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PRESS RELEASE

COCKATOO FESTIVALS – IN THE SPIRIT OF FUN AND LEARNING The 2008 Kalabukay and Katala Festivals

By Deborah V. van den Beukel and Indira Dayang L. Widmann, Katala Foundation

Two most awaited annual events initiated by the Katala Foundation (KFI) are fast approaching! Come, celebrate and have fun while LEARNING about conservation on June 16-18 in Dumarán Island and on June 19-20 in Narra, Palawan!

The 5th Kalabukay Festival of the Municipality of Dumarán in Northern Palawan, Philippines will showcase Dumarán's beauties parading and competing for the Ms. Kalabukay 2008 title. Amongst other highlights of the festivities include the street dancing contest with barangays named after wildlife species recorded in their area and the Kalabukay Fun Day which is packed with exciting and entertaining actions like the basic bird watching exposure, face painting, interactive lectures and games and a choral competition to boot.

A day after, the Municipality of Narra in Southern Palawan cheers aloud for its 2nd Katala Festival celebration on June 19-20. The festivities kick off with a coastal clean up and Malunggay planting in Bgy. Panacan. Malunggay *Moringa oleifera* known to be the magical vegetable is a favorite food of the Philippine cockatoo. The Katala frequents the mainland Narra to forage on these trees in the morning before these beautiful birds go back to their natural habitat, Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary. Highlighting the event is the municipal-wide "Walk for a cause". "*This is one of our little ways to encourage everyone to help reduce our carbon footprint in this fragile world*", says Indira Dayang Lacerna-Widmann, Program Manager of the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Program (PCCP). KFI and the Municipality of Narra lead its residents to reduce waste by using "bayongs or baskets" for marketing especially dry goods and get rid of plastics which requires hundreds of years for decomposition. Other activities and main events for the day include the triathlon competition, the Katala fun day, murals contest and the battle of bands and green concert. The launching of the competition for the Best Barangay Environmental Project will be held during the opening of the festivities on the 20th. The local government of Narra has been fully supportive of the Katala Festival and has put up funds for its successful celebrations.

Kalabukay and Katala are local terms for the critically endangered Philippine cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia*. Both festivals are joint efforts of the local governments of Narra and Dumarán and jointly celebrated along with their foundation anniversary. Every year, local partners and communities look forward to celebrating the said festivals with

much excitement and preparations. *“The bonus part is the fun we get from learning concepts, facts and principles about conservation in general presented in interactive lectures and games. Kataly, the famous cockatoo mascot will lead us to fun and laughter so come and join us!”*, says PCCP co-manager Dr. Sabine Schoppe. These fun days during festivals hope to increase awareness and knowledge and further influencing positive behavior towards protection and conservation. With understanding, follows pride and a willing heart to take on the shared responsibility to protect and conserve nature!

Katala Foundation uses the endemic Katala as its flagship species to achieve its vision of conserving biodiversity with the active community involvement. Nature festivals promote environmental learning through fun activities. Aside from Kalabukay and Katala Festivals, KFI also initiated the Kalikasan (Nature) Festival in the Municipality of Rizal, celebrated in the month of April. For several years of conducting these festivals, the awareness of the local community on protection and conservation is remarkably increasing.

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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Editor's Note:

- KFI implements the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme (PCCP) presently in 3 project sites in Palawan: Dumarán, Narra and Rizal. Narra, being the pilot site in 1998, celebrates its 10th year anniversary.