

What you can do and what not to do on Rasa Island...

Cockatoo watching: The easiest way to observe is at the roosting site at the mangroves by using a pumpboat. There are mooring bouys which can be used for anchoring. They are about 200 meters away from the roosting site. A closer approach is not allowed, so that the birds will not be disturbed. Only licensed boats are permitted in this area. And do bring good binoculars!



Bird watching: Aside from the Philippine cockatoo, so far 103 other bird species are recorded from Rasa, among them threatened ones like Grey-imperial pigeon, Mantanani scops owl and Blue-headed racquet-tail. Birdwatching is best in the early morning along the demarcated trail & at the bird-watch tower. You have to bring an authorized guide.



WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU



We are a conservation project not a tourism enterprise. The reason why we promote ecotourism for Rasa Island is to provide the local population who is conserving Rasa with an incentive. This is why we charge a moderate fee for boat trips, guides, hiking and snorkeling.

Of course as an eco-tourist you should follow the old rule:

Take nothing but memories,
leave nothing but footsteps.



Clown Fishes

Wildlife encounter: There is more wildlife to be seen in the coastal forests, mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs in and around the island. Collection or disturbance of any animal or plant or part of is prohibited. Just observe, take pictures and enjoy!

Hiking: The terrain is full of sharp coral rocks even inside the coastal forest making hiking difficult in Rasa. Mangrove areas are difficult to penetrate because of mud and stilt roots. All hikers have to have an authorized guide and have to use demarcated trails. Bring insect repellent! During the breeding season, January to end of June, it is not allowed for visitors to enter the mangroves or cultivated areas or forests in the island. This also applies for birdwatching.

Snorkeling: There is a lot of interesting marine life in the waters surrounding Rasa. Short-finned pilot whales, two species of sea turtles and dugong are recorded, but very rare! Water can be sometimes turbid, especially after storms or heavy rains. Snorkeling is best in mangroves and seagrass during high tide and along coral reefs during low tide. Bring your own equipment! Do not touch anything because you might harm it or it might harm you! Again, any collection of animals, plants or their parts is strictly prohibited!



Hawksbill Turtle



Last chance to see?

Hopefully not...

You have the chance to encounter one of the most endangered animal species (and many others) in the wild: The Red-vented or Philippine cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia*. This parrot species is endemic to the Philippines. Formerly, it was widespread over most parts of the archipelago. Due to hunting, poaching and habitat destruction, it can now only be found in Palawan in viable numbers.

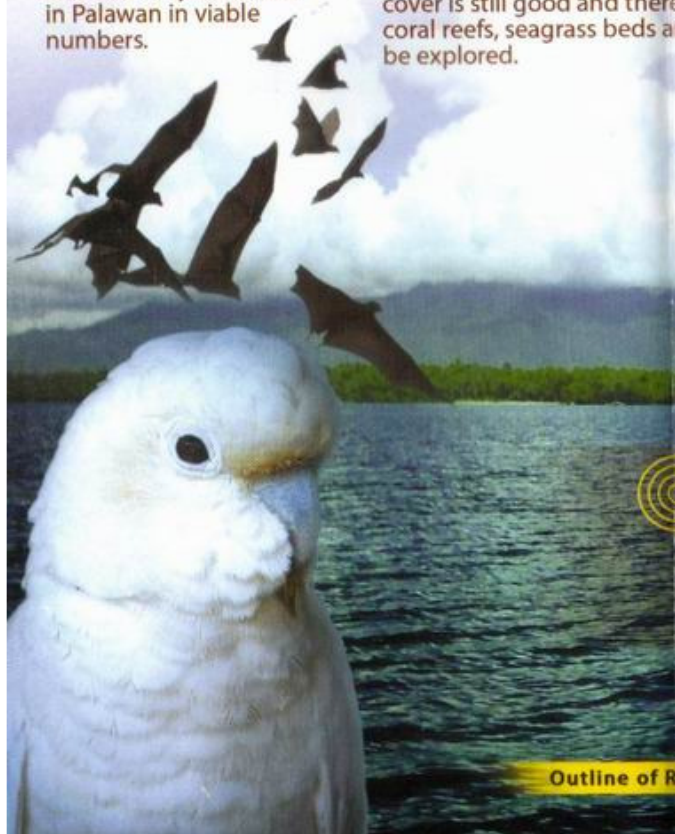


Traditional roosting site of Philippine Cockatoos



Clutch of wild Philippine Cockatoos

Palawan is a long and narrow island in the western part of the Philippines, quite close to Borneo. It is a hotspot for biological diversity and also for naturalists, particularly birdwatchers and SCUBA divers. The forest cover is still good and there are abundant coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves to be explored.



Visit the Philippine cockatoo on Rasa Island

Certainly the most convenient way to see the cockatoo in the wild is to visit Rasa Island. It holds the highest known population of this species in the world. The cockatoo can be easily observed from a boat in the late afternoon and early morning.

Outline of Rasa Island against the backdrop of Victoria Range, Narra, Palawan

HOW TO GET THERE

From Manila: There are daily flights (duration ca. one hour) to Puerto Princesa / Palawan e.g. offered by Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific, Asian Spirit and Air Philippines. Regular ferries are offered by WG & A and Negros Navigation (duration ca. 20 hours).

From Cebu: Regular air trips are offered by Cebu Pacific and Air Philippines (ca. 1 1/2 hours).

Puerto Princesa: Accommodation in all price categories are available.

From Puerto Princesa: Several jeepneys and busses operate between Narra and Puerto. The most convenient are small shuttle vans at New Market terminal, Bgy. San Jose.

Narra: In Narra you have to contact the RIWS-PAMB through the Katala Foundation Office, if you wish to visit Rasa Island. From here on, the trip can be organized for you. Overnight accommodation is available on mainland Narra in limited numbers.

To Rasa: From Panacan pier, it takes thirty to forty minutes boat to the roosting site of the cockatoos.

With your presence in the area we also hope to keep illegal activities in check, like logging, squatting, hunting or poaching.

Please report your observations!

CONTACT ADDRESS:

Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary - PAMB

Narra 5303, Palawan, PHILIPPINES or

Katala Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 390

Puerto Princesa City 5300

Palawan, Philippines

Telefax: 63 48 434 7693

Email: idlacerna@yahoo.com

www.philippinecockatoo.org



Text & Photos by Peter & Indira Dayang L. Widmann

Photo: Roosting site & flying cockatoo: B. Seitz; Photo: Cockatoo flock: B. van Laender

Printed by Futuristic Printing Press