

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



21

Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



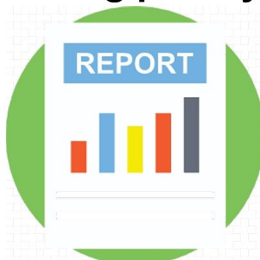
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Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



397

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



69

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



225

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



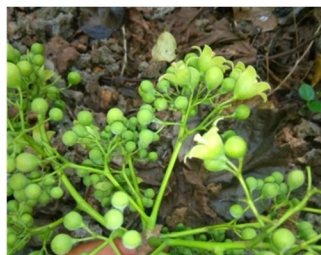
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Bilang ng ibang uri ng
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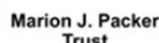
63

Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



8

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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

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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.

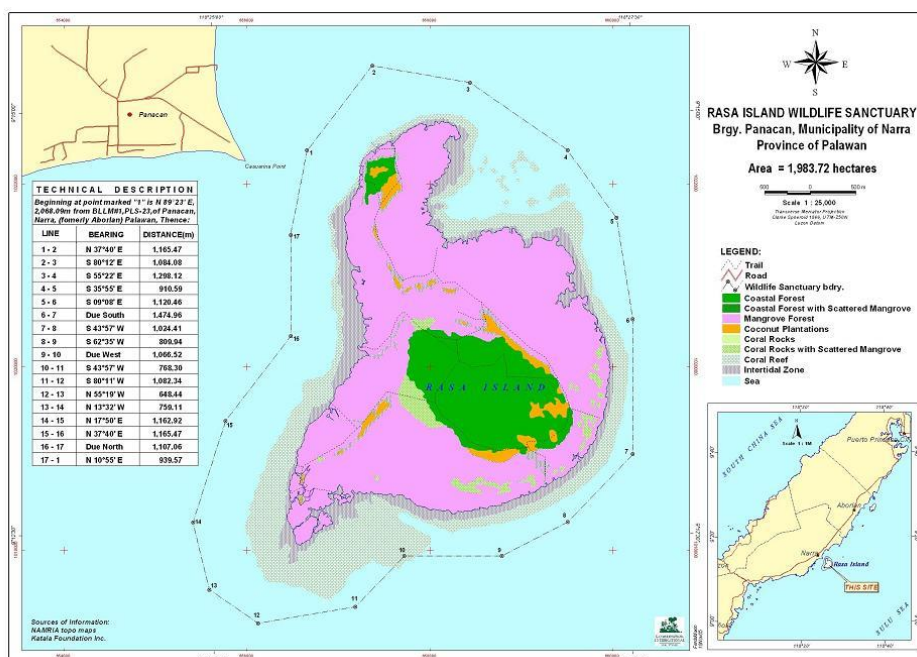


Figure 1. Landuse map of Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Narra, Palawan, Philippines

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. Stabilized number of Philippine Cockatoo breeding pairs on Rasa Island and vicinity by 2024 (Baseline: average breeding pairs from 2019 to 2021: 33.0).
2. Conducted weekly patrol and permanent presence of wildlife wardens with daily reports during breeding season per year.
3. Increased at least 20 percentage points in KAP survey results by 2024.
4. Rehabilitated at least one hectare per year through reforestation or enrichment planting within cockatoo foraging area.
5. Monitored and reduced 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

Three teams of wardens visited 79 nest trees and two potential nest trees. 44 nest trees showed signs of occupation mainly the ones occupied last year. One of the two potential nest trees, the Gindaon exhibits no signs of occupation while the Gatasan shows signs. No cockatoo egg was still recorded in our last checking in February 2022. Six camera traps were deployed on Rasa randomly. Simultaneously, data loggers were regularly checked during nest checking schedules. Our monitoring on Rasa and mainland covered **397kms.** Total of precipitation in February 2022: **59mm** on Rasa, **26mm** on mainland.

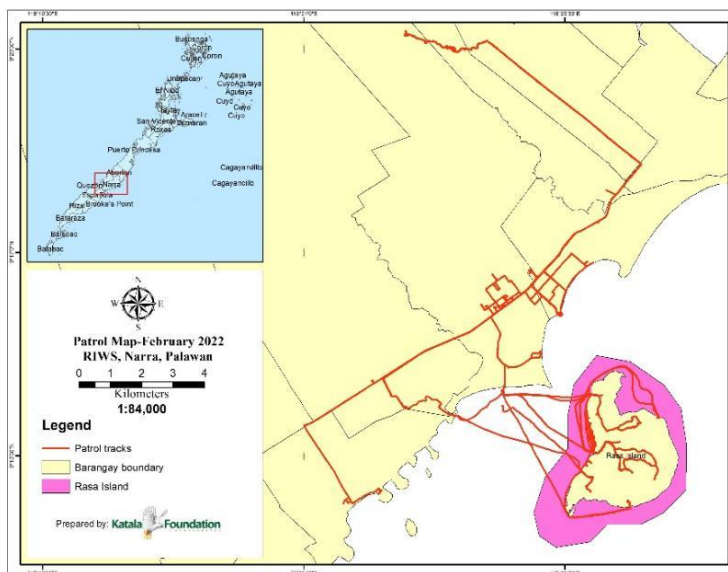


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in February 2022



Figure 3. Reynaldo checks on nest tree while Lucito observes on cockatoos and other wildlife around (right) ©KFI



Figure 4. Some indications of cockatoo visits: feces on ground or leaves under the nest (left) and cockatoo food left on ground (right) ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

Frequently, as breeding season approaches, wardens observed cockatoos guarding on nest holes, nibbling on leaves on nest trees, biting and cutting twigs and feeding sub-adult cockatoos. During our visits, three nests had the highest noted number of cockatoos around with six individuals.

Loreto counted **225 individuals** at the traditional roost site alone on Feb. 16, from 6:03-6:48pm. Moreover, in one of our timed counts, Lucito recorded 178ind in the morning of Feb. 4th on traditional roost site. No roosting cockatoos recorded at Borbon during our synchronized counts except at 6:48pm on Feb. 4 where 20ind rested on coconut trees. These cockatoos could not cross back to Rasa because of strong wind. Meanwhile, Veronica checked at Borbon at 5:40am on Feb. 5 yet no cockatoos were around anymore. Wardens observed sleeping cockatoos on nest trees from boardwalk and from mangrove entrance to camp.

63 individuals were recorded foraging and going back from Borbon to Rasa on Feb. 4 at 4:45-6:30pm. Like in other previous months, more cockatoos were still noted taking the Borbon route to Rasa this February since strong winds were still observed. During our timed counts on Feb. 10, 60 cockatoos went back to Rasa in the afternoon, recorded at Borbon station while there was none at Antipuluan. Cockatoos were observed struggling to go back to Rasa.

Lesser cockatoos were foraging to mainland this month compared to foraging cockatoos last year in the same month that might be affected by strong winds and food availability on Rasa and mainland. In Feb. 2022, Marcelo area recorded 17ind as highest number foraging on Feb. 20 in the morning. Cockatoos' flight to mainland in February 2022: Earliest 6:20am and latest 6:49pm recorded at Borbon station.

In February 2022, other noted species on Rasa were Red-headed Flameback, Tabon Scrubfowl, Blue-headed Racquet-tail, Nicobar Pigeon, Mantanani Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher, Great-billed Heron, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Western Osprey, Egret sp., Changeable Hawk-eagle, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Rufous Night-heron, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Common Tern, White-collared Kingfisher, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, Whimbrel, Sunbird sp., Green Imperial-Pigeon, Quail, White-vented Shama, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Emerald Dove, Common Koel, Greater Coucal, Large-tailed Night-jar, Reef Egret, Ashy Drongo, Asian Glossy Starling, Dollarbird, Pipit, Swiftlet sp. and Zebra Dove. Monitor Lizard is frequently encountered on Rasa while Blue-naped Parrot was not observed this month.

Bernito observed 6ind of Pied Imperial-Pigeon foraging on Buri at Kaburiah area on Feb. 2 and one Reticulated Python (L=5ft; C=30cm) on Feb. 5. Reynaldo noticed snake crawling on coastal forest near old campsite on Feb. 7 and two more individuals of Reticulated Python on coralline rocks near camp on Feb. 23 (Fig. 5). He also recorded approximately 1,000ind of flying fox hanging on mangroves at Kabaguan area on Feb. 13.



Figure 5. Noted at Borbon station, cockatoos struggle to go back to Rasa (left); Reticulated Python on ground near camp on Rasa on Feb. 23

Vegetation assessment

Boundary and inner coastal forests of Rasa island remain green in February 2022 (Fig. 6). Fruiting trees and vines are Taluto as most abundant, Ginlalid, Tulang-pagi, Balete, Kasuy-kasoy, Barenben, Buntot-daga, Gatasan, Piagaw, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species. Flowering trees and vines are Taluto, Ginlalid, Kasuy-kasoy, Guba-ay, Piagaw, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.



Figure 6. Boundary of coastal forest near coconut areas (left) and inner coastal forest (right) depict green state on Rasa in February 2022 ©KFI



Figure 7. Taluto (left) and Tulang Pagi (right) yield food for cockatoos and other bird species on Rasa in February 2022 ©KFI

B. THREAT OBSERVATION

No adverse human activities observed on Rasa during monitoring. The floating fish cage is still on its last location. We keep on monitoring the lobster fry pens at Borbon and there is no expansion noted during monitoring.

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. No adverse human activities observed during visits. On Feb. 6, two persons collected 250kgs of copra from Satina area in five days. On Feb. 8, seven persons gathered 1000kgs of copra at Villarias area for 18 days. On Feb. 14, three persons gathered 300kgs of copra at R. Deig area for six days. On Feb. 15, two persons gathered 70kgs of copra from B. Batac area in two days. On Feb. 20, six persons collected 1,500kgs of copra from Villarias area for one month. On Feb. 21, three persons gathered 100kgs of copra on Rasa for four days. On Feb. 27, three persons gathered 300kgs of copra from Panaguition area in 4hrs while another person was observed gathering copra at Villanueva area. On Feb. 28, two persons collected 600kgs of copra at Deig area for 15 days. On Feb. 20, grasses were pruned at Villarias area.

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On Feb. 3, Jhun Dela Cruz fished near tidal flat at Satina area. On Feb. 22, four persons gleaned 25kgs of Bakalan (bivalves) on tidal flat near Satina area in 4hrs.

PCCP Fb page features video and press release on **“Wild love for Wild life”**, the theme for this love month and to highlight the impacts to forests and wildlife caused by Typhoon Odette. As to date, these features have a reach of 4,361 and 43 shares.

On Feb. 13, Katala Institute (KI) gave seedlings to Mr. Carlo James De Guzman for rehabilitation of area at Mariwara, Princess Urduja (Fig. 6).

On Feb. 16, wardens' boats were registered to the Municipal Agriculture Office in preparation for processing of Mayor's Permits.

On Feb. 21, Anna and Mark presented to Barangay Councils of Bgy. Elvita and Antipuluan the Nature-based solutions for Tuas Watershed (Taritien River) in Narra, Palawan. Wardens prepared wood clamps for specimen collection for herbarium.



Figure 8. Mr. De Guzman received seedlings at Katala Institute for rehabilitation of area at Mariwara, Princess Urduja (left); Presentation of Tuas Watershed management with Barangay Councils of Bgy. Elvita and Antipuluan on Feb. 21 (right)

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

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