

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

August 2022 SUMMARY

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



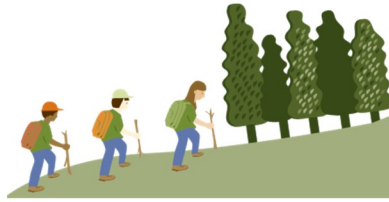
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Bilang ng nagawang
patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na
kailangang aksyunan



147

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot
ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng mga issues na
nai-report sa PAMO



48

Kabuuang oras ng
patrolya



0

Bilang ng naaresto



200

Pinakamataas na bilang sa
tulugan ng Katala



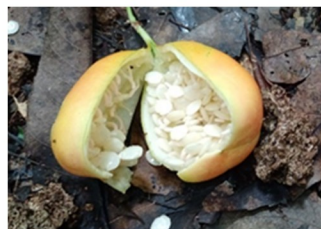
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Bilang ng ibang uri ng
ibon na nakita



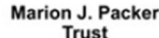
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Pinakamataas na bilang
ng Katala sa kinakainan



15

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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

AUGUST 2022

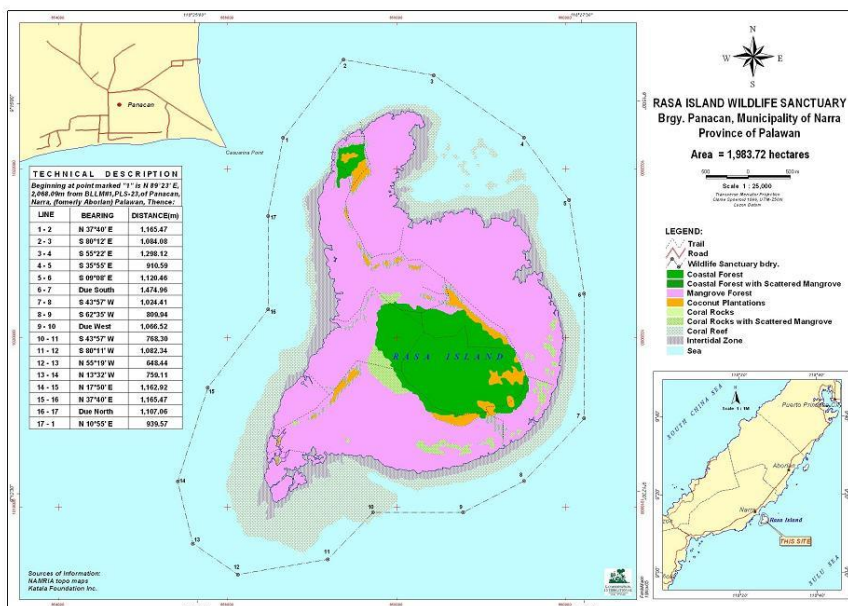
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I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES, CONSERVATION TARGETS AND METHODS

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.

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 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 BATAK, MARIO BATAK, LUCITO DANGIS, Veronica Marcelo, Danilo Villaruz, Monico Beleg and Antonio Marcelo. Wardens' teams covered **147kms** of nest checking, wildlife monitoring and patrol around Rasa. Total of precipitation in August 2022: **185mm** on Rasa, **153mm** on mainland.

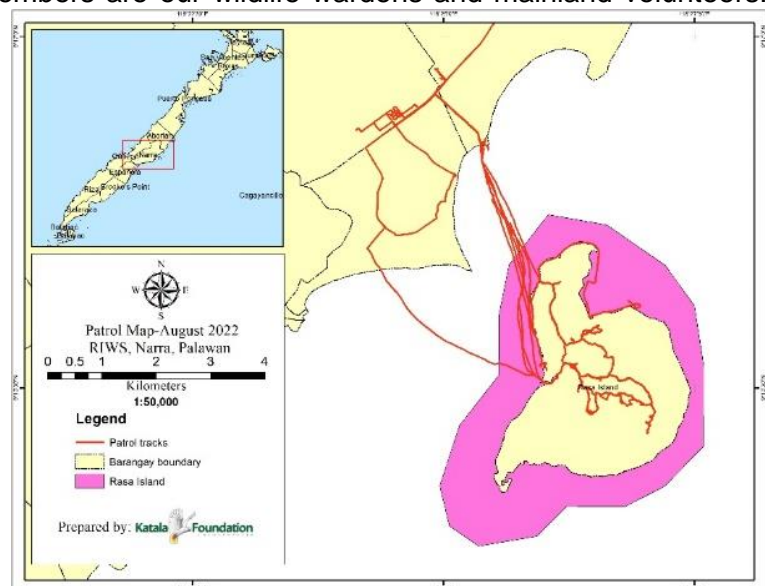


Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in August 2022

Seven camera traps were deployed around Rasa while two were at hanging aviary where two rescued birds are kept for eventual release back to the wild. 15 data loggers were mounted on nest trees. Fecal samples were collected at the base of five nest trees.

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

In August 2022, fledglings were observed with adult cockatoos. **200 individuals** were counted at traditional roost site on Aug. 23 in the morning. On Aug. 30 (PM) and 31 (AM), Mario recorded 143 and 145ind respectively. He also noted four and three sleeping cockatoos on one nest on Aug. 9 and 10 respectively. No roosting cockatoos at Borbon station during schedules of roost counting.

A total of **196 individuals** were recorded flying from Rasa to Borbon, Panacan (with 36ind) and Parco, Antipuluan stations (with 160ind) in the morning of Aug. 12. A total of 137ind flew back to Rasa in the same morning from the same stations (5ind from Borbon and 132ind from Parco). Likewise, on Aug. 23 in the morning, we had synchronized counting where we counted 53ind flying towards Borbon and 97ind flying to Antipuluan, both from Rasa, comprising a total of 150ind. More cockatoos were still recorded in the morning than in the afternoon. Earliest and latest sighted cockatoos were at 6:09am and 6:19pm recorded at Borbon station respectively. On Aug. 11, one cockatoo had difficulty in crossing from mainland to Rasa. It came from Antipuluan then flew from tree to tree until it got to Borbon. It attempted six turns to finally cross to Rasa at 6:19pm. The southwest monsoon at the time was strong. The highest recorded foraging cockatoos at Marcelo area were 34ind in Aug. 18. Earliest and latest foraging recorded at 6:10am and 5:05pm. Meanwhile, a pair of cockatoos were observed feeding on Malunggay along Estrella Village highway on August 26 at 8:18 am.

Beside Philippine Cockatoo, other noted birds on Rasa this month were Tabon Scrubfowl, Red-headed Flameback/ Woodpecker, Blue-headed Racquet-tail (BHRT), Nicobar Pigeon, Egret sp., Western Osprey, Mantanani Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, Great-billed Heron, Rufous Night-heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher/ Black-naped Monarch, Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Green Imperial-Pigeon, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Changeable Hawk-eagle, Sunbird sp., Fruit-dove sp., Reef Egret, Large-tailed Night-jar, Ashy Drongo, Whimbrel, White-vented Shama, Greater Coucal, Rail, Pied Fan-tail, Common Koel, Pipit, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Emerald Dove, Dollarbird, Asian Glossy Starling and Zebra Dove. Blue-naped Parrot was observed with six BHRT perching on Pagatpat on Aug. 3. Monitor Lizards were frequently encountered.

Lucito saw two hatchlings of Stork-billed Kingfisher with two adults calling and perching on Bogo at Baltazar area in Aug. 1. Reynaldo monitored Pied Fan-tail nest with two eggs at mangrove entrance to camp on July 26. His last observation on the nest was on Aug. 11 but he did not see any hatchlings, eggs, or adults. On Aug. 23, Mario noted approx. 2,000ind of flying foxes at mangrove forest near nest 48.



Figure 3. Cockatoos feeding on Malunggay at Antipuluan (left) and Estrella Village (right) ©KFI

Release of rescued Philippine Cockatoos

PCCP wardens and staff planned moved two rescued cockatoos from Katala Institute to Rasa Island on August 26th for eventual release back to the wild (DENR-131 and 70-22). Both birds are housed in a hanging aviary for its soft release while acclimatizing with natural foods and wild cockatoos on the island. On the same date, three wild cockatoos went near the aviary (ca. 10m from the aviary). DENR-70-22 squawked then the three squawked back. Interactions were also observed on next days of observation. Wardens shift to feed and monitor the two. Malunggay and food-plant species from Rasa such as Pagatpat, Balindadagat, vine (wild orange), Tapunhamog, Lomo-lomo, Kalampinay, Lanete, Tubo-bato, Tulang manok and Saramputi were served. Almost 100% of the offered food-plants were eaten. Observations continue and weight monitoring continue until birds are ready. These birds were rescued from Rasa Island, Narra and Iwahig, Puerto Princesa City in 2017 and 2022 respectively and both are free from PBFID as they were tested before eventual release.



Figure 4. Transfer of cockatoos DENR 131 and 70-22 to hanging aviary on Rasa in preparation for release ©KFI

Vegetation assessment

This month, Rasa Island has green vegetations at inner coastal forest as well as on boundary of coastal forest and on mangrove areas. Leaf litters are less dense. Fruiting trees and vines include: Ginlalid (dominant), Gindaon, Pagatpat, Balindadagat, vine sp. (wild orange), Tapunhamog, Lomo-lomo, Kanumay, Kalampinay, Lanete, Tubo-bato, Tulang manok, Saramputi, Balete, Buri, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species. Flowering trees and vines: Lanete, Gindaon, Gatasan, Tulang-pagi, Kanumay, *Rhizophora* sp., and other mangrove species.



Figure 5. Green vegetation on inner coastal forest in Rasa ©KFI



Figure 6. Fruits of Balindadagat (upper left), Gindaon (upper right) and vine sp. (wild orange, bottom) at Rasa near birdwatch tower ©KFI

B. THREAT OBSERVATION

No adverse human activities observed on Rasa during monitoring. No expansion was noted on lobster fry at Borbon. Floating cage was still on its former status.

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on marine resources on Rasa. On Aug. 25, one person gleaned 20kgs of lato at camp entrance for 5hrs. On Aug. 26, one person gleaned 8kgs of lato at camp entrance for 3hrs. On Aug. 27, one person collected 15kgs of mangrove crabs at Alisto, Kaburihan and A. Deig area in three days.

Monitoring on coconut plantations on Rasa. On Aug. 27, one person gathered 100kgs of copra from R. Deig area in six days. On Aug. 28, three persons collected 300kgs of copra from B. Batac area in 15 days.

Tree planting site at Plaridel National Highschool was visited by KFI staff this month. 90% of planted seedlings survived. They also replanted among inactive ones.

Wardens assisted visitors from International Container Terminals Services, Inc. (ICTSI) in joining the camera trapping team until Aug. 1. Lucito and Danilo participated on Eco-guiding training at PPC on Aug. 8-14. Thanks to LGU-Narra for the wardens' participation. Reynaldo fixed the outrigger of Katala boat and prepared light materials for repair of camp site. KFI-PCCP wardens, volunteers and staff conducted Katala Savings Club meeting regularly.

Birdwatch tower on Rasa was repaired this month courtesy of PAMO of RIWS-DENR.



Figure 7. Repair of birdwatch tower on Rasa concluded in last week of August ©KFI



Figure 8. Danio and Lucito joined birdwatching training at PPC and successfully completed the training. ©D.Villaruz

IV. ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

Owners of lobster traps at Borbon, Panacan must be continuously informed to not encroach inside Rasa boundary. Prescriptions for each zonation must be disseminated by PAO and with other PAMB members to encourage more active role in protection. Update on pending cases e.g. 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 BATAAC, MARIO BATAAC, LUCITO DANGIS, Veronica Marcelo, Danilo Villaruz, Monico Beleg and Antonio Marcelo. Thank you very much to the LGU-Narra through Mayor Danao and staff, Vice Mayor Calso Jr., and the municipal council, department heads, barangay officials, and everyone in the LGU for their unrelenting support and appropriation per year for our wardens and volunteers. Also, we thank the Narra community for pursuing the cause of cockatoo conservation in Narra. We also thank the PAMO through PASu Ma. Teresa V. Ayson for her kind attention. We are grateful to KFI family and board members for their help, assistance and sharing expertise and ideas. We are indebted to the following organizations and agencies for providing funds for this project:



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