

PCCP@10

CONSERVING WITH PEOPLE

Message

The Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme (PCCP) effectively implemented by the Katala Foundation Inc (KFI) since 1998 with its slogan "conserving and conservation with people" approach, revealed that passion, commitment and patience, more often than not, pay in its quiet priceless way. The PCCP proved that the combination of scientific research, advocacy and community development works using participatory and ecosystemic approaches worked and will continue to work in the next years to come. I am always proud to be a part of the KFI as its President and as a legislator ensuring that conservation laws are written, passed and effectively implemented.



We are indebted and sincerely grateful to the Loro Parque Fundacion and its funding partners – Chester Zoological Gardens, ZGAP and CEPA, for their steadfast technical and financial support which brought its success to what it is now! We thank too all our persistent local partners, donors and supporters who share the same vision as ours.

My sincerest congratulations and we look forward to more cockatoos in the wild!


Hon. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri
President, KFI
Senator, Republic of the Philippines

The Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI) implements the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme (PCCP) since 1998 with target sites in Palawan. KFI's niche developed over years of researches, advocacy and development works in order to protect and conserve the biological diversity of Palawan. Its vision is to effect conservation of biological resources through active community involvement, thus, conserving with people. To attain this vision, Katala Foundation employs participatory and ecosystemic approaches to all its programs and activities. The name Katala is derived from its local name.

PCCP @ 10 published on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme

Concept by Indira and Peter Widmann

Texts by Peter Widmann and Merlin Espeso

Photos by Peter Widmann, Sabine Schoppe, Benedict de Laender, Indira Widmann, Deborah Villafuerte, Rommel Cruz, Roland Seitre, Diverlie Acosta



Where it all began...

The Philippine cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia* is found nowhere else in the world but the Philippines and is listed as “Critically endangered” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). Major threats for the species’ survival are poaching for the pet trade, habitat destruction and persecution. Spurred by this, PCCP aims to save the species from dying out.

In 1997, Marc Boussekey, a French parrot expert, visited Rasa island and realized the potential for cockatoo conservation on the island. Oozing with enthusiasm and with firm determination, he convinced Peter Widmann, a German biologist and ornithologist, to initiate a conservation program that same year. Peter invited Indira Lacerna in 1998 to conduct the stakeholders analysis and together with Siegfried Diaz and the Tagbanua community, the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme was born.

All these efforts were and still are made possible through the generous support from KFI’s principal donor, the Loro Parque Fundacion in Spain and its funding partners: Zoological Gardens of Chester, UK; Zoologische Gesellschaft für Artenund Populationsschutz (ZGAP, incl. Fonds Fuer Bedrohte Papageien and Strunden-Papageien-Stiftung), and Conservation des Espèces et Des Populations Animales (CEPA).



1998 PCCP team poses for posterity.



Message



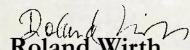
These are difficult times for anyone interested in the future of our planet and its wonderful diversity of life. One species, *Homo sapiens*, is claiming everything there is for himself – at the expense of all the millions of other species. There are at most 5.000 tigers left, 400 Sumatran rhinos or 1.000 Philippine cockatoos, but almost 7.000.000.000 people! Every day the human population grows by 240.000. There are ten times as many people MORE on earth every hour (!) than there are Philippine cockatoos in existence.

Considering these figures it is hard as a conservationist not to give up, BUT:

As responsible citizens we have an obligation to try to do what little we can to not give in to the majority of those who call themselves human beings, yet are only driven by greed and selfishness.

And motivation to continue our battle for conservation and a better future comes from the occasional conservation successes achieved by usually small and mostly underfunded groups of honest and wonderful people. KATALA is one such group – and their success to bring back the Philippine cockatoo (that once numbered in the millions, but plummeted to less than 1.000 in a mere three decades) from the brink of extinction can only be described as inspirational. There were only around 20 cockatoos left on Rasa Island in 1998. Without the Katala initiative there would surely be none by now, instead we have 200 – a tenfold increase in just ten years. A conservation success unheard of for any species in the Philippines so far.

Yes, these are difficult times for anyone hoping for a good future for our children and the diversity of life, but not entirely hopeless. Let us repeat the success of the Katala program all around the world!


Roland Wirth
ZGAP President



The Loro Parque Fundación supports many projects for the conservation of threatened parrots around the world, but very few achieve in ten years a ten-fold increase in the wild populations. This is an outstanding achievement of the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme, made possible by making the future of the cockatoo relevant to the every-day lives of the people who share the same environment. The LPF congratulates the PCCP on its 10 year anniversary, and the conservation success which marks this happy event.


Dr David Waugh
Director, LPF

I greatly regret that I cannot be with you to celebrate the achievements of the Katala Foundation over the last ten years. The Katala Foundation has done a truly remarkable job in taking forward the conservation of the critically endangered Philippine cockatoo. In only years the cockatoo population on Rasa Island has increased ten fold. This could not have happened without the work and guidance of the foundation trustees, managers, staff and the proud and hard working wardens. I know this not only from reports but because I have been privileged to have met and shared time with you all. Community support, education campaigns and local pride have all contributed to this success. Scientific research by Katala staff on ecology and breeding biology continue to unravel the needs of this species and provide the backbone for future directions of recovery effort.

Yet there is no room for complacency, the situation remains that the Katala's recovery is as yet limited to Rasa Island and the Cockatoos are not re-establishing themselves on the mainland. Many rural communities within the range of the cockatoos are desperately poor and both the cockatoos themselves and their breeding and feeding habitats require continued protection. Former poachers now make a living from protecting these birds and the Rasa Island birds are important tourist attraction benefiting the local community. The Philippine Cockatoo is found only in the Philippines and ultimately its continued survival rests in developing its conservation needs along with the needs of the local people.

The Katala and the Katala Foundation need and deserve continued support. This is a long term recovery programme. There is no quick fix and without continued financial and human investment the hard won recovery could as easily be reversed. May I give my heartfelt thanks to all involved in supporting this programme - government, sponsors, staff and especially the local people. I am personally proud that Chester Zoo has been able to assist and support this programme.

Long live the Katala. May your grandchildren thrill to its vivacity and cherish sharing their home with this beautiful parrot.

Dr Roger Wilkinson

Head of Field Programmes & Research
North of England Zoological Society
Chester Zoo, Upton-by-Chester
Chester CH2 1LH



When I set up the first programme in 1992, I could not imagine how large and successful would become the project: there is no doubt that the PCCP has greatly managed and improved the programme since 1998. I am very pleased to wish an enjoyable 10th anniversary to its strongly dedicated team!

Marc Boussekey
CEPA



Small Island, Big Potential...

Rasa is a small coral island with an area of 8.34 sq. km. situated in the Sulu Sea, just off the shore of the Municipality of Narra. The higher portion of the island has seen slow conversion from coastal forest to coconut plantation and poaching was rampant. With around 23 to 25 cockatoos on the island, KFI initiated the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme (PCCP) in 1998.

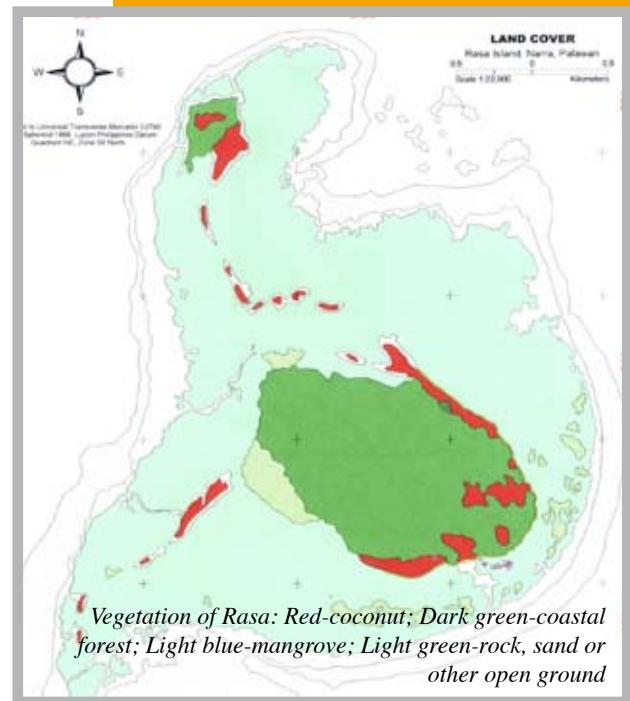
Message

The Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme (PCCP) was piloted in this humble municipality, on Rasa Island where 20-25 individuals of Katalas survive in the wild! We believe in its significance to the cockatoos in particular and to our community in general. In walking our talk, we passed and approved related ordinances, ensured strict implementation of them proving and paving the way to Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI) community-based approach to conservation: combination of researches, advocacy and community development works using participatory and ecosystemic approaches in order to achieve its vision - to effect conservation of biological resources through active community involvement – conserving with people



Without the PCCP in our backyard, progress in this rustic town might have been in slow pace. The PCCP's success does not only credit active local participation among Narranians but it has made and echoed to the whole world, Narra as the Philippine cockatoo capital of the world! This has not only benefited our dear Katalas but other ornithological rarities as well, putting Rasa Island on the map for serious birders worldwide. In 2008, Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary was chosen as Top 13 Birdwatching Site in the Philippines. There could be no other person prouder than the Narranians who have realized the dreams of the PCCP!


Atty. Clarito Demaala, Jr.
Mayor, Municipality of Narra, Palawan



Where to start and how...

That was the initial challenge to PCCP. After some rapid assessment, the PCCP focused on key people known to sneak out the birds for trade - the poachers. It was never a walk in the park - the Rasa poachers “owned” individual nest trees and was respected by the other poachers while wildlife laws were totally ignored.

But with all the patience and commitment the PCCP team has been known for (and maybe with a dose of luck), all nine poachers from the Tagbanua ethnic group active on Rasa were converted and became wardens! Theirs is “from poachers to wardens” story and is the most significant feature of PCCP’s success. Consequently, poaching of nestlings stopped and a slight increase in the number of birds was recorded at the traditional roost site in the following year.



Wardens learning how to collect herbarium samples



The nest protection scheme of the PCCP secures every breeding season of the Philippine cockatoos on Rasa island. Poachers-turned wildlife wardens provide the services that ensure the success of this program.

Message

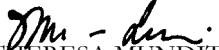
The Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau congratulates the Katala Foundation on the 10th year of its untiring efforts in the conservation of the critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo through the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program!



The increase in population of the endangered Katala on the Island of Rasa and the creation of the Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary are tangible proofs of the success of this difficult undertaking. The sustainability of this conservation activity is without doubt ensured with the participation of the local communities and other stakeholders. This is further strengthened by the opening up of livelihood opportunities in ecotourism activities where the benefits for local people are assured.

Again, our congratulations to the Katala Foundation and its partners, especially, the local communities, for doing what everybody else in the Philippines should be doing - the conservation of biological diversity, especially those that can only be found in the Philippines!

MABUHAY!


THERESA MUNDITA S. LIM
Director, Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Message



The Katala Foundation Inc (KFI) introduced the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) in 2005 considering the great lowland forests our municipality boasts which is haven for cavity-nesting birds including the beautiful Philippine cockatoo. We believed in their community approach and actively participated in all stages of the project from planning to implementation and maximum involvement of key stakeholders particularly the known poachers, local decision makers, teachers and students.

We passed and approved related ordinances the way other municipalities did for conservation. We are positive that our full support to the KFI through the PCCP in our town will prove beneficial not only to the cockatoos and other threatened species but to the whole community as well.

Mabuhay!

Mayor Clara L. Degillo
Mayor, Municipality of Rizal, Palawan



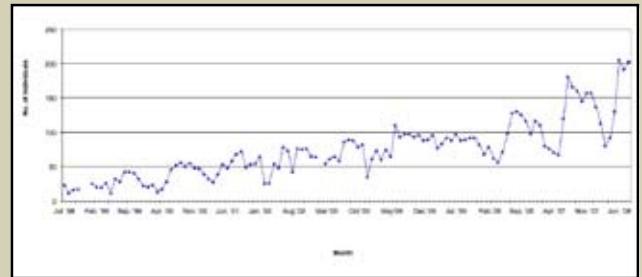
The Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) came to us in 2003 citing that we have some remnant cockatoo population in our area. It is an honor and privilege to be part of this programme where it engages local partners in order to achieve maximum success. Along with other NGOs and government agencies, the local government of Patanungan and KFI will strive to reach our mutual conservation goals for we know this will only redound to our own success and progress. Likewise, we are grateful to the KFI for extending their programme to us and we hope not only to save this endemic beautiful Kalangay but other threatened species as well. In this way we are slowly and surely contributing to biological conservation and of our people in general.

Mayor Danted M. Eusebio
Mayor, Municipality of Patanungan, Polillo

Measuring up.....

Rasa Island is now protected under local ordinances and nationally as Wildlife Sanctuary under a presidential proclamation. In 2008, the cockatoo population hit the 200 individual mark since the inception of the project. The area has become the core habitat not only of the Philippine cockatoo, but also of other globally threatened or near-threatened bird species.

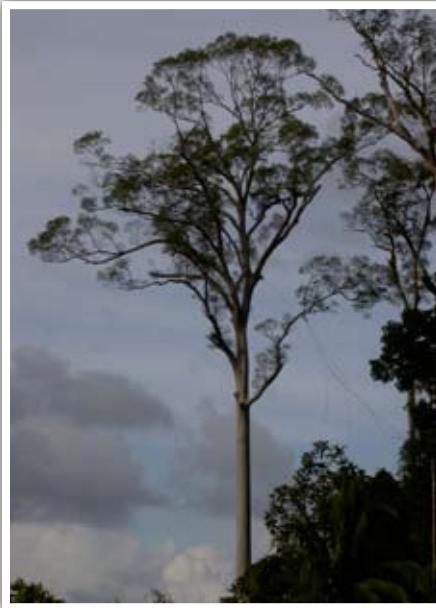
Now, Rasa island is the only place where Philippine cockatoos and some other ornithological rarities can be reliably observed in the wild. This fact has put the island firmly on the map of serious birders worldwide. In 2008 the Department of Tourism of the Philippines has identified Rasa as one of the Top 13 Birdwatching Sites in the country.



Monthly roost counts of Philippine cockatoos at the traditional roost site, Rasa Island, Palawan.

flying high and wide...

Since 2003 additional project sites have been established in areas with remnant cockatoo populations. Cooperation with local communities is one significant requirement for PCCP implementation. As in all sites local communities and governments have been involved in the project cycles from the earliest planning processes and throughout actual implementation. Key stakeholders in projects always were natural resource users like farmers or fishers, but particularly poachers, local decision makers, teachers and students.



Koompasia excelsa

Like on Rasa, the conservation efforts also benefited a number of other threatened or conservation-dependent species in other project sites, including the tallest tree in Southeast Asia *Koompasia excelsa*, locally known as Manggis, a haven for cavity-nesting birds like the Palawan hornbill *Anthracoceros marchei*, Blue-naped parrot *Tanygnathus lucionensis* and Hill myna *Gracula religiosa* on Palawan, and Tarictic hornbill *Penelopides panini* in the Polillo group of islands in the Luzon Faunal Region.



Nest protection, capacity-building, protected area management, scientific surveys, habitat restoration and conservation education are main activities conducted in PCCP project sites in (1) Culasian, Rizal, (2) Pandanan, Balabac (site in preparation), (3) Rasa Island, Narra, (4) Dumaran Island, Dumaran, and (5) Polillo, Quezon

Learning the fun way...

Dumaran Island is located in the northeastern portion of the Palawan Faunal Region, and a challenge for conservation of Philippine cockatoos. Habitat destruction and persecution of the species as agricultural pests were its main features. Cockatoos were opportunistically poached for the pet trade. Since the local poachers from the Cuyonon ethnic group are not adept climbers unlike the Tagbanua poachers, frequently, they simply chopped down occupied nest trees.

This most destructive harvesting method not only resulted in frequent death of nestlings and parent birds, but also caused a severe decline of suitable nest trees. Dumaran Island's overall forest cover was already critically low. The two last forest patches with breeding cockatoos of only 1.5 and 0.6 km² in size were protected as cockatoo reserves with support from the municipal government.



The PRIDE Campaign in Dumaran heightened the awareness among its local populace and made conservation a fun and learning experience. The campaign is adopted in other project sites to instill pride and hopefully create the passion for conservation.

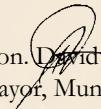
Message

Our great thanks to the remnant cockatoo populations of this municipality that brought the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) in 2003 to Dumaran! We gladly embraced the recipe for a successful project implementation in close cooperation with the Katala Foundation Inc. (KFI). We were involved from planning to implementation, involving key stakeholders.



Today, in full partnership with KFI through the PCCP in Dumaran, we engage in nest protection, habitat restoration and intensive conservation education that brought about our sense of pride.

We are grateful to be part of PCCP's success then, now and in the future.

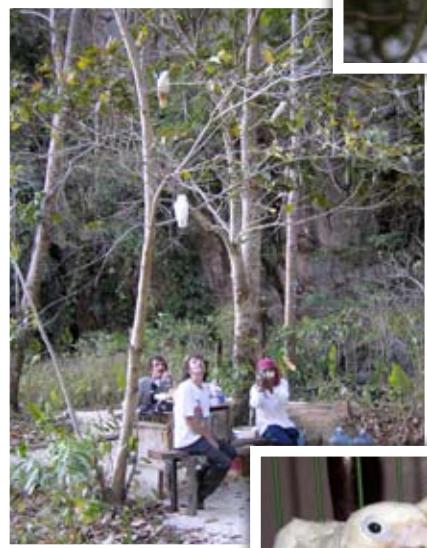
Hon.  G. Aurelo
Mayor, Municipality of Dumaran, Palawan

Crossing the seas in search of new homes....

*With success comes greater
challenges.*

The growing cockatoo population on Rasa is not free from problems. More birds mean increasing pressure on their habitat, in particular food sources. During the El Niño in 2005, several cockatoo hatchlings starved to death and 12 were rescued and raised by hand. Experimental translocation took flight after more than a year of stakeholder consultations, bird acclimatization and site preparation.

On Lagen Island in El Nido, the birds adapted well to conditions in the wild – readily exploring new food items and showed promising reactions towards predators. Unfortunately, birds found their way to humans again and it became increasingly difficult to prevent them from sharing the inviting breakfast buffet at the Lagen resort. Eventually the tame bird had to be recaptured, but valuable insights were learned for the development of a future translocation protocol and the eventual return of cockatoos to their historical habitats in the Philippines.



Creating an impact...

While PCCP protects cavity-nesting birds on site in cooperation with local partners, it also engages in curbing the problem on illegal wildlife trade.

Through the PCCP, KFI actively leads in several confiscation pursuits and buy bust operations along with concerned authorities. The organization conducted and published researches on hunting and wildlife trade in southern Palawan and gained support from media for wider public attention.

Networking did not end with national and local media. International organizations like TRAFFIC Southeast Asia joined forces with the KFI to organize trainings to capacitate law enforcing agencies and authorities in Palawan.



The flight ahead...

As the numbers of cockatoos on Rasa and in other project sites continue to increase, KFI pursues its studies on food and nest-providing tree species and their propagation. Hundreds of Horseraddish trees *Moringa oleifera* have been planted to mitigate future food shortages for the parrots.

Preferred nest trees are also mostly tall hardwood timber species. Several of these are heavily logged in Palawan and listed as 'Critically endangered' by IUCN, in the same category as the cockatoo. Artificial nest boxes of different designs have been installed.



Share a place to live...



At present, KIEBC is home to 50 freshwater turtles of four species and five Philippine cockatoos. The cockatoos will soon be available for public viewing. A view deck is already in place to get a good vantage on waterbirds in the vicinity.





not only the cockatoo benefits from PCCP



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