

MINDORO

Biodiversity



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MINDORO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION INC.

July to September 2021

IN THIS EDITION

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 02

MBCFI WAY

Apo Reef Natural Park Waterbird
Census 04

Together for Tamaraws: Distribution
of Food Packs and Allowances 05

MBCC Construction Updates 06

SPECIES IN FOCUS

Mindoro Scops Owl 07

VIRTUAL TOUR

Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park 08

Program Highlights



RESEARCH

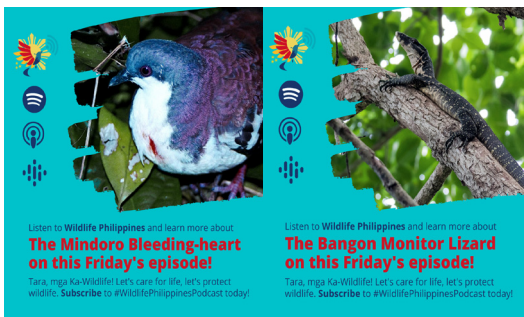
- Conducted the waterbird population survey in Apo Reef Natural Park as well as a refresher on waterbird survey techniques and species identification for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Protected Area (PA) staff and rangers
- Provided technical assistance to the San Jose Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of DENR for a flying fox survey in Mangarin, San Jose and local informant interviews in Manoot, Rizal
- Conducted informal interviews in Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm to verify the presence of Mindoro Bleeding-Heart in the area
- Finalization of the Ilin and Ambulong Islands Critical Habitat Management Plan
- Conducted Key Informant Interview in Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park regarding the presence of the Ilin Cloudrat
- Attended IUCN Red List Training Workshop for the assessment of Snakes and Lizards of the Philippines



Waterbird census in Tinangcapan, Apo Reef Natural Park



Informal interviews in Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm on their first-hand knowledge about Mindoro Bleeding-Heart



Featured podcast episodes for Mindoro endemic species



Coordination with JCI Philippines for provision of field gears to Tamaraw rangers

CARE

- Featured episodes of Mindoro-endemic species in Wildlife Philippines Podcast, in partnership with Tanggol Kalikasan
- Endorsement of proposed ordinance declaring the month of May as Mindoro Biodiversity Month to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Occidental Mindoro and Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Oriental Mindoro. Inclusion of annual budget in their AIP is likewise proposed.
- Membership to MAARRDEC and designated MBCFI staff as part of cluster committees
- Partnership with JCI Philippines for the provision of field gears to Tamaraw rangers
- Conducted "Tamaraw Guardians" Webinar for JCI Philippines about Tamaraws and Mindoro biodiversity

Program Highlights



MISSION

Mt. Halcon

- Establishment of 1-hectare tree plantation site along Mayabig river and initial 100 narra seedlings planted
- Conducted monthly maintenance of woodlot and restoration sites including nursery areas with KAWARAS and SARIG in Bayanan and Lantuyang, Baco
- Collected and replanted 7,800 of native wildlings, fruit bearing, and high value fruit trees
- Provided assistance for the review and revision of Rice Trading Policy and formulation of Bahay-Sandigan Policy
- Assisted in the preparation and submission of requirements for Local Tourism Stakeholder Excellence Award
- Coaching and mentoring of KAWARAS Treasurer on cash receipt records and disbursement
- Assisted SARIG in the election of officers and preparation of funding resolutions



Establishment of tree plantation site along Mayabig river

Mt. Malasimbo

- Preparation of 7,500 sqm. demonstration area
- Conducted vermicomposting maintenance activities as well as weed removal in nursery
- Assisted MASiPag in the preparation and submission of requirements for the DOLE's grant assistance Program



Expansion of building for rice trading project of KAWARAS



Memorandum of Agreement signed with DOST-MIMAROPA

MBCC

- Signed a Memorandum of Agreement with DOST-MIMAROPA for the installation and use of solar panels
- Conducted coordination and planning for graphics design of museum content

Others

- Inclusion in the conduct of transition operations as part of the handover process from Shell Philippines Exploration B. V. (SPEX) to Malampaya Energy XP Pte. Ltd. (MEXP)
- Launch of "A Guide: Philippine NGO Leadership Competencies Framework," with features on MBCFI-led activities and resources
- Graduation of Executive Director in LEAD to Serve Program organized by the Association of Foundations
- Participated in UNDP distribution of food packs and allowances to Tamaraw rangers
- Participated in PMEIAMT and PAMB activities and meetings, as well as ARNP PA Financial Planning

The MBCFI Way

Apo Reef Natural Park Waterbird Census



Photo by CJBantiling

The Apo Reef Natural Park (ARNP) is considered an Important Bird Area (IBA), serving as a habitat for migratory birds, breeding seabirds, and resident island-specialist bird species. Up until 1999, there were only 42 bird species recorded on ARNP.

Last July, MBCFI together with participants from ARNP Protected Area Management Office (PAMO), DENR CENRO Sablayan, DENR CENRO San Jose, and LGU Sablayan conducted the waterbird survey in ARNP.

The survey was conducted to obtain information on waterbird populations in ARNP during migration (non-breeding) and breeding seasons.

In addition, MBCFI technical staff conducted a refresher course to enhance the knowledge and skills of the DENR, PA staff, and rangers on waterbird survey techniques and waterbird species identification.

Transect cruises were conducted to assess the presence and population of waterbirds at Apo Reef Natural Park. These transect cruises were undertaken in the marine waters of ARNP in the morning and afternoon using a boat, taking note of birds encountered using binoculars.

The team approached Cayos del Bajo and searched for perched or nesting birds among the rocky outcrops or sandbars. Opportunistic transect walks were conducted in the morning and afternoon at the main island of ARNP to record other species.

A total of six species of waterbirds, including two unidentified species, was recorded at ARNP on 17-19 July 2021. The most abundant was Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*), followed by Black-naped Tern (*Sterna sumatrana*). They were both recorded at Cayos del Bajo, Apo Menor, and the main island of ARNP. The survey team documented two separate eggs from the larger island

of Cayos del Bajo (Tinangkapan) and confirmed by ornithologist Arne Jensen as an egg of a Black-naped Tern. There were also sightings of juvenile Black-naped Terns at Cayos del Bajo, Apo Menor, and at the main island of ARNP and breeding individuals at the main island of ARNP. These confirm that the Black-naped Tern is breeding at ARNP.

Bridled Tern is presumed to be breeding in ARNP. However, more evidence is still needed to verify the status. Unidentified tern species were also recorded in a far distance in transit to and from ARNP.

To continue the monitoring of waterbirds in ARNP, a regular waterbird survey should be established. And to conduct this, adequate equipment should be provided to ARNP staff and rangers. Likewise, refresher training on bird identification and counting should still be provided to better equip ARNP rangers during patrolling and monitoring.



Photo by BNatural



Photo by CJBantiling



Photo by CJBantiling

The MBCFI Way

Together for Tamaraws: Distribution of Food Packs and Allowances



Last July 6, a second batch of support received for the Together for Tamaraws campaign was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) BMB Office, in partnership with Tamaraw Conservation Programme (TCP) and MBCFI.

A total of 59 rangers and wardens from Mounts Iglit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP) received food packs and allowances for patrolling the core habitat area of the Tamaraws. This initiative was organized to

provide much-needed financial support and subsistence to these conservation frontliners so that they can continue to safeguard the Tamaraws and MIBNP.

The Tamaraw, the world's rarest and most endangered buffalo species, has been conserved by committed rangers and wardens in MIBNP and the TCP. The wardens also serve as guides and porters during tours and research expeditions.

However, with the current pandemic and the restrictions imposed due to it, these wardens, who help deter tamaraw hunters

and poachers, have lost their employment as a result of MIBNP's closure.

Campaign contributions have gone a long way toward ensuring their livelihoods and providing sustenance to the frontliners who continue to protect the Tamaraws from extinction while facing all kinds of hardships and threats as a result of the pandemic. These will not only benefit the families of wardens who are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, but will also help to safeguard the Tamaraw's existence for the future generations to come.



Photos by EHTan

The MBCFI Way

MBCC Construction Updates



By the last week of October 2021, the actual construction progress for Phase 1 of MBCC is 70%. Finishing works and roofing installation for the museum building are almost completed. In relation to this, coordination and planning for the graphics design for the museum content have also been conducted.

Auxiliary works for the establishment are also ongoing. Likewise, coordinations for the water system, power supply provisions, and excavation works for the retaining wall between the buildings are ongoing.

A memorandum of agreement with the Department of Science and Technology-MIMAROPA has been signed for the installation and use of solar panels in MBCC Research Laboratory. An invitation to bidders will be conducted in the following month.

Daily and weekly HSSE inspections were conducted. In addition, health and safety protocols in relation to COVID-19 are continuously being enforced in the construction area.



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<https://mbcfi.org.ph>



Onsite photos by Arch. RMagcale

Species in Focus

Mindoro Scops Owl



Photo by DGTaboranza

Common Name:
Mindoro Scops Owl

Scientific Name:
Otus mindorensis

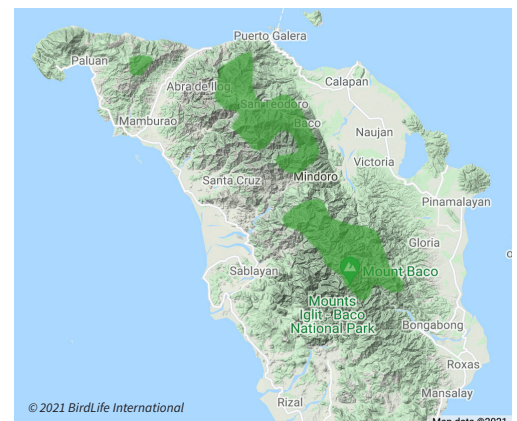
Conservation Status:
Near Threatened
(IUCN, 2019)

Otus mindorensis is endemic to Mindoro in the Philippines, where it is now judged likely to occur throughout the mountains in the centre of the island and it appears to be common above 1,000 meters. The species was commonly observed recently in Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park at 700-900 meters.

This species is known from forest habitats above 700 meters on Mindoro and hence it is assumed to have a very small global range which probably supports a moderately small population. Declines are suspected owing to the on-going clearance of forest habitats, but the species is not restricted to a few locations and its habitat is not regarded as severely fragmented, thus the species is classified as Near Threatened.

Although apparently quite common in suitable habitat, the area of remaining habitat is small and as a consequence, the population size is assumed to be moderately small.

A good conservation action is to determine the likely remaining population size and Area of Occupancy of the Mindoro Scops Owl. Protecting the remaining tracts of forest on Mindoro will greatly benefit this species as well as other threatened species in the island.



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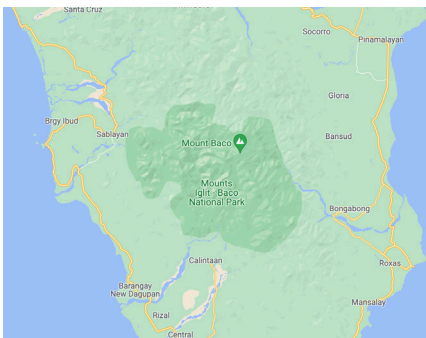
Map data ©2021

Virtual Tour

Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park



Photo by DGTaboranza



Where in Mindoro

San Jose, Sablayan, Calintaan, Rizal (Occidental Mindoro); Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, Mansalay (Oriental Mindoro)



Featured Place in Figures

Highest Peaks: Mt. Baco (2,488 masl),
Mt. Wood (2,024 masl), Mt. Iglit (1,324 masl)
Land Area: 106,655.62 hectares

Scan this QR Code
or click [here](#) to
view a 3D model of
Mt. Baco



The remaining stronghold of the Tamaraw

Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP) is located in the south-central part of the island. The park overlaps several geo-political boundaries of nine municipalities: Sablayan, Calintaan, Rizal, and San Jose in Occidental Mindoro and Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, and Mansalay in Oriental Mindoro.

The MIBNP is considered a conservation priority site for biodiversity as an Important Bird Area (IBA), a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), and declared as a protected area under E-NIPAS. The park has a land area of 106,655.62 hectares and covers some of the highest peaks in Mindoro Island – Mt. Baco (2,488 masl), Mt. Iglit (1,432 masl) and Mt. Wood (2,024 masl). The park covers headwaters of eight major watersheds, which are crucial to the inhabitants of the islands.

A total cover area of 106,655.62 hectares was proclaimed as a game refuge and bird sanctuary under Proclamation No. 557. Subsequently, it was declared as a National Park by virtue of R.A. 6148 giving authorization and allocation of funds for necessary developments. It was then declared as a Natural Park in the expanded NIPAS in 2018.

The park harbors the largest known population of the Critically Endangered Tamaraw, or the Mindoro Dwarf Water Buffalo (*Bubalus mindorensis*). Approximately 568 to 604 individuals can be observed in the wild today, making the Tamaraw one of the rarest mammals in the world.

In addition, the park is also home to other Mindoro endemic wildlife such as the Mindoro Hornbill (*Penelopides mindorensis*), Mindoro Watry Pig (*Sus oliveri*), Mindoro Pallid Flying Fox, (*Desmallopus microleucopterus*), Mindoro Tree Frog (*Philautus schmackeri*), and the Bangon monitor lizard (*Varanus bangonorum*), among many others.

Two out of the seven known Mangyan tribes reside within the area: the Buhid and Tau-buid. These indigenous tribes also participate in conserving wildlife, especially the Tamaraw.

The presence of the Tamaraw and other important wildlife as well as the indigenous groups, are the important attributes that supported its recognition as ASEAN Heritage Park on 18 December 2003.

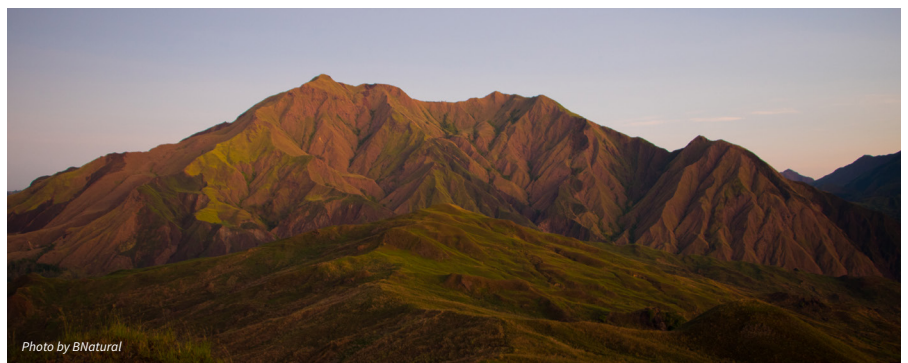


Photo by BNatural



OUR VISION

Sustained conservation of Mindoro's natural treasures for future generations.

OUR MISSION

To lead scientific research and catalyze collaborative and participative conservation efforts in key biodiversity areas of Mindoro resulting in empowerment of Mindoreños through increased awareness and care.

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