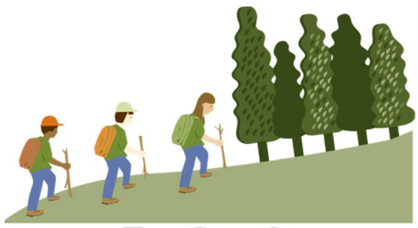
KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

December 2021 SUMMARY
IPPF-PPC, Palawan

6

Bilang ng nagawang patrolya



128

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patrolya

24.3

Kabuuang oras ng patrolya

0

Bilang ng illegal na aktibidades

0

Bilang ng naaresto

977

Bilang ng halaman sa nursery

97

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala

4

Pinakamataas na grupo ng Talusi na nakita

13

Pinakamataas na bilang ng katala sa kinakainan

Katala Foundation INCORPORATED

ZGAP FbP SPS BEAUVAL NATURE LORO PARQUE FUNDACIÓN WE CARE CHESTER ZOO ACT FOR WILDLIFE

ICTSI Foundation, Inc. Anonymous Donor Freundeskreis Zoo Landau e.V. Stadtholding Landau in der Pfalz Zoo Landau in der Pfalz LACOLA PARROTS INTERNATIONAL ZOO HEIDELBERG

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Biodiversity Management Bureau BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS

PHILIPPINE COCKATOO CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

09675176935 048-434-7693 kficacatua2016@gmail.com

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

December 2021

Prepared by:

Matt Brian P. Ong, Vicente Abendan Jr., Peter Widmann and Indira D.L. Widmann

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 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

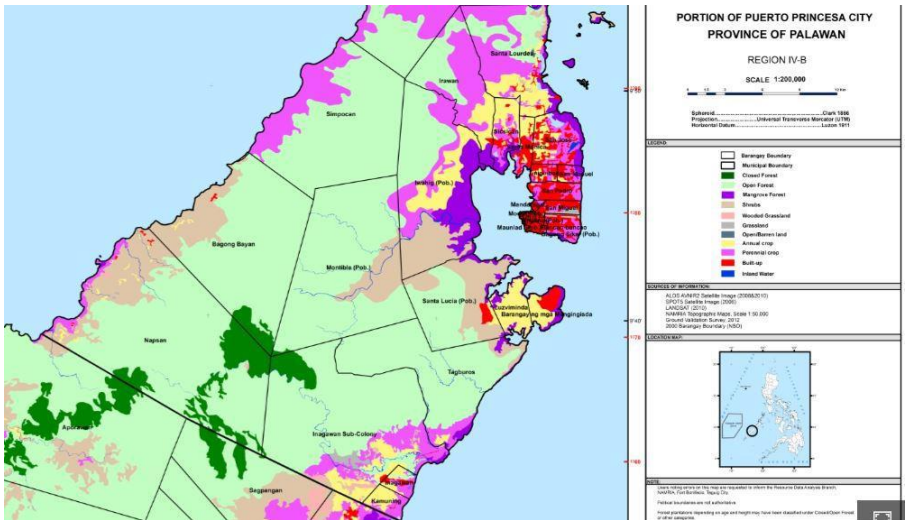


Figure 1. Land use of southern Puerto Princesa, including IPPF according to NAMRIA. Large areas were classified as open forest (bright green signature); this is not in line with observations on site, where large areas of closed forests were recorded particularly in portions of Iwahig, Tagburus ("Zigzag")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

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. To increase Philippine Cockatoo population within Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) by at least 3% 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 etc. in Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm from 2018-2021.
3. Reduce threats in the area by 50% from 2018 to 2021.
4. Establish critical habitat for Philippine Cockatoo and other threatened wildlife species within Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm.

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 seven patrols and covered a total of **128 Km** for December. Please refer to the list of team members on the last page.

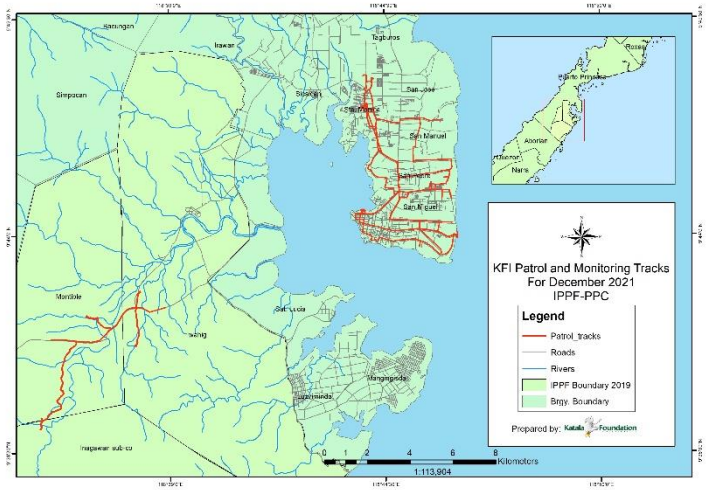


Figure 2. Patrol tracks for December 2021 ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS
A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

- *Intensive monitoring on foraging and roosting area continued.* Roost and synchronized counting of the Philippine cockatoo in the city were done for this month. The highest recorded count is 97 and 5 in the city and Montible respectively. At day time, (5:30 am-5:20pm) cockatoos in the city were observed foraging on Pagatpat, Balete, Moringa, Fire tree and Bani before dispersing in different parts of the city. 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. Meanwhile, some sightings were observed in San Miguel, WESCOM, San Pedro, and Libis. Cockatoos were also observed having a hard time perching in their roost site in the city due to strong winds with light to moderate rains, affecting their flight pattern during the first week of the month.
- A two-day nest and habitat monitoring was conducted in Malabo,Tagtalaba and Menor forest. Six nest trees were visited and indications of occupation like cut-twigs and feces were observed in two nest trees. There were cockatoos observed on nest trees with fledglings from this year. Continued monitoring for all active and inactive nest trees will be done in the suceeding months.
- On the other hand, KFI counted more than ten trees that had fallen due to strong winds from December 8-9, while traversing the trails of Malabo and Montible Forest. All active nest trees were still erect but some dead nest trees are feared to also fall because of Typhoon Odette (Rai) that recently hit Northen and Central Palawan. Damage assessment and inventory of fallen trees will be held next month.

Figure 3. Nest trees with three Philippine cockatoos (Left) and feces that was observed in the base of a nest tree. ©KFI

- *Observation of wildlife and other cavity nesters monitoring.* Four Hornbills were seen in flying in Malabo Forest going to KM 32. Other parrot species like Blue-naped parrot and Blue-headed racket tail were also seen. Some notable species observed during the monitoring period were: Palawan flycatcher, Hair-Crested Drongo, Palawan flowerpecker, Olive-backed Sunbird, Pale Spiderhunter, White-bellied Sea eagle, Common Sandpiper, Grey-Tailed Tattler, Pacific Reef-Heron, Eurasian Curlew, Whimbrel, Common Iora, Kingfishers, Red junglefowl, White-vented Shama, Asian fairy-bluebird, Palawan Peacock-Pheasant, Black-naped Oriole, Tailorbirds, Bulbuls non-avian species observed: Squirrels, Palawan Stink Badger, Palawan bearded pig, Paradise tree Snake.

B. THREAT OBSERVATIONS

For this month no threats were observed in the city area aside from the people that were seen passing and gleaning near the cockatoo roosting site. People were advised not to interrupt or flash their light on the birds. KFI also distributed information materials about the wildlife act. While in the lowland forests within the IPPF Illegal encroachment and clearing of lowland forest is visibly alarming especially near the road going west coast (from km 29 to 35). Along national highway going west coast, a signage saying tribal hall was seen but we could not locate the area; most probably this is within the claim of Mr. Lumis near Malinao River. Tracks of motorcycle were also observed in the area indicating that vehicles were in and out of the place.

IV. Other Highlights

A workshop with the USAID-SAFE Water, DENR, PCSD, PPCWD, LGU, and other concerned offices was conducted this month and KFI participated in. The goal is to summarize and consolidate all stakeholder's contribution for the formulation of Montible Watershed Management Plan. Goals, objectives, management plans, strategies, activities and projects from different offices were discussed during the workshop. All other agenda and activities that were held during the two-year formulation of said management plan were also presented.

As token for another yet successful breeding season despite challenges and in the spirit of Christmas, KFI distributed grocery packs to our city volunteers, volunteer inmates, and wildlife wardens.

Figure 4. Snapshots during the workshop (Top-left) a signage of a tribal hall (Top-Right) and distribution of giftpacks to the volunteers (Bottom). ©KFI

V. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS, AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- The continued and persistent destruction of lowland forests in these parts of Puerto Princesa is alarming and growing, and yet concrete actions are missing from authorities e.g. hunting of the Hornbill. The IPPF is also doing its rounds and reporting and needs further assistance on law enforcement.
- Availability of uniformed personnel during the patrols in Luzviminda and Sta. Lucia could help in apprehending violators within the IPPF area.
- The COVID 19 restrictions should not be a reason for lax law enforcement. These times more than ever, we think enforcement should be thoroughly carried out because the violators are also using the same reason. We will continue our monthly patrols so long as we are able and allowed. We follow minimum health protocols.

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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful and appreciative to our partners from the DENR-CENRO Puerto Princesa City, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS), Western Command, and Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) for their unrelenting support.

We also appreciate the help of CTOIII Earl Jude A. Arias and CSupt. Joel R. Calvelo for his leadership from the IPPF.

We also want to thank those community members who send us their cockatoo sightings in the city.

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!

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.