

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

June 2021 SUMMARY

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs,
Narra, Palawan



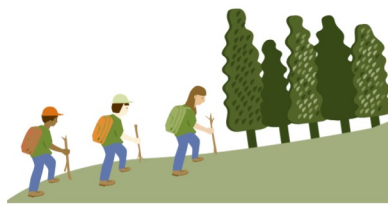
25

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



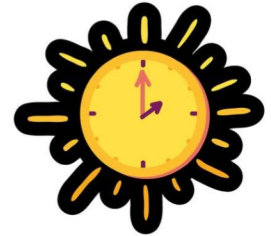
184.8

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



103

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



195

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



35

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



114

Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



9

Uri ng halamang namumunga



09675176935



048-434-7693



kficacatua2016@gmail.com



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

JUNE 2021

Prepared by:

Anna Rose Agullo, Mark Qunit, Peter Widmann and Indira D. L. Widmann

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.

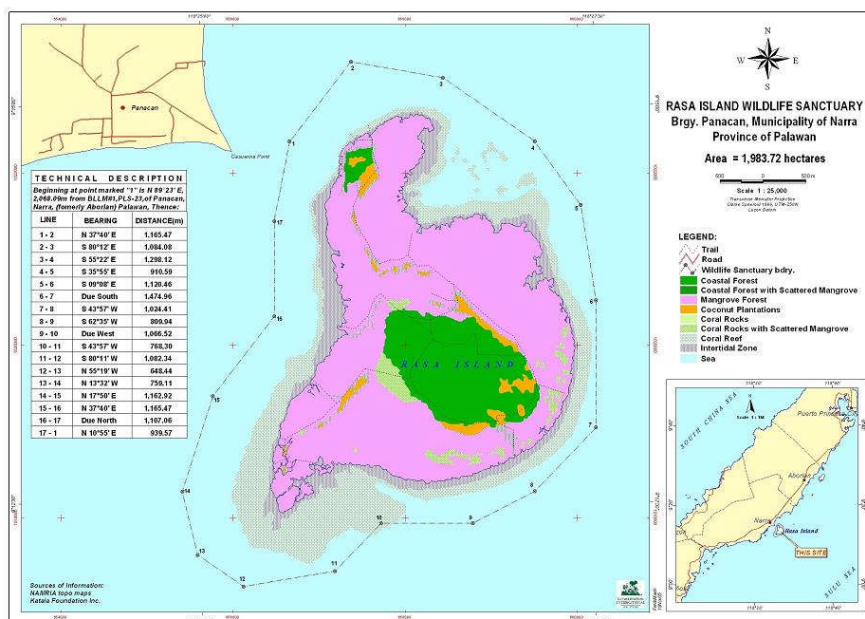


Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

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 June 30, we recorded 94 total eggs in which 63 hatched. 45 hatchlings were banded including two which died. A total of 18 hatchlings failed. Fortunately, 38 have fledged and seven more hatchlings are monitored including one hatchling from a dead Bogong *Garuga floribunda* nest at southeast and another hatchling from a dead Gindaon. Three teams conducted nest checking and monitoring on 81 nest trees and one dead but occupied Gindaon. The teams covered total distance **184.8kms** of monitoring on Rasa this month. Total of precipitation in June 2021: 122mm on Rasa and 111mm on mainland.

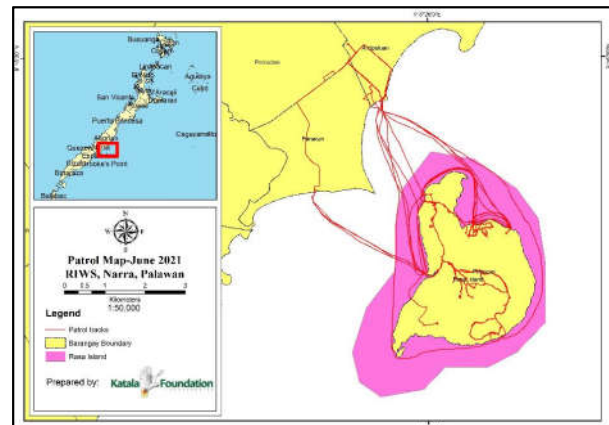


Figure 2. Patrol tracks for June 2021 by RIWS wardens.

On June 12, Lucito and Reynaldo saw one branch of occupied nest tree on coastal forest which collapsed probably because impacted by rain and strong winds (Fig.3). The hatchlings on the other branch were safe. Meanwhile, we noticed a big developmental gap in two hatchlings from one nest. The one with stunted growth was rescued and brought to the Katala Institute (KI) for intensive care but died three days after (Fig. 3). On June 28, Lucito noted 11 cockatoos, in which four individuals were fledglings, foraging on Siar at Villarias area.



Figure 3. Bernito and Mark gather biometrics of hatchlings during nest checking (above photos); Branch of nest tree fell (left); Hatchlings from one nest with big developmental gap (right) ©KFI photos

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Bernito counted **195 individuals** at the traditional roost site and dispersing in the morning of June 18. Some cockatoos were still observed sleeping on occupied nest trees. No cockatoo was observed roosting on Borbon roost site. In the morning of June 14, **114 individuals** crossed from Rasa to mainland (counted at Borbon station) from 5:53am to 6:39am. Marcelo observed that most of the cockatoos were flying high from Rasa to mainland. This may indicate that they forage farther than they usually foraged in previous months. She also noted some crossing fledglings. Less cockatoos were observed crossing to mainland in the afternoon.

In June 5, Monico noted five cockatoos snapping on Pagatpat leaves in Tugbuan at Malinao at 8:20am. He frequently observed cockatoos on this area this month. In June 15 at 6:25am he observed five cockatoos nibbling on Mahogany leaves at Princess Urduja. Consequently, on June 19 at 8:15am, Danilo noted three cockatoos perching on Malunggay at Princess Urduja then suddenly flew due northeast.

For June 2021, notable species were Red-headed Flameback, Tabon Scrubfowl, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Nicobar Pigeon, Egret sp., Western Osprey, Whimbrel, Mantanani Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, Changeable Hawk-eagle, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher, Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Fruit-dove sp., Sunbird sp., Reef egret, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Common Tern, White-vented Shama, Large-tailed Night-jar, Greater Coucal, Ashy Drongo, Common Koel,

Emerald Dove, Asian Glossy Starling, Pipits, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Emerald Dove, Dollarbird, and Zebra Dove. Monitor lizard was frequently encountered. Blue-naped Parrot was still observed.

In June 5, Lucito noted ca. 30 individuals of Rufous Night-heron flying, calling and nesting near BMS station 7. Estimated 25 nests were recorded. In June 9, the team observed approx. 3,000 individuals of roosting Flying Foxes and one White-bellied Sea-eagle at Villarias mangrove area. Wardens heard two individuals of Mantanani Scops-owl near camp site on June 13 and on June 24, while Loreto and his wife were fishing on dock to campsite, they saw three of the species perching on a mangrove then flew. On June 14, one team found two eggs of snake inside another nest tree at the coastal forest. One of which was found on the ground (Fig.4). Mario noted two individuals of Spotted Wood-owl calling and perching on coconut on June 20 in his area. His another observation of the latter was in June 29 at Espinosa area. In June 24, Loreto and Reynaldo saw two dolphins on northwest Rasa. On June 25 at 11:41am on mangroves area at Malinao, Monico recorded nine individuals of Blue-headed Racquet-tail perching and biting on Pagatpat leaves then went inside the hole. Recorded wildlife through camera traps were Monitor lizard, Tabon Scrubfowl, Nicobar Pigeon, immature Night-heron?, snake and Olive-backed sunbird (Fig. 4).

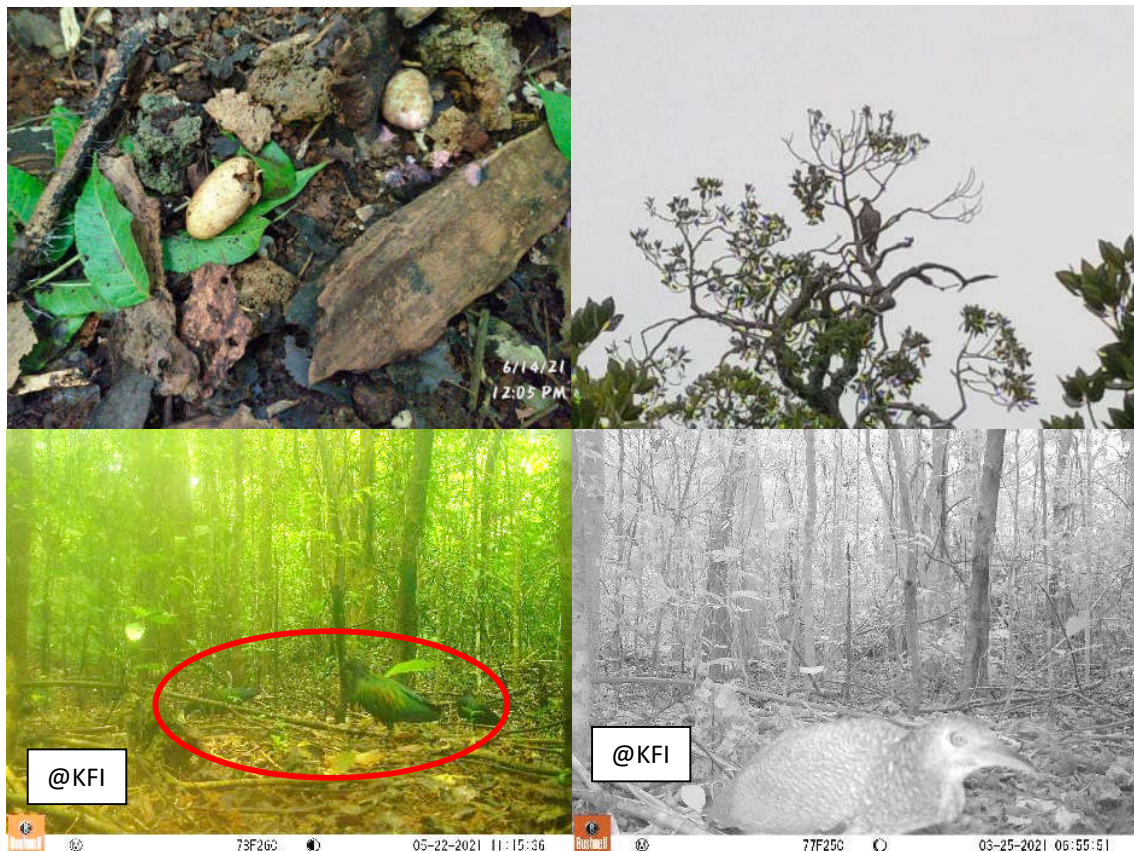


Figure 4. Eggs of snake on ground (upper left); White-bellied Sea-eagle on mangroves (upper right); Camera trap footages: three Nicobar Pigeon (lower left) and an immature Night Heron (lower right)
©Photos by KFI

Vegetation assessment

Coastal forests (inner and boundary) and mangrove forest are greener this month. More wildlings are also observed on ground. Fruiting trees and vines are Siar, Tubo-bato, Bogo, Balete, Malugai, Pagatpat, Sapisapinet, Ginlalid, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species

while flowering trees and vines are Bogó, Gatasan, Magtalisay, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.



Figure 5. Malugai wildlings (left) and one of cockatoo food-plant (vine) this month

B. THREAT OBSERVATIONS

While monitoring, one team noticed cut and shavings of root of Barenben at Deig area. The cut root was probably used for carabao cart (singkaw). Wardens checked on claimants and reminded them on restrictions on the island. Another cat from Dapdap area was caught and released on mainland on June 15.

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On June 14, three persons gathered 10kgs of mangrove crabs and 16kgs of fish at Alisto, Villarias and Asinan areas for 36hrs.

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. On June 5, Edgardo Batac plucked coconut at Pipina Batac area. On June 23, five persons visited Baltazar Batac's coconut area for 6hrs. On June 28, six persons bathed at Satinal tidal flat for 3hrs.

15th Katala Festival

In June 25, Narra celebrated the 15th Katala Festival with a theme “We are part of the solution”. Unique activities were contested and Jeff Hidalgo and Joey Ayala made the closing ceremony more memorable via PCCP Fb page. Street quiz vlog making and bilao art design were contested by Palaweños while photo feature of Isla Rasa and nature photo poem were exclusive for Narranons. Part of contests' criteria was the netizens' choice where three entries on Street Quiz vlog contest reached 4,891 people, 1,384 people and 9,549 people. Bilao art design contest reached a total of 45,603 people. Photo feature Isla Rasa reached 1,902 people and nature photo poem reached 9,138 people. We are satisfied of how the activities reached a wider audience with the use of social media.

Also in celebration of 15thKatala Festival and World Arbor Day, 60 Parina from Katala Institute were planted at Bgy. Antipuluan, Narra on June 25, 2021. 850 seedlings in all were planted by 60 participants to include the Antipuluan barangay officials, NPRGOC, DENR, MENRO, KFI, 4Ps municipal links, JCI, HTU students and Alpha Phi Omega. This tree planting activity aims to help provide food for foraging cockatoos on mainland Narra in the near future.



Figure 6. Snapshots of the 15th Katala Festival in Narra with some of the tokens received by the winning entries (above) and bilao art design entries (middle); Tree planting led by RIWS-PAMO, in celebration of Katala Festival and World Arbor Day. Photos by KFI

IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

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

The PCCP acknowledges the key players on the ground: our wildlife wardens and mainland volunteers: REYNALDO ALBELAR, LORETO ALISTO, BERNITO BASIO, EDWIN BATAAC, MARIO BATAAC, LUCITO DANGIS, Veronica Marcelo, Danilo Villaruz, Monico Beleg and Antonio Marcelo.

Thank you very much to the LGU-Narra through the office of the Mayor and staff, Vice Mayor Lumba, now Acting Mayor and the municipal council, department heads, barangay officials, and everyone in the LGU for their unrelenting support and appropriation per year for our wardens and volunteers. Also we thank the Narra community for pursuing the cause of cockatoo conservation in Narra. We also thank the PAMO through PASu Pablo Cruz for his leadership and kind attention.

We are grateful to KFI family and board members for their help, assistance and sharing expertise and ideas.

We are indebted to the following organizations and agencies for providing funds for this project:



References

- Critchlow, R., Plumtre, A.J., Alidria, B., Nsubuga, M., Driciru, M., Rwetsiba, A., Wanyama, F., and Beale, C.M. (2017). Improving Law-Enforcement Effectiveness and Efficiency in Protected Areas Using Ranger-collected Monitoring Data. *Conservation Letters* 10, 572-580.
- IUCN (2019). IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2016.1. (www.iucnredlist.org).
- Teacher, A.G.F., Griffiths, D.J., Hodgson, D.J., and Inger, R. (2013). Smartphones in ecology and evolution: a guide for the app-rehensive. *Ecology and Evolution* 3, 5268-5278.