

KFI PATROL AND MONITORING REPORT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

July 2022 SUMMARY

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary and its environs, Narra, Palawan



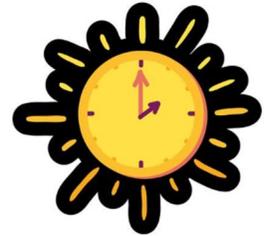
20

Bilang ng nagawang patrolya



267.9

Kabuuang kilometrong naabot ng patrolya



68.7

Kabuuang oras ng patrolya



0

Bilang ng illegal na kailangang aksyunan



0

Bilang ng mga issues na nai-report sa PAMO



0

Bilang ng naaresto



167

Pinakamataas na bilang sa tulugan ng Katala



39

Bilang ng ibang uri ng ibon na nakita



114

Pinakamataas na bilang ng Katala sa kinakainan



10

Uri ng halamang namumunga



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

JULY 2022

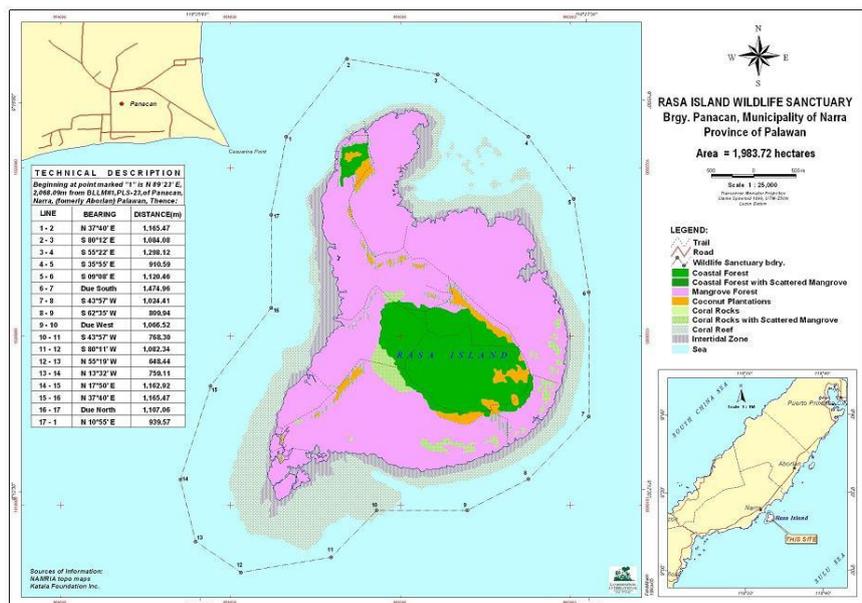
Prepared by:

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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.

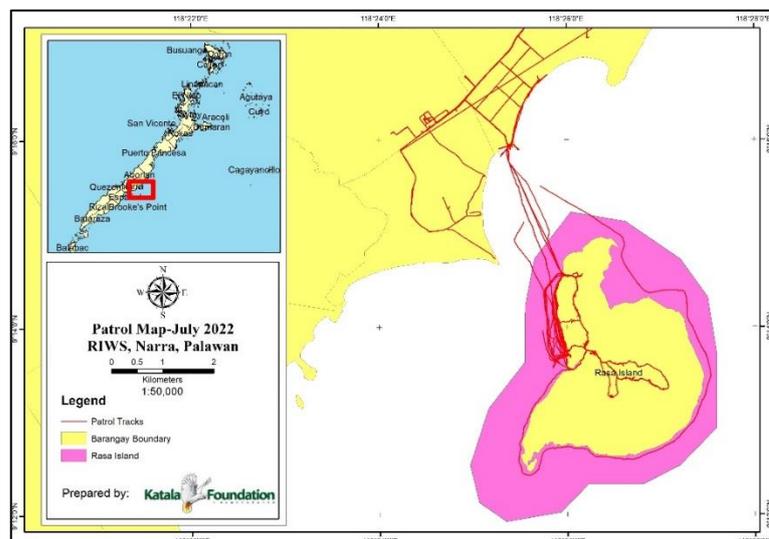
II. PATROL TEAM AND EFFORT

The patrol and monitoring team members are our wildlife wardens and mainland volunteers:

REYNALDO ALBELAR,
LORETO ALISTO, BERNITO BASIO,
EDWIN BATAAC, MARIO BATAAC,
LUCITO DANGIS,
 Veronica Marcelo, Danilo Villaruz,
 Monico Beleg and Antonio Marcelo.

Figure 2. Patrol tracks in red marks in July 2022

Seven camera traps and 15 data loggers are deployed on Rasa. Wardens' teams covered **267.9kms** of nest checking, wildlife monitoring and patrol around Rasa. Total of precipitation in July 2022: **160mm** on Rasa, **155mm** on mainland.



One hatchling from Pagatpat nest tree was infested with mites which was immediately treated with cock shampoo. After regular checking and treatment, no mites were observed in the second week of the month. This hatchling was banded on July 6 and fledged in the last week of the

month. Likewise, all other hatchlings had fledged early in the months of June and July. All active nests were revisited this month for checking on possible occupation yet none were observed. Fledglings were mostly seen during the visits. Some were observed being fed by the adult ones.



Figure 3. Collection of biometrics and banding of last hatchling ©KFI

III. PATROL OBSERVATIONS

A. WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS

79 nest trees were revisited by wardens and no late breeding of cockatoo pairs was observed. The last hatchling from Pagatpat nest tree fledged in the last week of July 2022. This breeding season had 67 total eggs of which 31 hatched. 18 hatchlings were banded and had fledged while 38 nest trees were occupied in this breeding season.

167 individuals were the highest roost count noted in the afternoon of July 15 at traditional roosting site on Rasa. All wardens reported that some cockatoos were sleeping at nests. The highest recorded number of cockatoos around nest trees during visits were nine individuals. No roosting cockatoos at Borbon station were observed during schedules of sync counting.

A total of **114 individuals** were the highest foraging count recorded in the morning of July 8 flying from Rasa to stations at Borbon (72ind), Antipuluan (36ind) and Panacan Pier (6ind). 69ind went back to Rasa until 9:00am of the same date. Meanwhile in the morning of July 12, a total of 81ind were counted flying from Rasa to Panacan, Panacan 2 and Malinao while 36ind went back to Rasa until end of monitoring at 9:30am. Less cockatoos were still observed in the afternoon probably because the southwest monsoon was getting stronger in the afternoon and cockatoos found it hard to cross. The highest frequenting cockatoos at Marcelo area in the morning were 21ind on July 12 from 6:51-7:26am, while in the whole month, mostly 2-8ind were recorded in the afternoon. Earliest cockatoos' flight to mainland was at 5:49am recorded at Borbon station while the latest flight back to Rasa was 5:46pm recorded at Parco beach, Antipuluan station.

Other notable birds recorded on Rasa in July 2022 were Red-headed Flameback/ Woodpecker, Nicobar Pigeon, Tabon Scrubfowl, Blue-headed Racquet-tail (BHRT), Egret sp., Western Osprey, Mantanani Scops-owl, Spotted Wood-owl, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Changeable Hawk-eagle, Sunbird sp., Pied Imperial-Pigeon, Blue-Paradise Flycatcher/ Black-naped Monarch, Great-billed Heron, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Rufous Night-heron, Oriental Dwarf-kingfisher, White-collared Kingfisher, Common Tern, Fruit-dove sp., Large-tailed Night-jar, Whimbrel, Emerald Dove, Green Imperial-Pigeon, Ashy Drongo, Greater Coucal, Common Koel, Pipit, White-vented Shama, Swiftlet sp., Pied Fan-tail, Rufous-tailed Tailor-bird, Asian Glossy Starling, Dollarbird, Reef Egret, Rail and Zebra Dove. Monitor Lizard was also frequently encountered.

6ind of BHRT with 1ind of Blue-naped Parrot were seen perching on Ginlalid then flew to mangroves on July 6. Reynaldo saw snake crawling on rocks near campsite on July 11. On July 18, Lucito saw 2ind of Mantanani Scops-owl perched on mangroves then flew near a known cockatoo nest tree. Nesting colony of Rufous Night-heron was still observed on wetland at Bagong Sigla, Panacan 2, Narra. These birds started breeding in the area since 2020. Beside the Rufous, we also saw 1ind of Black-crowned Night-heron amongst the Rufous colony on July 30, 2022.



Figure 4. 8ind perching on barren tree at Katala lot in Panacan 2 in the afternoon of July 30 ©KFI



Figure 5. Rufous Night-heron colony on wetland (left, KFI) with 1ind of Black-crowned Night-heron (right, photo credit to Mr. Harvey Tapan) at Panacan 2, Narra, Palawan

Vegetation assessment

Rasa Island has green vegetation in July 2022. Leaf litters are less dense. Fruiting trees and vines are Ginlalid (dominant fruiting species), Pagatpat, Siar, Balindadagat, Kalampinay, Balete, Gatasan, Magtalisay, Lomo-lomo, Sapi-sapinet, vine sp., Gubaay, Piagaw, Banaro, Tangal, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species while flowering trees and vines are Ginlalid, Barenben, Tapon-hamog, albotra (vine), Tangal, *Rhizophora* sp. and other mangrove species.



Figure 6. Inner coastal forest on Rasa Island exhibits green vegetation in July 2022 ©KFI



Figure 7. Some of food-plant for cockatoos and other birds on Rasa in July 2022; Lomo-lomo, vine, Ginlalid and Balindadagat (from upper left-clockwise) ©KFI

B. THREAT OBSERVATION

No adverse human activities observed on Rasa during monitoring. No expansion was recorded on lobster fry at Borbon. Floating cage was also placed far from Rasa boundary.



Figure 8. Lobster fry pens at Borbon (left) and floating fish cage, both not encroaching on Rasa boundary (right) ©KFI

III. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring on marine resources and coconut plantations on Rasa. On July 5, Mr. Diosma Sr. and Jr. collected 10kgs of lato at Rasa tidal flat for three days. On July 6, five persons gathered 600kgs of copra from Baltazar area in 13 days. On July 7, two persons gathered 4000pcs of copra at Espinosa and Dapdap area for one week. On July 8, five persons collected 43sacks of copra at Villanueva area in 12 days. On July 13, five persons gathered 650kgs of copra at Baltazar area for four days while on July 22 Lucito recorded four persons gathered 37sacks of copra at Deig area for 1mo.

KFI staff collected seeds of Apitong, Barringtonia and two unknown seeds at Katala lot in Apis, Aborlan which are propagated at Katala Institute, Antipuluan, Narra. Barringtonia seeds are good for developing and improving wetlands. Wardens cleaned and maintained Katala foraging lot at Panacan 2, Narra, Palawan (Fig. 9). ICTSI Foundation team accompanied by Indira and Peter visited Katala Institute and Rasa Island in last week of July. The visiting team was introduced to warden scheme and joined the field work on camera trapping under another project within the VAMR.



Figure 9. Wardens weeding at Katala lot, Panacan 2, Narra ©KFI



Figure 10. ICTSI Foundation team visited Rasa Island and had good talk with the wildlife wardens ©KFI

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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