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

9

Bilang ng nagawang patrolya

65

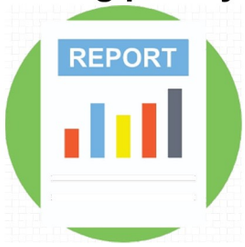
Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patrolya

22

Kabuuang oras ng patrolya

0

Bilang ng illegal na kailangang aksyunan



0

Bilang ng mga issues na nai-report sa PAMO

0

Bilang ng naaresto

225

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala

34

Bilang ng ibang uri ng ibon na nakita

46

Pinakamataas na bilang ng Katala sa kinakainan

9

Uri ng halamang namumunga

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

DECEMBER 2021

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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 km^2 land area situated in the Sulu Sea, just offshore of the Municipality of Narra, Palawan, Philippines (Fig. 1). About 1.75 km^2 are covered with coastal forest, mangrove (5.60 km^2), cultivated areas (predominantly coconut; 0.39 km^2), 0.60 km^2 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.

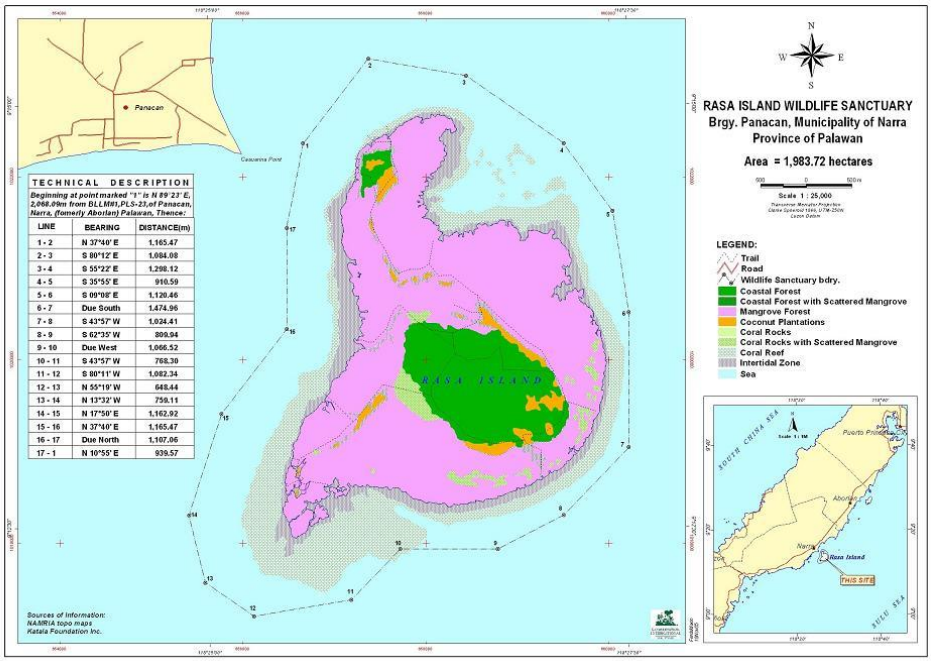

Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

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 December 2021, 54 nest trees were visited and checked for occupation of cockatoos with 34 with early signs of occupation. Presence of fresh and old cut twigs and feces were observed around nest trees. 1 to 8 cockatoos were observed around during nest checking. Nest characterization resumed on this month by the team. Seven nest trees were characterized and important parameters were collected. Monitoring for this month covered **65kms**. Total precipitation in December 2021 was: **254mm** on Rasa, **305mm** on mainland.

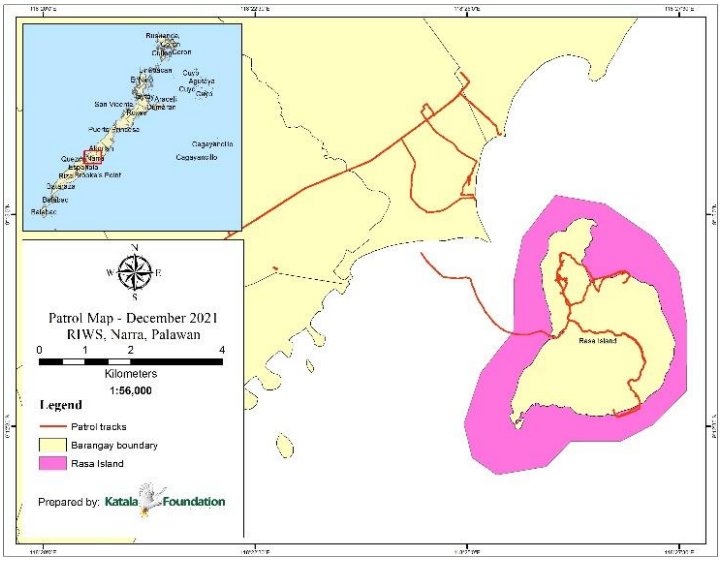

Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in December 2021.

Figure 3. Mario and Edwin collecting nest tree parameters. ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Lucito counted **225 individuals** at traditional roost site on Dec. 17. It started to disperse at 6:02am and cockatoos completely left the site at 6:10 am. During the synchronized counting on Dec 16, Lucito recorded 207ind from 5:39-5:58 pm. No cockatoos were observed roosting at Borbon, Panacan. Strong waves caused by amihan limited roost counts for this month.

The number of foraging cockatoos on mainland continue to drop with **46 individuals** recorded on Dec. 10 from 7:34-9:04 am at Borbon station, returning to Rasa from Panacan and Panacan 2. Additionally, 24 individuals were the highest recorded count at Panacan pier on Dec. 27 from 6:25-8:45 am while 10 individuals were the highest of Monico's records in Princess Urduja. Moreover, highest foraging record at Marcelo area was 14ind on Dec. 20, foraging time from 6:15-6:58 am. Several Malunggay trees particularly in Panacan were damaged due to strong wind brought by the recent typhoon. This entails that cockatoos might go farther in search for food in mainland. Earliest flight of Cockatoos to mainland for this month at 6:21 am while earliest return to Rasa during afternoon at 4:50pm at Borbon station.

Noted species in December 2021 were Tabon Scrubfowl, Red-headed Flameback, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Spotted Wood-owl, Mantanani Scops-owl, Nicobar Pigeon, Western Osprey, Egret sp., Changeable Hawk-eagle, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Reef Egret, Whimbrel, Common tern, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Swiftlet sp., Pied fantail, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Copper-throated sunbird, Large-tailed Night-jar, White-vented Shama, Ashy Drongo, Greater Coucal, Pipits, Common Koel, Asian Glossy Starling, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Emerald Dove, Dollarbird, and Zebra Dove. This month, Monitor Lizard was also frequently encountered.

On Dec. 7, Bernito observed approximately 5000 individuals of roosting flying fox at Villarias area mangrove. Mario noted 2ind of Spotted Wood-owl on Dec. 6 and on Dec. 7 he also recorded 2ind of Mantanani Scops-owl calling and perching on coconut at his area. Reynaldo observed 3 individuals of Blue-headed Racquet-tail calling and perching on pagatpat at Deig area on Dec. 14.

Vegetation assessment

For this month, mangrove and coastal forests as well as its boundaries exhibit greener vegatation cover. However, during the surge of Typhoon Odette (Rai) several branches of trees fell off while some were uprooted but only caused minor damage in the camp. A lot of leaf litters along the trail also noticed after the typhoon. Malugai wildlings is also abundant on this month. Fruiting trees and vines were Buntot daga, Tulang pagi, Pagatpat, Kalampinay, Lomo-lomo, Magtalisay, Binunga, Balete, *Rhizophora* sp. And other mangrove species. Flowering trees: Magtalisay, Gatasan, Barenben, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.

Figure 4. Greenish vegetation inside of Rasa and Malugai wildlings (top). Fallen tree branches at camp house after the typhoon (bottom). ©KFI

THREAT OBSERVATIONS

Existence of floating fish cage is still monitored at 20m away from *09°14'15" N, 118°25'15" E* while lobster traps are at 20m away from *09°14'35.7" N, 118°25'36.9" E* PA boundary.

Figure 5. Floating fish cage near old trident pier on Dec. 15

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On Dec. 5, Jun and Bong Esteban gathered 4kgs of mangrove crabs at Panagution area for 3 hours.

Wardens are continued working on the completion of the hatchling area on Rasa Island, with few things lacking like the installation of tinted mirror and doors. Inventory of equipment was done on this month.

We also distributed our custom made Christmas card to our local partners (schools, groups) and municipal offices and barangays in Aborlan and Narra.

Figure 6. Improvements on construction of hatchling area on Rasa. ©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 BATAC, MARIO BATAC, LUCITO DANGIS, Veronica Marcelo, Danilo Villaruz, Monico Beleg and Antonio Marcelo.

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