

Philippine Scops Owl/Luzon Scops Owl

Local Name: 'Akop' (Kankanaey); 'Koop' (Ilocano)

Distribution: Endemic to the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: These birds live in forests and forest edges in Luzon. In Benguet, these owls are usually found in Benguet Pine and mossy forests.

Characteristics: The Philippine Scops Owl perches motionless on the tree during the night hearing sounds coming from their prey. Their ears have excellent hearing advantage the reason why they easily detect the presence and location of their prey. Their claws and beaks are very sharp, making it easy for them to kill and tear their food (Rabor, 1977).

Food: Philippine Scops Owls are nocturnal, that is, they find their food at night. They feed on varieties of insects, rodents, and lizards (Rabor, 1977).



Figure 43. Philippine Scops Owl/Luzon Scops Owl (Tabangaoen Forest, Balili, La Trinidad)

Sturnidae

Sturnidae is a songbird family of Order Passeriformes represented by starlings and mynas. Mynas and starlings have black feathers with slightly down curved bills and strong legs and feet. Some have white feathers on their wings and chatter while in flight and roosting. Mynas and starlings feed on a variety of insects but also feeds on grains and small fruits (Craig & Feare 2009).

Crested Myna

Local Name: Martines

Distribution: Found in central and southern China, Hainan, Formosa, Northern Indochina but introduced in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Lives in terrestrial plains and rocky-mountainous cliffs, or in higher hills.

Characteristics: The bill of the Crested Myna is dull, whitish to orange-yellow, medium-sized with white color on the wings. As observed during the day, they have strong feet and its flight is fast and mostly in groups. It prefers open habitats. They prefer laying eggs in holes along rocky mountain cliffs.

Food: These birds eat insects, worms, and fruits like berries and bananas. These were seen sucking nectar of calliandra flowers at the Benguet State University Farm.



Figure 44. Crested Myna (BSU, Strawberry farm, La Trinidad)

Turdidae

Thrushes and chats belong to Family Turdidae of the Passiformes. Birds under Turdidae are able to walk, run, and hop on the ground. Thrushes and chats feed on invertebrates, insects, worms, fruits and berries either found on the ground or trees (Gill et al., 2016).

Eyebrowed Thrush

Distribution: Asian Countries including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Found in lowland and high montane forests.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, this bird forages on soil under trees by hopping to look for food. Eyebrowed Thrush also perches on branches of trees and clings on foliage to look for food.

Breeding: Eyebrowed Thrush breeds in coniferous forests. It lays eggs among trees. This bird is migratory (BirdLife International, 2015_p).

Food: Feeds on different larvae, earthworms, berries and insects like grasshoppers, crickets, and moths.





Figure 45. Eyebrowed Thrush (At the back of the College of Forestry Building, La Trinidad)

Zosteropidae

Chestnut-Faced Babblers and Mountain White Eye belong to the Zosteropidae family. Birds under this Zosteropidae family are noisy restless small birds and are usually foraging in groups feeding on various seeds, berries, tiny insects, and nectars (Fishpool & Tobias, 2016).

Chestnut-faced Babbler

Distribution: Luzon, Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: These birds are found in mountainous forests. Chestnut-Faced Babblers were seen foraging in a grassy area, under lantana and sucking nectar of calliandra plants at the Tabangaoen Pine Forest area.

Characteristics: These babblers are chestnut-faced with grey crown and white eye ring. The tail and wings are brown. As observed during the day, these are restless birds and usually forage in groups. These birds foraged with the mountain white eye under the calliandra plants in Tabangaoen, La Trinidad. Chestnut-Faced Babblers mate during summer where insects are abundant.

Food: Feeds on seeds, berries, spiders, and were observed sucking nectars (BirdLife International, 2012_A).



Figure 46. Chestnut-faced Babbler (Calliandra strand at the back of College of Forestry building)

Mountain White Eye

Local Name: 'Kuyotan' (Kankanaey) or 'Matangdulong' (Tagalog)

Distribution: Mountain White Eyes are found in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Lives in second growth forests, lowland, and montane forests.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, these Mountain White Eyes are tiny noisy restless birds that forage in groups. Mountain White Eyes were either mixed with the flocks of Elegant Tit, Pygmy Flowerpeckers, Yellow-breasted, or Crimson-breasted Sunbird sucking nectar from calliandra.

Mountain White Eye breeds at the end of the rainy season, usually November in La Trinidad Benguet. It was observed that a young Mountain White Eye was foraging nectar from Calliandra flowers.

These birds build their nests using spider web feathers, dried grasses, and mosses (Van Balen, 2016).

Food: Feeds on fruits, tiny insects, spiders, and nectars.



Figure 47. Mountain white eye (Calliandra strand at the back of College of Forestry building)

CONCLUSIONS

There are 46 different species of birds under 27 families identified and photo-documented. Therefore, the species richness of birds in BSU Land Reservations is high. It indicates that the natural vegetation found within the BSU reservations are still existing and not muchly disturbed. Of the 46 species of birds identified, 44 are indigenous (species naturally occurring or native in the Philippines but similar species may or may not be found in other countries) and two are exotic (introduced to the country). Of the 44 indigenous species, 15 were



found to be endemic (species are only found in the Philippines) to the Philippines. Two of the 15 endemic bird species ranked six and seven in the Ten must see birds in the Philippines. Therefore, almost all the birds in BSU, La Trinidad, Benguet are indigenous to the Philippines. All the 46 bird species identified in BSU land reservations belong to the category, least concern indicating that these birds are not qualified under the category vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered of the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria Version 3.1, 2001.

Of the 46 species of birds identified in the BSU Land Reservations in La Trinidad, Benguet, 41 of them were insect-eating (means insect is purely or just a part of their food) while the remaining five are herbivores. Therefore: A great majority of the birds identified and photo-documented are insect-eating. This insect eating birds are beneficial to the farmers as biological control to insects attacking their crops.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The identified and documented 46 bird species under 27 families showed that the bird species richness is high in BSU land reservations in La Trinidad, Benguet. To sustain or enhance the bird species richness in BSU Land Reservations it is important for BSU to develop conservation strategies and plans to sustain the bird species. Also, the University may also hire additional forest rangers to protect the remaining reservations from illegal encroachment and destructions particularly in Sitio Timoy, Wangal, La Trinidad, Benguet.

The 44 indigenous birds including the 15 endemic and two of the ten must see birds in the Philippines are all found in BSU land reservations in La Trinidad, Benguet. Therefore, it is important for BSU extension office to organize an interagency collaboration team composed of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, BSU College of Forestry and College of Agriculture and other concerned agencies and come up with a program for the protection and conservation of these birds especially the endemic species.

All the 46 bird species identified in BSU land

reservations belong to the category, least concern (LC). Although all the conservation status of all the documented birds is least concern, five of these birds are decreasing in population, so it is still needed to strengthen their protection especially that they are insect eating and two of these birds the Scale-feathered Malkoha and Spotted Wood Kingfisher are included in the ten must see birds in the Philippines.

Forty-one bird species identified eat various insects. Six species of them are decreasing in population. It is therefore important for concerned agencies like the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Extension Office of BSU to educate the farmers by showing them the insect eating birds and teaching them the strategies on how to use birds like the Tree Sparrows and Philippines Shrikes as biological controller of insects attacking their crops for them to help in the protection and conservation of these birds.

The birds in BSU Land Reservations in La Trinidad, Benguet were already identified, follow-up study should be undertaken to determine the birds' diversity index, abundance, and population trend within the study site.



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