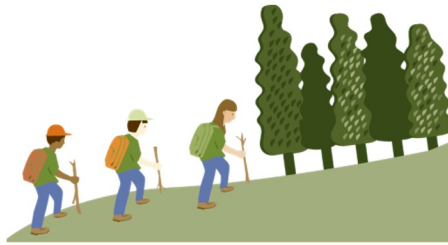


KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY JANUARY 2022 SUMMARY IPPF-PPC, Palawan



16

Bilang ng nagawang patrolya



265.1

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patrolya



84

Kabuuang oras ng patrolya



5

Bilang ng illegal na aktibidades



0

Bilang ng naaresto



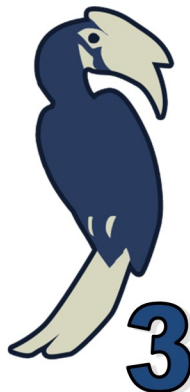
977

Bilang ng halaman sa nursery



73

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala



3

Pinakamataas na grupo ng Talusi na nakita



12

Pinakamataas na bilang ng katala sa kinakainan



8

Bilang ng mga napinsalang puno ng Katala at artificial na mga pugad



Anonymous Donor



PHILIPPINE COCKATOO CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Biodiversity Management Bureau



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KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY IWAHIG PRISON AND PENAL FARM (IPPF)

January 2022

Prepared by:

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

IPPF is part of a larger landscape, the Sulu Sea plain, which comprises the lowlands of central Palawan facing the Sulu Sea and including areas of Puerto Princesa City, and the municipalities of Narra and Aborlan. The area is bordered by the Victoria-Anepahan Range to the west and the Sulu Sea to the east; the northern edge runs roughly along 9° 47' N, the southern along 9° 9' N. Philippine Cockatoos have long been known to persist in the IPPF south of Puerto Princesa City. More recent are flocks of cockatoos from Rasa feeding on the mainland of Narra, and from Iwahig Penal Colony feeding in coastal areas of

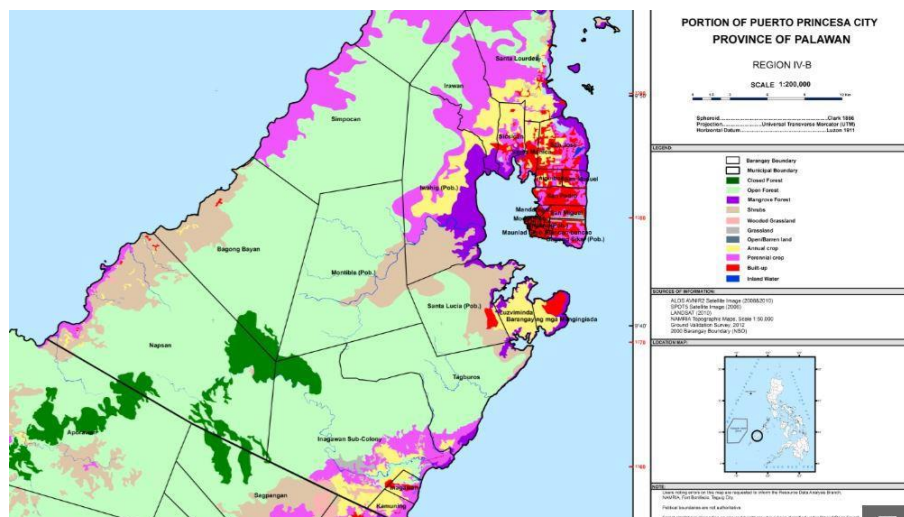


Figure 1. Land use of southern Puerto Princesa, including IPPF according to NAMRIA. Large areas were classified as open forest (bright green signature); this is not in line with observations on site, where large areas of closed forests were recorded particularly in portions of Iwahig, Tagburus (“Zigzag”) and Montible (Source: NAMRIA)

Puerto Princesa City, particularly in the compound of the Western Command (WESCOM) and Bgy. Bancao-Bancao. Large parts of the coastal plains are cultivated, mainly with coconuts and rice paddies, particularly in Narra and Iwahig, where irrigation is available. Extensive areas of disturbed grassland-forest mosaics persist, which are habitats for a surprisingly high number of Palawan endemics. One explanation for this phenomenon could be that the present vegetation resembles that of some periods in the Pleistocene. These areas are used as pastures, but also for the collection of a wide variety of forest products. Grass fires are a regular occurrence and partly the vegetation is adapted to these occurrences (*Antidesma* fire savanna). Extensive evergreen and semi-evergreen lowland forests exist at the foot of the Victoria Anepahan Range, on fossil limestone reefs in Narra and Aborlan, south of the Bay of

Puerto and in the Iwahig Penal Colony. Particularly the latter area is of outstanding conservation importance. All endemic lowland bird species are recorded from the area. Globally threatened species, aside from the cockatoo, include Palawan Peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron napoleonis*, Blue-headed Racquet-tail *Prioniturus platenae*, Palawan Hornbill *Anthracoceros marchei*, Red-headed Flameback *Chrysocolaptes erythrocephalus*, Great Slaty Woodpecker *Mulleripicus pulverulentus*, Falcated Wren-babbler *Ptilocichla falcata*, and Palawan Flycatcher *Ficedula platenae*. Because of the abundance of brackish and freshwater wetlands Iwahig Penal Colony is an important wintering ground for waterbirds, including the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor*.

Conservation Objectives

1. Maintain the species diversity and function of ecosystems and species within Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF).
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. Increased number of Philippine Cockatoo breeding pairs in Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm by at least 10% by 2024 (Baseline: average breeding pairs 2019 to 2021: 9.3).
2. Reduced threats in the area by 50% from 2022 to 2024.
3. Restored at least two hectares of cockatoo breeding and foraging habitats annually by 2024
4. Established a critical habitat for the Philippine cockatoo and other threatened wildlife species within the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm and support the protection of the proposed Montible watershed.

Methods

Deputized 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.

Patrols are coordinated with the concerned barangay, prison farms, protected area office wherever it applies.

II. PATROL TEAM AND EFFORT

The patrol team comprises KFI, PCSDS, IPPF personnel, and wildlife wardens conducted synchronized counting and patrol monitoring. The main areas monitored were foraging areas in the city and the surroundings of the penal farm. The team conducted sixteen patrols and covered **265.1 Km** for January. Please refer to the list of team members on the last page.

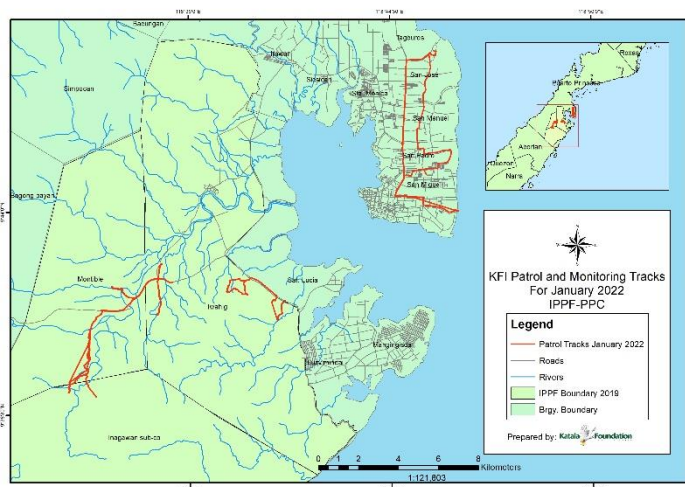


Figure 2. Patrol tracks for January 2022 ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

- *Intensive monitoring on foraging and roosting area continued.* This month, roosting cockatoos were monitored in two roost sites within the penal farm and the city area. The highest recorded count is 73 and 40 in the city and Montible, respectively. At day time (5:50 AM-5:50 PM), cockatoos in the city were observed foraging in Balete, Moringa, Fire tree, and Kapok before dispersing in different parts of the city. Some sightings were observed in Bgy. San Miguel, PPC. At the roost site, we observed that cockatoos struggle against strong winds. There is a drop in the number of roosting cockatoos in the city in mid-January, with 27-48 cockatoos possibly due to breeding season activities. We documented up to 12 individuals in the breeding areas during habitat patrols. We noted that some Taluto, Malabulak, and Banaran are now flowering or fruiting in the city area while Pagatpat fruits are getting scarce. In Montible, cockatoos were observed flying from Malabo Forest crossing Tagtalaba and Bacoco river to Iwahig central to forage on other species of fruiting trees in the area.
- The team conducted synchronized counting of the Philippine cockatoo in established areas within its flight path. We counted 42 and 4 cockatoos in the city and Montible, respectively. No cockatoos were also observed crossing Puerto Bay and Puerto Princesa Airport.
- A five-day nest and habitat monitoring/forest assessment was conducted in Malabo, Tagtalaba, Menor, Sta. Lucia and Luzviminda forest. Fifteen nest trees were visited for the month. Due to the typhoon that devastated the entire island of Palawan last December, five active nest trees and three artificial nest boxes were destroyed. In Montible, the typhoon heavily damaged a vast part of the forest. An estimated 60% of the tree canopy is opened up in the lower portions of the site. This may increase in the upper reaches of the forest, which are more exposed. In Menor and Sta Lucia forests, we documented some cut twigs and feces at the base of the nest tree.
- Meanwhile, the same cockatoo pair from the previous breeding season occupied one nest tree in Malabo. Nest trees in KM 32, Tagtalaba, and Luzviminda forests were also destroyed. There are no signs of occupation yet of the remaining standing nest trees in Luzviminda.
- The team also observed a higher number of foraging cockatoos in the forest of Malabo. While patrolling, we observe 11-12 cockatoos foraging on Pasungan. Some food plants like Karantang is now fruiting in Luzviminda. Two potential nest trees (Kabad and Bayoso) were recorded during the patrol in Sta. Lucia and Luzviminda, respectively.
- *Observation of wildlife and other cavity nesters monitoring.* Three Hornbills were seen foraging in Malabo Forest going to Tagtalaba forest. We also observed 15 Blue-naped parrots, 20 Blue-headed racket-tails. Some notable species observed during the monitoring period were: White-bellied sea eagle, Osprey, Hill myna, Red-tailed green rat snake.

B. THREAT OBSERVATIONS

In the lowland forests within the IPPF, encroachment and clearing of lands for plantation and charcoal production persist, especially in Luzviminda and near the road going Napsan (from km 29 to 35). The team heard chainsaws being operated in the area. There were three individuals collecting Almaciga resin. Slabs of wood (Bayoso) were also seen in the trails of Luzviminda. In Malabo Forest, the team observed a campsite probably done by rattan collectors, one kilometer from one of the nest trees in the area. Remnants of rattan shavings were present in the riverside. In Menor, indications that a poacher recently accessed the identified nest tree through the foot tracks near the river and at the base of the nest tree.

We continue to monitor through our volunteers on site the people passing and gleaning near the cockatoo roosting site. People were advised not to interrupt or flash their lights on the birds. KFI also distributed information materials about the wildlife act.

IV. Other Highlights

KFI's nursery was also devastated by the typhoon. Fences, shades of plants, and even the nipa hut did not survive the onslaught of the typhoon. Meanwhile, seedlings are intact and were sorted out in the nursery. Repairs are ongoing and will be prioritized for the succeeding month

KFI participated in the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) this year together with the DENR-CENRO and the City ENRO. Within IPPF, the two highlights of the count were the three Buff-banded rails and a Slaty-breasted rail.

We also joined DENR-CENRO in this year's roost count of Egrets at the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC), where we counted 44 Great Egrets, 39 Intermediate, 68 Little, 390 white egret sp, and 2,292 Cattle Egrets. We also counted 5 Nankeen Night-Herons.

A poster presentation on the negative impacts of the pandemic to the Philippine Cockatoos breeding within the IPPF area was presented during the 29th Annual Biodiversity Symposium with the theme of "Strategies for Inclusivity in Philippine Biodiversity Conservation" which was organized by the Bioversity Conservation Society of the Philippines. Brian presented the threats observed in the area that had impacts to the breeding success in 2019-2020.

V. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS, AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- During the assessments, chain saw operations were noticed, and it is feared that the temporarily relaxed ban on chain saws to allow for the clearing up of fallen trees is misused to cut standing trees as well for timber poaching purposes. Persistent illegal cutting and encroachment in forest areas must be addressed seriously before it's too late. Our patrols will continue despite challenges, and we hope that law enforcement agencies value patrols as a vital step to prevent destruction and not only to react when damage has been done. Increased patrolling in the sites is necessary to ensure that these regulations are followed. Other risks that also need to be mitigated by presence of patrollers include increased forest encroachment, including creation and widening of logging trails, timber poaching of standing trees, and poaching of cavity-nesters!
- Conditions in Palawan are arid following the storm, and the danger of forest fires is extreme due to the heavy fuel loads on the forest floors. Hence, patrol efforts must be strengthened and intensified along with policies that support these efforts.
- Reconstruction and replenishment of Montible nursery that was heavily affected by the typhoon will be prioritized.
- Poaching of cavity nester and other wildlife species in IPPF persist; camera traps and drone surveys will be conducted to mitigate these threats.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies on and better enforcement of lowland forest protection and conservation must be implemented and sustained, especially within IPPF and the Victoria Anepa'am Mountain Range (VAMR)! Lowland forests harbor more biodiversity than montane forests; thus, they should be protected against encroachment and further destruction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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To all those who, in one way or the other, had contributed to the achievement of our shared vision for the conservation of biodiversity in the IPPF, great thanks!

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Figure 3. The previously closed-canopy area in Montible is now open and dry with felled trees including identified nest trees and artificial nest boxes installed ©VAbendanJr, KFI



Figure 4. Remnants of the illegal cutting and tracks of hauled trees in Luzviminda (top photos). Rattan collected from Malabo forest (mid-left), cockatoos foraging on Pasungan in Malabo forest, and snapshots from the current condition of KFI's native tree nursery in Montible sub-prison. (bottom) ©VAbendanJr, KFI