

Project Update: September 2009

The West Visayan region of central Philippines is a conservation priority in terms of both numbers of endemic species and degrees of threat. The West Visayas or 'Negros-Panay' Faunal Region, which collectively comprises the islands of Masbate, Ticao, Panay, Guimaras, Negros and Cebu, is considered the most threatened and critically important of the several separate faunal regions in the Philippines, since the region has the least remaining forest cover and the highest numbers of severely threatened endemic species and subspecies.

Negros Island harbours some of the world's endangered species, all of which are West Visayan endemics. These include such highly threatened species as the Visayan Warty Pig (*Sus cebifrons*), Visayan Spotted Deer (*Cervus alfredi*), Negros Shrew (*Crocidura negrina*), Philippine Bare-backed Fruit Bat (*Dobsonia chapmani*), Negros Bleeding-heart Pigeon (*Gallicolumba keayi*), Negros Fruit Dove (*Ptilinopus arcanus*), Visayan Writhed Hornbill (*Aceros waldeni*), Visayan Tarictic Hornbill (*Penelopides panini*), Negros Flame-templed Babbler (*Stachyris speciosa*), and White-throated Jungle Flycatcher (*Rhinomyias albigularis*) among others.

Almost all the species' rich lowland forest of Negros island is already gone. Its forest cover has been reduced to less than 4% of the total land area and most of these few remaining forests are located more than 1,000 meters above sea level. North Negros Natural Park (NNNP) has one of the most intact forests in the Island. Its forest is a mosaic of secondary and primary lowland, montane and mossy forests. It was declared a natural park on August 15, 2005 through Presidential Proclamation no. 895.

The purpose of this study is to assess the fauna and flora of NNNP to supplement the data needed for the creation of a management plan for the park. The objectives of the study are the following: a). to conduct biodiversity survey in North Negros Natural Park, b). to identify the species of plants and animals in the area, c). to determine presence of threatened species of plants and animals and d). to determine the conservation status of the forest.

These are the progress in attaining these objectives:

- Reconnaissance survey on North Negros Natural Park (NNNP) was done on April 2008.
- Field techniques and species identification training for the new team members and students on May 2008
- Faunal survey on May to June 2008 (Alipasyao and Patpatao study areas)
- Faunal survey preliminary results
 - Birds
 - 90 species recorded
 - 37 species - endemic
 - 55 subspecies - endemic

- Mammals
 - 6 fruit bats, 4 endemic species
 - 1 insectivorous bat
 - 2 rodents
 - 1 shrew

- Biodiversity lecture at West Negros College (10 October 2008)
- Site Visit at Mambukal and Barangay, Patag, Silay on November 2008
- Site Visit at Barangay Patag, Silay on February 2009
- Site Visit at Mambukal on March 2009
- North Negros Natural Park Poster preparation (September 2009)
- Preparation of technical report (October 2009)
- Presentation of results and distribution of reports and poster to the local municipalities and barangays within the NNNP (November 2009)