

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



21

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



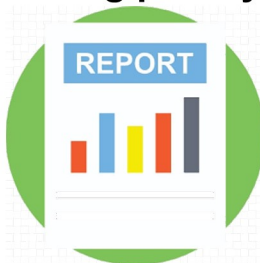
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Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



202

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



1

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



63

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



171

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



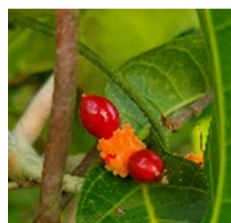
33

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



127

Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



12

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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

NOVEMBER 2022

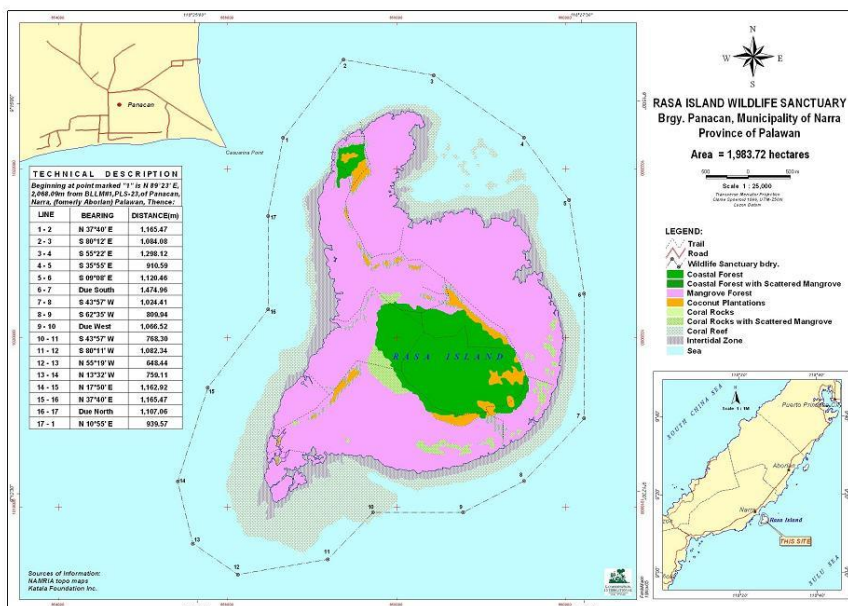
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I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES, CONSERVATION TARGETS AND METHODS

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 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 **202kms** of nest checking, wildlife monitoring and patrol around Rasa. Total of precipitation in November 2022: **406mm** on Rasa, **400mm** at Panacan 2 and **270mm** on Katala Institute, Antipulan.

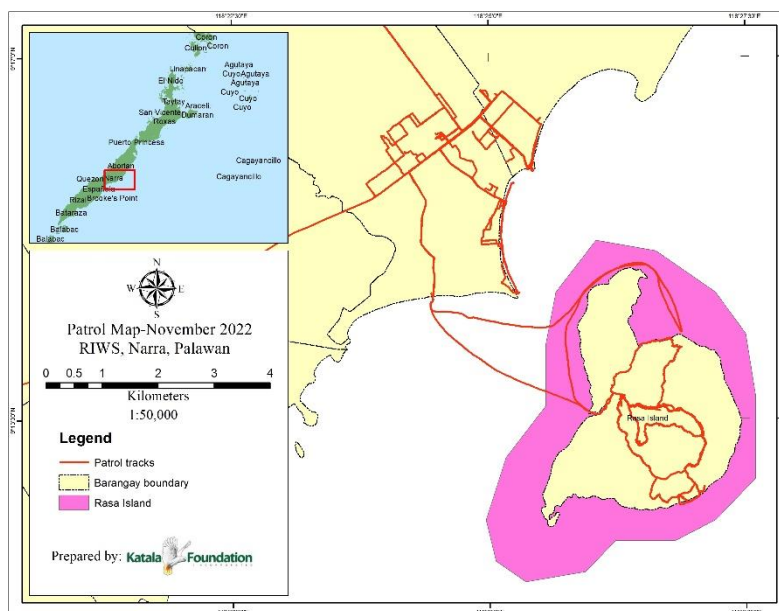


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in November 2022

Beside preparations for the release of Angel (DENR-70-22 from Rasa in 2017) and Anna (from IPPF in 2022) on Rasa and monitoring afterwards, KFI-PCCP wildlife wardens and staff were preparing for the next year's breeding season. In November 2022, 12 nest trees were installed

with plain sheets and eight were updated with parameters. Six camera traps are still deployed on Rasa.

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

171 individuals were counted by Bernito during cockatoos' dispersal at traditional roost site from 5:15-7:00a.m. in Nov. 11. During monitoring, seven to nine cockatoos were noted sleeping on Pagatpat nest trees on west part of Rasa in the second to last week of the November. On Nov. 28, 3ind were observed flying from nest tree to another and were not seen leaving at 6:15p.m. Likewise, 2ind came out from the Pagatpat nest to Dapdap area on Nov. 29 at 5:40a.m. No cockatoos were observed roosting at Borbon and other stations. **127 individuals** dispersed from Rasa to Borbon station from 6:09-7:10a.m., Veronica counted on Nov. 30. Earlier this month, in Nov. 8th, we counted a total of 102ind from Borbon (72ind) and Parco beach (30ind) stations flying from Rasa from 6:18-7:20a.m. While in Nov. 29th, 109ind went from Rasa to mainland, counted at Borbon and Parco beach stations. 84ind went back to Rasa until 8:29a.m. in the same date. During monitoring, no cockatoos were observed at Princess Urduja and Batang-batang. The highest count at Marcelo area was 32ind recorded from 6:30-8:25a.m. in Nov. 26.

Sub-adult cockatoos were observed on mainland this month. Lesser cockatoos were noted foraging in the afternoon at the stations which probably is due to the rains and winds which usually were stronger in the afternoon. Both earliest and latest foraging were recorded at 6:09a.m. and 5:55p.m. at Borbon station.

Besides the Philippine Cockatoo, other species noted in November 2022 were Nicobar Pigeon, Red-headed Flameback, Tabon Scrubfowl, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Egret sp., Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Copper-throated Sunbird, Changeable Hawk-eagle, White bellied sea-eagle, Western Osprey, Mantanani Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, Palawan Bulbul, Green Imperial-pigeon, Reef Egret, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher/ Black-naped Monarch, White-vented Shama, Ashy Drongo, Common Koel, Whimbrel, Large-tailed Night-jar, Rail, Greater coucal, Pipits, Emerald Dove, Asian Glossy Starling, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Dollarbird and Zebra Dove. Bernito saw one individual of *Dendrelaphis cf. caudolineatus* on mangroves on Nov. 22. Monitor Lizards were frequently encountered on Rasa.



Figure 3. Bernito and Loreto mount plain sheets around nest tree to avoid cockatoo predators (left); Simultaneously with the scheduled visit, Bernito with the team updates parameters of nest trees (right) ©KFI



Figure 4. Cockatoos roost on a Pagatpat tree on traditional site (left); foraging cockatoos on malunggay at Damayan Bliss, Panacan 2 (right) ©KFI

Release of rescued Philippine Cockatoos

On Nov. 7th, Angel (DENR-70-22 from Rasa in 2017) and Anna (DENR-131-22 from IPPF in 2022) went free from its pre-release aviary on Rasa. Anna left the aviary first while Angel waited for some wild cockatoos to come and interacted immediately. Angel was not seen after interacting with the wild going to a nest tree in the afternoon of Nov. 7th while Anna was around until Nov. 20th. Monitoring on the two on Rasa and on mainland continued. Bernito heard the distinct call of the two released cockatoos flying with six wild ones at Favila area due coastal forest on Nov. 25 while Mario believed he heard Anna with eight wild cockatoos flying to mangroves on Nov. 26. At the mainland, Danilo noted two cockatoos feeding on malunggay at his station on Nov. 25 at 11:00a.m. The two were flying low and calling. He suspected one of them was Anna and viewed them until they reached Borbon.



Figure 5. Mark and Angeles collect biometrics of birds for release (left); Anna, the cockatoo with blue marks munches on Buntot-daga after leaving the aviary (right) ©KFI

Vegetation assessment

In November 2022, more and frequent torrential rains were recorded than in previous months in Narra (Fig. 6). Some flowers of some important food plants were blown and fell to the ground. The boundary and inner coastal area of Rasa as well as the mangroves exhibit green vegetation. Few leaf litters were observed at coastal areas. Flowering trees and vines on Rasa were Bogo, Tulang pagi, Kasoy-kasoy, Buntot daga, Magtalisay, Binunga, Bago, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species. Fruiting ones were Buntot daga, Tulang pagi, Ginlalid, Kasoy-kasoy, Gindaon, Magtalisay, Beled-beled, Balindadagat, Balete, Tulang Manok, sp. A1, Pagatpat,

Rhizophora sp. and other mangrove species (Fig. 7). On Nov. 23, two trees of Rotok-rotok decomposed and fell (Fig. 7).

Figure 6. Monthly precipitation at three stations: Rasa, KI and Panacan 2 in 2022

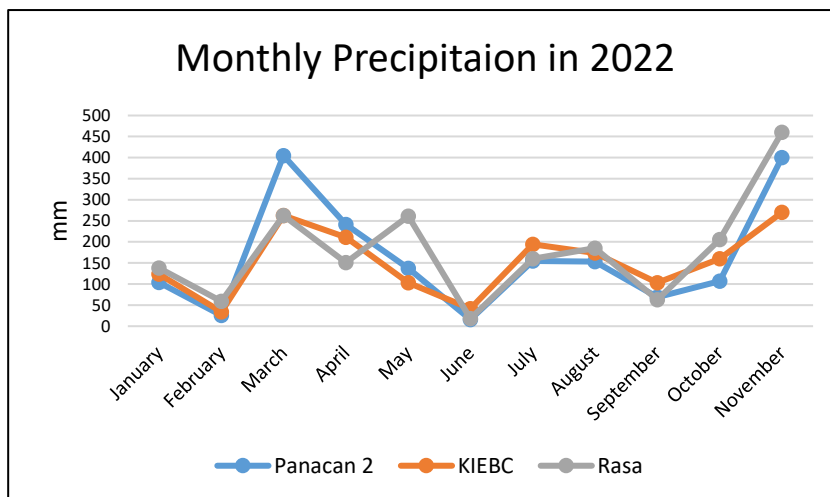


Figure 7. Fruiting Buntot-daga, a vine that provides food for cockatoos (left); Dead Rotok-rotok, a mangrove species fell in Nov. 23 on Rasa (right) ©KFI

B. THREAT OBSERVATION

One Magtalisay tree (DBH=22cm; H= approx. 26m) was found cut in coastal forest on Nov. 7, 2022. The stump was documented and no person was encountered during monitoring. Initial assessment around the vicinity was conducted and this was reported to Protected Area Office.



Figure 8. Cut Magtalisay on Rasa; cut tree with stump is still on the area ©KFI

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on coconut plantations and marine resources on Rasa. On Nov. 4, E. Batac harvested 2gals of honey from Dapdap area in 3hrs. On Nov. 12, two persons gathered 15kgs of lato at mangrove entrance to camp in 4hrs. On Nov. 20, one person collected 10kgs of lato at mangrove entrance to camp for 5hrs. On Nov. 26, four persons gathered 17kgs of lato from tidal flat near Satina area for 3hrs while on Nov. 27, three persons gleaned 10kgs of seashells (sikad-sikad) at tidal flat near Asinan area in 4hrs.

Among the visitors this month were Jemson Baltazar who visited Rasa and encountered wildlife wardens in Nov. 2 and Richard Netherwoods enjoyed the sight of the cockatoos at roosting site in Nov. 21 (Fig. 9). Both were amazed on the cockatoos and the conservation efforts for the species. Conservation International (CI) visited KI in Nov. 4 to get footages of wildlife in the center (Fig. 10). Planted malunggay cuttings and native seedlings at the new barangay hall of Antipuluan were maintained by putting up signages to prevent unattended grazing cattles and goats in the area (Fig. 10).



Figure 9. R. Netherwoods enjoys taking photos of cockatoos at roost site (left) and interacted with wardens at camp site (right) ©KFI



Figure 10. CI takes footages of animals in KI (left); Larry puts signage inhibiting farmers to bring cattle and goats at tree planting site (right) ©KFI

IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The incidence of cut Magtalisay tree is reported to PAO. The trunk is left at the area for monitoring on possible transporter. 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:



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