

## Project Update: May 2022

The province of Palawan is known as the “last ecological frontier” because it is considered the fortress of the remaining lush forests in the Philippines. It is home to more than 200 endemic species in the Philippines, including several species of *Psychotria*. But as the category 5 Typhoon Rai (locally known as Odette) slammed the Philippines in December 2021, the once-thriving forest turns into brown. Trees were either severely defoliated or uprooted. With the drastic decrease in canopy cover, temperature also increases, causing difficulties in the growth of understory vegetation like *Psychotria*. Three months after the devastation of Typhoon Odette, the conditions of *Psychotria* species were assessed in various areas of Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP) and Cleopatra’s Needle Forest Reserve (CNFR). During the rapid assessment, four species of *Psychotria* were recorded: *Psychotria palawanensis*, *Psychotria ixoroides*, and two undescribed species. Since a lot of trees have been uprooted, most of the observed climbing species, *Psychotria ixoroides*, were growing near the fallen logs. The other three (shrub) species were recorded on the remaining parts of the forest with minimal damage to canopy cover. These species are flowering, and mature seeds can be collected upon maturity to check if they can successfully germinate ex-situ. The population of these recorded *Psychotria* species were quite small and this might be attributed to the change in the Palawan landscape due to typhoon-related damage. Another fieldwork will be conducted in June 2022 to check other areas in Palawan.



*Psychotria* sp.



*Psychotria ixoroides*.