

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY October 2022 SUMMARY Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



22

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



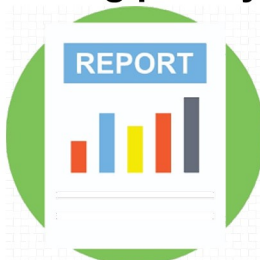
0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



165

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



61

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



199

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



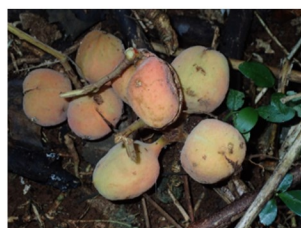
33

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



68

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

OCTOBER 2022

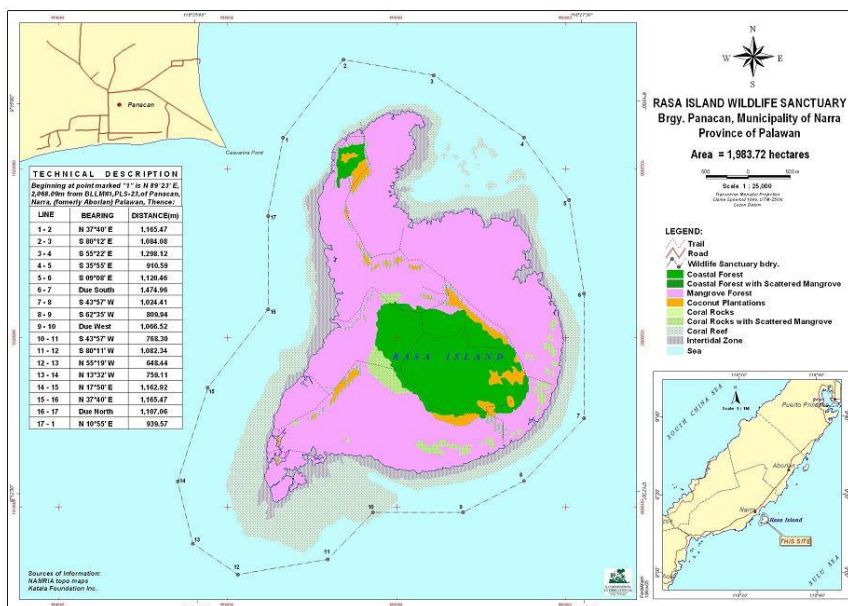
Prepared by:

Anna Rose Agullo, Mark Quinit, 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 stabilize number of Philippine Cockatoo breeding pairs on Rasa Island and vicinity by 2024 (Baseline: average breeding pairs from 2019 to 2021: 33.0).
2. Conduct weekly patrol and permanent presence of wildlife wardens with daily reports during breeding season per year.
3. Conduct at least 12 school/community visits (with at least 20 percentage point increase in KAPP survey results for individual interventions) and one festival annually.
4. Rehabilitate at least one hectare per year through reforestation or enrichment planting within cockatoo foraging area.
5. Monitor and reduce threats in the area by 50% from 2022-2024; 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

The patrol and monitoring team members are 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. Wardens' teams covered **165kms** of nest checking, wildlife monitoring and patrol around Rasa. Total of precipitation in October 2022: **206mm** on Rasa, **107mm** at Panacan 2 and **160mm** on Katala Institute, Antipuluan.

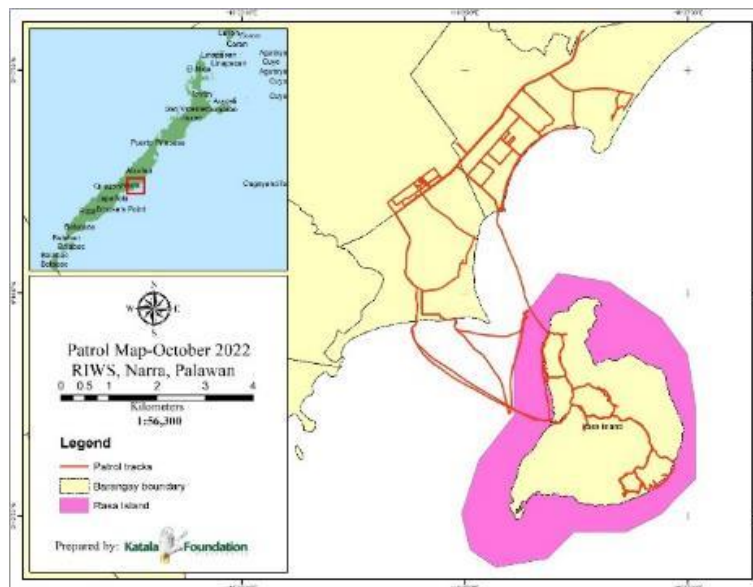


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in October 2022

In October 2022, 14 nest trees were characterized; six camera traps were deployed around Rasa while two were at hanging aviary; and 15 data loggers were checked. Preparation for the release of two cockatoos on Rasa and for nest flushing occurred.

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

This year's fledglings were still observed with adult cockatoos during wildlife monitoring both on Rasa and mainland. Loreto counted **199 cockatoo individuals** in Oct. 21, 2022 from 5:40-6:19a.m. at traditional roosting site on Rasa while 197ind were recorded on Oct. 20 from 5:46-6:22p.m. at the same area. Previously, in the first half of the month, he noted 166ind from traditional roosting site and Lucito counted 9ind from three nest trees on Oct. 9. The latter noted no sleeping cockatoos at Alisto area in Oct. 9. No cockatoos were also observed at Borbon roost site during monitoring.

Veronica monitored **68 cockatoo individuals** flying from Rasa to Borbon, Panacan from 6:09-7:13a.m. on Oct. 4. In the morning on Oct. 14, a total of 57ind were recorded from Borbon and Parco station, with 49ind and 8ind respectively, flying from Rasa. Meanwhile, the highest count at foraging area (Marcelo area) were 18ind recorded on Oct. 18. This month, cockatoos were still noted in the afternoon from 1:39-5:10p.m. at foraging area, Princess Urduja and Panacan Pier while one cockatoo was seen flying at 11:20a.m. on Oct. 27 in Princess Urduja. During our timed monitoring in October 2022, less cockatoos were observed foraging on mainland, probably because of monsoon and frequent rain. Lesser cockatoos were also noted in the afternoon. Both earliest and latest foraging were recorded at 6:02a.m. and 6:45p.m. at Borbon station.

In October 2022, we noted three individuals of Red-headed Flameback feeding on termites near cockatoo nest tree on Oct. 21, 2022 at 11a.m. A camera trap was installed at mangrove areas near boardwalk where Mario and Loreto saw a pair of Mantanani Scops-owl. The Blue-naped Parrot was not observed or heard on Rasa this month. Reynaldo observed three individuals of marine turtles on mangrove entrance to camp on Oct. 4. Less nests and individuals of Rufous Night-heron were noted on roosting site at Panacan 2 on Oct. 19 at 4:42p.m (Fig. 4). A beehive was observed near nest 76 on Oct. 25 (Fig. 4). Other monitored species on Rasa were Nicobar Pigeon, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Tabon Scrubfowl, Western Osprey, Egret sp., Mantanani-Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, Changeable Hawk-eagle, White bellied sea-eagle, Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Copper-throated Sunbird, Palawan Bulbul, Swiftlet sp., Whimbrel, Large-tailed Night-jar, Ashy Drongo, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher/ Black-naped Monarch, Reef Egret, Greater Coucal, Common Koel, Pipits, Emerald Dove, Pied-fantail, Rail, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Asian Glossy Starling, Dollarbird and Zebra Dove.



Figure 3. Wardens team with KFI staff take off to monitor on Rasa (left); Bernito paints plain sheets in preparation of nest flushing (right) ©KFI



Figure 4. Bernito and Loreto measure DBH of Pagatpat *Sonneratia alba* (left) while Edwin assessed the canopy (right), during nest characterization in preparation for next breeding season ©KFI

Release of rescued Philippine Cockatoos

Observations on Angel and Anna, the cockatoos inside hanging aviary on Rasa Island, continued this month. The proposed release for the two will be in the first week of November 2022 with prior preparations and assessment especially on the health status of the birds.



Figure 5. Lucito and Mark weigh and assess health condition of cockatoos in Rasa aviary ©KFI

Vegetation assessment

Vegetation on Rasa is on green state in October 2022 (Fig. 6). Inventoried food-plants on Rasa are fruiting less though the following fruiting trees and vines sufficed: Magtalisay, Balete, Buntot-daga, Tubo-bato, Balindadagat, Tabangaw, Tulang-manok, Lanete, Kanumay and other mangrove species. Flowering ones are Gatasan, Tulang-pagi, Tubo-bato, sp. 2 and mangrove species. Malunggay trees at Panacan and Panacan 2, Narra are fruiting as much as with the previous months except on the two stations in Panacan 2 which are not fruiting this month. Malunggay trees at Villaruz area are still fruiting more abundantly than on other areas.

Three trees of Rotok-rotok, a mangrove species fell due to decomposition on Oct. 25 at southeast Rasa (Fig. 6). This month, frequent precipitation distributed more volume of which on three stations at Panacan, Panacan 2 and Antipuluan than last month.



Figure 6. Green vegetation of coastal and mangrove forest on Rasa Island in October 2022 (top); Mario gathers phenology of food-plant species on Rasa digitally (left bottom); decaying mangroves fell at southeast Rasa (right bottom) ©KFI

B. THREAT OBSERVATION

No adverse human activities observed on Rasa during monitoring. No expansion was noted on lobster fry pens at Borbon and the floating fish cage is still at the area.

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on coconut plantations and marine resources on Rasa. On Oct. 6, four persons collected 3000pcs of copra from C. Batac area in a week while on Oct. 10, five persons gathered 3700pcs of copra at Espinosa area in five days. On Oct. 10, one person harvested 15kgs of mangrove crabs near Alisto and Agui area for three days. Meanwhile, two persons gathered 15kgs of Lato at camp entrance within 3hrs on Oct. 11. Lucito collected 4kgs of mangrove crabs in four days of leaving the traps at B. Batac and Deig area.

KFI wardens and staff maintained the Katala lot at Panacan 2, Narra on Oct. 28, 2022 (Fig. 7). Grasses were trimmed and fence was repaired. Trees were also measured for monitoring. 60% of Malunggay seedlings and cuttings beside the fenced road survived. Malunggay cuttings were also collected in preparation for tree planting on new Barangay Hall and covered court at Barangay Antipuluan. A total of 96 Malunggay cuttings from the council and collected from Panacan 2, and 250 seedlings of Narra, Ipil, *Gyrocarpus* sp., Balindadagat, Malugai and Siar from Katala Institute were planted at Bgy. Antipuluan, Narra on Oct. 29 (Fig. 7).

Anna and Mark resumed IEC with 88 participants at Bgy. Aramaywan, Narra on Oct. 20th (Fig. 9). In the next day, Anna talked with 240 participants at Bgy. Calategas, Narra. Implementation

of Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) was tackled that emphasized on KFI's conservation message "Share a place to live". Hundreds of posters were distributed. The IEC schedules were coordinated with the municipal links of 4Ps in Narra, Palawan.

Mark and Reynaldo joined the team which composed of DENR, LGU, PCG and Narra MPS on installation of buoys around Rasa Island on Oct. 6 (Fig. 10).

Energy Development Corporation (EDC)-BINHI program personnel visited KI and handed three species of wildlings namely *Diospyros transita* (from Brooke's Point), *Embolanthera spicata* (Estrella Village in Narra) and *Barringtonia ridsdalei* (Estrella Village, Narra), to raise in KI nursery on Oct. 7 (Fig. 10). In celebration of 19th Palay Festival in Narra, Palawan, KFI staff joined parade on Oct. 21.



Figure 7. Edwin fixes the fence while Loreto measures trees (above); Collection and hauling of Malunggay cuttings and native seedlings for tree planting at Antipuluan (below); ©KFI



Figure 8. Barangay Antipuluan council, KFI, MENRO and RIWS-PAMO enjoin for tree planting at Antipuluan on Oct. 29th, for the objective of providing food for the cockatoos in Narra, Palawan (above); Mark, Joshuael and Mario collect parameters for monitoring of planted seedlings ©KFI



Figure 9. Barangay Aramaywan community actively participates in the presentation on cockatoo conservation @KFI



Figure 10. Installation of buoys around Rasa (left); Mr. Ronino Gibe shares best ways of potting the wildlings (right) ©KFI

IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

Owners of lobster traps at Borbon, Panacan must be continuously informed to not encroach inside Rasa boundary. Prescriptions for each zonation must be disseminated by PAO and with other PAMB members to encourage more active role in protection. Update on pending cases e.g. establishment of fish corral on Rasa is appreciated. Vigilance as to collection of fossilized Taklobo must continue; 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 Mayor Danao and staff, Vice Mayor Calso Jr., 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 Ma. Teresa V. Ayson for her 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., Plumptre, 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 2019.1. (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.