

## AN INTERVIEW SURVEY ON SPECIES PROTECTION ASPECTS AMONG RESIDENTS OF THREE COMMUNITIES IN THE MT. TALINIS AREA, NEGROS ORIENTAL

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### ABSTRACT

Residents living close to the residuals of virgin rain forest in the research area were interviewed about sightings, nesting places, and potential hunting and trapping of the two bird species *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini*. The results show that *Aceros waldeni* is very rare and that *Penelopides panini* occurs more frequently. Hunting and trapping of *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini* possibly still takes place. The paper also includes data about various other, partly endangered, species seen and hunted in the research area. All respondents claimed that they have a positive attitude towards protecting *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini*.

The study was conducted to find answers to the following questions: (1) How frequently do residents of the study area see the two bird species *Aceros*

*waldeni* (English name: Writhed-billed Hornbill, local name: "kalaw") and *Penelopides panini* (English name: Visayan Tarictic Hornbill, local name: "talusi"), and what reports about sightings have they heard from other people? (2) Do the respondents know of any nesting places of *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini*, and how large do they estimate the population size of the two bird species? (3) How threatened are *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini* by hunting and trapping? (4) What is the attitude of the respondents towards protecting *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini*? (5) Which other animal species are seen and hunted in the study area?

The survey was conducted on May 8, 1998 in the three communities of Magsaysay, Mag-Aso, and Baslay, Negros Oriental, Philippines. These communities are located on the slopes of Mt. Talinis, an inactive volcano. The higher elevations of Mt. Talinis are one of the few remaining areas with virgin tropical rain forest on the island of Negros.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Philippine National Oil Corporation (PNOC), and several other Governmental Organizations (GOs), and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been conducting reforestation projects close to the existing primary and secondary forest around Mt. Talinis, as well as environmental awareness projects in the surrounding communities.

Scientific species names are italicized. Native species names are set in quotation marks.

### Methodology

Twenty-two respondents, seven female and 15 male, be-

tween the ages of 17 and 68 years were interviewed using a questionnaire. Criteria used for selecting the respondents were proximity of their houses to the mountain forest and willingness to participate in the survey. Table 1 shows the age and sex distribution of the respondents.

The research team consisted of four faculty members from different departments of the College of Arts and Sciences of Silliman University as well as three students from different colleges of Silliman University. To ensure the authenticity of individual responses, the interviews involved only two interviewers and one respondent at a time without a third party whose presence could possibly influence the respondents.

The questionnaire contained 37 questions in English. The interviews were conducted in Cebuano, the local dialect in Negros Oriental. The respondents answered mostly in Cebuano. The answers were generally written down in English. Only in case of uncertainty, the Cebuano answers were recorded and analyzed

Table 1: Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
15-24	2	2	4
25-34	3	1	4
35-44	3	3	6
45-54	2	1	3
55-64	2	0	2
above 65	3	0	3
Sums	15	7	22

later on.

The term "kalaw" used in the interviews to refer to *Aceros waldeni* is problematic because it can refer either to any hornbill or to specific hornbill species. In Mindanao, *Buceros hydrocorax* and *Aceros leucocephalus* are called "kalaw," while in Negros Oriental, this expression refers usually to *Aceros waldeni*. To avoid confusion, the respondents were shown black-and-white pictures of *Aceros waldeni* and *Penelopides panini* printed on the

back of the questionnaires.

After the interview, the respondents were given a copy of a flyer written in both English and Cebuano enjoining them to actively participate in protecting the "kalaw" and other animal species in the area (see Appendix). The flyer had been adapted from bilingual hornbill flyers produced and distributed by the Philippine Endemic Species Conservation Project (PESCP) on the island of Panay and in the province of Negros Occidental.

## Results

### *Reported sightings of Aceros waldeni and Penelopides panini*

Results of the interviews show that only one respondent, a 27-year-old man, claimed to have recently seen a "kalaw" in the study area. However, this respondent did not give a reliable impression in the course of the interview. Three of the respondents had seen a "kalaw" in Mindanao, but they can only mean *Buceros hydrocorax* or *Aceros leucocephalus* since *Aceros waldeni* does not occur in Mindanao. A 58-year-old man from Magsaysay had last seen a "kalaw" in 1988. Nobody knew of a recent sighting of a "kalaw" by other persons.

Seventeen persons had seen one or more "talusi" during the years 1998 and 1997, sometimes several individuals at the same time. Moreover, a number of these respondents claimed that these sightings took place in the proximity of their homes. Eight respondents reported hearing other people claim having seen "talusi" recently.

### *Reported nesting places and population size*

Although four men claimed to know about a "kalaw" nesting place, three of them had never seen a "kalaw" or heard of a recent "kalaw" sighting. Therefore, their claim is questionable. The fourth man gave contradictory answers so that it remains uncertain whether he really knew about a nesting place. Eleven of the respondents knew of a "talusi" nesting place but the exact location could not be ascertained by them.

Most of the respondents had no knowledge of the "kalaw" population size in their area. A 27-year-old man who had earlier given contradictory answers estimated their number at 50; another man stated "more than ten." Both men lived in the same community.

The responses concerning the "talusi" population were rather divergent. Seven persons were not able to give an answer. Most of the answers indicated one to ten individuals in the respective area.

**Hunting and trapping of  
*Aceros waldeni* and  
*Penelopides panini***

None of the respondents reported ever having shot or caught a "kalaw." On the other hand, three of the male respondents admitted having shot or caught a "talusi" in the past. The 27-year-old man mentioned above had shot a "talusi" with a gun in the past. A 41-year-old man had caught a "talusi" in a trap "a long time ago" and kept it as a pet. A 64-year-old man reported catching a "talusi" in the past with his bare hands but released it immediately afterwards.

One respondent reported having heard of rumors that "other" people were hunting "kalaw." A woman and two men claimed that they knew of people who hunted or caught "talusi." One "talusi" was allegedly caught for a school project in May 1998 but this statement was not further investigated.

None of the respondents knew about a "kalaw" or "talusi" being kept as a pet. Only one person answered why anybody could be interested in

keeping a "kalaw" or "talusi": for selling or bartering.

Nine respondents mentioned that people from other towns in Negros Oriental and other Philippine islands, as well as from other countries had been coming to hunt in their area.

**Respondents' attitude  
towards species  
protection**

According to the respondents, none of them would harm a "kalaw" or "talusi" if he or she saw one. Five respondents would only watch them, nine would leave them alone, six would not do anything (some of them not being interested in these birds), and two respondents had other reasons.

A 52-year-old man who claimed to be a hunter and who kept an "alimokon" (*Phapitreron leucotis*) and a "kulansi" (*Loriculus philippensis*) at the time of the interview said that he had no interest in catching "kalaw" and "talusi" because these birds were "difficult to catch". This is not likely, especially in the case of the "talusi,"

whose curious nature makes it an easy prey.

Six persons did not specify why they would not harm "kalaw" or "talusi" if they saw one, but others either gave sentimental reasons, or considered the birds harmless, or part of the natural environment.

A 34-year-old woman mentioned that she had been influenced by PNOC seminars. PNOC runs the geothermal power plant in Palimpinon in the Mt. Talinis area. As part of environmental compensation measures, PNOC conducts reforestation and species conservation projects.

Apart from one woman who did not answer the particular question, all respondents said that hunting "kalaw" or "talusi" is bad. The reasons they gave included sentimental attitudes, the harmlessness or usefulness of the hornbills, awareness of the dwindling population of these species, and knowledge of legal restrictions against hunting.

The respective answers were so telling that an English translation of 19 answers is provided here:

*Answers referring to the harmlessness of "kalaw" and "talusi":*

"Because they are harmless to man."

"They are not harmful."

"They are harmless and it is forbidden [to hunt them]."

"They are harmless and I like to watch them."

"They are harmless."

"It is not necessary to kill them."

*Answers referring to the small population size of "kalaw" and "talusi":*

"They will be extinct."

"They would die out."

"Because the population is so small."

"It is not good to catch them."

*Answers referring to the usefulness of "kalaw" and "talusi":*

"Birds are helpful."

"They are helpful."

"They eat worms."

"They help to spread seeds."

"They are useful because they eat worms and the forest would be lonely and unharmonious [without them]."

"They help to reduce the pests in our fields."

*Sentimental answers:*

"I pity them and it is a waste [to

kill them].”

“Because you would miss the call of the birds in the forest.”

“There wouldn’t be anything left to watch.”

### **Reports on sightings and hunting of other species**

The following mammals, birds (apart from “kalaw” and “talusi”), and reptiles were reported by the respondents to live in the survey area (Table 2 on page 125). Some of the local terms are general expressions, like “unggoy” (monkey) but in every case only one specific species to which the expression fits can be found in the area.

Sixteen persons said that they did not hunt any of the species mentioned by them. Six men admitted that they hunted or trapped one or several of the species mentioned by them or that they used to do so in the past.

### **Discussion of the Results**

As usual, results of an interview survey have to be in-

terpreted carefully. Given the fact that the residents around Mt. Talinis have been made aware of species protection and conservation by several GOs and NGOs, the respondents might have given answers which reflect more how things should be rather than how they really are.

Results of the research indicated that the “kalaw” is extremely rare in the research area proper. Since only one of the respondents claimed to have seen a “kalaw” recently and the validity of his claim could not be fully verified, it is possible to conclude that no more “kalaw” is left in the specified research area.

As the results also show, the “talusi” is considerably more frequent than the “kalaw.” Most likely, there are breeding pairs in the research area. Yet, the population is small and probably does not exceed an estimated 10-20 pairs in the whole research area.

The populations of “kalaw” and “talusi” might be additionally threatened by hunting and trapping by out-

siders who are not under the social control of the barangays included in the research area. Hunters from the research area might still not be able to resist “hunting fever” when they really encounter a “kalaw” or “talusi.”

Almost all respondents are aware that hunting and trapping “kalaw” and “talusi” pose a serious threat to the dwindling “kalaw” and “talusi” populations.

That some respondents are aware of the usefulness of “kalaw” and “talusi” or have a positive sentimental relation to their environment is promising as far as species conservation is concerned. Still, no less than a massive educational campaign is needed—and urgently—in order to stall the radically dwindling number of bird species. The results of the investigation confirmed the bleak prognosis of the author. (See also: Diesmos, A. C. & M. D. Pedregosa (1995), unpublished Hornbill & Bleeding-heart report.)

However, an encouraging development is the positive attitude of the respondents to-

wards protecting “kalaw” and “talusi.” Of course, the discrepancy between the respondents’ statements in an interview and their actual behavior in reality should be considered.

### **Afterword**

Around 300 copies of the abovementioned flyer were distributed to residents of the research area and other communities in the Mt. Talinis area. The Barangay Captains of the respective communities were given plastic-laminated copies which were meant to be displayed in a location accessible to the inhabitants of their communities.

During the “Ecological Festival” in Valencia, Negros Oriental, in May 1998, the flyers were given to some participants of a mountain climbing tour which led the hikers to the summit of Mt. Talinis. When they returned from the trip, one of the participants reported two independent “kalaw” sightings in the proximity of the lakes below the summits of Mt. Talinis. The author investigated details which the person could not have seen on the

black-and-white picture of a "kalaw." The hiker had never seen a "kalaw" before but he described the two individuals (or two sightings of the same individual) quite accurately. The locations where he saw the birds are far from the study area.

### Acknowledgments

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translating the local species names into scientific names, and to Prof. Rolando Mascuñana, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Silliman University for assisting in developing the questionnaires.

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Table 2: Scientific, English, and Local Names of the Animal Species Reported and Hunted by the Respondents

Scientific Name	English Name	Local Name	M	H	R
MAMMALIA					
<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	Crab-eating (or Long-tailed Macaque)	unggoy	5	1	-
<i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i> (= <i>Felis bengalensis</i> )	Leopard Cat	maral	7	3	(a) (b)
<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i>	Common Palm Civet	milô	9	3	(a) (b)
<i>Viverra zangalunga</i>	Malayan (or Malay, Oriental, Ground) Civet	singalong	2	1	(a)
<i>Sus cebifrons</i>	Visayan Warty Pig	baboy ihalas	7	2	(a)
<i>Cervus alfredi</i>	Philippine (or Visayan) Spotted Deer	lagsaw	6	3	(a) (b)

**Column M:** contains the number of respondents who mentioned the respective species

**Column H:** contains the number of respondents who admitted hunting the respective species, or who used to do so

**Column R:** specifies the reason why a species (or group of species) is hunted or used to be hunted by the respondents: (a) protection of poultry and crops, (b) for food, (c) to keep the animals as pets, (d) to sell them for profit, (e) to use them to make amulets

Table 2 (cont'd.)

Scientific Name	English Name	Local Name	M	H	R
AVES					
<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Red Junglefowl	manok ihalas	2	-	-
<i>Halcyon chloris</i>	White-collared Kingfisher	tikarol	1	-	-
<i>Loriculus philippensis</i>	Colasisi	kulansi	3	2	(b)
<i>Otus megalotis</i>	Philippine Scops-Owl	bukaw	1	-	-
<i>Columba vitiensis</i>	Metallic Pigeon	balod	3	1	(b)
<i>Macropygia phasianella</i>	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	tukgaw	2	-	-
<i>Ptilinopus leucotis</i>	White-eared Brown-Dove	limokon	5	3	(b) (c) (d)
<i>Ducula poliocephala</i>	Pink-bellied Imperial Pigeon	hagumhom	1	-	-
<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>	Crested Goshawk	banog	1	1	(e)
<i>Zosterops nigrorum</i>	Golden-yellow White-eye	bulay-og	2	1	-
<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	Large-billed Crow	uwak	1	-	-
<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	Black-naped Oriole	antolihaw	2	1	(b) (c)
<i>Dicurus balicassius</i>	Balicassiao	balicassiao	1	-	-
<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	Yellow-vented Bulbul	tangol-ol	3	1	(b) (c)
<i>Hypsipetes philippensis</i>	Philippine Bulbul	tagbaya	2	2	(b) (c)
<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	Black-headed Munia	maya	1	1	(b)
birds in general		langgam	1	-	-

Table 2 (cont'd.)

Scientific Name	English Name	Local Name	M	H	R
REPTILIA					
<i>Hydrosaurus pustulatus</i>	Philippine Sailfin Lizard	ibid	1	-	-
<i>Varanus salvator</i>	Malayan Water Monitor	halô	3	1	(b) (c)
<i>Python reticulatus</i>	Reticulated Python	sawa	3	1	-
<i>Elaphe erythrura</i>	Reddish Rat Snake	bahe	1	-	-
snakes in general		halas	8	-	(b)

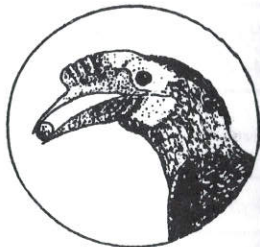
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Philippine Endemic Species Conservation Project (PESCP)  
of the Frankfurt Zoological Society

## LUWASA ANG LANGGAM NGA KALAW!



Usa ka paghangyo sa mga lumulupyo sa Negros:

Ang langgam nga Kalaw nga mapalngan lamang sa Kasadpang Kabisay-an, namiligro nga mahanaw sa dayon. Gibana-bana nga pagkakaran, mga 50 hangtod sa 60 kabuok na lamang niini ang nahibilin sa mga bukid sa Panay. Mas diyutay pa gani niini ang nahibilin sa kabukiran sa Negros.

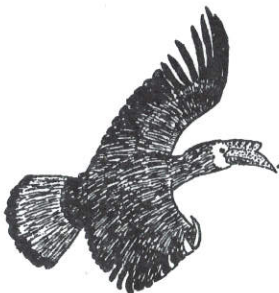
Gani, gituhoan nga basin ug kining nahibilin nga mga Kalaw dili na paigo para makasanay sila ug mabuhi pa. Tungod niini, haron mapanalipdan ang mga Kalaw gikan sa dayon nga pagkahanaw, gihangyo ang mga lumulupyo nga nagpuyo duol sa mga bukid, sa gilayon:

Ang padayon nga pagkabuhi sa mga Kalaw ania sa atong mga kamot. Dili nato tugutan nga mawala lamang sa dayon kining mga maanindot ug mapuslanon nga mga langgam. Likayan ang pagputol sa mga kahoy, ang pagpusil o pagpanamastamas sa mga langgam, ug ang pagkuha sa mga itlog o kuyabog sa ilang mga salag.

Ang pagkabuhi sa mga mahimsog nga lasang nag-agad sa gidaghanon sa mga Kalaw tungod kay kini sila mao ang makadala ug makasabwag sa mga liso sa kahoy. Ang maayong pagkaamping sa atong mga lasang makahatag kanato ug limpiyong tubig nga ilimnon, igo nga tubig para sa irigasyon, ug makatabang usab sa panginabuhi sa katawhan.

✂ E. Curio ✂

Alang sa dugang nga kahibalo  
bahin sa langgam nga Kalaw, paliहुg  
pangutana lamang sa CenTrop,  
Silliman University o ni Dr. Ely Alcalá o ni  
Prof. Renee Paalan!



## ALARM ... ALARM ... ALARM

Be it known to all people living in or near the Negros mountain range:

The Visayan Kalaw (Wreathed-billed Hornbill, *Aceros waldeni*) is in immediate danger of dying out. According to our most recent research, there may be as few as 25-30 pairs of Dulungan, as the Wreathed-billed Hornbill is called in Ilongo, in the Panay mountains. The Kalaw on Negros, the only other island of its occurrence, is even more rare, i.e., perhaps functionally already extinct.

**Only a total ban on hunting and nest-robbing**

may bring back the Kalaw to safer numbers and - hopefully - its continuing survival.

We therefore solicit the support of all people living in or near areas with this magnificent bird. Support is easy and cheap: Please refrain from hunting or destroying nest trees or from taking live birds from the wild. It is in YOUR hands that the Kalaw has a last chance of survival!

If you want to know more about this bird and others inhabiting the Negros forests, e.g., the Talusi (*Penelopides panini*), please contact us at the Center for Tropical Conservation Studies (CenTrop) of Silliman University, Dumaguete City.

More information can be obtained from:

- THE PROTECTED AREAS AND WILDLIFE BUREAU (PAWB) of the DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR), Ninoy Aquino Nature Center, Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City (or regional DENR and PENR Offices of the DENR)
- THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY (CAF, Lamburno) of the WEST VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY (WVSU), La Paz, Iloilo City 5000
- THE NEGROS FOREST AND ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATION, Inc. (NFEFI), South Capitol Road, Bacolod City 6100
- THE ZOOLOGY DIVISION, PHILIPPINE NATIONAL MUSEUM, Old Congress Building, Rizal Park, Manila
- THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES (WCSP), c/o WILDLIFE BIOLOGY LABORATORY, Institute of Biological Sciences, University of the Philippines at Los Baños College, Laguna
- FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL, Great Eastern House, Tenison Rd., Cambridge CB1 2DT, U.K.



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