

THE PHILIPPINE COCKATOO FESTIVALS ***Re-establishing our Connections with Nature!***

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

19 June 2010, Palawan, Philippines – The yearly Philippine cockatoo festivals organized by the Katala Foundation are here again! Learning about nature with fun is the concept of these festivals. The Municipality of Dumarán in northern Palawan held its 8th Kalabukay Festival on the 15th of June while the Municipality of Narra in southern Palawan will celebrate its 5th Katala Festival on 20th of June. Celebrate with us and learn about caring our environment!

The theme of this year's festivals is "Re-establishing our Connections with Nature". This encourages the people to engage in environmental conservation activities and to refresh their knowledge about Philippine cockatoo. Different exciting and interactive activities were planned. These include birdwatching, tree planting, interactive lecture about the theme, puppet show, quiz bee, face painting, extemporaneous speech and choral competition. In addition, Kalabukay Festival in Dumarán includes the most awaited Search for Ms. Kalabukay 2011. This contest is not only a search for beauty but measures the contestants' knowledge about environment protection. Thus, this disseminates knowledge to the audience.

The festivals' names, Kalabukay and Katala, are local terms for the Philippine cockatoo. Initiated by the Katala Foundation, Inc. ever since, the festivals had been generously supported by the two local governments of Dumarán and Narra.

Katala Foundation uses the endemic Philippine cockatoo as its flagship species to achieve its vision of conserving biodiversity with active community involvement. In the Municipality of Narra where Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary is located, probably the highest population density of the Philippine cockatoo that remains in the wild is found. This makes Narra as the "Philippine cockatoo of the World". Equally important is the Island of Dumarán where viable population of the Philippine cockatoo can be found in the mangroves and forest remnants.

Indeed, nature festivals promote environmental learning through fun activities. For several years of conducting these festivals, the awareness of the local community on protection and conservation is remarkably increasing.

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Editor's Note:

- KFI implements the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Programme (PCCP) presently in 4 project sites in Palawan: Dumaran, Narra, Rizal and Pandanan; and 1 in Luzon: Patnanungan Island, Polillo in Quezon.