



TAKING FLIGHT

OFFICIAL BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF
TALARAK FOUNDATION INC.

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GREAT THINGS ARE COMING

LOOKING BACK AT 2021 AND FORWARD TO 2022

Photo by Finn Snow

This past year has been a challenge, as it has for many in the Philippines and around the world. But in the face of these challenges the Talarak Foundation has grown. We have grown in number, adding new and enthusiastic members to our diverse team. We have grown our partnerships with more academic, funding and advisory partners assisting us in our expansive conservation efforts. And we have grown as a Foundation; being involved in international conferences, engaging in multi-national strategy planning workshops, and raising our presence through our social media, new merchandise and the Negros endemic wildlife themed art exhibit "Ihalas Negrense". These activities will be expanded upon in 2022 as we aim to make the Talarak Foundation a household name in Philippine

conservation. We are fully invested in making the Bayawan Nature Reserve a sustainable community led conservation site and sanctuary for reintroduced captive-bred animals and native biodiversity. We are looking to increase this community protection with more sites building from the lessons learned and successes in Bayawan, to help regenerate and restore wild habitats and biodiversity across Negros Island. Finally we want to improve our abilities to reach and educate people; nationally and internationally through the scientific communities and online media, and locally with our outreach team and Negros Forest Park engagement activities.

Matt Ward
Executive Director

NEW CHAPTER

A new year, a new Talarak.



The Talarak Foundation, Inc. was started as a passion project by Fernando "Dino" Gutierrez of Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, in 2010. As a child, Dino would see the amazing wildlife we have in Negros and was aware of the problems they were facing, such as human expansion, poaching, and deforestation, among many. Driven to tackle these challenges, Dino ran Talarak as the foundation president and set up captive breeding programs and nurseries with a mission to conserve and restore the wild animals and plants of Negros.

We can't thank Dino enough for everything he did that put Talarak on its path, and we are sure that we are still in good hands with Paul Lizares.



Fernando "Dino" Gutierrez with the Feather Park team.

Paul Lizares is the former vice president of Talarak and an integral member of the former Negros Forests and Ecological Foundation, Inc. (NFEFI), the former NGO working to conserve Negros Wildlife and operate the breeding center in Bacolod (now known as the Negros Forest Park operating under Talarak Foundation).

Paul is excited to step up to the presidency and lead us into a bright future and we at Talarak are excited to be working more closely alongside him.



Dear Friends and Partners,

“Happy New Year!!” It is sometimes difficult to hear this greeting given our current worldwide circumstance. We are now on the third year of the pandemic and we all continue to move forward as best we can. For us here in the Philippines, we had the additional weather disturbance that affected our work recently. Through it all, and with our committed partnerships, friendships and interests for our work with the animals, communities and the environment in general, we continue to persevere. For all of this, Talarak Foundation would like to express our sincerest gratitude to everyone who is a part of the journey. We must not give up for the work that we do carries one of the most important aspect of our existence in this God-given planet that is also perhaps the most neglected as well. There is no time to fret, nor energies to waste. We have to continue to do our work through it all. THANK YOU for supporting what we do in this corner of the planet that continues to give Hope for everyone involved, and that is all we hold on to for perseverance as long as we continue to strive towards our common goals for the animals and the environment.

**Sincerely,
Paul T. Lizares**

In October, our core team gathered in Negros Forest Park for a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis workshop and strategy planning meeting for our organization.

We reassessed the existing conservation values and strategy of the foundation before deciding a rebrand and new set of values would be needed to accompany the new direction Talarak is on and advancements made in the recent years. This included creating a new mission, vision, website, foundation structure, and dedicated departments to push us forward in this new phase of our foundation's growth. We appreciate and respect all of the values that made Talarak what it is today and our activities still share the previous sentiments and passion for wildlife that was driving the foundation before. But we felt there was a need to update these statements to include further aspects of TFI's newly set goals and illustrate the key activities we will build the foundation on for the future.

We plan to improve all aspects of our operations with special consideration for Negros Forest Park. NFP is not only a captive animal center for the safe management and proliferation of our target species, but also an opportunity to bring the plight Negros wildlife to the public. We are working to make NFP a national leader in conservation breeding AND public education and engagement.

VISION

Harmony between communities and wildlife, protected and thriving in the West Visayas faunal region.

MISSION

The Talarak Foundation Inc. is committed to protecting populations of regionally endemic species through collaborations, conservation education, research, and restoration of endemic species and habitats while developing sustainable livelihoods and fostering harmony between communities and the environment.



"As a united team we came together to assess our Mission, Vision and values. We made some bold choices but we ALL believe in this venture and will strive to reach every goal we have set ourselves."



NEGROS FOREST PARK

Building A New Future



FLIGHT OF THE BLEEDING-HEARTS

In September of last year we accomplished a world first with the help of Mandai Wildlife Reserves, by sending a group of 6 Negros Bleeding Heart Doves to the Jurong Bird Park in Singapore. This is the first time the Negros Bleeding Heart has ever left Negros Island and we hope can be the start of a new breeding population for this critically endangered species.

We are being kept up to date regularly on the fate of our ex-patriated doves, so far they are all doing great and breeding is underway.



Left: Negros Bleeding Hearts making history in Mandai Reserves, Singapore.

Below: Refurbishment of the previous staff office.

RENOVATION FOR CONSERVATION

Back in NFP the breeding programs are continuing to bring more of our endangered and endemic species into our lives, but we identified the infrastructure as the next area where updates were needed. With the help of the Province of Negros Occidental we invested in the renovation and rebuilding of our staff offices, with the plans this year to renovate our on-site staff housing and open classroom. This new facelift is more than cosmetic as it sets our staff on the course, building momentum in our pursuit of excellence at Negros Forest Park.



MAKING NFP AN EXPERIENCE

In recent years we have been eager to use our Negros Forest Park center as a beacon for conservation education and inspiration to the people of Negros. However the continuing Covid-19 pandemic has prevented us from reaching many members of the public. We are hoping this year, as the pandemic mitigation measures continue to allow people to venture outside, and our own health and safety measures aid in reducing Covid transmission, we can finally reach more of the people of Negros.

This year will also (hopefully) see the return of international tourism and we will be implementing new engagement activities and merchandising possibilities to further increase our entertainment and educational impact on visitors. We have already started with our animal ambassadors and new tours, designed to bring education to life and provide that extra personal touch that can make a day-out and "experience". We currently have a Philippine Serpent Eagle (affectionately named Snake), a Philippine Sailfin Lizard (Azul), Reticulate Python (Nigini) and pair of Yellow-Headed Monitor Lizards (Sunfyre and Honeybee), that entertain the public and provide hands-on experiences for any curious children or adults. This year we will develop this further with scheduled flight shows, feedings and more interactive tours to highlight our amazing and endangered endemic wildlife of Negros Forest Park.



Top: Snake the Serpent Eagle on a glove.

Middle: Sunfyre the Monitor out for a bask.

Bottom: Kim the tour guide and ambassador animal trainer, with Nigini the Reticulate Python

BAYAWAN NATURE RESERVE

A Sanctuary For Negros Biodiversity



The Bayawan Nature Reserve (BNR) is a ~300 hectare patch of mixed forest, grassland, with beautiful native biodiversity, tucked into the lowland undulating valleys of Bayawan City, Negros Oriental. Formerly an agroforestry site, the reserve was reforested by the Bayawan City Government more than a decade ago with the intention to provide habitat for native wildlife and create an eco-park. Initially the site was named Danapa after the site's location, however, it was hard to determine where this site is and attracting tourism was deemed more difficult using this name. After some deliberation, the Local Government with TFI decided to rename the site as the Bayawan Nature Reserve so that it is easier to find for tourists and is

directly associated with Bayawan City to be more relatable.

At TFI we consider this to also be an opportunity to unite the entire city and surrounding Bayawan municipal area into the ethos and conservation efforts of the reserve. By integrating the Bayawan name into the reserve we hope that we can integrate the people and institutions of Bayawan into our values and expand the biodiversity protection and proliferation outside the reserve boundaries.

Much like the previous half of the year, all our staff members have been working hard, ensuring that our infrastructure and animals are in top condition.



Top: Our hardworking Bayawan Nature Reserve team.



Left: Martly our new radio tracker.

We have kept surveillance on the mammal feeding stations using camera traps to record the health and behaviors of these individuals. We have now reduced our level of food input in the feeding stations as we see our species are becoming more accustomed to feeding in the wild, however these are still great opportunities to observe interactive behaviors within groups, between groups and even between the species in the reserve. Some of the delights we have seen on these cameras are the blessings of new offspring from both Visayan Spotted Deer and Visayan Warty Pigs in our reserve, with 3-5 new deer and 8-10 new young warty pig additions to our population added this year. This success in breeding shows us that we are doing something right and that the balance of the ecosystem is there to provide for these growing populations.

We increased our camera trapping efforts in the latter half of the year and set up a series of cameras throughout the reserve to capture more natural behavior, and record our animals' movements, activity patterns and habitat use across the reserve's total area. There are a total of 17 functioning camera traps in the BNR but we plan to expand this amount in 2022. We have covered most of the northern side in cameras and will be moving on to the southern side to in the first quarter of 2022 before rotating again to cover all habitats and areas in the BNR.

We hope this data can not only show us the areas of the reserve which are being used most, but also highlight the factors influencing why our animals are using certain areas, whether their group structures are stable or fluctuate across the year, and what our expected carrying capacity is for these species.



Camera trap footage of Bayawan Nature Reserve born Visayan Warty Pig (**top**) and Visayan Spotted Deer (**left**) babies.

PIONEERING POWER COUPLE



Rudy (left) and Penelope (top) in their soft release enclosure, showing off their GPS tags

Our two resident hornbills (Rudy & Penelope) seem like they are establishing themselves well within the reserve, while the other two hornbills released together with them (Marco and Panini) have not been found since May 2021. Our research team is still working to find and collect the data from these two missing vanguards for us to be better prepared for subsequent releases. However we suspect the reason for their departure was to find a mate, as there were no other female hornbills available for these two handsome young males to bond with. Rudy and Penelope, are happily staying within the confines of the reserve and continue to display bonding behavior which we hope will lead to them nesting within the reserve. We have constructed and installed an artificial nest box but they have not yet shown interest.

The most interesting behavior from the pair came this December as we took in injured or displaced hornbills from the Kabakalan breeding center. Due to typhoon 'Odette' we have had to relocate several of our animals from our captive breeding site in Kabankalan. This includes an extra three pairs of Visayan Tarictic Hornbills held at BNR in temporary aviaries until we can construct full breeding and soft-release aviaries this year. We weren't sure how Rudy and Penelope would react to the newcomers but were very surprised

with the result so far. Far from fleeing or fighting, feeling threatened by the new additions, Penelope became obsessed with one of the newly introduced males. She would remain atop the aviary where this male (and his mate) were, and would follow him around trying to get his attention and provide him with gifts from the outside world.

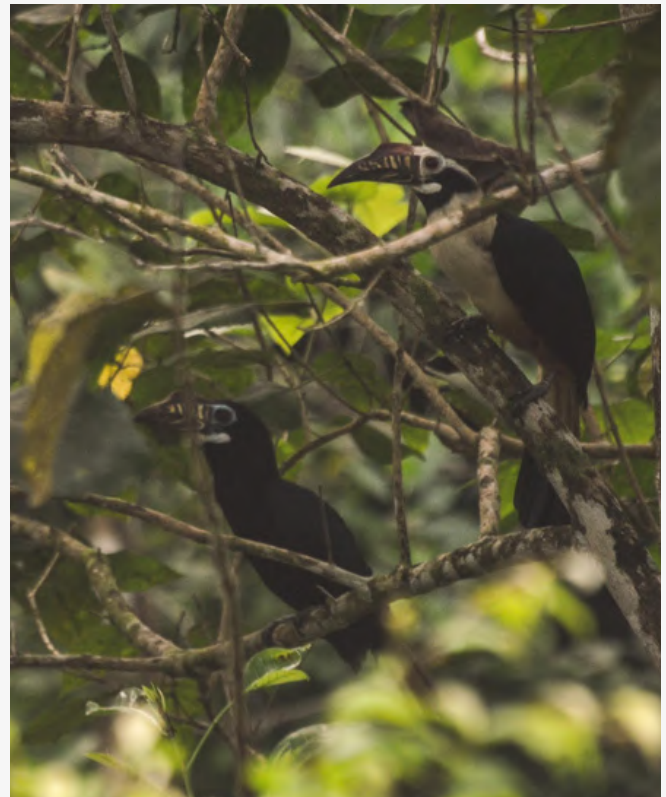


Photo by Jarome Simon



Top: Rudy exploring his surroundings.
Bottom: Rudy and Penelope resting in the shade of native trees.

Rudy would call regularly from his home trees in a desperate attempt to attract Penelope back. After a few days Rudy was then seen approaching another adult male in a temporary enclosure in his current territory/home range, but seemed to be attempting to bond with the individual and interact with it in a non-aggressive but friendly manner. Could this be the two young birds attempting to seek mentorship? Could Penelope have been exploring her options with older males, whilst Rudy was trying to find company in a new flock? We hope to find answers through more hornbill introductions and observations over the next year. Ultimately, like all good love stories, by the start of January Penelope had come back to Rudy and the two of them are now roosting together in their home trees.



Penelope and Rudy reunited and stronger than ever.

HOGGING THE LIMELIGHT

Our dear warty pigs have taken root in BNR and have begun to establish themselves within the reserve. So far, there are a total of eight documented piglets that were born inside the reserve. Our rangers and researchers have found numerous nests and shelters where these piglets may have been born but one of the more exciting discoveries that we encountered was this construction made within a grassland section of the reserve. We have confirmed that this structure was not made by female warty pigs but rather by the males. The first time this structure was sighted was after the release of the first set of warty pigs (all males), and a new structure was made again this year in close proximity to the site. We hope to publish a short note on this discovery in the coming months as it may

be the most complex structure made by any wild pig.



BNR Warty Pigs living that hog life.

We released numerous warty pigs into the reserve, but some pigs could not forget their time in captivity. Two male warty pigs, Anakin and Mario, have spent a large amount of their time interacting with our staff and exhibiting unnatural behaviors. So far these intelligent animals have figure out how to work gates (even when they are bolted), how to get into the kitchen and which people to follow if you want attention or food. Since pigs are very social, we could not run the risk of having these two individuals influencing the entire group, so we had to capture and place them within our on-site enclosures. The plan is to develop these two individuals into ambassador animals and have them participate in our public education efforts.

This year we will also be using these highly intelligent individuals to test different deterrent methods for keeping pigs away from crops, humans and property. A major reason for warty pig persecution in the Philippines is the damage they do to crops and smallholdings, so we want to work with the communities to prevent the pigs from causing this damage. Having our two smartest warty pigs in enclosures is enabling us to run experiments on which methods work and which don't work (or last long) to deter a wild pig from getting at a tasty meal. We plan to build designated enclosures for the testing this year so that we can be as thorough as possible and identify



Mario, one of our most intelligent and mischievous Warty Pigs, giving his thoughts about our Warty Pig plushies.

multiple ways to ease the tension between farmers and wild pigs and hopefully keep everyone safe and happy.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our Visayan Spotted Deer have been a wonder to watch. Based on our camera trap footage, they have established routes, feeding grounds, and locations within the reserve for their daily activities. Our rangers audibly observed male combat before the breeding season, but they could not get a proper visual of the individuals. Currently, there have been at least three fawns born within BNR, indicating that this location is sufficient to support their basic needs, and the population is not yet at capacity for this 300 ha site.

In August last year we received a report from local farmers in a rural area of Bayawan called Uban-Uban, that a deer has been invading their corn crops. Our team went out and placed camera traps on the farmer's land to confirm their claim and were able to catch the escapee in action and confirmed that it was a female Visayan Spotted Deer with a fawn accompanying her.



Top: New Spotted Deer family in BNR grassland.
Middle: "Danny" the deer with a midnight snack.
Bottom: Our escapee female raising her calf under the protection of local corn farmers (pictured below).

Thankfully, our outreach team interacted with these groups prior to the encounter, and they were very accommodating, more intrigued in the deer than upset for the crop loss. We compensated the land owners for their lost crop and have an agreement to regularly purchase corn from them to help provide a steady income, but these deer have now become local celebrities and we encourage the community to keep an eye out for them and let us know when they see them. This news is notable since this mother had escaped from the reserve in early pregnancy over a year ago, but was able to survive and raise her young in the forest fragments outside the reserve.

KEEPING THEIR HEARTS BEATING

We placed 15 bleeding-heart doves within an aviary in BNR last year and they have been undergoing anti-predator training to increase their fitness and survival response once they are released into the reserve. This is especially important because of the diversity of predators within the reserve that may pose threats to this very vulnerable species.

In the coming year, we will be releasing these individuals into the reserve with radiotelemetry devices attached to monitor them after the release. The idea is to release this initial flock and see whether they can establish themselves within the reserve and learn as much as possible from their ecology and survival.



Our Negros Bleeding Hearts preparing for a new life in the wilds of BNR.



Photo by Finn Snow

THE NEGROS ISLAND ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Searching for the "Big 5" and their habitats.

In 2021 we conducted several assessments within Negros Oriental. We have almost fully surveyed Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park, apart from a few key areas that are scheduled for 2022. We conducted a total of four assessments in the latter half of 2021, two within the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park and two in Bayawan. Overall, our team was able to identify signs from two of our five target species, namely, the Visayan Warty Pig and Visayan Tarictic Hornbill. For the warty pigs, the signs were mostly tracks, bark stripping, and routing, while the hornbills were confirmed via their calls or visual identification during the assessment. We placed camera traps in areas that had very recent evidence of our target species so that we can confirm their condition and population and will be checking in again soon this year.

Apart from our target species, we also focused on key species that are influential or indicators to our big five. During our assessments, we were able to find some locations that had clear evidence of woodpecker holes and parrot nests, suggesting good nesting opportunities for the hornbills too. Unfortunately, being able to detect potential nests of the hornbills has proven to be challenging as the canopy in the forests is often too high and dense to be able to see all potential/active nests.



Our assessment team hard at work scouring the forests and natural habitats of Negros for the elusive Big 5, their habitat needs and any threats.

This is a common issue with bird surveys, especially when dealing with an animal that requires extremely large, old trees for their nesting and survival. Another issues we have identified in many of our assessment sites so far is a simple lack of suitably sized and aged trees in areas where these birds would nest.

GUIDE EXCERPTS

On one occasion talking with one of the guides (Rudy) for an assessment on the outskirts of Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park, he told us that his grandparents were able to see the Talarak (Walden / Rufous Headed Hornbill) within the north side of the forest near the town of Amlan; they were also able to see 4 out of 5 of our big five back in the day but now have not seen most of them and rarely see the remaining Visayan Hornbill and Warty Pig. These stories like the excerpts below are important in sharing the knowledge of generations in the local community, acting as living timelines to the changes in biodiversity and forest protection in these areas.

“In the past, we would use air rifles and shoot the larger bird species (pigeons and doves) in the area for personal consumption, but not the hornbills or other key species. Outsiders would hire me to hunt in Mt. Guinsayawan, and other people would use mist nets to capture birds for collection and trade.”

- Rudy

“People would burn the forested areas for farming and would just burn the larger hardwoods without using their lumber. They would just let the tree fall and leave it where it fell since it was too much effort to process the wood.”

- Kim

Notably, this is not their main source of income since an abaca crop has a 3 year growing period before harvest. Even though this practice uses native plants, it causes a lot of damage and disturbs the natural processes of the ecosystem since numerous patches are planted without oversight. The workers also utilize the park when they are there, acquiring food from the river, such as fish or eels, or using game traps for birds and mammals. These workers range from below 13 years old to above 50 years old, and our casual talks with our own guides shed light on many aspects of our forests that we were unaware of. By taking their information into account, we can improve our community support and conservation efforts together.

“Abaca plantation workers get 300kgs of abaca before bringing the final product outside BTLNP, where it is sold for 130 PhP/kg.”

- Nikkishim



Our assessment team and amazing guides in Balinsasayao Twin Lakes (left to right: Nikkishim, Fredo, Guillermo, and Emilio).

ONE NEGROS FOR ALL

Creating A Conservation Community



This family supported our messages and alerted us to a deer on their property, to show our thanks we gave them some TFI memorabilia and support them through buying their corn.



Our outreach team venture to all areas of the community, from the rural village churches to the bustling city markets. This gives us the information we need on perceptions and wildlife use for the area.



Our mission is to protect populations of regionally endemic species through collaborations, conservation education, research, and restoration of endemic species and habitats while developing sustainable livelihoods and fostering harmony between communities and the environment. In line with this our education and outreach team has been hard at work in Bayawan raising awareness for native biodiversity, Talarak projects and conservation initiatives, but also find ways to develop connections between the communities and wildlife. They have focused on three barangays/villages (Nanga, Kalumboyan, and Narra) close to the Bayawan Nature Reserve so far with great success. The residents from all three barangays are happy to learn about our 'big five' and are excited at the prospect of seeing them once again in the forests around them. The common story we hear

from these communities and others around the island is that the last time they saw most of these animals was many years ago but we also noticed how excited they are to see these animals again. The most important thing for most of these communities is their own survival and we are working with these communities and experts in livelihood development to devise ways each community can have sustainable livelihoods that provide income, education and if possible promote conservation values.

IHALAS NEGRENSE

On November 26 to 29, 2021, we held an art exhibit at the Henrys Resort in Dumaguete City named “Ihalas Negrense,” which loosely translates as ‘wildlife of Negros’ in Bisaya. The goal of the art exhibit was to increase the community’s awareness of our native Negros species using native Negros artists. Each artist used their interpretation of Negros wildlife to create two (or more) pieces for the exhibit; one for our silent auction that would raise money for local conservation and community programs and others they could sell for themselves. The silent auction was a resounding success raising around 100'000 pesos, and the artists themselves were truly appreciative of the opportunity to exhibit and all the information regarding our native species that they didn't know prior to this exhibit. Additionally we consider the exhibit to be a great success in providing education and inspiration for Negros wildlife to people from across the island who attended the exhibit over the 3 days and got to see the amazing portrayals of native wildlife from our local artists. With an estimated attendance of over 200 people across the weekend and opportunities for our team to talk to many of them in person and show them what Talarak is doing toward Negros conservation.



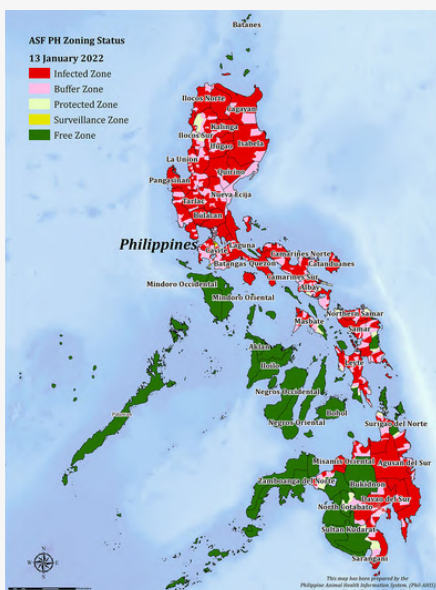
TROUBLES & TRAGEDIES

Enemies At The Gate And Overhead

THE "OTHER" VIRUS

Some of the biggest threats that face the animals of Negros are habitat loss, encroachment and poaching. But our Visayan Warty Pigs have a new threat looming over them with the spread of African Swine Fever or ASF. This viral disease has decimated domestic and wild pig populations across Asia and has already hit the Philippines with red alerts placed in the South, East and North of the country. Fortunately the West Visayan area of Negros and Panay, where our Visayan Warty Pigs are found, has not been affected by this disease yet. Our team were in an emergency workshop to discuss potential pathways for the disease to reach these islands, mitigation measures to avoid the disease spreading and how to identify its presence in case of an emergency. But it is now time to implement these strict biosecurity measures and precautions to protect our endangered and endemic warty pigs.

ASF mitigation measures fall closely to those of Covid-19, with this viral disease also mainly transmitted from direct contact, but possible to be transmitted as a fomite (attached to materials such as clothes, boots or even mud and feces). To prevent this method of spread quarantines and barriers between pigs is necessary, along with strict biosecurity cleaning for people in areas where domestic or wild pigs are present. What makes this virus so potentially damaging is that its ability to survive inside infected pigs even after they have died and/or been processed for pork products. This means that without letting any actual pigs enter an area the virus could still infect a previously "safe" zone through a wayward ham sandwich or pork bun, infected with the virus, coming into contact with a live pig.



Left: Zoning Map from the ASF monitoring partners helps to show where the virus has hit, and where is in danger (where protection is most needed).
Right: Our Visayan Warty Pigs, safe from ASF for now but we stay vigilant.

TYPHOON ODETTE

In December of 2021, typhoon Odette/Rai hit the Philippines hard, with Negros island and all three of our active sites being affected. The silver lining is that only one location, Kabankalan in the center of the island, received major damage as the typhoon passed directly overhead while the other areas needed some minor tree clearing and repair.

Kabankalan was one of our main captive breeding centers for our hornbills. This area, known as Feather Park housed many of our native species, including the Tarictic and Talarak hornbills, Bleeding Hearts, Blue Nape and Blue Back Parrots,

Palawan Peacock Pheasants, and others. After an initial destructive rain and wind, a flash flood hit the park and the water rose about 5 to 6 feet. Many birds were able to survive the initial flood and wind, but their enclosures were filled with mud and debris, and several species that forage on the ground landed on the mud and got stuck. With the struggles of the wind, rain and water the mud was too much for many of these weakened birds.

Unfortunately, our personnel were also badly affected by the typhoon and despite attempting to get back to the park as soon as possible had to ensure their family's safety.



Feather Park along with the rest of Kabankalan City were devastated by Typhoon Odette on December 16 2021. The torrential rains broke the flood barriers of the nearby river causing the city to become engulfed in a flash flood, which left thick layers of mud and debris across the area.

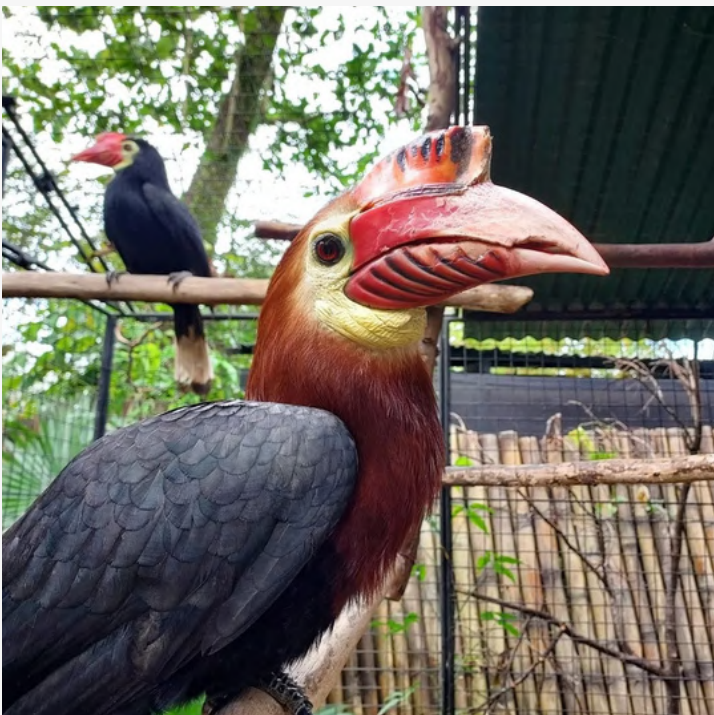


Negros Forest Park was affected by the high winds of the typhoon. Felling large trees, damaging water and electrical lines but narrowly avoiding animals and enclosures.



As the dust and dirt settled, and the waters receded, the repairs were underway. In Kabankalan priority went to retrieving injured or weak animals, and those in damaged aviaries, and placing them in temporary enclosures in NFP and BNR to be monitored and cared for. In Negros Forest Park the clearing of fallen trees and debris from the paths and enclosures enabled the park to reopen to the public, with some areas set aside to build new aviaries.

Thankfully, we have received very generous donations from our network of partners and members of the public to help rebuild our losses. We received a total of 4,934,166 Php (up to and including January) from our partners and supporters across the globe; with which we plan construct new enclosures in Negros Forest Park (and Bayawan Nature Reserve) and make repairs to the minor infrastructure damage, water and electrical facilities. Due to the impact of Odette, we no longer consider Kabankalan Feather Park as a suitable satellite breeding center. Therefore, we will relocate our most endangered and priority bird species to NFP and BNR, to secure their safety and prevent future hazards claiming more lives.



"To everyone who donated, shared our social media posts and supported our foundation or staff during this difficult time, THANK YOU. We cannot understate the gratitude we feel to all of you that came together in our time of need and support the conservation efforts that the Talarak Foundation was built from. We will endeavor to continue in our mission of saving and restoring the wildlife of the West Visayas in your names. Honoring your donations of time and funds with an invigorated determination."

GROWING OUR TALARAK FAMILY!



Kim Decena

Tour Leader & Ambassador Animal Trainer

My name is Joakim Isyru A. Decena or you may know me as Kuya Kim Decena. For as long as I remembered, I always had a long fascination with animals and the natural world. I would watch National Geographic during the weekends and I would explore my front yard searching for lizards and creepy crawlies at night. At age 5, my uncle gave me my first turtle whom peaked my interest to the world of reptiles and amphibians and has inspired me to become a herpetologist and a wildlife conservationist.

In college, I had the opportunity to volunteer at Negros Forest Park to learn how to take care of animals, conducting tours and educating visitors about the importance of conserving these animals and their habitat. Now I'm here full time and excited to be part of this growing team.

Mita Chabeli Pangan

Social Media Manager

Hi! I'm Mita Chabeli Pangan, a bird-loving communications professional and illustrator. I have tiny parrots as best friends who inspire me to excel at what I do. Because of them, what started out as a mere appreciation for cute, feathered creatures also became a strong drive to pursue meaningful work in conservation! I am fortunate to be taken under the wings of the amazing people at Talarak Foundation and be given opportunities to use my skills for good. Together with the Talarak team, I hope to keep working towards the protection of birds, other species, and their habitat.





Patricia Remoquillo

Marketing Consultant and Corporate Liaison

Patricia Remoquillo, or Pat, graduated from Ateneo de Manila University with a degree in Management. She has been working in the corporate world for 7 years now, in the fields of Business Development, Sales, and Marketing. Never forgetting her love for nature and her roots as a mountaineer, she has found herself venturing into wildlife conservation with TFI. "I am not a scientist, nor do I have a background in the field but in the best way that I

can, I would like to be able to help spread awareness of the importance of preserving and safekeeping the environment.

BAYAWAN NATURE RESERVE



Martly Violeta

Animal Tracker

Martly is our newest research assistant, focused on tracking the reserve's Visayan Spotted Deer and Visayan Warty Pigs. He has come to excel with the telemetry equipment (pictured) and taking data, and fits well with the research team. He is also helping develop a local running club as we aim to increase community engagement.



Agustino Fajardo

Ranger

Agustino was brought in to support our ranger team with experience of the area and the livelihoods that people get from these forests. He has been very encouraging in building relationships with his colleagues and his boundless energy and stamina have helped to survey the reserve perimeter to check and repair damages afflicted by storms.



Diicole Aguirre

Education Officer

Diicole (or Alpon) joined our education team full time this year to bolster our ability to reach more people and areas. He was previously a local liaison for the team, wanting to assist in providing awareness in connecting TFI to the communities, before we decided to bring him in full time and represent us within all the nearby villages.

ANIMAL UPDATES

By Dr. Monica Atienza

DEER AND PIGS

As our captive breeding programs continue to bear fruit (or rather fawns and piglets) we have had to think more about our population management strategies. We've managed to find several private individuals with the land and experience to adopt several of our sub-adult pigs in order to decrease the TFI captive population and increase our breeding satellite stations within the island. With only two breeding groups, Kabankalan just had an additional three piglets last July, while Negros Forest Park (NFP) had 12 new progeny within the span of October to December. We will continue with our priority of finding satellite partners to accommodate our captive born offspring as we cannot expand our own breeding space within TFI grounds, but we are looking at all necessary measures including reintroductions and other means of population control for the near future.

Around July 2021, the last batch of the Visayan Spotted Deer were sent to Bayawan Nature Reserve for release; three came from NFP while four were from Kabankalan. Our breeding success with the spotted deer is continuing but at a steady and more manageable pace with an additional two in NFP and one for Kabankalan this year. We will find out this year what our expected carrying capacity for the Bayawan Nature Reserve is and whether it is a viable option to continue releasing animals into the reserve from our captive centers.



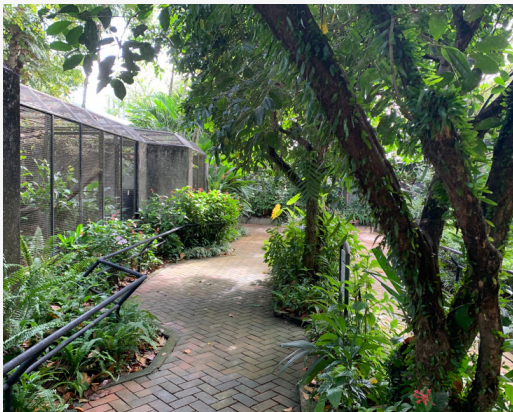
Above: Our Visayan Spotted Deer mothers with their new fawns ready for the challenges of their species conservation

Right: Our Visayan Warty Pigs; with new piglets learning from their father how to siesta (top), before the family tuck-in to some foliage and vegetables for dinner (bottom).

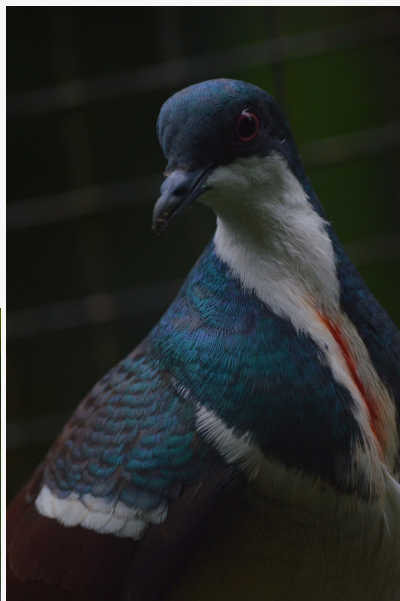
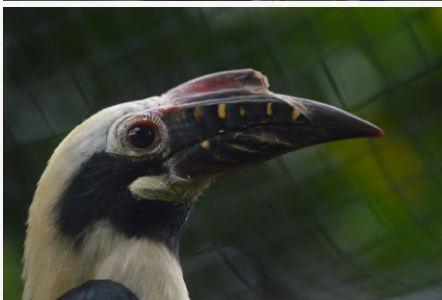
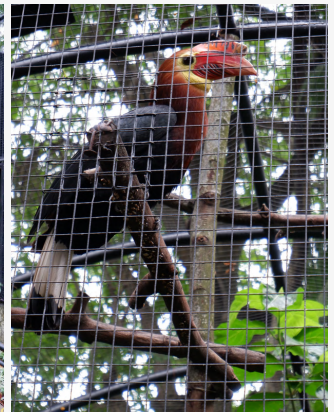
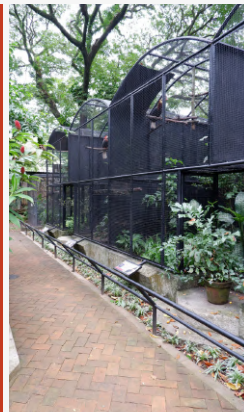
FEATHERED FRIENDS

We have had a relatively successful breeding period for many of our birds this year, especially for our hornbills and bleeding heart pigeons. We were again able to successfully breed the critically endangered Rufous Headed Hornbill for the third year in a row, growing our population by 2 to reach a population of 20 (before sadly losing 4 to the typhoon) .

Unfortunately, the Kabankalan breeding center, where the majority of our bird species were located, suffered serious casualties this year. During the typhoon rains and wind we lost one male Mindanao Writhed Hornbill but the subsequent flood waters and debris left 6-7 inches of thick mud. Many of our hornbills forage on the ground and sadly this mud caused the deaths of 4 Southern Rufous Hornbills, 6 of our Visayan Tarictic Hornbills, and 2 Rufous Headed Hornbills. The keepers tried to save our ground dweller species like the Negros Bleeding Heart and Palawan Peacock Pheasants but the sheer volume of water and force of the current too much for many. Sadly, we lost 5 bleeding heart pigeons, the majority of them being proven breeders, while we were left with only 1 pair of Palawan Peacock Pheasants. Many other of our bird species suffered similar fates with mortalities in the Blue-naped parrots (2), Nicobar pigeons (8), Metallic pigeon (1), and Palawan Hill Mynah (1).



Our aviaries in Negros Forest Park are alive and flapping, with breeding birds of all species. Looking forward to the new arrivals from Kabankalan.



ANIMAL INVENTORY

KABANKALAN

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STOCKS
Rufous Headed Hornbill	<i>Rhabdotorrhinus waldeni</i>	6.6.0
Visayan Tarictic Hornbill	<i>Penelopides panini</i>	15.17.0
Southern Rufous Hornbill	<i>Buceros mindanensis</i>	3.1.0
Mindanao Writhed Hornbill	<i>Rhabdotorrhinus leucocephalus</i>	5.5.0
Negros Bleeding Heart Pigeon	<i>Gallicolumba keayi</i>	4.5.6
Blue-naped Parrot	<i>Tanygnathus lucionensis</i>	13.14.18
Philippine Blue-backed Parrot	<i>Tanygnathus everetti</i>	1.2.3
Visayan Warty Pig	<i>Sus cebifrons negrinus</i>	9.5.6
Visayan Spotted Deer	<i>Rusa alfredi</i>	10.12.0

NEGROS FOREST PARK

SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STOCKS
Rufous Headed Hornbill	<i>Rhabdotorrhinus waldeni</i>	2.2.0
Visayan Tarictic Hornbill	<i>Penelopides paninini</i>	3.3.0
Southern Rufous Hornbill	<i>Buceros mindanensis</i>	1.1.0
Mindanao Writhed Hornbill	<i>Rhabdotorrhinus leucocephalus</i>	1.2.0
Negros Bleeding Heart Pigeon	<i>Gallicolumba keayi</i>	16.15.21
Blue-naped Parrot	<i>Tanygnathus lucionensis</i>	2.2.0
Visayan Warty Pig	<i>Sus cebifrons negrinus</i>	16.10.12
Visayan Spotted Deer	<i>Rusa alfredi</i>	4.6.2
Visayan Leopard Cat	<i>Prionailurus bengalensis rabori</i>	4.5.0
Philippine Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo.Philippensis</i>	4.9.0
Southern Philippine Hawk Eagle	<i>Nisaetus pinskeri</i>	1.2.0

OUR PARTNERS

