

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

May 2022 SUMMARY

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



40

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



215

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



120

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



110

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



35

Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



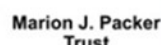
101

Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



7

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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

MAY 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.

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).

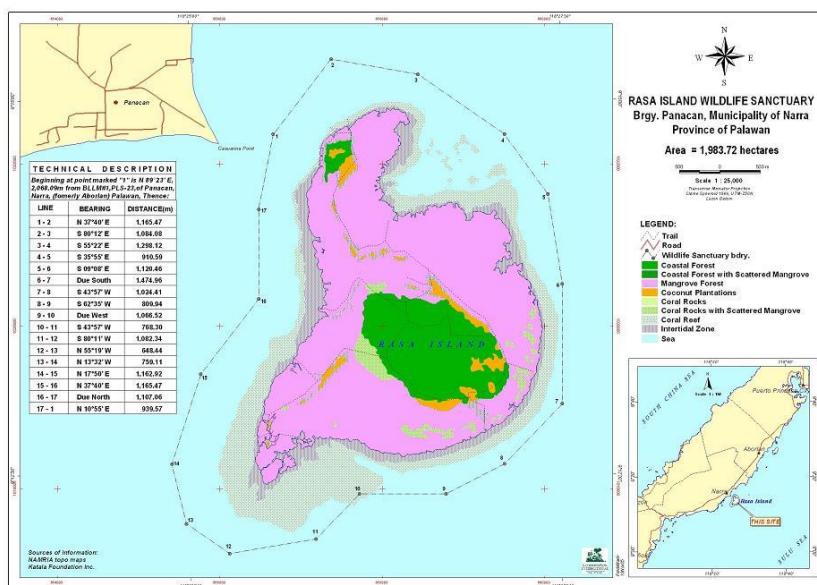


Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

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. No other nests had mites infestation in May 2022 besides two hatchlings from nest tree on southeast Rasa had mites on May 26th which were immediately treated. One of the two hatchlings on nest tree on northwest of Rasa mangroves has small lump on stomach though the hatchling does not feel hurt (Fig. 3). Endoscope was used for detection of eggs and hatchlings though some nest trees are still hard to check because of placement of chamber and cavities inside. Data loggers are checked regularly. Lobster fry at Borbon, Panacan adjacent to Rasa Island rests as southwest monsoon approaches. No expansion recorded. Three teams of wardens on Rasa covered **215kms** of nest checking, wildlife monitoring and patrol around Rasa. Total of precipitation in May 2022: **261mm** on Rasa, **137mm** on mainland.

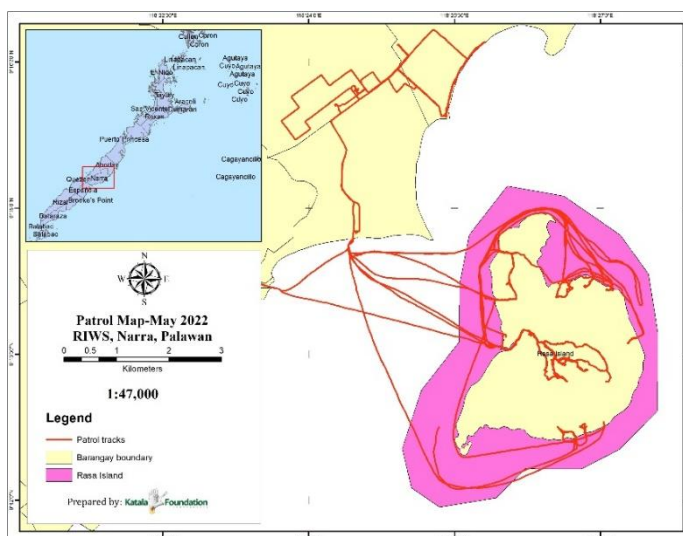


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in May 2022



Figure 3. Loreto climbs to check on nest tree (left) meanwhile Mark and Edwin bands hatchlings (right) ©KFI



Figure 4. Cockatoos continue to cut twigs of nest tree *Bogo Garuga floribunda* (left); A lump was noticed on one of hatchlings on western Rasa (right) ©KFI

Wardens worked on the extension of camp site through roofing the outside part but is only done in between of nest checking. Meanwhile the new Katala fiberglass boat is nearing its final completion and was tested for its seaworthiness on May 21.

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

As of May 30, 2022, 67 total cockatoo eggs were recorded on Rasa of which 31 hatched. 12 hatchlings were banded while two fledged (incl in total hatchlings) this month. 36 eggs and 14 hatchlings failed. 33 eggs were lost to natural predation by snakes, rats and monitors while others were either rotten or with cracks. Hatchlings on the other hand were lost to natural predation especially against monitors and snakes and accipiter. This month, 63 nest trees were visited on Rasa Island. 38 nest trees are occupied including Gatasan nest tree. During nest visits, we encountered six cockatoos, the highest number recorded around nest trees.

This month, Reynaldo recorded **110 cockatoo individuals** at traditional roost site on May 31 from 5:30-6:15am while 104 individuals were counted on May 30 from 6:00-6:37pm. During synchronised counting, cockatoos were still observed roosting on nest trees and no cockatoo was observed sleeping at Borbon. **101 individuals** were the highest recorded cockatoos at Borbon station crossing from Rasa to mainland from 5:50-8:16am. Although many cockatoos were observed crossing from Rasa to mainland, less cockatoos visited foraging site in Panacan 2 starting third week of the month. 35ind were the highest count recorded in foraging area in

Panacan 2. During our timed count in May 6 in the morning, Veronica counted 44ind crossing from Rasa to Borbon from 5:59-7:50am while Mark counted 18ind flying from Rasa to Antipuluan from 6:24-7:01am. Like in the previous months, less cockatoos were still observed crossing in the afternoon. On the other hand, more cockatoos foraged on mainland in the same month of 2021 than this year's month. Earliest cockatoos' flight to mainland was at 5:51am while the latest flight to Rasa was 6:10pm recorded at Borbon station. Cockatoos were still observed around foraging site between 9:00am-3:00pm.

Besides Philippine Cockatoo, we noted the following bird species on Rasa in May 2022: Tabon Scrubfowl, Blue-headed Racquet-tail (BHRT), Green Imperial-Pigeon, Red-headed Flameback/ Woodpecker, Nicobar Pigeon, Spotted Wood-owl, Western Osprey, Egret sp., Common Tern, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Great-billed Heron, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher/ Black-naped Monarch, Whimbrel, Sunbird sp., Pink-necked Green-Pigeon, Fruit-dove sp., Large-tailed Night-jar, Common Koel, Rufous Night-heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Reef Egret, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Ashy Drongo, Greater Coucal, Pipit, Emerald Dove, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Asian Glossy Starling, Dollarbird and Zebra Dove. Monitor Lizard and the only Blue-naped Parrot on island were frequently encountered. On May 1 at 4:25pm, Loreto noted one Green Imperial-Pigeon flew from mangrove and spotted nest with one egg from where the bird left. This month, beehive was still observed hanging on nest 51. Reynaldo saw 1ind of snake crawling on rocks near camp on May 9. Loreto also saw one marine turtle swimming and submerging on May 11 near mangrove entrance to camp site.



Figure 5. Nest of Green Imperial-Pigeon on southeast Rasa) ©KFI

Vegetation assessment

Coastal as well as its boundaries and mangrove forests on Rasa exhibit green vegetation in May 2022. Leaf litter are less dense. Fruiting trees and vines are Pagatpat (dominant), Siar (dominant), Kalampinay, Gatasan, Balindadagat, Balete, vine sp., Rhizophora sp. And other mangrove species. Flowering trees and vines while Pagatpat, Kalampinay, Ceriops sp., *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.

B. THREAT OBSERVATION

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On May 20, three persons collected 16kgs of mangrove crab at Alisto area for three days. On May 27, one person gathered 17kgs of mangrove crab at Kaburihan area for three days.

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. On May 20, five persons collected 500kgs from B. Batac area for seven days. On May 23, two persons started gathering coconut from Villarias area. On May 27, one person started gathering coconut on Dapdap area. On May 29, one

person collected 800pcs of copra from Dapdap area in a day. On May 30, three persons collected 450kgs of copra at Deig area in six days.



Figure 6. Green vegetation inside Rasa Island (left); Unripened Kalampinay, cockatoo food on northern Rasa (right)) ©KFI

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

International World Parrot Day was celebrated online on Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) Facebook page. Singaporeans, Palawan students and young leaders participated on a talk with three resource speakers that included our Conservation Champion, Indira Widmann of Katala Foundation. A video on the recovery of Philippine Cockatoo after Typhoon Odette was also watched on PCCP Fb page.

Dr. Emilia Lastica, DVCS Chair in UPLB CVM with Nancy Dimayacyac, veterinarian intern conducted In-House Workshop: Wildlife Rescue and Release Protocols on May 12-13, 2022. Katala Institute staff and Protected Area Management Office staff joined the 2-day lecture and practice on sample collection and processing.

Two caretakers from Apis lot at Bgy. Cabigaan, Aborlan sent herbarium specimens for identification, wildlings and seeds to Katala Institute for germination for reforestation.



Figure 7. KFI In-house Workshop on Wildlife and Release protocol) ©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. Update on pending cases e.g. fish corral 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 BATAK, MARIO BATAK, LUCITO DANGIS, Veronica Marcelo, Danilo Villaruz, Monico Beleg and Antonio Marcelo.

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