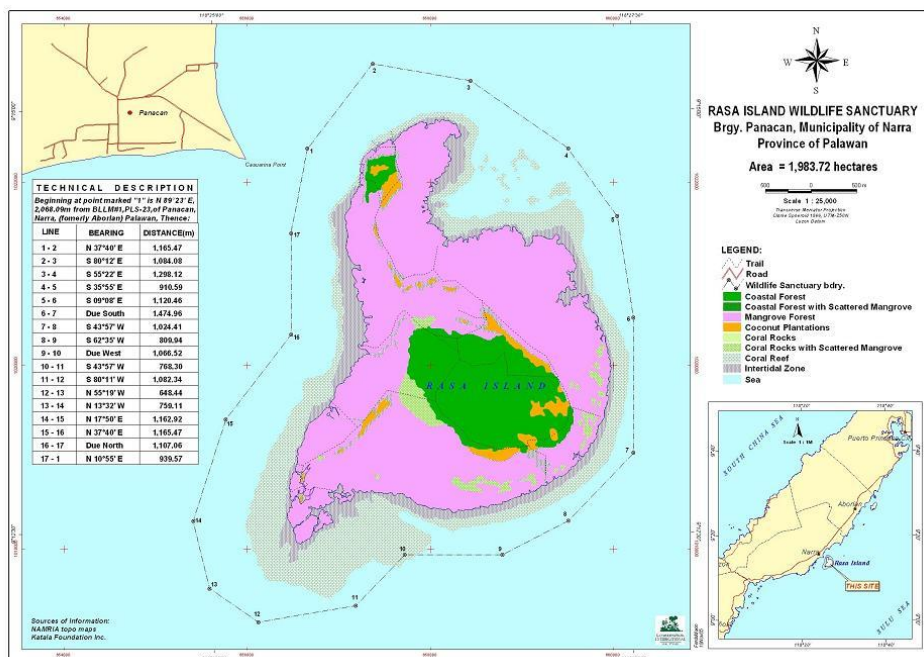


Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

The island is the pilot site of the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program since 1998. Due to intensive poaching, only 23-25 Philippine cockatoos were left on the island then. Key component of this project site is the warden scheme which involves ex-poachers as wildlife wardens whose main task is to patrol and protect the wildlife in particular the Philippine Cockatoo during and outside its breeding season. This scheme has proven to be efficient and lead to the dramatic recovery of the Philippine Cockatoo population to nearly 400 individuals as of to date. This makes RIWS the most important population of the species in the wild!

Not only Philippine Cockatoos live on the island, but a variety of other species, with an unusual high percentage of globally threatened and near-threatened taxa (IUCN 2019), considering the small size of Rasa. Noteworthy among the 112 recorded bird species are Red-headed Flameback *Chrysocolaptes erythrocephalus* (EN), Grey Imperial-pigeon *Ducula pickeringii* (VU) and Mantanani Scops-owl *Otus mantananensis* (NT).

Conservation Objectives

1. Maintain the species diversity and function of ecosystems and species within Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary.
2. Identify and preserve priority sites for conservation and maintain their ecological functions.
3. Prevent or report to enforcing agencies illegal activities that compromise the integrity of the conservation area.

Conservation Targets

1. To increase Philippine Cockatoo population in Rasa Island and vicinity by at least 3% from 2018-2021.
2. Increase viable population of endangered and endemic target cavity-nesters e.g. Blue-headed Racquet-Tail, woodpeckers (Red-headed Flameback), owls, kingfishers etc. in Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary from 2018-2021.
3. Monitor and reduce threats in the area by 50% from 2018-2021; if any.

Methods

Deputised wardens patrol by foot or by boat monthly within site. Patrol members use a technology-based system to register all observations (threats, status and wildlife data) in the android and transferred to a smart application to generate report (Critchlow et al., 2017; Teacher et al., 2013). Species to be monitored are based on their red-list status and their value as bioindicators (IUCN, 2019). Ease of identification in the field was considered as well. The maps are generated and analyzed through QGIS/ArcGIS. Patrols are coordinated with the concerned barangay and protected area office wherever it applies.

II. PATROL TEAM AND EFFORT

As of July 31, we recorded 95 total eggs of which 64 hatched. Of the 64 hatchlings, 46 successfully fledged (43 of which were banded; three could not be banded for security of climber since nest trees are dead) and 18 failed due to predation and malnutrition including two banded earlier. A total of 42 nest trees were occupied including five newly-discovered this year. Fledglings and other activities of cockatoos around the nest trees are continuously monitored. This month, the teams prepared for and conducted installation of metal sheets and nest characterization. One new potential nest tree, Gatasan was identified this month and was covered with metal sheets including newly occupied nest trees this breeding season. We covered total distance **138.10kms** of monitoring around Rasa. Total precipitation in July 2021 were: **196mm** on Rasa, **127mm** on mainland.

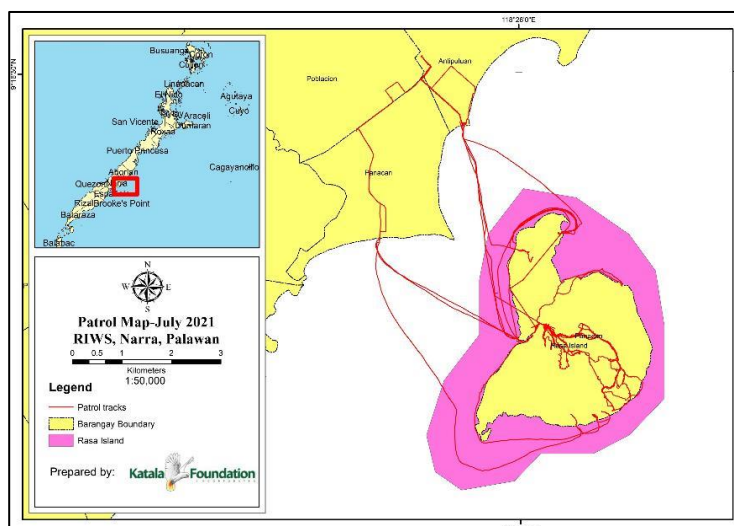


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in July 2021 in red marks



Figure 3. Wardens install metal sheets on nest tree to prevent from predators e.g. monitor lizard (left); new potential nest tree, Gatasan on coastal forest (right) ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

196 roosting cockatoos in total were counted at traditional roost site and on nest trees (185 and 11 ind. respectively) in the morning of July 27. On July 26 in the afternoon, we recorded 192 individuals (181 and 11ind from traditional roost site and nest trees). Their dispersal routes at different times before arriving at and after leaving the traditional roost site were noted; on this day, no cockatoos were observed at Borbon roost site.

The highest foraging count was **82 individuals**, recorded at Borbon station flying from Rasa to Panacan and Panacan 2 from 5:55-6:35am. The highest record of cockatoos at foraging site (Marcelo area) was 43ind on July 22. Monico, at his station recorded 29ind including six fledglings foraging on July 8. Consequently, he counted 28ind on July 28. On July 24, Bgy. Bato-Bato Chairman Ferrer noted five cockatoos foraging on Malunggay at his neighborhood. He asked the community not to harm the cockatoos in case they are in their backyard. Danilo also reported cockatoos feeding on Malunggay and Papaya on July 23 and 28 at Sitio Mariwara, Bgy. Princess Urduja as shared by two guides of Mt. Victoria. In the last week of the month, less cockatoos were observed crossing at Borbon and Antipuluan probably because of stronger southwest monsoon (Habagat).

In this period, we noted Red-headed Flameback, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Tabon Scrubfowl, Nicobar Pigeon, Mantanani Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, Egret sp., Western Osprey, Whimbrel, Great-billed Heron, Pied Imperial-pigeon, Stork-billed Kingfisher, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Changeable Hawk-eagle, Rufous Night-heron, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher, Sunbird sp., Ashy Drongo, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Common Tern, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Reef egret, Large-tailed Night-jar, White-vented Shama, Greater Coucal, Swiftlet sp., Emerald Dove, Asian Glossy Starling, Dollarbird, Common Koel, Pipits, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, and Zebra Dove. Blue-naped Parrot was still observed and Monitor lizard was frequently encountered. Lucito recorded 39 individuals of Rufous Night-heron including ca. 20 fledglings flying near BMS station 7 on July 2. While on July 16, no Rufous Night-heron was observed on the area. No new feces were also observed. On July 2 at 9:00am, 18ind of Pied Imperial-Pigeon were observed feeding on Buri at Alisto area. Bernito saw 12ind of Pied Imperial-Pigeon on mangroves near camp entrance on July 30, 5:00pm flying from mainland to coastal forest. During nest checking, Nonoy discovered nest of Pied Fantail with one egg and two hatchlings on July 10 at 3:30pm. On July 16 at 2:39pm, two fledglings with two adult Pied Fantail were observed perching on closest mangrove. No egg was seen on nest.

One nest of a Flameback with two eggs noted on July 7, 2021 by Loreto on Pagatpat at northern mangroves of Rasa (Fig.5). Eggs were last observed on July 8 as well as the adult woodpecker (thru camera trap). Nest characterization was also conducted on July 8. With the camera trap no bird was seen on nest hole on July 9 while on July 10 a small reptile was observed on nest tree. The eggs might have been preyed by the small reptile. On July 16, no egg was seen on nest.



Figure 4. Pied Fantail hatchlings and egg on July 10 (left); no egg was observed on nest while two fledglings were with two adult birds on July 16 (right) ©KFI



Figure 5. Nest of Flameback ©KFI

Vegetation assessment

This month, coastal forest (inner and boundary) and mangrove forest are still greener and more wildlings are observed on ground. Fruiting trees and vines are: Tubo-bato, Bogo, Balete, Malugai, Magtalisay, Piyagaw, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species. Flowering trees and vines: Barenben, Tangal, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.

THREAT OBSERVATIONS

In May 2021, we reported that the last point of the lobster pens was approximately 30m close to the boundary of Rasa Island. In our latest monitoring July 10 and 31, 2021, the lobster pens extend to south, covering only 15m from the last point to Rasa boundary (Fig. 6). The PAMO had inspected the site as reported.



Figure 6. Lobster traps at Borbon, Panacan extend to south, approximately 15m away from Rasa boundary (Point of reference: red flag onsite inside the red circle on the photo) ©KFI

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On July 8, two persons gathered 3kgs of mangrove crabs and 5kgs of Bagongon (gastropod) at B. Batac and Deig mangroves for 5 and 3hrs respectively. On July 13, 10 persons collected 10kgs of lato at camp entrance in 2hrs. On July 25, two persons gathered 10kgs of lato at tidal flat near Satina claim for 2hrs; two persons gleaned one pail of tuway (bivalve) from mangroves for 3hrs. On July 26, three persons gleaned 4kgs of ballit (gastropod) from mangroves in 2hrs. About 15 fishing boats were noted at northeast part of Rasa on July 19, 2021 while avoiding the strong Habagat or southwest monsoon. One boat with seven fishermen was from Liberty, Puerto Princesa. These boats were temporarily taking refuge from bad weather condition.

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. No adverse human activities during visits. On July 6, Mario gathered 2.5gal of honey from Dapdap mangrove in 2 days. On July 30, two persons gathered 350kgs copra from Deig coconut area in 10 days.

In this month, Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary is featured on PCCP Fb page in celebration of International Day for the Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem. Veronica Marcelo outshines in the online world as we celebrate World Ranger Day 2021. She shares her experiences as KFI volunteer for a long time and encourages everyone especially the youth to support conservation of Katala (Fig. 7).

Wardens and volunteers planted 40 Malunggay seedlings and 34 cuttings and 10 Parina saplings around Katala lot in July 22-23, 2021 (Fig. 8). The said area was secured with improved fence and gate to avoid stray animals. Only 30% of planted Malunggay seedlings in March 2021 survived probably due to lack of direct sunlight.

We had our breeding season assessment in this month. On July 21, wardens joined meeting of Rasa Island's recognized claimants through the call from the Protected Area Management

Office (PAMO). Holy Trinity University-Nursing students donated seeds, gardening items and health essentials in Katala Institute on July 9, 2021 (Fig. 9).



Figure 7. Rasa Island featured in celebration of the International Day for the Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem (left); Veronica shines in World Ranger Day celebration. Both released at PCCP fb page.



Figure 8. Hauling of Malunggay seedlings from Katala Institute for tree planting around Katala lot at Panacan 2 (left); Katala lot saturated with tall food plant trees (right) Photo by KFI



Figure 9. HTU-Nursing students donated for Katala Institute Photo by KFI

IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

Owners of lobster traps at Borbon, Panacan must be informed to not encroach inside Rasa boundary. Prescriptions for each zonation must be finalized and disseminated by PAO and with other PAMB members to encourage more active role in protection. Case filed against

establishment of fish corral on Rasa must progress. Collection of fossilized Taklobo shells has been rampant even in other municipalities of Palawan hence intensive monitoring around Rasa at night is also encouraged.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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