



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILIPPINE EAGLE FOUNDATION

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## PEF MAKES HISTORIC RELEASE OF EAGLE



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(L-R): Carlos Pedrosa, Erwin Tulfo, Melanie Aquino, Gov. Manny Piñol, Agnes de Jesus, Arlene De Castro, Dennis Salvador, Sec. Elisea Gozun, Sec. Vincent Perez, J. Marsh Thomson, Luli Arroyo, Paul Aquino, Joseliza Paje, and Gen. Cesar Tapia.

The Philippine Eagle Foundation made conservation history last April when it released an endangered Philippine Eagle back into the wild and signaled the progression of conservation efforts into a new level.

*Kabayan*, a male juvenile Philippine Eagle, was released to its new home within the PNOG Geothermal Production Field in the majestic Mt. Apo in Kidapawan City on Earth Day April 22, 2004. Bred, hatched and raised at the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Davao City, *Kabayan* is the first captive-bred large forest eagle to be released to the wild in the whole of Asia.

The then 17-month-old *Kabayan* was released to Mt. Apo in ceremonies attended by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Elisea Gozun, Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Vincent Perez and Mrs. Arlene de Castro, wife of Vice-President Noli de Castro who adopted the eagle shortly after its birth in 2002. The President's daughter Luli Arroyo was also present to witness the release, along with PNOG President Paul Aquino, Cotabato Governor Manny Piñol and PNOG Resident Manager Ellsworth Lucero.

PEF President Carlos Pedrosa and Vice Chairman J. Marsh Thomson were on hand to welcome guests to the historic affair. A large crowd gathered to watch live video feeds of the release proceedings on a tv screen set up at the program hall, a short distance from the actual release site. A collective cheer erupted when *Kabayan* flew out of its

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*Kabayan*, the first captive-bred Philippine Eagle released to the wild.

### Research and Conservation of PEs at Sierra Madre Mountains

Being one of the most threatened species in the world, the Philippine Eagle has driven conservation efforts in the country. As a powerful flagship and a keystone species of the Philippine tropical forest, focusing on the Philippine Eagle provides a practical conservation umbrella that also benefits the species that share its habitat with the eagle.

The species is historically found on four major islands in the country, namely Luzon, Samar,

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## PEF Highlights Reintroduction At 6<sup>th</sup> Philippine Eagle Week

Tatit Quiblat

The Philippine Eagle Foundation led the celebration of the sixth Philippine Eagle Week (PEW) last June 4 to 10, 2004 on the heels of the historic release of the captive-bred Philippine Eagle *Kabayan* to the wild last April. The Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Malagos was the hub of all the activities throughout the week.

Over thirty vehicles from fifteen agencies and business organizations formed a caravan to kick off the celebrations on June 4. The caravan, carrying conservation banners and bearing nearly a hundred eagle supporters, cruised through the streets of Davao City before proceeding to the PEC.

At the Center, guests were treated to film shows, miniconcerts and the exceptional opportunity to see several birds of prey, including a three-year old Philippine Eagle, up close. Ten raptors were on display at the center plaza of the PEC, with a few more animals like owls and snakes shown to the crowd by PEF animal keepers and volunteers.

At the back of the Raptor Display was a flight area where a Philippine Hawk Eagle named Angelly was stationed to fly to its handler on command.

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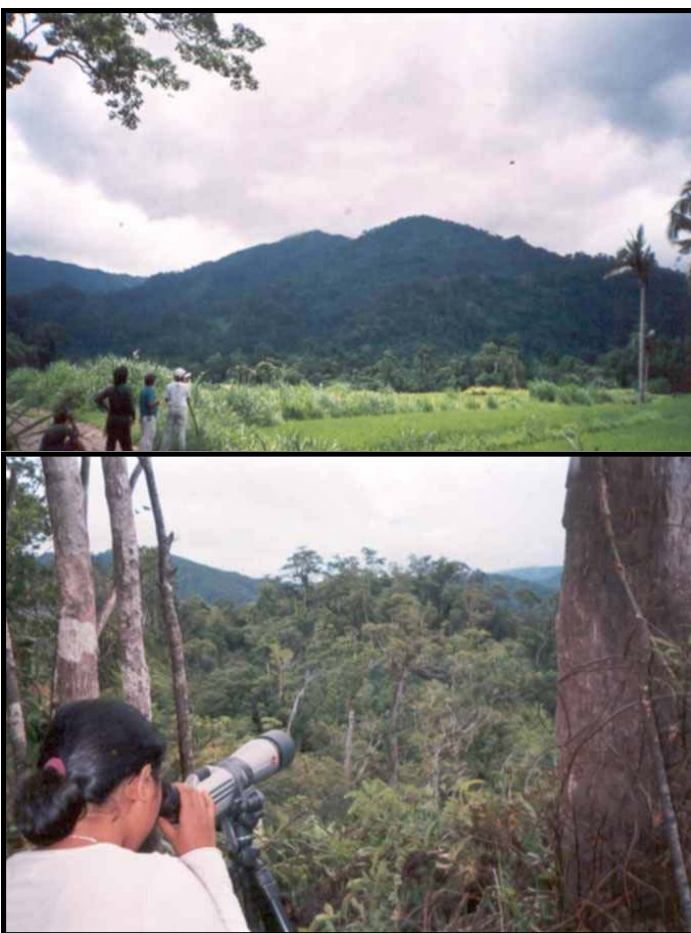
## Research and Conservation of PEs at Sierra Madre Mountains

Mindanao. So far, scientific knowledge on the Philippine Eagle is hampered by the lack of information on populations in other islands. Although population surveys and nest studies were done in some parts of Mindanao, these undertakings are not enough to determine the true status of the Philippine Eagle.

To help address this problem, the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) and the Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (KKP) embarked on a project to study Philippine Eagles in the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (NSMNP).

The project's ultimate goal is to ensure the long-term survival of biodiversity within the NSMNP by using the Philippine Eagle as a flagship and umbrella species for conservation. Through scientific information on the Philippine Eagle's distribution, biology and ecology, specifically on the recent factors that limit its number in the wild, NSMNP authorities can have a sound basis for management decisions concerning habitat and species protection.

The project has three major components: field research,



training (to build local capacity for raptor research and monitoring), and public education. The project's immediate objectives are the estimation of breeding density of Philippine Eagles in the NSMNP, conduct of natural history studies such as distribution pattern and breeding biology, building of local capacity for eagle research and conservation, and increase in the knowledge and understanding of local stakeholders regarding the importance of the conservation of the Philippine Eagle in the preservation of the biodiversity of the NSMNP.

From February 19 to 21, PEF trained 16 local people on raptor survey, monitoring and handling. These parabiologists reside around NSMNP in the municipalities of Tumawini, Macoraccon, Dinapigue, and San Mariano of Isabela Province.

In March, Regional Eagle Watch Team (REWT) members of DENR Region II, two faculty from Isabela State University, and representatives from KKP and Conservation International-Philippines were trained on raptor research and management by PEF staff. The training was conducted at the Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, Davao City where the participants had access to the conservation breeding facility. Participants received lectures and participated in exercises on capture, handling and restraining large eagles. They also participated in the annual physical check-up of Philippine Eagles to get a first-hand look at detecting external signs of a healthy or sick bird. Such knowledge is valuable for diagnosis of confiscated or retrieved birds to determine appropriate medication or first aid solution to administer. Training participants also joined the PEF field biologists in their radio-telemetry work in Central Mindanao.

Surveys in Mt. Susong Dalaga complex and Mt. Pangal complex in San Mariano, Isabela Province were conducted in March and April respectively. No Philippine Eagle was seen in the first survey area and this suggested that the site is not an occupied territory.

The team got lucky on the second survey. A Philippine Eagle was sighted and its plumage revealed that the eagle was still a juvenile. This was the first ever documentation of a juvenile eagle in the forests of NSMNP.

Informal interviews with local hunters in the two survey areas were also conducted to help determine the presence of potential prey items of Philippine Eagles. The data collected suggested that all probable prey items except the Philippine Brown Deer are still abundant.

As of press time, the field research team is on another survey activity in the NSMNP.



Kabayan, as photographed through a field scope.

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## PEF Makes Historic Release of Eagle

temporary cage after almost an hour of coaxing. It was around noon when he finally left his cage to land on a perch a few meters away.

Kabayan had been acclimatizing to the new environment in Mt. Apo for three weeks prior to the release. He was moved from the PEC to a temporary cage, called a hack cage, on March 30, 2004.

PEF's Experimental Release Project seeks to document a captive-bred eagle's adjustment to the forest environment as a preliminary step to the conduct of a full-blown program of reintroducing captive-bred eagles into the forests to complement wild eagle populations. The experimental release is designed to test known release protocols for use with the Philippine Eagle. "This has never been done with the Philippine Eagle before, thus, we are taking a successful release protocol such as that of the Peregrine Fund's program for the Harpy Eagle and adapting it to our Philippine Eagles," PEF Executive Director Dennis Salvador explained.

PEF mobile teams have been monitoring and following Kabayan since he flew off from the hack cage last April. Kabayan is equipped with a backpack-type radio and satellite transmitter for tracking, and an aluminum leg band and a PetiChip radio frequency identification (RFID) microchip implanted in his left breast muscle for identification.

Tribal leaders and local officials of communities surrounding Mt. Apo gave their full support to having the eagle in the area. Ten barangays expressed their commitment to support the protection and conservation efforts and assist in the monitoring of the eagle. Teams of PEF biologists, PNOC research collaborators, volunteers and local tribal guides were formed to track Kabayan in the wild until October.

Most recent reports from the monitoring teams in Mt. Apo related that Kabayan was practicing his hunting skills almost on a daily basis, performing mock attacks on sticks and branches and occasionally searching for small prey items like lizards and rats. The eagle appeared well-groomed and of good build. Though Kabayan was most often seen in a particular area he likely associates with the supplemental food provided for him, he was also observed to be honing his flight skills in exploring areas as far as two kilometers away. PEF's researchers observed that Kabayan's behavior is

consistent with wild Philippine Eagles his age.

Kabayan is a product of the cooperative artificial insemination on the eagles Kahayag and Junior. He was hatched in November 23, 2002.



One Network Bank President Alex Buenaventura (seated second from left) and Philippine Eagle Foundation Executive Director Dennis Salvador (seated third from left) sign a six-year agreement for the adoption of captive-bred Philippine Eagle "Mindanao".

## Welcome to the PEF Family: Two Eagles Find New Godparents Tatit Quiblat

### Arakan

The PEF welcomes into the family the adoptive parent of Arakan, Tomas C. Llamas. Mr. Llamas, a Manila-based individual who engages in aquaculture, visited the Philippine Eagle Center in January of this year and quickly asked about helping out by adopting one eagle. Mr. Llamas chose to support Arakan, a male eagle turning six years old this December. Arakan is the offspring of a pair of Philippine Eagles in Arakan Valley which has been the subject of numerous studies by the PEF field team. Two men captured the eagle after it was allegedly chased by a flock of crows. The eagle was weak and starving by the time the PEF team retrieved the eagle. He was then brought to the Center for rehabilitation and inclusion into the breeding program. The six-year adoption was formalized on Earth Day 2004.

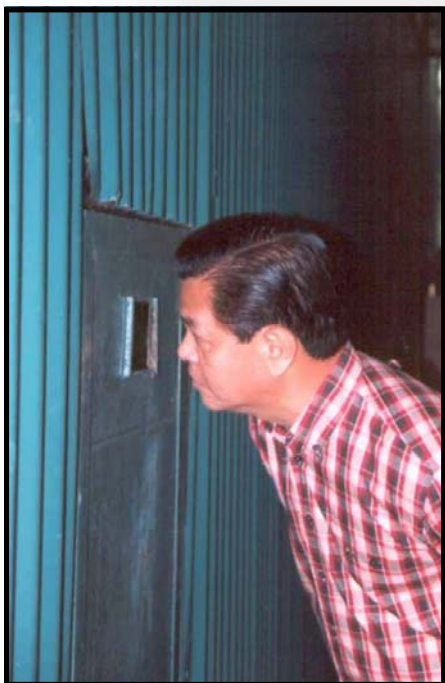
### Mindanao

One Network Bank pays tribute to its depositors and clientele by adopting an unnamed captive-bred eagle and naming it "Mindanao" in ceremonies held July 29, 2004. Alex Buenaventura, One Network Bank President, led bank officials on a visit to the Center to formalize their six-year commitment to the protection of the national bird. Mindanao, who turns three years old this December, is the fifth of seven offspring of the natural eagle pair Jag and Ka Brianne. Mr. Buenaventura shared that it was only fitting for them to take care of the species that was very much a part of the lives of many of their clients who live in and have a stake on the future of the island. One Network Bank has 46 branches all over Mindanao.



# MOW-WIT OD LAYANG: The Philippine Eagle Soars Home

Release Day: April 22, 2004 Earth Day



Vice President Noli De Castro takes a peek at *Kabayan* during his visit at the Philippine Eagle Center.



Arlene de Castro unveils marker as Presidential daughter Luli Arroyo looks on.



Carlos Pedrosa delivers a message of thanks in behalf of the PEF.



Kabayan practices his flight skills inside the hack box.



Kabayan walking on a perch shortly after the hack box was opened.

# Notes from the Field

## Camille Concepcion

As a biologist, I dream of having a direct contribution to the conservation and preservation of our wildlife. It was just something that I felt would complete my being a biologist, even when I was still a college student. I saw and felt, and was inevitably infected, by the passion of my professors. I had one particular professor who we always ridiculed for saying “*mainit talaga dito sa Pilipinas*” (*It’s really hot in the Philippines*) a million times during our classes. But whenever this professor spoke about his experiences on field studying the Philippine Eagle, there was never a question that he fervently believed that our national bird was worth each and every drop of effort, time and money. Coaxed by the fire in his eyes, I too, burned.

Now, as a young field biologist for the Philippine Eagle Foundation, I am helping to fulfill the dream that my professor and his colleagues had, in turn fulfilling mine. They wanted to augment the wild population of Philippine Eagles by releasing captive bred birds. And last March 30, 2004, a captive-bred Philippine Eagle was transported from the Philippine Eagle Center to the Mt. Apo Geothermal Production Field in PNOC (Philippine National Oil Company), Kidapawan City. With that transport, the experimental release program that would eventually lead to a full-blown reintroduction program started.

The hacking stage, which is the three-weeks when the eagle *Kabayan* would stay inside the hack cage to acclimatize, was both exciting and boring. It was exciting for me to learn about the behavior of the bird. Eventually though, excitement would fade and would turn into complete and utter boredom. The Philippine Eagle is a docile creature and there is not much for a bird of his size to do in a 10 feet x 12 feet x 14 feet hack cage.

Things became more hectic as April 22, the release day, drew nearer. It did become more exciting because the first batch of volunteers arrived about three days before the release. It was a welcome break from seeing the same people, Namie and Joseph, everyday for the past weeks. We were all keyed up to see new faces. We were lucky that we clicked with the volunteers. There was a high school student, some college students, college graduates, and some professionals. These people were not just volunteers, they became our friends as well.

The observation shifts of the last two days before the release were shared with the volunteers. I enjoyed sharing with them what I have so far learned about Kabs’ behavior. And for the first time in almost three weeks of observation, I was not observing alone.

Here are the thoughts of the PEF volunteers as they got a taste of

### Eagle Escapade

*One is never too young to help out. At 15 years old, Kai C. Sorongon was the youngest to volunteer during Kabayan’s release.*

I embarked on this “eagle escapade” as a requirement for school. During the summer, incoming fourth year students of Pisay (Philippine Science High School) are required to undergo an internship as an elective subject. So while most of my batchmates chose to work in offices and laboratories, I took a different route and landed in the field. At first, I thought my job would be limited to work at the Philippine Eagle Center, helping the crew cut up eagle food and the like. But I was wrong. The opportunity came, and with my parents’ consent, I grabbed it and had a blast.

My parents are both nature lovers, having climbed Mount Apo at least six times, and having had some involvement in the protection of the Philippine Eagle. I, too, have always been a nature lover. I have been to forests before but never in a mountain. I have seen Philippine Eagles before but never in the wild. The chance to see both in one trip, was simply exciting.

I felt privileged to join the trip, being only 15, and only a high school student, among volunteers who were already professionals or studying their last bit of school. The group was a mix of people from different walks of life: student, lawyer, engineer, physical therapist, teacher, photographer, etc. But as we were volunteers out to watch the eagle, we became equals. We treated each other warmly and openly, and in the end, I gained friends who are like family to me now. The company was definitely one of the major highlights of the Mount Apo-Kabayan experience.

I was with the first batch of volunteers and our work then, while Kabayan was not yet freed, was simply to chronicle his behavior, from his usual perching activities to his feeding, preening, or spreading of wings. Before the day of the release, I went to look at him for the last time in captivity. I thought that this would be a stepping stone for future releases, and perhaps the foundation of the propagation of Philippine Eagles in the wild. I hoped that someday their number will multiply greatly, and the Philippine Eagle will regain its throne as the King of the Forest.

Finally, Kabayan was released. Everybody was happy to see him free, though we all knew we were gambling on his life. We could keep him

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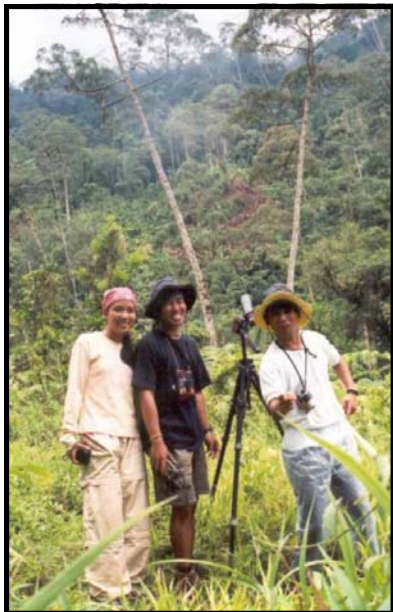


Kai on the field scope during monitoring activities for Kabayan.



(Continued from page 6)

in captivity and ensure his wellness, health and safety, or risk him getting shot, acquiring diseases or simply not being able to hunt on his own. Yet he was freed, to live like he had never done before, to give hope to his kin and to grab the chance many of them did not fully enjoy. Even if the program turned out to be imperfect, it will allow the improvement and success of the next eagle releases.



Our work was not yet over. It was still our job to monitor and track his behavior in the wild. Many times we found ourselves in unfamiliar forests and infrequently trodden trails. Though the chase for the eagle had been tiring and difficult, one look at Kabayan with one of the most beautiful places in the world as backdrop was enough to wipe away the sweat and trouble. All that remains with me now is the memory and the hunger for more eagle adventures, but I am happy and content, knowing that Kabayan is free, and the release program went well.

I signed up for only a week but ended up extending my stay another week. My internship has ended, and still I hope that I can come back and get hooked again. I now see the truth in the cliché “Work is not work when you’re enjoying it.” I’m sure that many of my batchmates enjoyed their internships too, but I think I had the best one of all. Even if some of them visited other countries for their internships, I bet none of them climbed the beautiful Mount Apo, went out to observe a majestic eagle, and in the company of great newfound friends.

### Notes from (a Volunteer’s trip to) the Field

**Marlon G. Dejadina**, a civil engineer by profession, took two weeks off from work to join the monitoring team for the release of Kabayan. Marlon details the specific tasks of a volunteer.

#### That Morning Ride

It was a beautiful morning. The sun was shining and there was no threat of rain. I woke up early to prepare for the start of my two weeks as a volunteer for the Philippine Eagle Foundation. I double-checked my things. I was in good physical condition. I was excited. Too excited that I was the first one to arrive at Mercury Drug Ulas where we would be fetched by the PEF staff. One by one, the other volunteers arrived and for the first time I had a good look on the faces of the people I would be working with.

The three-hour drive to PNOC compound was not that bad but it was not comfortable either. There were eight of us volunteers, three staff and a stuffed Philippine Eagle named Diola. We were all neatly arranged inside the PEF service vehicle popularly known as the “brown car”. No one was complaining. I guess we were just too excited that we hardly noticed the misery of staying in the same

position for two hours.

#### Off to Work

The PNOC compound was a sight for sore eyes. At least for me who loves to see tall trees, lush green forest and chains of mountain peaks. We were led to our base camp and for the first time we all saw eagle Kabayan in his hack cage. I thought seeing him in his cage was awesome enough, what more to see him fly and soar the sky. We were all there for that reason. To see the Philippine Eagle soar and own the Philippine skies again.

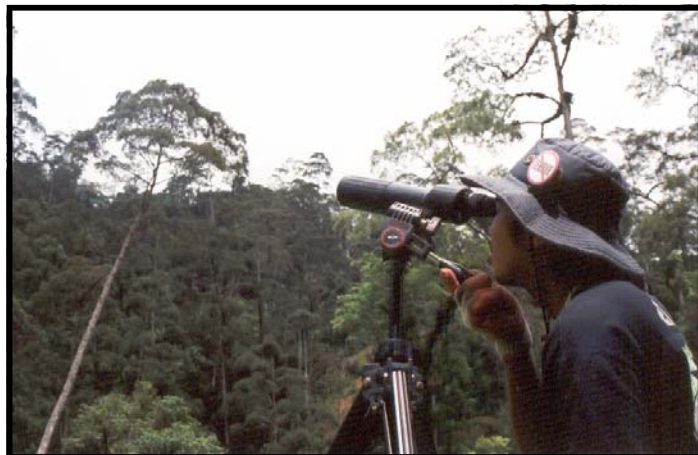
The next day we were off to work. Each was given at least two hours to observe the behavior of Kabayan inside his cage. We were introduced to the basic eagle activities and their corresponding codes: PRC for perching, PRN for preening, Rest-LL to say the eagle is resting on his left leg, and all other activities. We were to record these activities for the whole day, from six in the morning to six in the evening. I imagined, PEF biologists Camille and Namie would be staring at the eagle the whole day for one month. Days like that can be dull. Perhaps that’s one reason they looked so happy to see us.

Our next assignment was to check and verify radio signal from one of the observation posts, Macadac, probably the highest and most difficult post to trek. It took Joseph (PEF staff), Nato (volunteer), two other guides and myself almost two hours to get to the observation post. It was steep and I almost felt my knees on my chin. But we were not disappointed. The site proved to be ideal for telemetry readings and for eagle sighting. However, after much deliberation and meetings, the site was abandoned due to security reasons.

The day before Kabayan’s release, Namie and I were sent to a nearby ridge near the Marble River to stay there for five days to record radio telemetry readings, report sightings of Kabayan and observe the different birds around our post. After two days of signal hunting we were pulled out of our post. Apparently Kabayan was too far down and out of our signal coverage. We then became part of the mobile team whose primary goal was to find Kabayan inside a particular area of forest and hopefully record his hunting and eating activities. I could not imagine how we could have found Kabayan inside that forested area without the help of radio-telemetry.

#### Air-Force One

On one of our routine observations, we saw Kabayan make a few flaps and transfer from tree to tree. Kabayan showed increasing confidence and flew longer and higher. But our exhilaration was cut short when



out of nowhere two crows emerged from the trees and displayed what seemed like signals that Kabayan was unwelcome. They flew around him and suddenly dove down like they were driving Kabayan out of their territory. Kabayan moved from side to side and raised his crown as if showing his fight stance.

After much harassment, Kabayan flew and headed towards our direction. We clearly saw the span of his wings as he flew right above us with the crows on each side. It was such a wonderful sight to see, like a 747 jet was flying above us with two F16 fighter planes alongside. It reminded me of Air-Force One with its convoy.

### The Experience

There would follow many events and many sightings of Kabayan. What I noticed however was that most of the sightings would last for only a couple of minutes and yet this was enough to complete our day. It gave us much encouragement to wake up the next day and patiently wait for another rapturous experience.

There is something about watching an eagle fly. I just can't explain what it is exactly but I know it has something to do with firing up a man's soul. Perhaps I see in Kabayan a different kind of freedom, the kind that I myself have been searching. Pure and simple freedom.

### **“Nag soar si Kabayan! Nag soar si Kabayan!”**

*Veterinary Medicine student Bayani Weredi Vandenbroeck tells of the thrills and spills of volunteering during the watch for Kabayan.*

I can still clearly remember my fourth day in the field. I was with Cito (PEF staff), Sherwin Q. (volunteer) and 'Nong Boy (guide) up in Kawayanon, the farthest – and most difficult to reach! – observation post that day. Despite the hours of hiking, slipping and climbing, our efforts were rewarded with some of the most spectacular views of the valley below! Kabayan was perched on the other side of the valley and nowhere in sight.

Being the good people that we were (hehehe!), we settled in and started doing our work. Unfortunately for us, we were not able to bring along a telescope that day, so we were stuck with our less powerful binoculars to scan the area for the eagle.

With the shaky grip that I had on the binoculars, I already felt a bit

nauseous after just three hours of looking for the bird. Additionally, the sky was slightly overcast and the sun never really broke through the whole morning. I was starting to think we'd probably not have anything exciting to see in comparison to my first two days in the field.

Before I continue with what happened the rest of the day, here's a little flashback...

### Day 1, Monday, April 26

It's my first day on the field! I'm one of the Batch 2 volunteers, the group the PEF staff would “fondly” remember as the noisiest batch. Excited at the prospect of finally being able to actually do what I had been wanting to do for a long time, I eagerly go with Marlon (Batch 1 & 2 volunteer) and volunteer coordinator Ate Rein to our post at Blaster peak. After posing for some pictures for the trigger-happy Ate Rein, we settle in to doing our regular telemetry readings, with me just popping question after question about the first week to Marlon.

We had a telescope, and in practically no time “eagle-eye” Marlon spots Kabayan, giving me my first ever glimpse of a Philippine Eagle in the wild! After my initial excitement, I realize he hardly moves at all, so we settle back into our routine of telemetry readings, always making sure that we have the eagle in sight.

Just before lunch, our patience is rewarded. As Kabayan is perched on one of the top branches of a pine tree, a Brahminy kite appears. Action! After spotting the eagle, the kite gives a screech and dives straight down at Kabayan! Though there's no actual physical contact, the kite swoops down three more times and then soars off into the valley below. It circles around a few times, then rides a thermal and eventually flies away again. Kabayan was totally unaffected and unintimidated, but nevertheless, what a sight that was! We were practically glued to our binoculars and telescope, thanking our lucky stars for having seen everything happen.

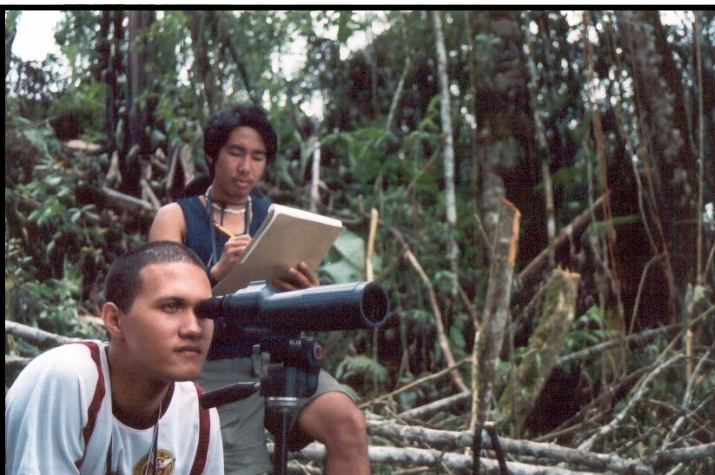
### Day 2, Tuesday, April 27

I'm assigned to the roving team! Camille (PEF staff), Keith (photographer), our two guides and I set out a bit earlier, and before long we find Kabayan perching on yet another pine tree. We set up

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Field team in a huddle with volunteers.



Bayani scans the area for Kabayan while Marlon takes notes.





our blind, and since it's still a bit early for the eagle to fly (he usually does between 9-10 in the morning), we just relax and occasionally check to see if the eagle's still on his perch.

Just when I'm starting to think this day would be just as easy as the day before, Kabayan takes off and transfers to another perch...and our work begins!

It doesn't take long for us to spot the eagle again, but no sooner have we set up the blind, that Kabayan takes off again! It seemed like Kabayan wanted to play cat-and-mouse with us, and we ended up running after him the whole morning. It wore us out.

We managed to keep up with the eagle, though he was slowly succeeding in leaving us behind, when finally we got a break as he decided to perch at the edge of a valley, right next to an army detachment. This proved to be a moment of comic relief for us.

The soldiers, upon seeing the eagle, became immediately excited and offered their dog and rooster as prey! As everyone - the soldiers and the roving team - tried their best to hide behind or inside the buildings of the detachment (with practically everyone suppressing laughs), all eyes were on Kabayan, who has seen the rooster.

However, the eagle lost interest in the smaller bird on the ground and eventually decided to fly across the valley to perch on a tall pine tree (again!) about 300 meters away, giving us another spectacular sight - an eagle in flight! Good for me, because I was able to take 2 shots of his flight on film!

#### Day 3, Wednesday, April 28

Sherwin Q. (did you know we had three Sherwins in the volunteer pool?) and myself were among the volunteers who had to watch over a guinea pig set up as supplemental feeding for Kabayan. We ended up not going to the field at all, since Kabayan did not come anywhere near the feeding station where we were posted with our guinea pigs. Though naturally we were disappointed, this was in fact the day we got enough rest. Maybe we were meant to rest that day, for we had no idea that the next day would be totally different for us...

#### Day 4, Thursday, April 29

This brings me back to the start of my story. So there we were, manning our post in Kawayanon. After the exhausting hike up to the post, we were all too happy to just settle down and rest a bit while getting our telemetry readings. Just before lunch, we were witness to the greatest sight any of the monitoring teams had seen so far.

For the past hour or so we had the same telemetry reading, when all of a sudden, at around 11:30am, we recorded quite a big difference. We thought that it was just a reading error, and as Cito was about to get a second reading, Sherwin gave an excited shout and pointed to the valley below us.

There, right in front of us, was Kabayan soaring! Wings spread wide, the eagle soared from below us, with his back facing us. As he gained altitude, the eagle turned around, exposing its magnificent underside as he rose above us.

Enthralled by what we saw and forgetting everything else, we grabbed the radio and shouted "*Nag-soar si Kabayan! Nag-soar si Kabayan!*" It was a wonderful sight! After he disappeared into the side of the mountain, we got our last glimpse of the eagle as he reappeared further and higher up, circled twice more, and finally soared out of sight.

It didn't matter to us that we were unable to capture any of it on camera. It also didn't matter anymore that in the remaining days of the week I volunteered I did not get to see the eagle anymore. As we told the people back in camp that day, those moments would forever be etched in our memories.

And it is true what they usually say: One can spend hours, days, or even weeks in the field with practically no visuals or no action whatsoever. Everything will be worth it for those few moments, those few minutes of being able to witness such a wonderful sight.

Seeing Kabayan out there, exploring the slopes of Mt. Apo, is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It is only in the wild, where the Philippine Eagle truly belongs, that one can truly see its majesty.

### From a Volunteer's Point of View

*University of Southeastern Philippines Senior student Jeam Camile is a scholar of the Dominguez family and was assigned to serve the PEF office for the summer of 2004.*

Saving our endangered national bird, the Philippine Eagle is the main goal of the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF). In the fulfillment of this goal lies not only the future of the Philippine Eagle, but of Mother Nature as well.

This task doesn't only apply to the staff of PEF. We too are called to do our share to help save these threatened raptors from extinction even through the simplest way we know how. Money is not the only thing to consider if we speak of helping. Rendering one's service is the greatest alternative there is.

For sure, each of us has his or her own special skills and talents. The skills we possess can contribute a lot to the success of the conservation of our natural resources. I, myself, am one of the volunteers for the PEF. Since I had skills appropriate for office jobs, I was assigned at the PEF office, along with my friend Ritchel. At the beginning, we were a bit disoriented with the office setup. We made it a point to familiarize ourselves with the new environment first. As we grew more accustomed to the place, things became easier for both of us and we functioned well.

We didn't have a hard time at all doing the tasks at hand. The PEF staff welcomed us warmly and made us feel that we are part of the family. We learned to love the job and enjoyed every moment of it. There were a few challenges but we knew this was all for a good cause. We knew that we were not just helping to save these magnificent raptors from extinction but were also fulfilling our calling and passion. That is, to be functional citizens of this country not only for the Philippine Eagle's sake but for all of humanity as well.

Do you want to experience what I'm talking about!!!! BE A VOLUNTEER TODAY!!!!!!

*(Continued from page 6)*

working to save the Philippine Eagle.

### Notes from the Field

After over a month, I am finally home. Soon I go back to PNOF for a couple of days. Later, I head to Sierra Madre to survey for Philippine Eagles. Daily, I fulfill my dream. But more than the fulfillment of my dream as a biologist, I also walk away with friends who I consider family.

As a field biologist, I feel the honor granted me by being part of the experimental release. It is now my turn to be "young and stupid" as my professor said he was when he would live in the forest for long periods. The foundations have already been laid. And it is up to my generation to continue building hope for the Philippine Eagle.



Camille enjoying the Jumar ascender.

### Owls Anyone?

Ana Mae Sumaya

Owls roam the forests at night hunting for food. Big or small, they are considered raptors. Armed with powerful talons, they squeeze their prey to death. These birds are good biological indicators and help maintain the ecological balance of the forest.



The Philippine Giant Scops Owl (*Mimizuku gurneyi*) Eagle Center

maintains three species of owls in the facility. The Giant Scops Owl natural pair and the Philippine Scops Owl natural pair have been able to breed and hatch their offspring successfully.

Philippine Scops Owls are generally small owls that are found in the understory of forests and the forest edge. They may breed throughout the year but at the Center, their breeding season may have started in early January as our natural pair produced eggs late January. This species of owl lays 2 eggs per clutch and may lay 2 to 3 clutches per breeding season, depending on the survival of the eggs produced. Incubation may last anywhere from 25 to 28 days. Three of the seven eggs produced at the Center have hatched successfully. Two eggs were artificially incubated while the third one was incubated naturally and is currently sharing the same roof with its parents.

Giant Scops Owls are medium to large in size and stand from 12 to 15 inches in height. Like the Philippine Scops Owl they may breed throughout the year, but eggs from the Philippine Scops Owls at the PEC were collected in February till May. Three eggs were produced this season. One was broken while the other two were retrieved, then artificially incubated and hatched successfully.

All the hatched owls are between three to four months old and have been found healthy.



Philippine Scops Owl (*Otus megalotis*)



## PEF Joins an Alliance for the Philippine Eagle

Jayson Ibañez

In the spirit of collaboration, PEF joined the Philippine Eagle Alliance in 2003 to share its experience and expertise with four organizations that want to work for eagle conservation in other parts of the archipelago.

Supported by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the Alliance was formed to bring together five non-government organizations to work for eagle research and conservation in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Luzon and the Eastern Mindanao Corridor (EMC) in Mindanao. Through its Threatened Species Fund, CEPF will be giving grants to each member organization to support a three-year project to conserve the eagles and the forests where they live.

As its commitment to the Alliance, the PEF will do its share of work by studying and working to conserve Philippine Eagles in the large forest blocks of the Agusan Provinces, the Davao Provinces and the Compostela Valley Province. PEF will also help Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (KKP) with their eagle work at the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park (see related article in page 1). Because of its long years of experience in studying wild birds, PEF was also tasked to facilitate training of Alliance biologists on methods for studying how the eagles breed, behave and survive in the wild. PEF will also assist Alliance biologists in their first expeditions in Sierra Madre in Luzon island and the Surigao Provinces in Mindanao island.

As of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting in July 2004, the Alliance has developed an eagle conservation plan, set areas of work where members can collaborate and share expertise, and made project proposals for CEPF's funding. As proposed, each member will conduct research on the ecological and habitat needs of the species, do education campaigns to raise people's awareness on the status and importance of the eagles and its habitat, and implement community-based livelihood projects in areas where eagles nest and live.

The Philippine Eagle Alliance is a consortium of five organizations composed of the Haribon, Birdlife, Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas-World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International-Philippines and, the PEF.

The CEPF is a joint initiative of Conservation International (CI), the MacArthur Foundation, the Government of Japan, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the World Bank. CEPF provides financing to projects in areas of the world where unique biodiversity is concentrated. Aside from Luzon and Mindanao, CEPF is also investing to conserve the Palawan Forest Corridor.

(Continued from page 2)

## PEF Highlights Reintroduction At 6<sup>th</sup> Philippine Eagle Week



Mindanao, a two and a half year old Philippine Eagle stands in the foreground as bikers and visitors enjoys the facilities at the Philippine Eagle Center during the Bike Fun Ride at the 6th Philippine Eagle Week.

During the weeklong affair, an exhibit depicting different aspects of conservation work and some of the best eagle photos taken was set up for viewing. Art workshops, film showings, storytelling sessions and mini-concerts also spiced up the celebration.

A Fun Ride for cyclists was held on June 6, Sunday, starting at Magsaysay Park and ending at the PEC. Over 70 cyclists joined the ride, including two twelve-year-old boys who were the youngest finishers. At the Philippine Eagle Fun Run on June 19, about 70 participants negotiated the course starting at the Calinan Barangay Hall to the PEC in approximately one and a half hours. The Fun Run was co-sponsored by Barog Kalikupan ng Davao (BARKADA) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

This year's theme, "Kagawasan sa Agila, Kaugmaon sa Katawhan (The Eagles' Freedom, Our People's Future) was selected to celebrate the experimental release of the eagle *Kabayan* in April. *Kabayan* was the first captive-bred Philippine Eagle released to the wild. The effort was a landmark conservation project, being the first of its kind in Asia.

The Philippine Eagle Week, celebrated on June 4-10 of each year through Presidential Proclamation Number 79 aims to stir awareness on the endangered status of our national bird and gather support for its protection and conservation.

## President Cory Aquino Donates to the Philippine Eagle Foundation

Tatit Quiblat

Former President Corazon C. Aquino showed her support for the conservation efforts of the Philippine Eagle Foundation by donating one of her paintings at simple rites held at the Don Jose Cojuangco Building in Makati last February 12, 2004.

The painting, titled "Color, Colors Everywhere" was turned over by Mrs. Aquino in behalf of the Aquino Foundation to PEF President Carlos Pedrosa. Witnessing the turnover were PEF Treasurer Carlos Dominguez and Board Trustee Gen. William Hotchkiss III. Mr. Dominguez, who is also a trustee of the Aquino Foundation, facilitated the donation.

Mrs. Aquino expressed her intent to support the PEF during her visit to the Philippine Eagle Center in January. During her visit, she remarked that the Center reminded her of a nature preserve she had visited in South Africa though she thinks the



(L-R) PEF Treasurer Carlos Dominguez, Former President Cory Aquino, PEF President Carlos Pedrosa, PEF Trustee Lt. Gen. William Hotchkiss and Fundraising Officer Tanya Hotchkiss during the turnover ceremonies.

Center in Davao is greener and cleaner, for which she congratulated the PEF staff.

Shortly after the donation was made, the oil painting of a landscape with flowers was purchased by an anonymous donor for P750,000 to support the Foundation's various conservation programs.

Mrs. Aquino expressed her pride that there was such a facility in the Philippines for the conservation of one of the largest eagles in the world. At the turnover rites, she candidly shared that she wanted to do her share in preserving the environment and hoped to inspire other people to do the same through her gesture.

Mrs. Aquino is the only Philippine president to have visited the home of our national bird.



Former President Cory Aquino was accompanied by PEF Treasurer Carlos Dominguez and PEF Executive Director Dennis Salvador (R-L) during her visit at the Philippine Eagle Center.



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