

# KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY AUGUST 2022 SUMMARY Pandanan and Bugsuk Balabac, Palawan



**14**

Bilang ng nagawang patroya



**65.8**

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patroya



**44.6**

Kabuuang oras ng patroya



**20**

Bilang ng illegal na kailangang aksyunan



**0**

Bilang ng naaresto



**11**

Bilang ng naitalang supply ng Pagkain ng Katala at ibang buhay-ilang



**210**

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala



**15**

Bilang ng mga naitalang Kalaw/Palawan hornbill



**1,155**

Bilang ng nakuhang pananiim



**22**

Bilang ng mga naitalang Blue-naped parrot



**0**

Nakuhang mga silo o patibong ng mga buhay-ilang



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## KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY PANDANAN AND BUGSUK ISLANDS, BALABAC

August 2022

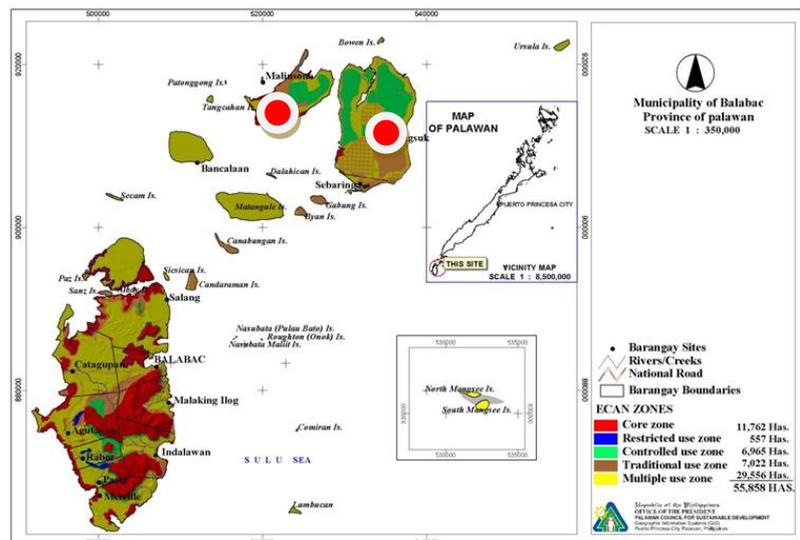
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### I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES, CONSERVATION TARGETS AND METHODS

Pandanán and Bugsuk Islands belong to the north-easternmost municipality of Balabac in Palawan (Fig. 1). Coastal forests are dense and stock on flat limestone originating from elevated coral reefs. Large trees in the coastal forest are mostly deciduous and widely spaced due to water stress during the dry season. The understory is very dense with abundant vines. Emergent trees *Pometia pinnata*, *Dracontomelon dao*, *Koordersiodendron pinnatum*, *Intsia bijuga*, and *Ficus* spp. A narrow rim of beach forest with *Erythrina*, *Calophyllum* and *Barringtonia* is present. The dense coastal forest cover is as well protected because the large portion of the island is privately-owned and entries are monitored by security company guards. Extensive mangroves are thriving which mostly dominated by genus *Sonneratia* and *Rhizophora*. Mangrove forest play important role not only to its wildlife inhabitant but act as one of the main food sources for the critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo. Both islands have old growth *Sonneratia* that can sustain food to significant numbers of wild cockatoo population during its fruiting season.

Currently, 101 bird species have been recorded in Pandanan, Bugsuk and adjacent Malinsuno Island. Among these are six globally threatened and six near-threatened species (IUCN 2019). Of outstanding conservation concern are particularly the larger tree cavity nesters, like Palawan Hornbill, all three parrot species of Palawan, Philippine Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia*, Blue-naped Parrot *Tanygnathus lucionensis* and Blue-headed Racquet-tail *Prioniturus platenae*, and other conservation relevant species like Grey Imperial-pigeons *Ducula pickeringii* and Mantanani Scops-owl *Otus mantananensis* (Widmann et al. 2008). The first and only record for the Philippines of a Fairy Pitta *Pitta nympha* comes from Malinsuno as a result of the conservation project. On the other hand Bugsuk Island also serves as one of the important habitat for the endemic Balabac Mousedeer *Tragulus nigricans*,



**Figure 1.** Location map of Pandanan and Bugsuk Island (red dots) in municipality of Balabac, Palawan (Map: PCSDS).

due to restricted access of locals and less presence of hunting, deer population thriving in significant numbers. Bugsuk Island is apparently the only place in the world where the highly threatened Balabac Mousedeer, Palawan Porcupine, Philippine Cockatoo and Palawan Hornbill co-exist in the same forest habitat in viable populations.

Both islands' marine ecosystem harbors several threatened marine turtle species. Portions locally declared as marine protected area remain as important breeding sites for grouper, wrasses and other high valued marine products.

### Conservation Objectives

1. Maintain the species diversity and function of ecosystems and species at Pandanan and Bugsuk Island.
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

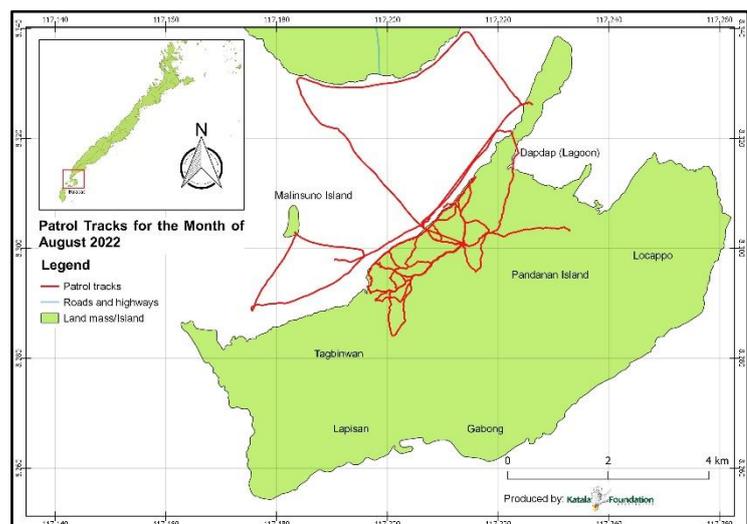
1. To increase number of Philippine Cockatoo breeding pairs on Pandanan/Bugsuk by at least 5% by 2024 (up from 23 and 10 from Pandanan and Bugsuk respectively in 2021).
2. Increase viable population of endangered and endemic target cavity-nesters by at least 3% by 2024 e.g. Palawan Hornbill (up from 15 breeding pairs in 2021), Blue-naped Parrot (up from 6 breeding pairs in 2021), in Pandanan and Bugsuk Islands from 2022-2024.
3. Reduce threats in the area by 50% from 2022-2024.

### Methods

Deputized wardens patrol by foot, by boat and by truck monthly within sites. 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 2022). Ease of identification in the field was considered as well. The maps are generated and analysed through QGIS. Patrols are coordinated with the concerned barangay, private land owner/company and protected area office wherever it applies.

## II. PATROL TEAM AND EFFORT

Regular forest patrolling and monitoring activity were made inside Pandanan Island by wildlife wardens and staff: Rene Antonio, Ismael S. Dela Cruz Jr., Deo E. Aplid, Celso Badilla and Ariel C. Omog. As of this period, a total of 65.8km was covered in 14 patrols. Settlement visitation was made along Dalahican, Arananan and Magsakayan. Other sitios like Gabong was not reached due to torrential rains on the island during planned schedule.



**Figure 2.** Patrol tracks along Pandanan Island and coastal areas as of August 2022 (Map: KFI 2022).

### III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

#### A. Wildlife observations

Nine bird species were recorded as of August monitoring period of which two are listed under “threatened” category: Blue-naped parrot (Near threatened), Crested serpent eagle (Least concern), Green imperial pigeon (Near threatened), Hill mynah (Least concern), Palawan hornbill (Vulnerable), Philippine cockatoo (Critically endangered), Spot throated woodpecker, Stork billed kingfisher (Least concern) and Philippine scrubfowl (Least concern).

Presence of terrestrial mammals like Palawan flying squirrel (Near threatened) and Long-tailed macaque (Endangered A3cd) is continuously recorded during this period. Green Sea turtles (Endangered) and Hawksbill Sea turtles (Critically endangered) were noted along the coastal waters Pandanan Island by during coastal monitoring activity.

#### B. Philippine Cockatoo roost counts and food providing tree monitoring

Total of 210 cockatoos counted as the highest number for the month of August 2022 while lowest was 59. The latter count is mainly affected by monsoon winds. Frequent observation of cockatoo flocks visiting the mainland was noted by our team, however no new roost site found nor reported by locals during the monitoring visit made on August 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>.

In terms of food source, ten forest and a mangrove species were recorded fruit bearing this month: Aga, Aluyaw, Babatiyong, Balite, Bat-bat palm, Bongyu, Ipil-ipil, Magbaka-baka, Maglabuyo, Mangupak and Pagatpat tree (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** Recorded food-providing plants for Philippine Cockatoos, Palawan Hornbills and parrots on Pandanan Island. Fruits of Mangupak tree (left) and young fruit of Balite (Right, Photos: AOmog).

#### E. Community monitoring and threats observation

No new transient local found within the visited settlement in Pandanan Island. Recorded threat this month is the persistent cutting of forest trees within Arananan to Dalahican coastal forest. A total of 20 new cut trees were discovered within the aforementioned location, to wit: Aluyaw (1), Anaan (5), Antipulo (1), Baro (1), Bayoso (1), Dangkalan (3), Impaw (2), Marampuso (2), (Mararango (1) and Talisay (3). Lumbers from these sawed trees are already missing during our discovery while some of the trees were only cut and left untouched. No allegedly local cutter found on site however we continue to investigate on identity of the possible local chainsaw operator, cohorts and others involved.



**Figure 4.** Remnants of illegal logging inside Arananan-Dalahican coastal forest. Half trunk of Mararangon tree (left) trunk of Aluyaw tree (center) and stump of Talisay tree along the beach forest of the same area (Right, Photos: KFI 2022).

#### F. Nursery maintenance and seedling update

Construction of new nursery was made on August 21<sup>st</sup> within the vicinity of first KFI nursery. The site had an area of 5meter width and 12meter in length, local materials like round timber for post and beams was used, while dry coconut leaves for shades. The new nursery can hold up to four thousand seed bags and seedlings. Repair and posts replacement was also done at the old nursery shade, as of this period a total of 1,155 saplings/wildlings were collected by our team and currently nurtured (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Wildlings collection along the BMS sites and preparation inside nursery area (left) newly constructed nursery shade within the station vicinity (Right, Photos: KFI 2022).

#### G. Site visit and cockatoo monitoring

Monitoring visits were conducted in southern barangays of Bataraza, particularly at Tagolango, Tabod, Puring, Tagnato and Malitob. Presence of cockatoos were observed daily by one council member of Barangay Tagolango. Accordingly cockatoos forage on the young and mature fruits of Pagatpat just near the barangay site; a similar observation was reported from Barangay Tabod. Cockatoo numbered from 18-23 individuals documented on August 17 and early

morning of 18<sup>th</sup> at these two villages. Informal interviews were made among encountered locals and we learned that no secondary roost sites could be confirmed within these five barangays. Coordination among these places was also done for our future IEC specially at the village council level, contact numbers and possible dates every month was gathered by our team to plan our IEC activity. Distribution of 100 pcs Share-a-place to live poster was also done by our team; no threats found nor discovered from these places during our visits (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** Informal interview and poster distribution during the cockatoo monitoring and site visit at Barangays of Southern Bataraza, Palawan (Photos: KFI 2022).

#### IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

Persistent cutting in timberland areas which are vegetated still with good lowland forest trees. No DENR visit has ever been done. Reports are submitted. These are critical areas of lowland forests needing immediate protection; ie. as critical habitats.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Establishment of critical habitat on Pandanan Island is needed to hold and prevent further destruction of the remaining coastal and lowland forests. This is in coherent to the call of PCSD's additional areas for declaration of lowlands to secure integrity of these critical ecosystems.

Immediate site visit for cockatoo monitoring and IEC at Barangay Councils are needed particular at the identified community with reported cockatoo sightings.

## VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are indebted to our wildlife wardens for their patience and work: Ismael S. Dela Cruz Jr., Deo E. Aplid and Ariel C. Omog. Likewise, we thank our escorts from SCAA, Philippine Army who restlessly secured us every monitoring visit. Thank you very much to the Jewelmer Corporation by providing the KFI team full assistance during every visit in Bugsuk island especially to Sir Jacques Christopher Branellec and Ms. Vianney Brossard. We also extend our appreciation to the Council members of Barangay Bugsuk, Council members of Barangay Pandanan and Local Government Unit of Balabac Municipality for making the conservation project more effective and successful. We are grateful to KFI family and board members for the help, assistance and sharing expertise and ideas.

We are indebted and grateful for the support of the following organizations and agencies for supporting patrols and implementation of our work in Pandanan and Bugsuk Islands, Palawan:



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