

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

November 2021 SUMMARY

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



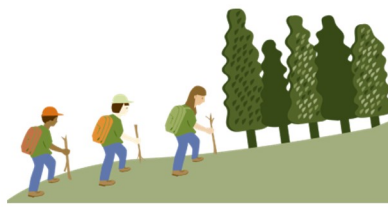
20

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



135.5

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



68.9

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



220

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



39

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



61

Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



9

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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

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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.

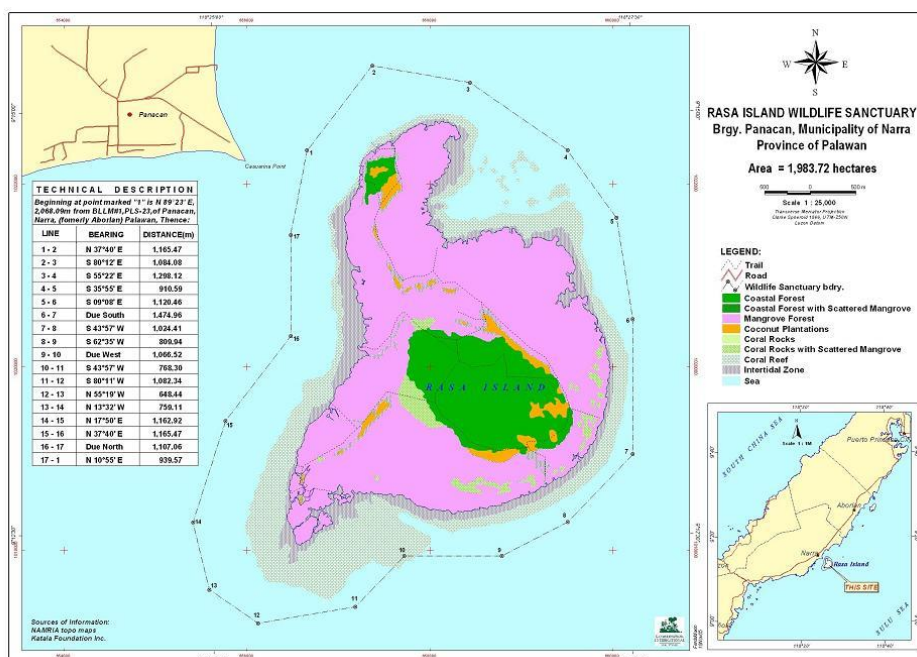


Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

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

In November 2021, 52 nest trees were visited and checked for occupation of cockatoos. 34 nests showed potential occupation as early as this month. Around 8ind were the highest noted number around the nests particularly on one nest during our visits. Our monitoring covered **135.5kms**. Total of precipitation in November 2021: **185mm** on Rasa, **416mm** on mainland.

Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in November 2021

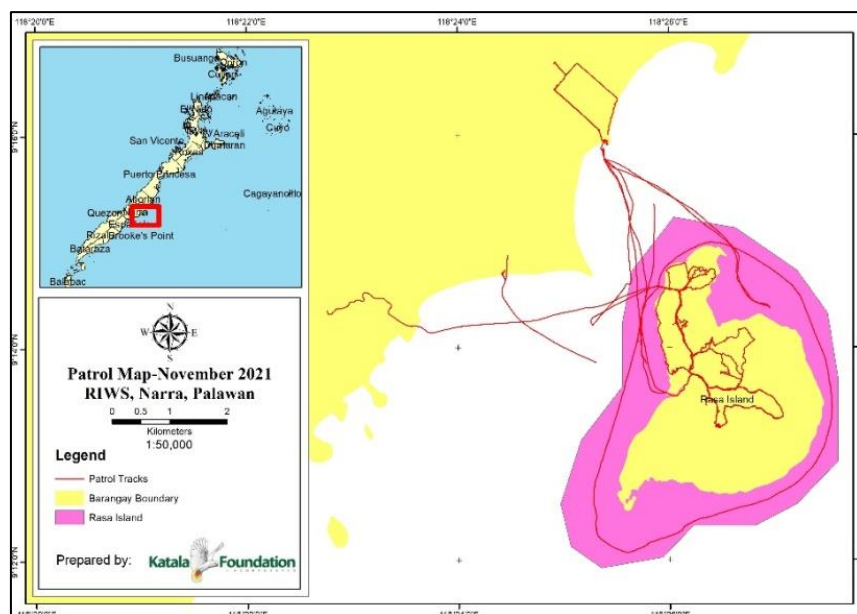




Figure 3. Loreto observes on cockatoos (left); Mario checks on nest tree on Rasa (right) ©KFI



Figure 4. Fresh cut twigs around nest tree during checking (left); wardens encountered beehive on cockatoo nest tree at northeast Rasa (right) ©KFI

One cockatoo #145-21 was rescued at Borbon, Panacan, Narra in Nov. 16, 2021 by Mr. Jayson Aguirre. Immediately, Angel and Zaldy rescued the bird from Jayson's custody and put it in Katala Institute (KI) for proper handling and care. After three days of observation in quarantine, the bird was released back on its nest in Rasa. Adult cockatoos were on nest as we came and the released bird interacted with two cockatoos as close as one foot away (Fig. 5). Wardens kept monitoring the bird for a week while camera traps were also installed around the nest tree.

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Lucito counted **220 individuals** alone on traditional roost site on Nov. 26. It started to disperse at 5:56am and just after four minutes, the cockatoo completely left the site. During our synchronized counting on Nov. 19, Loreto recorded 216ind that dispersed from 5:45-6:05am. No cockatoos were roosting at Borbon, Panacan while cockatoos were still observed roosting on nests. Lucito reported that as he monitored on Nov. 28 at Bliss, Panacan 2, Narra (coastal community next to Borbon fronting Rasa), a resident informed him that two days ago around 12ind slept around. This area will be monitored in the next days.



Figure 5. Release of cockatoo #145-21 back to the wild on Nov. 19 after rehabilitation at the Katala Institute @KFI

The number of foraging cockatoos on mainland is getting lower with **61 individuals** recorded in Nov. 2 as the cockatoo went back to Rasa from 6:19-6:50am. This happened to be the highest count in the month though Veronica could not count further as it rained at 7:05am. Less cockatoos were noted foraging in the coming weeks after this counting. Even in our synchronized counting schedules, the highest recorded were 24ind on Nov. 23, from 7:30-8:36am, flying back from Panacan and Panacan 2 to Rasa. Possibly, this is because of the approaching breeding season, abundance of food on Rasa and or due to the strong northeast monsoon. Moreover, the highest recorded foraging at Marcelo area was 30ind on Nov. 11, foraging around from 6:50-7:39am. Cockatoos' flight to mainland in November 2021: Earliest 6:00am and latest 5:46pm recorded at Borbon station.

Noted species in November 2021 were Tabon Scrubfowl, Red-headed Flameback, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Spotted Wood-owl, Mantanani Scops-owl, Nicobar Pigeon, Western Osprey, Egret sp., White-bellied Sea-eagle, Changeable Hawk-eagle, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Reef Egret, Whimbrel, Buttonquail, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Swiftlet sp., Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Sunbird sp., Common Tern, Large-tailed Night-jar, White-vented Shama, Ashy Drongo, Greater Coucal, Pipits, Common Koel, Asian Glossy Starling, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Emerald Dove, Dollarbird, and Zebra Dove. This month, the lone Blue-naped Parrot was also observed. Monitor Lizard was frequently encountered.

Bernito counted 30ind of Pied Imperial-Pigeon on Nov. 16, flying from mainland to coastal forest of Rasa. He also saw one marine turtle with carapace ca. 2ft-diameter, swimming for 5min then

dived near mangrove entrance to campsite. Consequently, on Nov. 30, he also noted dolphins, 6ind, at 12:00nn, on southwest Rasa. Mario observed approx. 3,000ind of Flying fox at Dapdap area on Nov. 25 (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Approx. 3,000ind of Flying fox in Nov.25, 2021 ©KFI

Vegetation assessment

This month, mangrove and coastal forests as well as its boundaries exhibit greener vegetation (Fig. 7). Fruiting trees and vines: Buntot-daga (most abundant), Lomo-lomo, Balete, Species 1, Ginlalid, Magtalisay, Binunga, Pagatpat, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species. Flowering trees: Barenben, Tulang pagi, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.



Figure 7. Green vegetation on boundary and inside coastal forest in November 2021 ©KFI

THREAT OBSERVATIONS

No adverse human activities observed on Rasa during monitoring. Floating cage is still monitored at 20m away from 09°14'13.2"N, 118°25'15.8"E while lobster traps are at 20m away from 09°14'35.7"N, 118°25'36.9"E (Fig. 8).



Figure 8. Lobster traps at Borbon (left) and floating fish cage near old trident pier (right) in Nov. 29, 2021 ©KFI

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. On Nov. 13, two persons gathered 200kgs of copra at Alisto area for 12 days while on Nov. 23, one person collected 1260pcs of coconut from Dapdap area in 10 days.

Loreto and Lucito assisted on visit/inspection of Ms. Rhodora Ubani, PASu Cruz and Protected Area personnel on Rasa on Nov. 12. Wardens collected wildlings for nursing in tree nursery at KI this month.

Andrea claimed her prize for completing a pattern in Katala “Do” challenge, an online event through PCCP Fb page (Fig. 9). Wardens work on hatchling area on Rasa while climbing is not permissible due to rains.

On Nov. 29, KFI-PCCP volunteers and wives of wildlife wardens participated on virtual workshop for formulation of Sustainable and Inclusive Landscape Governance (SILG) Program 2021-2025 (Fig. 10).

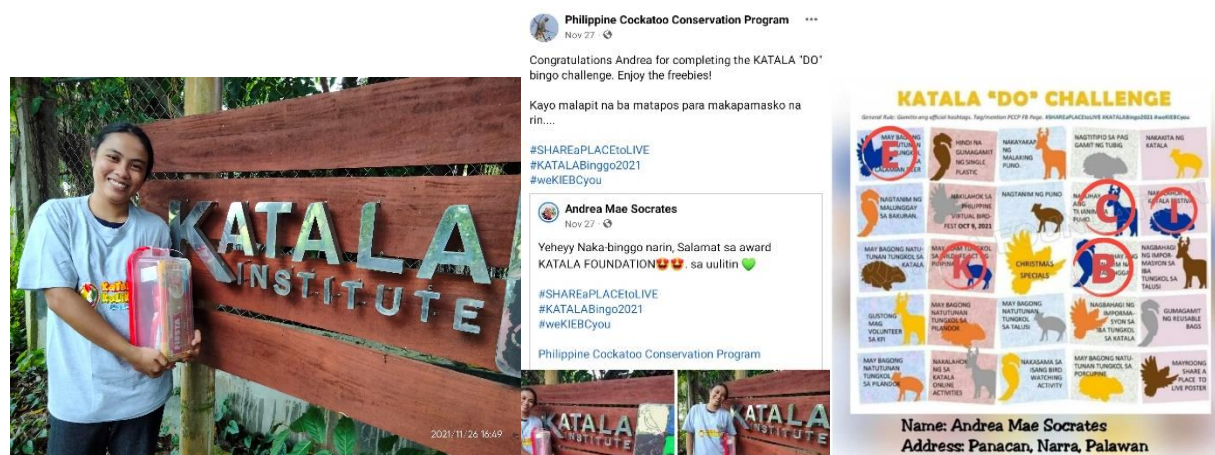


Figure 9. Andrea claims food pack for winning Bingo in Katala “Do” challenge ©KFI



Figure 10. Wardens make hatchling area in preparation for next year's breeding season (left); KFI-PCCP volunteers join online SILG workshop (right) ©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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