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PRESS RELEASE

PHILIPPINE COCKATOO CONSERVATION PROGRAM (PCCP) in Narra, Palawan BAGS 2015 GALING POOK AWARD

PCCP in Narra started in 1998, the Philippine Cockatoo Capital of the World

Sept. 1, 2015 (Manila, Philippines) – The Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP) in Narra, Palawan was chosen one of the ten Galing Pook Awardees in 2015 from 16 finalists all over the Philippines. The award was received by none other than the Municipal Mayor of Narra, Lucena D. Demaala along with her municipal council and the PCCP management in SMX Convention Center in Pasay City on Tuesday, September 1.

The Galing Pook Awards, which started in 1993, recognizes 10 outstanding local governance programs every year. Over 150 applications were received this year.

“The long wait is over. Our joint effort with the Katala Foundation from conservation of sheer 23 Philippine Cockatoo individuals on Rasa Island to promotion of Narra as the Katala Capital of the World is worth it”, says Lucena D. Demaala, Municipal Mayor of Narra, Palawan, Philippines. Mayor Demaala considers this program as her baby as this has already started way back in the early years of her political career. Katala is the local name of the Philippine Cockatoo, a critically endangered parrot species endemic to the Philippines.

Rasa Island is situated in the Sulu Sea, offshore the coast of Brgy. Panacan in the Municipality of Narra, Palawan holds at least 30% of the global population of the species. PCCP Director Indira Widmann relates the challenges facing the start of the program way back in 1998. “We believe our strong engagement with local government and the key stakeholders in particular the poachers who are now the wildlife wardens who 24/7 during breeding season monitor and patrol the Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary to keep the hatchlings safe to fledge is the key to our success”, says Indira. She added that community participation through intensive conservation education is vital at all stage of program implementation.

“It is remarkable how our protection of this small coral island of Rasa in our municipality rippled to other benefits like protection of the marine resources surrounding the island which is one of the primary sources of our fishery production”, adds Mayor Demaala. She talks in an interview that the LGU of Narra sees the importance to support the project through yearly financial assistance and relevant legislations to promote its conservation.

This year’s winners are awarded One hundred thousand pesos for which the Mayor has kindly appropriated for the continuing development of the Katala Institute in Narra, an ecology center established by the Katala Foundation.

The PCCP thanks its principal sponsors and partner donors: Loro Parque Fundación (LPF), Spain; Zoological Gardens of Chester, UK; Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten- und Populationsschutz (ZGAP, incl. Fonds Fuer Bedrohte Papageien and Strunden-Papageien-Stiftung), Germany; and ZooParc de Beauval and Conservation Association (Association Beauval Conservation et Recherche), France.

For more information about the PCCP, please contact Indira Widmann, Katala Foundation, P.O. Box 390, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan or at ldlacerna@yahoo.com or www.philippinecockatoo.org.

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Notes for the Editor:

- The PCCP uses an ecosystemic and participatory approach for conservation where people are greatly involved in the process. On Rasa, former poachers have been successfully recruited to serve as active deputized wildlife wardens. The wardening scheme proves very efficient and effective for protecting nest trees particularly during breeding season and patrolling against illegal activities. Most of these wardens belong to the Tagbanua community in the area. The conservation likewise invokes the active involvement of the local government through an organized protected area management committee where issues and concerns are deliberated regularly.
- Katala Foundation (KF) is based in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. It implements the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program in the Philippines with target sites in Palawan, the stronghold of the species.
- The PCCP implements nest protection, livelihood, habitat protection and restoration and conservation education mostly in Palawan. We conduct distribution surveys in areas with historical cockatoo records where surviving populations are to be expected. And we also conduct habitat assessments for possible translocation of cockatoos.

