

Contact: Dr. Sabine Schoppe
Project Director
PFTCP/Katala Foundation
Telephone No: 048-4347693
Email: sabine_schoppe@web.de

PRESS RELEASE

Born to be wild – The Palawan Forest Turtle *Siebenrockiella leytensis* After quarantine and site selection, Katala Foundation releases repatriated turtles in Barangay Dumarao

Roxas, Palawan, Philippines. After four months in captivity, the first of 18 Honk Kong-confiscated and repatriated turtles were released on June 11, 2012 in Barangay Dumarao, Roxas. The ceremony was well attended by Barangay and Purok Officials, the Municipal Mayor, representatives from the Office of the Vice Governor, CENRO Roxas, PCSDS Roxas and PPC, teachers, students, community members and the media.

In his welcome message, Barangay Chairman Higinio N. Lagan expressed his pride that his barangay was chosen for the release. He stated
“The turtles are back in their province of origin but that this does not mean they were poached from Dumarao. The poaching site remains unknown but Barangay Dumarao is happy to receive them and the responsibility of taking care of them”.

Dr. Sabine Schoppe, KFI’s Director of the Philippine Freshwater Turtle Conservation Program, explained why the Philippine Forest Turtle is special. She also said that since the turtle is endemic to the Province of Palawan it deserves to be called Palawan Forest Turtle and she encouraged everybody to use this name in the future. “Kasi sa buong mundo ito ay sa Palawan lamang makikita - kaya pwede rin itong tawaging Palawan Forest Turtle” she emphasized. Sabine further clarified why Barangay Dumarao was chosen among all other sites. She said: “Dumarao and Roxas are pioneers in collaborating in the turtle conservation efforts of the Katala Foundation. Since 2005, they are supporting research and conservation work on the Palawan Forest Turtle in Dumarao. Through this the LGU of Dumarao and Roxas have recognized the importance of this turtle and the barangay council has just issued Resolution No. 20 – 2012 entitled “A RESOLUTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE PHILIPPINE FOREST TURTLE *SIEBENROCKIELLA LEYTENSIS* IN BARANGAY DUMARAO, ROXAS, PALAWAN” on May 4, 2012.” In a very informative talk, Ms.

Teresita Batul, PCSDS North District Manager, explained the legal status of the Palawan Forest Turtle and gave a background of the confiscation case. This was followed by Forester Pedro Velasco of CENRO Roxas who talked on the importance of protected areas for the conservation of wildlife. Prior to the release, Municipal Mayor Maria Angela Sabando lobbied for the sustainable use of natural resources. She said: "We are proud that Barangay Dumarao was selected and we will do all we can to protect the turtle here and also in the other barangays of Roxas". After this the group proceeded to the release site and the Barangay Chairman and council members released the turtles.



Mabuhay ang mga tao at bakoko!!! Share a place to live

For more information about the PFTCP, please contact Dr. Sabine Schoppe, Katala Foundation, P.O. Box 390, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan or at sabine_schoppe@web.de or www.philippinecockatoo.org.

###

Editor's Note:

- Katala Foundation, Inc. implements the Philippine Freshwater Turtle Conservation Project (PFTCP) since 2006 on the basis of a MOA with the DENR-PAWB.
- Apart from the Palawan Forest Turtle, three other freshwater turtles are under the PFTCP.