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PRESS RELEASE

Puerto Princesa City adopts with pride the repatriated Palawan Forest Turtles

Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines. The remaining nine Hong Kong-confiscated and repatriated turtles were released on June 22, 2012 in Barangay Tagabinet, Puerto Princesa City. Like in the first release in Roxas on June 11, the ceremony was well attended by village officials, law enforcers, and representatives from the Office of the City Mayor, DENR CENRO Puerto, teachers, students, community members and the media. Our partner in the repatriation – the PCSDS – was represented by Director Josephine S. Matulac.

The welcome message of Barangay Chairman Arnold Cayaon was followed by an informative talk of Dir. Matulac sharing the background of the confiscation. The representative of the local DENR highlighted the importance of protected areas for threatened wildlife. Just like in Dumarao where the first nine turtles were released, Sabine – KFI's Director of the PFTCP - explained the important roles of the Palawan Forest Turtle in the ecosystem; among these seed dispersal, control of the Golden Kohol – a pest in rice fields, help in stemming down diseases like malaria and dengue, and maintaining clean rivers. Furthermore, Sabine explained that the long lasting good collaboration between and among KFI, Bgy. Tagabinet and Puerto Princesa City in conserving nature especially on turtles, is the reason why Tagabinet was selected as release site. She thanked and congratulated Barangay Captain Cayaon and the City of Puerto Princesa City represented by City ENRO Atty. R. Tulali for taking this additional responsibility and commitment. "*The City of Puerto Princesa is proud to be a recipient of these turtles and we will do all we can to protect them*", Atty. Tulali said. The Office of the City Mayor also financially supported the release and first monitoring activities.

After the ceremony the group proceeded to the release site and Barangay Chairman Cayaon, Atty. Tulali and council members released the turtles. The release site will be monitored at least twice monthly to guarantee the wellbeing and safety of the turtle babies.



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.

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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.
- In 2001, the Program was adopted by the Province of Palawan and issued PCSD SEP Clearance No. 102811-010.