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A CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF MOUNT MURUD, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

Mustafa Abdul Rahman, Isa Sait, Besar Ketol and Andrew Alek Tuen

INTRODUCTION

Mount Murud, the second highest peak in Malaysia after Mount Kinabalu is located in Kelabit Highlands of Borneo. A scientific expedition to this mountain was organized by the Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation (IBEC), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in May and October 2003. Bird surveys were conducted in three locations, namely; the Church Camp (4 to 8 May 2003), Pa' Rabata (10 to 14 May 2003) and Ravenscourt (14 to 18 October 2003).

Mjoberg (1925) has written an account of his expedition to Mount Murud in 1922. He mentioned that there were similarities between the species of birds found in Mount Murud and those in Mount Kinabalu and Mount Dulit. Among the species of birds commonly found during his expedition were the flycatchers; *Cryptolopha montis* and *C. trivirgata*; and mountain blackeye, *Chlorocharis emiliae*.

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DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLING LOCATIONS

The first sampling site was the Church Camp (2,110 m above sea level). Mist-nets were placed along the trail (just below the camp) to the peak of Mount Murud (30° 55' 33.567" N; 115° 30' 52.685" E). The forest at the sampling site was made up of Alpine forest. Pa' Rabata, 1,200 m above sea level (03° 57' 43.0" N; 115° 33' 51.0" E) was a logged-over forest which was logged about six to seven years ago. Emergent trees in logged-over areas were scattered

and saplings had grown to about 20 – 40 cm dbh and three to four metres high. Mist-nets were set up along Sungai Bur and at the estuary of Sungai Pa' Rabata and Sungai Bur. Another sampling location was at Ravenscourt (1,100 m above sea level) (04° 05' 27.9" N; 115° 27' 57.0" E). This site belongs to Samling Sdn. Bhd. Mist-nets were deployed in the logged-over Dipterocarp forest believed to have been logged about 10 years ago.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 10 mist-nets with four shelves (2.5 m x 12 m, 35 mm mesh) were deployed at the Church Camp starting from the afternoon of 4 to 8 May 2003. At Pa' Rabata and Ravenscourt, 10 mist-nets were deployed from 10 to 14 May and 14 to 18 October 2003, respectively. The distance between each net was about 20 m and they were erected 0.5 m above the ground. As far as possible the nets were set under the close canopy to avoid sunshine reaching the ground and thus silhouette the mist nets. Cutting of undergrowth were kept to a minimum as cuttings were only made along the net line.

The nets were activated in the morning at 0630 hrs until 1830 hrs in the evening. The nets were checked every two hours. The captured birds were immediately identified after each checking time with the aid of King *et al.* (1975), Lekagul and Round (1991), MacKinnon and Phillippis (1993), and Francis (1998). All captured birds were weighed with a Pesola spring balance, measured using steel ruler (total length, wing span, wing length – flat straightened wing, tail length, head-bill length, bill depth, bill width and tarsus length), sexed (only for sexually dimorphic birds) and ringed before released at the captured sites. The numbered (each ring is uniquely numbered) aluminum rings belong to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The date and time of capture were also recorded. The recaptured birds were recorded and released.

In addition to mist-net studies, we also recorded observations and calls as well as signs encountered. Bird studies using mist-nets