

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

AUGUST 2022 SUMMARY

IPPF-PPC, Palawan



4

Bilang ng nagawang patrolya



54.07

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patrolya



14.23

Kabuuang oras ng patrolya



3

Pinakamataas na bilang ng ilegal na gawain na naobserba



0

Bilang ng naaresto



1662

Bilang ng halaman sa nursery



45

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala



1

Pinakamataas na grupong Talusi na nakita



15

Pinakamataas na bilang ng katala sa kinakainan



09675176935

048-434-7693

kficacatua2016@gmail.com



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

August 2022

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. Banca-Banca. 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,

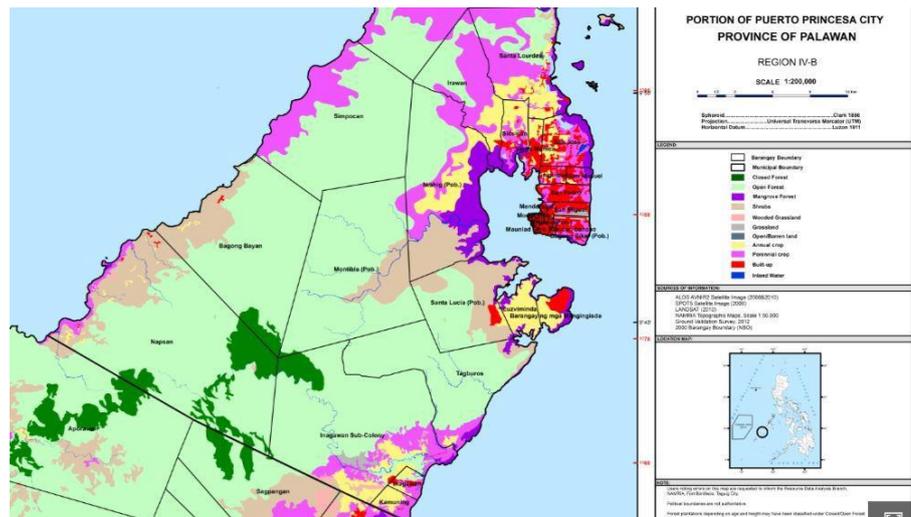


Figure 1. Land use of southern Puerto Princesa, including IPPF according to NAMRIA. Large areas were classified as open forest (bright green signature); this is not in line with observations on site, where large areas of closed forests were recorded particularly in portions of Iwahig, Tagburus (“Zigzag”)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

particularly in the compound of the Western Command (WESCOM) and Bgy. Banca-Banca. 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 them 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 composed of KFI, DENR, IPPF personnel, and wildlife wardens conducted a two-day nest, habitat, roosting, and foraging areas monitoring within the city, breeding habitat, and the surroundings of the penal farm. The team covered a total of **54.07 km in August**. Please refer to the list of team members on the last page.

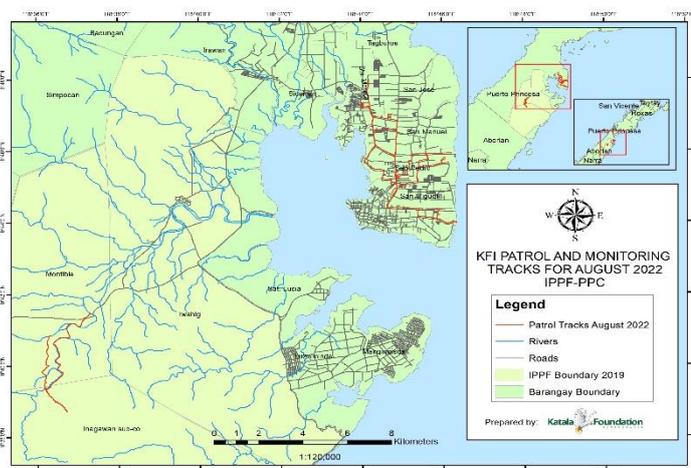


Figure 2. Patrol tracks for August 2022 ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

- *Intensive monitoring in foraging and roosting areas continued.* The team conducted roost monitoring in the city and the penal farm's surroundings. The highest count in the city was 45, while in Montible, no roosting cockatoos were observed at the traditional roosting site. Concerned citizens also reported some sightings through our social media page. Cockatoos were observed in Malvar area going to Hartman beach and KFI's volunteer also reported some sightings of foraging cockatoos in Camella homes and other parts of the city. Meanwhile, in Montible, cockatoos were observed flying in Malabo and Menor Forest, crossing the Bacoco river, and going to Iwahig central to forage.
- *Nest and habitat monitoring in Montible.* A two-day nest and habitat monitoring were conducted in Malabo Forest on August 30-31. The team noted that all hatchlings of cavity nesters have already fledged except for the last hatchling of the Philippine cockatoo that was banded the previous month. The cockatoo was found dead in the nest chamber. Emaciation and dehydration are the probable cause of the cockatoo's death since food sources in the forest are still scarce. Cockatoos were also observed in some nest trees during the monitoring.



Figure 3. Philippine cockatoo hatchling that was banded last month (left) and its remains (right) ©MBOng KFI

- *Observation of wildlife and other cavity-nesters monitoring.* One Palawan Hornbill was seen foraging in Malabo Forest. Blue-naped parrots were also present in all areas visited; we also recorded a Blue-headed racket-tail inside the Montible sub-colony. Among other avian species recorded in August were Velvet-fronted nuthatch, Palawan peacock pheasant (tracks), Hill myna, White-bellied Sea eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, Black-naped Oriole, Common lora, Palawan Drongo, Palawan tit, Palawan fairy bluebird, White-vented Shama, Philippine Scrubfowl. Non-avian species were Palawan-Flying Squirrel, Palawan Tree Squirrel, Palawan Stink badger, Palawan bearded pig, Palawan porcupine (tracks), and Paradise tree snake. We also noted some plants that are flowering or fruiting like the White cinnamon orchid *Corymborkis veratrifolia*.



Figure 4. *Corymborkis veratrifolia* in Montible ©MBOng KFI

B. THREAT OBSERVATIONS

In Montible, the construction of allegedly a tribal hall which was observed last month continued. Meanwhile, rattan collectors from last month have vacated their area from Malabo Forest. Encroachment in Montible was also seen through remote sensing (Satellite images and drone footage). Illegal land clearing for agriculture and charcoal production was also seen expanding vastly in the area.

On August 22, KFI staff visited the reported cockatoos that were caged near WESCOM. The team confirmed that at least two adult cockatoos were in the area, and the house was surrounded by numerous CCTV so the team didn't inspect the area since no law enforcement agency or local government officials were present during the monitoring.



Figure 5. A hall construction (left) within penal reservation and two Philippine Cockatoos in an seen by citizens and KFI staff near WESCOM (right) ©MBOng, KFI

IV. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- *Construction of artificial nest boxes and nursery room.* Two artificial nest boxes for Palawan hornbill are being constructed and hopefully could be installed next month. The nursery which was destroyed by Typhoon Odette was finally rebuilt; improvised shades and seedbeds will be done next.
- *Collection of wildlings.* Wildlings collected this month were Bayoso *Pometia pinnata*, Ipil *Intsia bijuga*, Manggis *Koompassia excelsa*. DENR representative For. Jessie Escandalio shared to wardens and volunteer inmates how to process the wildlings for better survival. The wildlings were dipped in root enhancer for 12hrs and then planted. Pruning and other nursery maintenance activities were done by staff, volunteer inmates, and a representative from the Bureau of Corrections.



Figure 6. Montible storage room completed by volunteer inmates and wildlife warden (left) and volunteer inmate processing the collected wildlings of Ipil, Manggis, and Bayoso. ©V.Abendan, KFI

V. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS, AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- Increased patrolling in the sites is necessary to avert further destruction of lowland forests. Source of wood used for construction of structures within the area should be investigated.
- The report of citizens about the two cockatoos caged in a house near WESCOM was relayed to PCSDS since July. The latter told us that their operatives visited the area but didn't see the cockatoos. This is contrary to citizens' reports and our visit that confirmed the presence of the birds in the cage. We hope thorough investigation can be done ASAP so not to discourage citizens from reporting illegal activities.
- Continued tree planting within these areas is a must.

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'an 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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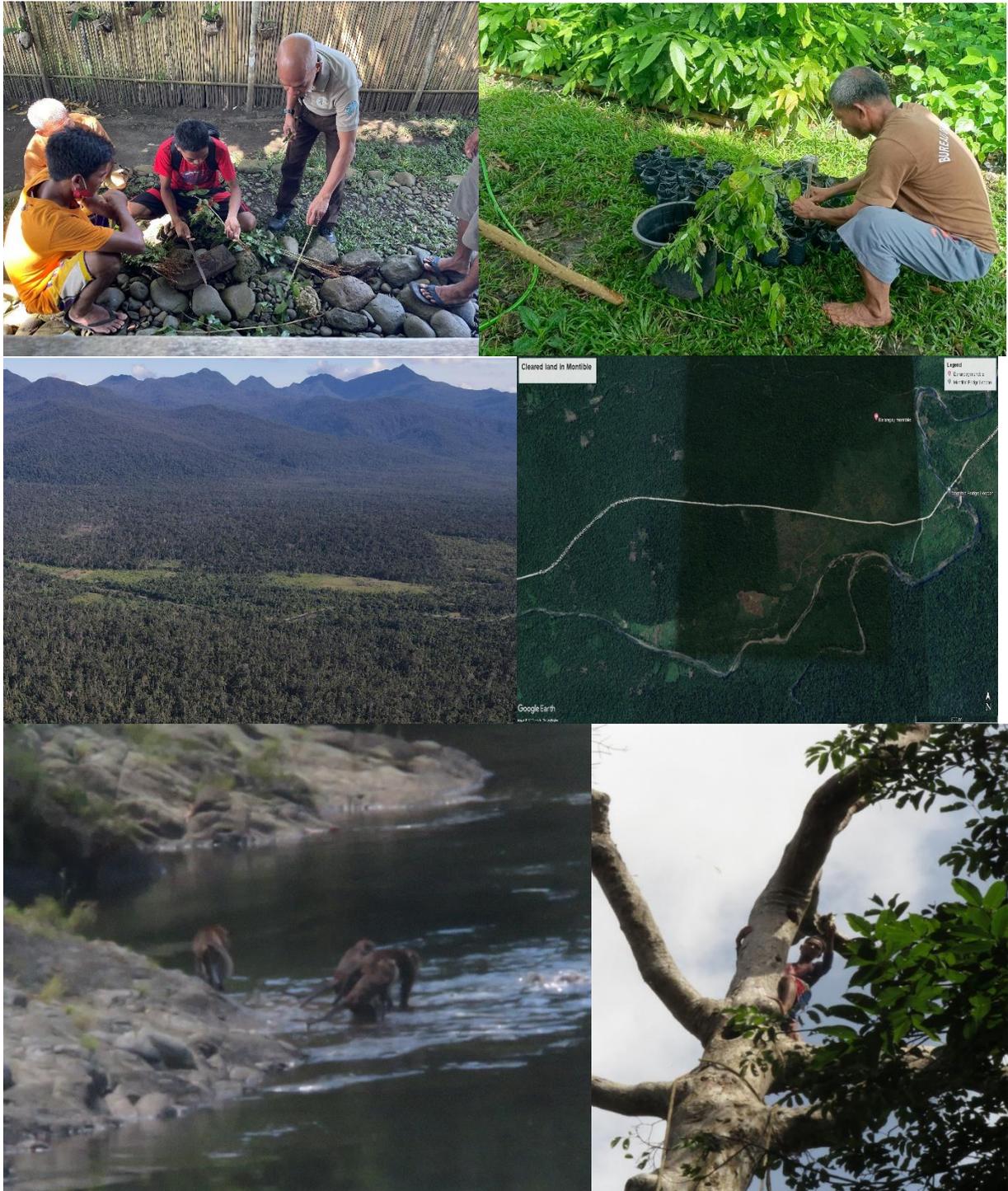


Figure 7. Processing of wildlings that were collected in Montible with wardens, volunteer inmates and IPPF personnel, DENR and KFI. (top), Lowland Forest of Montible and some patches of cleared land for agriculture (middle), a group of macaques in a river in Montible (bottom-left) and warden checking the nest chamber where remains of the hatchling was retrieved (bottom-right) ©MBONG KFI