

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY September 2021 SUMMARY Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



20

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



191.6

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



2

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



50.9

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



260

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



35

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



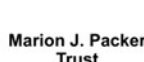
165

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

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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.

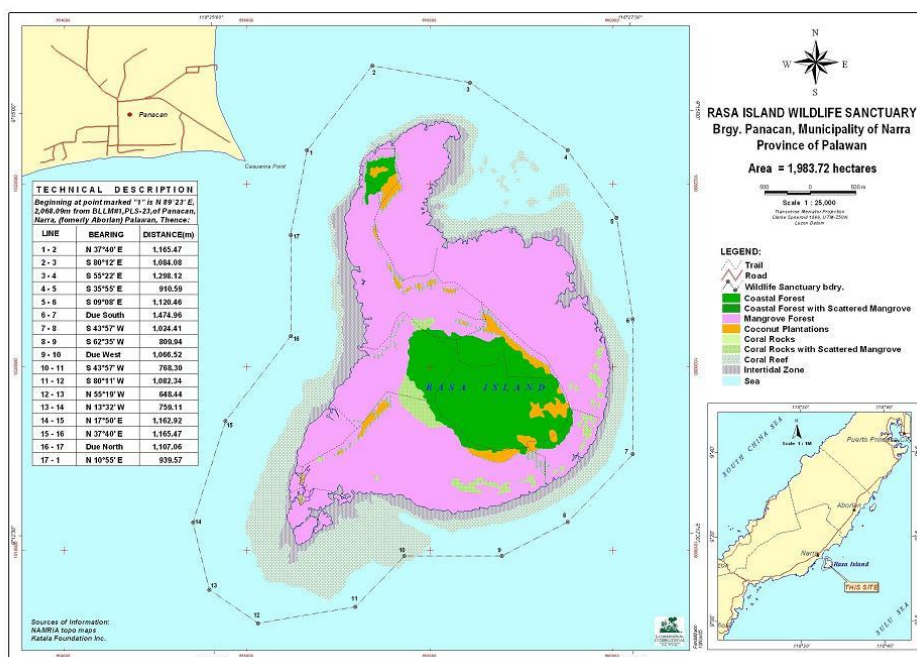


Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

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 September 2021, 50 nest trees were visited by the three teams where about 70% of visited nest trees have indications of cockatoo visits. Nest characterization resumed yet frequently interrupted due to rains. Data loggers in nest trees are also checked. Fledglings are still frequently observed with adult cockatoos. We covered a total distance **191.6kms** of monitoring around Rasa and adjacent barangays. Total of precipitation in September 2021: **227mm** on Rasa, **215mm** on mainland.

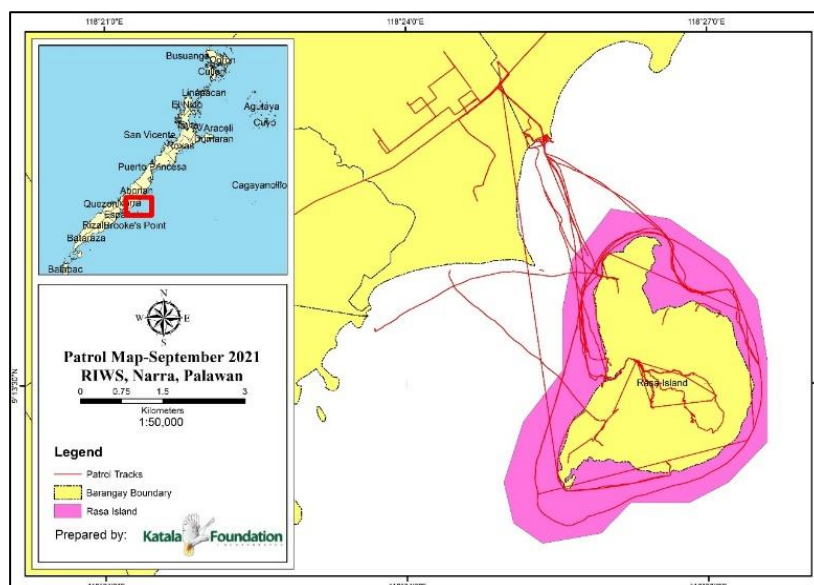


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in September 2021 in red marks

One new floating structure was noticed by Lucit at Rasa on Sept. 23. This was hauled by two boats with three persons allegedly from Antipuluan. We immediately informed the Protected Area Management Office (PAMO) of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary (RIWS) on the same date

via text message. Consequently, on Sept. 24, Mark, Bernito and Mario conducted patrol around Rasa and noted one floating cage on northwest part of Rasa at N 09° 14' 3.9", E 118° 25' 42.3" hence an official report was sent to PAMO RIWS (Fig. 3). The office was advised by Protected Area Superintendent (PASu) Pablo Cruz that the PAMO had informed the alleged owner, Mr. Simeon Uy from Antipuluan, Narra the displacement of the structure. On Sept. 28, the structure was transferred near the old Trident Pier. Lucito and Mario had verified it.

During monitoring on Oct. 1, we noted that the birdwatch tower on Rasa is already unsafe to use. Urgently, we put a warning signage around the tower and blocked the stairs while simultaneously informing PAMO (Fig. 4).



Figure 3. Floating fish cage inside boundary of Rasa (left); The cage was moved near old Trident Pier (right) ©KFI



Figure 4. Lobster traps at Borbon, Panacan (left); Unstable birdwatch tower on Rasa with signage and obstruction on stairs (right) ©KFI



Figure 5. Mark and Bernito collected parameters of nest trees and mounted camera trap on nest ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Bernito recorded **260 individuals** of cockatoos at traditional roost site on Sept. 2 as they started gathering at 6:06pm. Likewise, during this synchronized count, cockatoos were also observed staying on nest trees. Lucito observed 3 and 2ind of cockatoos on two nest trees on Sept. 17 at 6pm and did not come out. On Sept. 14, he started monitoring near the nest tree on coastal forest at 5:30am and at 6:06am 4ind came out from nest. At 6:10am they flew on inner coastal forest. Stations on Rasa were also monitored yet no other roost site was established aside from traditional roost site and nest trees. No roosting cockatoos were observed at Borbon, Panacan and Caguisan.

165 individuals in total were noted in the morning on Sept. 21 from Rasa to Panacan, Panacan 2, Antipuluan, Princess Urduja and Malinao. While in the morning of Sept. 2, we noted 132ind flying from Rasa to the said barangays. More cockatoos were observed in this month than in August probably because of fruiting Malunggay which are more observed now in barangays proximate to Rasa. This month, cockatoos are also observed crossing from southern part of Rasa due southwest e.g. Malinao. On Sept. 8 at 4pm, we noted 20ind of cockatoos perching and bathing on dead Sampaloc tree at Suha St., Poblacion, Narra. This was visited again in Sept. 9 and we noted 2ind at 4:03pm (Fig. 6). More cockatoos were observed this month around Poblacion.

This month we noted Tabon Scrubfowl, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Red-headed Flameback, Nicobar Pigeon, Egret sp., Western Osprey, Spotted Wood-owl, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Changeable Hawk-eagle, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher, Fruit-dove sp., Sunbird sp., Whimbrel, Common Tern, Swiftlet sp., Ashy Drongo, White-vented Shama, Large-tailed Night-jar, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Reef egret, Common Koel, Emerald Dove, Greater Coucal, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Pipits, Asian Glossy Starling, Dollarbird, Zebra Dove. Blue-naped Parrot was still observed on Rasa while Monitor lizard was also frequently encountered.

On Sept. 2, 10ind of Rufous Night-heron were observed near cockatoo nest tree. Mario observed 6ind of Pied Imperial-Pigeon perching on Gindaon then flew near B. Batac area on Sept. 4 at 11:10am. He also saw 4ind on Sept. 22 at 10:45am perching on Taluto near camp. Likewise, Lucito saw 30ind feeding on Buri at Kaburihan area on Sept. 5 at 9am then flew due nest 67. Mario noted 2ind of Spotted Wood-owl calling at his area on Sept. 14 and 19 while Lucito heard 2ind calling around camp site on Sept 18 at 8pm. Reynaldo also noted this species

inside the mangroves on traditional roost site on Sept. 2 at 6:35pm during synchronized counting. Loreto observed one Dugong at mangrove entrance to camp site grazing on seagrasses on Sept 30. On Sept. 11, Reynaldo saw reticulated python near camp.

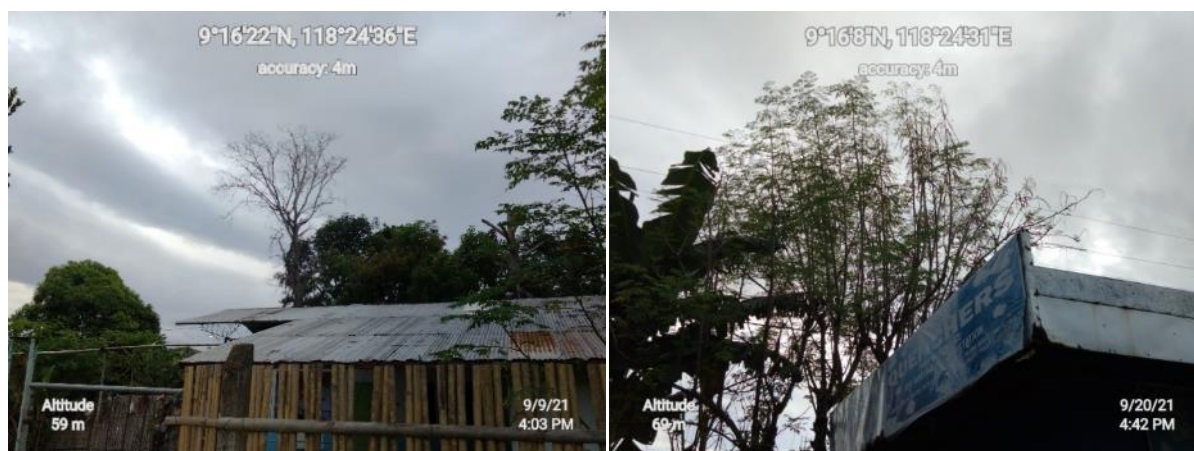


Figure 6. Two cockatoos seen on a dead Sampaloc tree at Suha St., Poblacion while more were observed around the town during our monitoring (left); 10ind of cockatoos hiding on Malunggay tree while foraging on pods at National Highway, Poblacion (right) ©KFI

Camera trap footages on Rasa Island

Footages from camera traps on Rasa captured Pied Fantail, Monitor Lizard, Woodpecker, snake, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Reticulated Python.

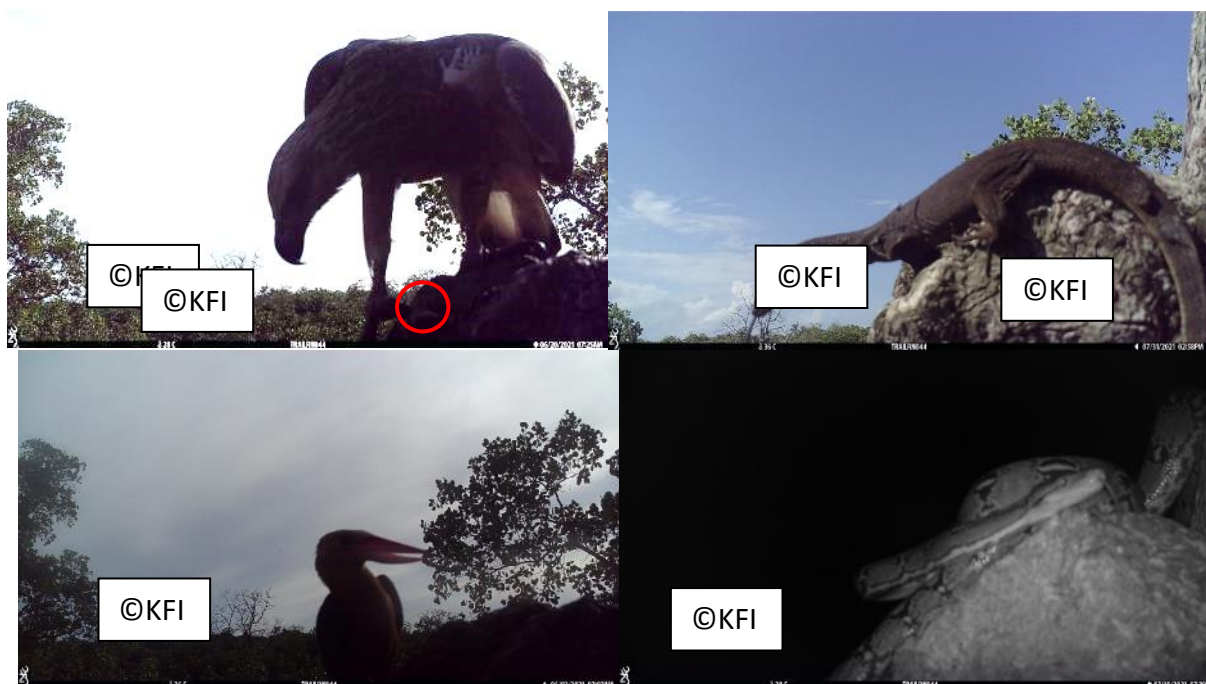


Figure 7. Immature White-bellied Sea-eagle on Pagatpat nest hole on June 21 and Monitor lizard on the same hole on July 31, 2021 (upper photos); Stork-billed Kingfisher on June 3 and Reticulated Python on July 19 on Pagatpat nest (lower photos). @KFI

Vegetation assessment

Coastal forest including the Kaburihan, Kabaguhan and Kaipilan areas, Dapdap, Favila areas and camp site and areas near boundary of coastal forest have green vegetation and less leaf litters are on ground. Mangroves are also in green state. Gindaon and Bogo are shedding leaves. Fruiting trees and vines are Magtalisay, Barenben, Balete, Binunga, Sapisapinet, Buntot daga, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species while Magtalisay, Tulang pagi, Tangal, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species are flowering.



Figure 8. Sapisapinet pods devoured by the cockatoos at Dapdap area (left); Greener coastal forest (right) @KFI

THREAT OBSERVATIONS

We keep on monitoring the lobster pens of which there is no additional stake from our last monitoring on Aug. 31 (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. Lobster traps on Borbon, Panacan, Narra

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On Sept. 2, Edwardo Igisa from Panacan, gathered 4kgs of mangrove crabs at Villanueva area. On Sept. 11, Taming and Bunso Unlao collected 16kgs of octopus on northeast Rasa for 5hrs while Jing Noquera gleaned 20kgs of lato from tidal flat near Satina area for 5hrs. On Sept. 21, Efren Paragatos collected 10kgs of lato at mangrove entrance to camp at 2pm.

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. No adverse human activities during visits. On Sept. 1, two persons gathered one sack of copra at Alisto area for three days.

Katala “DO” challenge was launched in September 2021 via PCCP FB page. This resembles BINGO game but instead instructs the participants to conduct activities that support environmental and biodiversity conservation. This “DO” challenge runs until December 2021 and available for all Palawaños.

Anna, Lucito and Bernito monitored and maintained Katala lot at Panacan 2, Narra in Sept. 16. 80% of malunggay seedlings and 68% of malunggay cuttings planted in July 2021 on foraging site survived (Fig. 10). On the same date Mark and Nonoy with KIEBC staff collected wildlings to be nursed in Katala Institute nursery.



Figure 10. Maintaining cockatoo foraging area at Panacan 2, Narra on Sept. 16 and planting of 6ind of Cycads on Sept. 9 ©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

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.

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