

Lake Manguao Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Project

2nd Intermediate Report

This report covers the second project phase from July to October 2007:

July 24 to 28 was spent at the State Collections of Natural History Dresden, Germany, where additional data of recent field collections were added to a manuscript (1) and microscopic photographs were taken which will be included in the forthcoming publications on new decapod (crustacean) species from Palawan.

- As a request for a “non-immigrant visa under “section 47 / a / 2” on the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940” at the Philippine Embassy in Germany, dated July 18, 2007 was not approved upon departure to the Philippines on August 5, 2007, it was necessary to spend several days in Manila to follow up the processing of requirements. Unfortunately, the request for exemption of payment of immigration fees by an official letter of the Museum of Natural History Vienna was denied, due to the lack of legal agreements with the funding organization (= Rufford). This caused the payment of rather high fees (ca. PHP 13.000). [As you are likely to provide RSGs for future activities in the Philippines you might consider a registration and agreement with the Department of Foreign Affairs, which would allow the issuance of visa free from payment of immigration fees]
- After the return to Palawan I was affected by a flu, followed by an eye infection, which only allowed computer works at the pension. This time was used for final proof corrections on the aforementioned manuscript (1), to fulfill a request by the journal “Zootaxa” for peer review of a scientific article intended for publication and preparations for the Rainforestation workshop.
- 13 days were spend for organismic sampling of 24 sites
- Several meetings with officials of the Municipality of Taytay (Municipal Administrator Sermeno, Sangguian Office Head Gonzales, District Poblacion “Kapitan” E. Rodriquez, etc.), the Municipality of Balabac (Municipal Councilor, District Agutayan Kagawad Buhangin) and the City of Puerto Princesa (Municipal Councillor f. Environment Oliveros, Sangguian Board Secretary Asuncion, District “Kapitans” of Napsan and Luzviminda) were held to clarify formalities (permit for sampling of comparative sites etc.) and inform about the ongoing project activities.
- A Taytay Municipal Council Meeting was attended September 3rd, giving in-depth information about the project’s concerns and activities.
- Further meetings with KATALA Foundation members (S. Schoppe, S. Diaz) and Western Philippines University (WPU) staff were held (President Dr. Magay, Prof. Lerom, Prof. Matillano, and Prof. Dolorosa) to coordinate the organization of the Rainforestation workshop
- A power point presentation (translated into a Tagalog Version) was prepared focusing on basic illustration of ecosystem functioning, value and conservation of forest streams
- The regional conference “5th Ecology and Fish Conservation Week” at the WPU was actively joined with a PP-presentation (October 8-12)
- A four-day excursion to the forests around Lake Manguao was undertaken with the experienced local “rainforestation” expert Siegfred Diaz (KATALA Foundation). His support

was very helpful to detect potential mother-trees for the collection of seedlings for the project nursery.

- Several families of the Manguao area have been visited prior to the “Rainforestation” Workshop to explain its objectives and to win participants (partly assisted by S. Diaz)
- The Rainforestation workshop was held on September 25-28. 20 members of the community around Lake Manguao, a representative each of the Municipal Administration, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS), WWF Philippines and students of the WPU were invited. Due to the large fraction of non-academic participants, the workshop was held in Tagalog language. All participants received a kit made of a Tagalog guide to rainforestation farming and fruit crop seeds. For 1-½ days the workshop was held at the conference place in the town proper of Taytay. Municipal Administrator Sermeno made the welcoming speech. The subsequent lectures were given on the vertebrate wildlife of the Lake Manguao Catchment and their conservation necessities (Matillano, WPU), the conservation and use of indigenous plant genetic resources in Palawan (Lerom, WPU), ecosystem functioning, value and conservation of forest streams and the AQUA Palawana program (applicant), followed by a detailed introduction to the “Rainforestation Farming” concept (Diaz, KATALA). The remaining days were a practical training. Potential mother-trees were visited with the participants and marked by sign boards, suitable seeds and wildlings were collected, a nursery for tree seedlings, fruit and cash crops was established providing optimal soil, light and humidity conditions. A people’s organization (SAMAHAN ng mag MANGGUGUBAT at MAGSASAKA sa SITIO DANA O) was founded, which will be responsible for the future management of the “rainforestation” activities. Local persons elected during the workshop filled respective honorary positions. Finally, pioneering trees were planted at an area near the sitio hall and a closing ceremony was held where all participants got their Certificate of Participation.
- Two day meetings with the members of the new people’s organisation were held to continue “rainforestation” activities, to maintain and to monitor the nursery and the plantations.
- The regional conference “5th Ecology and Fish Conservation Week” at the WPU was actively joined with a PP-presentation (October 8-12)
- Two volunteers (Niels Hagge, student at University of Hamburg; Jojo Orcullo, conservationist Puerto Princesa) were joining the project to receive a practical training on conservation for the entire period October 01-20. Therefore excursions to the WWF Irawadi-Dolphin-Conservation Project (Malampaya Sound, Taytay), the Philippine Cockatoo Conservation Project of the KATALA Foundation (Rasa Island, Narra) and an ornithological excursion at Lake Manguao were included into the schedule. The volunteers also joined the regular program, which included field sampling, “rainforestation” activities and the “5th Ecology and Fish Conservation Week”.
- The information sheets displayed at the boards at Lake Manguao and at the WPU have been changed twice to adjust for the respective project stage (general information on the “rainforestation” concept and workshop invitation; workshop results).

Outlook

Recently, corrections have to be done and new data will be added to a reviewed manuscript on Palawan Heptageniidae (2). Dr. H. Zettel (NHM Vienna) announced his arrival in the Philippines by

November 13 for a joint sampling of comparative sites in Palawan and the realization of the Biodiversity Workshop (November 26-29) at the WPU. The identical workshop at the University of San Carlos was unfortunately cancelled by the faculty there due to an overlap with important field projects. The “rainforestation” activities at Sitio Danao, the maintenance and the monitoring of the nursery and the plantations will be continued.

- (1) FREITAG, H. & JÄCH, M. 2007. The genus *Ancyronyx* Erichson, 1847 (Coleoptera, Elmidae) in Palawan and Busuanga, (Philippines) with descriptions of six new species. *Zootaxa* 1590: 37–59.
- (2) BRAASCH, D. & FREITAG, H. Palawaneuria, a new subgenus of *Compsoeuria* and new species of *Compsoeuria* and *Afronurus* (Ephemeroptera: Heptageniidae) from Palawan, Philippines. (Reviewed by *Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift*).

