

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY OCTOBER 2021 SUMMARY Pandanan and Bugsuk Balabac, Palawan



18

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



92.25

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



15

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



0

Bilang ng nai-report sa KFI



0

Bilang ng naaresto



103

Pinakamataas na bilang
sa tulugan ng Katala



51

Bilang ng cavity nesters



26

Bilang ng naitalang
namumunga at
namumulaklak na puno



1

Nakuha ng mga silo o patibong



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KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

PANDANAN AND BUGSUK ISLANDS, BALABAC

October 2021

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

Pandanan and Bugsuk Islands belong to the north-easternmost municipality of Balabac in Palawan (Fig. 1). Coastal forests are dense and stock on flat limestone originating from elevated coral reefs. Large trees in the coastal forest are mostly deciduous and widely spaced due to water stress during the dry season. The understorey is very dense with abundant vines. Emergent trees *Pometia pinnata*, *Dracontomelon dao*, *Koordersiodendron pinnatum*, *Intsia bijuga*, and *Ficus* spp. A narrow rim of beach forest with *Erythrina*, *Calophyllum* and *Barringtonia* is present. The dense coastal forest cover is as well protected because the large portion of the island is privately-owned and entries are monitored by security company guards. Extensive mangroves are thriving which mostly dominated by genus *Sonneratia* and *Rhizophora*. Mangrove forest play important role not only to its wildlife inhabitant but act as one of the main food sources for the critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo. Both islands have old growth *Sonneratia* that can sustain food to significant numbers of wild cockatoo population during its fruiting season.

Currently, 101 bird species have been recorded in Pandanan, Bugsuk and adjacent Malinsuno Island. Among these are six globally threatened and six near-threatened species (IUCN 2019). Of outstanding conservation concern are particularly the larger tree cavity nesters, like Palawan Hornbill, all three parrot species of Palawan, Philippine Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia*, Blue-naped Parrot *Tanygnathus lucionensis* and Blue-headed Racquet-tail *Prioniturus platenae*, and other conservation relevant species like Grey Imperial-pigeons *Ducula pickeringii* and Mantanani Scops-owl *Otus mantananensis* (Widmann et al. 2008). The first and only record for the Philippines of a Fairy Pitta *Pitta nympha* comes from Malinsuno as a result of the conservation project. On the other

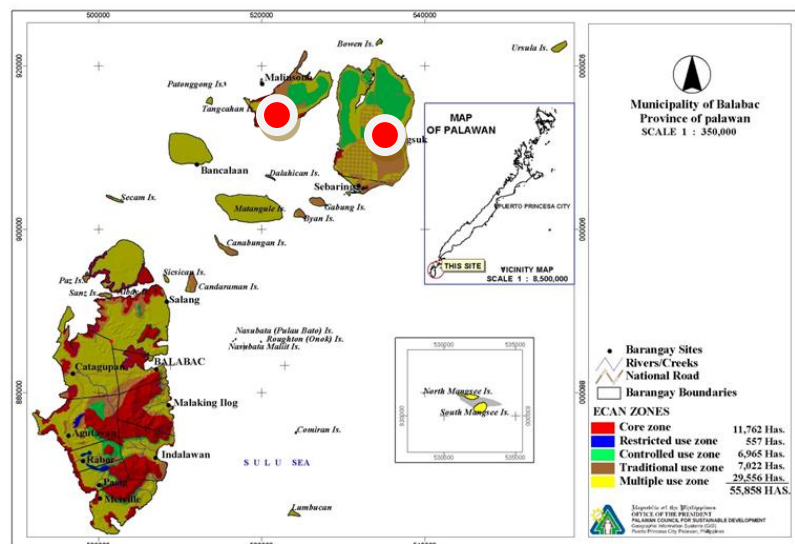


Figure 1. Location map of Pandanan and Bugsuk Island (red dots) in municipality of Balabac, Palawan (Map: PCSDS).

hand Bugsuk Island also serves as one of the important habitat for the endemic Balabac Mousedeer *Tragulus nigricans*, due to restricted access of locals and less presence of hunting, deer population thriving in significant numbers. Bugsuk Island is apparently the only place in the world where the highly threatened Balabac Mousedeer, Palawan Porcupine, Philippine Cockatoo and Palawan Hornbill co-exist in the same forest habitat in viable populations.

Both island marine ecosystem harbor several threatened marine turtles species and locally declared as marine protected area that remain as the important breeding sites for grouper, wrasses and other high valued marine products.

Conservation Objectives

1. Maintain the species diversity and function of ecosystems and species at Pandanan and Bugsuk Island.
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 on Pandanan/Bugsuk by at least 5% from 2018 to 2021.
2. Increase viable population of endangered and endemic target cavity-nesters e.g. Palawan Hornbill, Blue-naped Parrot, Blue-headed Racquet-Tail, among others in Pandanan and Bugsuk Island from 2018-2021.
3. Reduce threats in the area by 50% from 2018-2021.

Methods

Deputized wardens patrol by foot, by boat and by truck monthly within sites. 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 analysed through QGIS. Patrols are coordinated with the concerned barangay, private land owner/company and protected area office wherever it applies.

II. PATROL TEAM AND EFFORT

A sum of 92.25km was covered as of this month patrolling and monitoring events. Site visitation and monitoring was made at the Barangay Sebaring, Bugsuk Island Balabac and Barangay Tagnato, Bataraza Palawan.

Philippine Cockatoo, Palawan Hornbill button pins together with “Share a place to live” posters were distributed to locals during the visits.

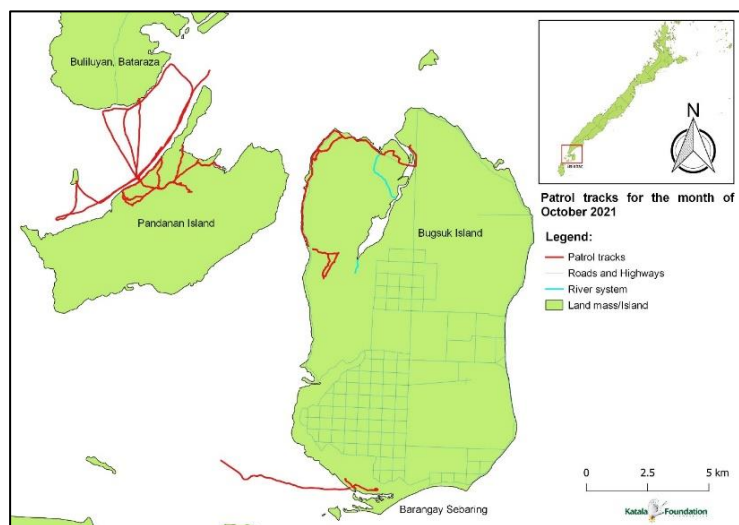


Figure 2. Patrol tracks at Pandanan Island, Bugsuk Island and Barangay Sebaring Balabac (Map: KFI 2021).

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. Wildlife observations

Four threatened bird species were recorded at Pandanan Island as of this monitoring period, these are Philippine Cockatoo with 103 individuals, Palawan Hornbill (23 indi.) Blue-naped Parrot (14 indi.), Blue-headed Racquet tail (10 indi.) and Hill Mynah (4 indi.) Significant numbers of Pied imperial Pigeon were sighted foraging at Pandanan Island. Presence of Great-billed Heron and Little Heron were recorded at Manas point, Pandanan and at Malinsuno Island.

As of October 25th and 26th two species of migratory raptors were spotted at Pandanan-Buliluyan channel and heading south down to Borneo and Malaysian peninsula. These raptors are identified as Grey-faced Buzzard with 713 individuals and Osprey with 3 individuals respectively. These raptors are part of winter migration from northern to southern hemisphere and head back north by summer taking the same fly ways.

Other wildlife species recorded includes terrestrial mammals represented by Southern Palawan red Squirrel, Flying Squirrel, Civet Cat, Palawan bearded Pig and Balabac Mousedeer. For terrestrial reptiles we recorded Spiting Cobra and Monitor Lizards while Saltwater crocodiles (juvenile and adult) were recorded daily in Bugsuk Island from October 18 to 22, 2021.

Coastal motoring event further record the presence of marine species like Green Sea turtles, Hawksbill Sea turtles and pods of Bottle nose Dolphins at northern Pandanan Island on October 22, 2021.

B. Cockatoo roost counts and food providing tree monitoring

A total of 103 cockatoo counted as the highest number while 51 individuals as the lowest count taken for the month of October at the traditional roost site. Roosting cockatoo was affected by severe wind coming from southwest during the 10th to 13 of this month due to typhoon presence.

In terms of food providing plants, 25 forest trees and one salt tolerant tree species were recorded at fruiting stage: Aga tree (*Ficus sp.*), Alalod tree, Aluyaw tree, Amugis tree, Arigmogdan tree, Bago tree, Baro tree, Balinad tree, Bubog tree (*Sterculia foetida*), Bungyo tree, Buyon Tree, Dao tree (*Dracontomelon dao*), Girangan tree, Ipil-ipil tree, Kandis tree, Magbaka-baka, Maingit tree, Magdita-dita tree, Maglabuyo tree, Mangupak tree, Marampuso tree, Marapisa tree, Moringa plants, Pagatpat tree (*Sonneratia alba*), Pisursur tree, and Talisay tree (*Terminalia catappa*).



Figure 3. Food providing trees: Fruits of Balinad tree (left) Magdita-dita (Right, Photos: R.Antonio).

C. Community monitoring and threats observation

Four visiting locals from Barangay Puring and Buliluyan, Bataraza were recorded at out monitoring station on 16th and 20th. Recorded respondents were engaged in fishing activity and relative visitation, all went back home after 3-5 days in the island.

D. Cockatoo foraging and site monitoring

Regular monitoring visits were conducted at Barangay Sebaring, Balabac in October by a community volunteer from the area indicates the decreasing numbers of cockatoo at the foraging and secondary roost site. Highest numbers recorded reach up to 35 cockatoos. New additional roost site was discovered at Principe property (Fig. 4), this site was located east of Lawrensana and Mayor Properties. The new roost site was discovered during the first week of the month and occupied from October 5th to 13th and on 21st. Cockatoo numbers range from 10 to 30 individuals inhabit the area. Moving to new location of cockatoo within Sebaring could be attributed to the strong wind action from southwest during the first week and typhoon presence during the 11th to 13th. Reoccupation of Mayor's site was noted on October 22, 2021 with 10 cockatoos during 5:47pm. As of this month monitoring cockatoos in Sebaring used different roost location, presence of snare traps intended for cockatoo was discovered at local's Moringga plants at Sebaring Dos. Immediate dismantling was made by our community volunteer, no cockatoo caught by this snare trap. This is the second observation of snare traps from the area. Cutting of old growth mangrove trees was documented at Principe area (Fig. 4). Regular monitoring will be conducted along the foraging sites including Moringga plants within local's houses. Posting of share-a-place to live posters was made together with the distribution of Philippine Cockatoo button pins during this month visit.



Figure 4. Newly discovered roost site within Mangrove area at Sebaring Dos (left) and cutting of mangrove tree as the same location (Right, Photos: KFI 2021).

Offsite monitoring at mainland Palawan continued, visit was made at Barangay Tagnato, Bataraza on October 29, 2021. Informal interviews were made among the encountered respondents. Nine locals with cockatoo observation were interviewed, most of their reports are on cockatoo sightings passing thru the Tagnato and heading northward (Barangay Malitub and Barangay Sapa). Foraging of three cockatoos at Moringga pods and 20 cockatoos at Pagatpat tree was noted by two locals in September. Base on monitoring no cockatoo roost site reported in the area. No snare traps found among the visited Moringga plants within the community. Distribution of 150 Philippine Cockatoo buttons pins and 100 pieces Share-a-place to live was made by our team (Fig. 5).

Reports/Notes: A flock of 30-50 Cockatoos was reported by RAntonio relatives and trusted locals at Barangay Malaking Ilog, Balabac last October. Some of the birds are seen with leg bands while foraging on Moringga pods within Antonio property. Sightings also reported from Poblacion and Barangay Indalawan, Balabac.



Figure 5. Distribution and posting of share-a-place to live posters at Barangay Sebaring (left) and Barangay Tagnato, Bataraza (Right, Photos: KFI 2021).

E. Camera trap installation and deployment

Card replacement and retrieval of camera traps in Pandanan and Bugsuk Island were done. New set of batteries was installed, and camera traps were set at a new location. Footages captured by the camera documented the continued presence of the following wildlife species: At Pandanan Island, camera captured the activity of Tabon Scrubfowl, Hooded Pitta, Forest Rats, Long-tailed Macaque, Civet Cat and Palawan bearded Pig. In Bugsuk Island, footage revealed the daily movement of Balabac mousedeer, Forest Rats, Southern Palawan red Squirrel, Long-tailed Macaque, Palawan bearded Pig, Palawan Porcupine, Civet Cat, Wild Cattle and even post guards on patrol at northern Bugsuk forest. Minor damage was found among camera traps at both island due to routine incursion of Long-tailed Macaque, Ants and Termites.



Figure 6. Adult Palawan bearded Pig on early morning foraging activity at Pandanan Island (left) and day time movement of Balabac mousedeer at Bugsuk Island (Right, Photos: KFI 2021).

F. Other related conservation activities

Nursery repair and replacement of timber posts were made this month together with bagging of soil. Wildling collection commenced this month, a total of 1,552 native wildlings were collected and raised at nursery site, and these are food and nest tree providing species. Collected tree wildlings are as follows: Amugis, Balangihan, Balinad, Bayoso, Marapisa, Sigurap, Se-ar and Tarongtong.



Figure 7. Seed bag preparation (left) and planting of collected native tree seedlings (center and right, Photos: KFI 2021).

IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

Presence of snare traps for cockatoo was found along Sebaring Dos, removal took place immediately. Regular monitoring within the identified areas with threats is set and coordination with barangay councils for joint monitoring will be made in the future visit.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

More site visit within Balabac Islands and barangays at Southern Bataraza is needed starting by 2022. Joint monitoring with DENR CENRO is recommended within and outside Pandanan Island. Cockatoos from Pandanan and Bugsuk Island already started to disperse within their historical range which also coincide with the low counts at Malinsuno traditional roost site. IEC along the communities of Balabac and southern Bataraza is deemed necessary.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are indebted to our wildlife wardens for their patience and work: Ismael S. Dela Cruz Jr., Deo E. Aplid and Ariel C. Omog. Likewise, we thank our escorts from SCAA, Philippine Army who restlessly secured us every monitoring visit. Thank you very much to the Jewelmer Corporation by providing the KFI team full assistance during every visit in Bugsuk island especially to Sir Jacques Christopher Branellec and Ms. Vianney Brossard. We also extend our appreciation to the Council members of Barangay Bugsuk, Council members of Barangay Pandanan and Local Government Unit of Balabac Municipality for making the conservation project more effective and successful.

We are grateful to KFI family and board members and staff: J-Kris Gano for the help, assistance and others who have shared expertise and ideas.

We are indebted and grateful for the support of the following organizations and agencies for supporting patrols and implementation of our work in Pandanan and Bugsuk Islands, Palawan (logos below):



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