

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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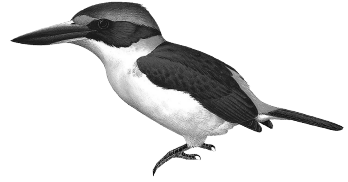
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RUFOUS-LORED KINGFISHER

Todiramphus winchelli



Critical —

Endangered —

Vulnerable A1c; A2c; C1

This kingfisher qualifies as Vulnerable because it is thought to be undergoing a rapid population decline as a result of extensive loss of lowland forested habitats throughout its range.

DISTRIBUTION The Rufous-lore Kingfisher (see Remarks 1) is endemic to and widely distributed in the southern half of the Philippines, often on small islands, with five subspecies established as follows: *nesydrioides* on Tablas, Romblon, Sibuyan and (probably this race) Masbate and Sicogon, *nigrorum* from Samar, Biliran, Leyte, Calico-an, Bohol, Cebu, Negros and Siquijor, *mindanensis* from Mindanao, nominate *winchelli* from Basilan and *alfredi* from the Sulu archipelago. Specific records are:

■ **PHILIPPINES** *Tablas* unspecified locality, August–September 1905 (McGregor 1906c); **Badajoz**, September 1892 (Parkes 1966);

Romblon unspecified locality, September 1892 (three specimens in CM, USNM; also Bourns and Worcester 1894);

Sibuyan unspecified locality, October 1892 (Parkes 1966, also Bourns and Worcester 1894; specimen in CM), and another, June–July 1904 (McGregor 1905a); **San Fernando**, August 1928 (Baud 1976); **Mayo's Peak**, 850–900 m, March 1992 (Evans *et al.* 1993a); **Agdamagan**, 320 m, March 1992 (Evans *et al.* 1993a); **Lambingan Falls**, 1.75 km west of Silum, 7.5 km east of Magdiwang, 15 m, March 1992 (three specimens in FMNH); north-west slope of **Mt Guiting-guiting**, 4.5 km south and 4 km east of Magdiwang, 325 m, March 1992 (two specimens in FMNH) and August 1993 (two males in PNM); **Casing**, Magdiwang, March 1972 (male in DMNH);

Masbate Calasuche mangrove swamps, July or August 1993 (Curio 1993, 1994);

Sicogon Barangkalan, May 1969 (Alcala and Sanguila 1969);

Samar Catbalogan, April 1888 (male in AMNH; see Remarks 2); **Borongon**, undated (de Elera 1895);

Biliran Calpi adjacent to the Pulang Yuta river, c.300 m, Barrio Cansiso, Caibiran, April 1987 (specimen in CMNH; also Dickinson *et al.* 1991);

Leyte Mt Lobi at Patok, July 1961 (Parkes 1973), and Dagami, Ma-alngon, Bulog, before 1946 and at 600–750 m, May 1964 (Delacour and Mayr 1946, Parkes 1966, 1973; male in USNM); **Mt Kabalanti-an** at Pulog Peak, Mahaplag, 600–900 m, July 1964 (female in USNM; Parkes 1973); **Baybay**, May 1984 (female in UMMZ);

Calico-an unspecified locality, May 1945 (male in UMMZ, also Potter 1953);

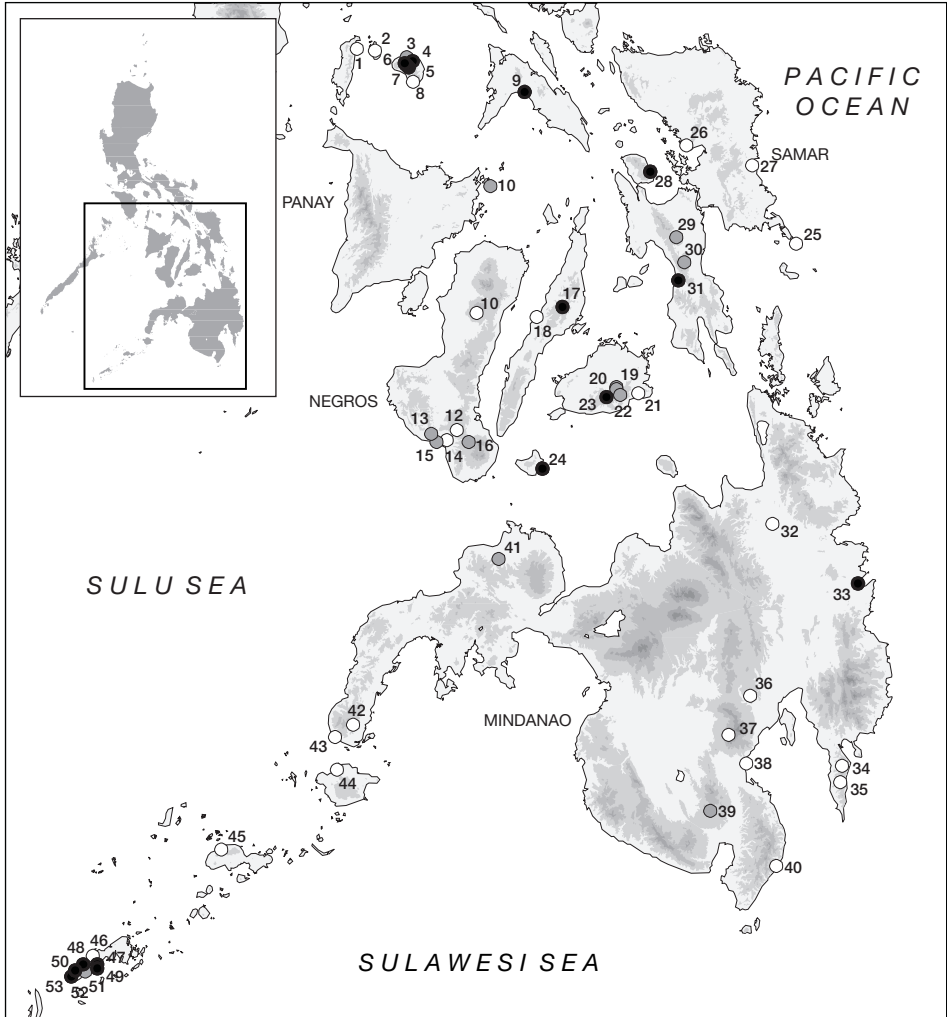
Bohol Guindulman, around May 1906 (McGregor 1907e); **Cantaub**, Sandayong, Sierra Bullones, 700–750 m, April 1955 (Rand and Rabor 1960; female in FMNH); **Sandayong**, Sierra Bullones, 300–450 m, April 1955 (Rand and Rabor 1960; three specimens in FMNH); **Duao**, Sierra Bullones, December 1958 (two males in DMNH, YPM); **Rajah Sikatuna National Park**, in recent years (Brooks *et al.* 1995c, B. Gee *in litt.* 1997, F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1997), including at Logarita, January 1994 (Hornbuckle 1994);

Cebu Toledo, July 1892 (male in CM); **Tabunan**, April 1994 (Robson and Davidson 1995) and January 1995 (A. J. Long verbally 1997);

Negros unspecified locality (“Negros Asia”), April 1932 (Dupond 1942; male in IRSNB); **Mt Canlaon** volcano, before 1934 (Parkes 1966); **Lake Balinsasayao**, in the period January

1977 to July 1978 (Alcala and Carumbana 1980); **Katumbahan**, Tolong, June 1952 (male in YPM); **Naliong**, Tolong, 600 m, April 1950 (male in FMNH); **Amio** at Ugdangan, May 1948 (male in FMNH); **Hinubungan**, Santa Catalina, December 1949 (female in PNM);

Siquijor collected by Bourns and Worcester (1894); **Lilo-an**, where two juveniles were seen in August 1991 (Evans *et al.* 1993a,b);



The distribution of Rufous-lored Kingfisher *Todiramphus winchelli* (sequence not as in text): (1) Badajoz; (2) Romblon; (3) Casing; (4) Lambingan Falls; (5) Agdamagan; (6) Mayo's Peak; (7) Mt Guiting-guiting; (8) San Fernando; (9) Calasuche; (10) Barangkalan; (11) Mt Canlaon; (12) Amio; (13) Katumbahan; (14) Hinubungan; (15) Naliong; (16) Lake Balinsasayao; (17) Tabunan; (18) Toledo; (19) Sandayong; (20) Cantaub; (21) Guindulman; (22) Duao; (23) Rajah Sikatuna National Park; (24) Lilo-an; (25) Calico-an; (26) Catbalogan; (27) Borongan; (28) Calpi; (29) Mt Lobi; (30) Mt Kabalanti-an; (31) Baybay; (32) Esperanza; (33) Bislig; (34) Tumadgo Point; (35) Agustin Peninsula; (36) Davao; (37) Mt Apo; (38) Digos; (39) Mt Matutum; (40) Caburan; (41) Matam; (42) Zamboanga; (43) Ayala; (44) Isabela; (45) Jolo; (46) Tataan; (47) Lubbuk; (48) Tarawakan; (49) Balimbing; (50) Balabek; (51) Batu-batu; (52) Papahag; (53) Bongao Peak.

○ Historical (pre-1950) ● Fairly recent (1950–1979) ● Recent (1980–present)

Mindanao (eastern) **Bislig**, at the PICOP concession, 130 m, March 1970 (female in DMNH), and at 500 m, February 1996, February 1997 (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1997, B. Gee *in litt.* 1997, T. H. Fisher verbally 1997); **Tumadgo Point**, March 1930 (male in DMNH), and, more generally, “**Agustin Peninsula**”, 1927–1928 (Hachisuka 1941); (*central*) **Esperanza**, Agusan del Sur (McGregor 1909); **Mt Apo** at Catigan, a few leagues north of Sibulan, April 1882 (Kutter 1883); **Digos**, Davao del Norte, February 1930 (female in DMNH); **Davao**, June 1889 and April 1905 (Ogilvie Grant 1906; specimen each in BMNH, RMNH); **Mt Matutum** at Kablon, Tupi, 650–1,090 m, June 1966 (male in USNM); **Caburan**, Caburan, Davao, January 1947 (female in FMNH); (*western*) **Matam**, Katipunan, May 1952 (Parkes 1966); above Catagan (untraced, but on the lower slopes of Mt Malindang), 400 m, May 1906 (male in USNM); **Zamboanga**, April 1878 and October 1922 (Tweeddale 1878h; two specimens in BMNH and DMNH); **Ayala**, March 1898 (two females in AMNH, BMNH);

Basilan **Isabela**, January 1874, October 1874, November 1887, August and September 1891, April 1898 and May 1937 (Sharpe 1877, Peters 1939, Parkes 1966; 15 specimens in AMNH, BMNH, MCML, MCZ, UMMZ, USNM), near Isabela, December 1906 to March 1907 (McGregor 1907a), and at unspecified localities, November 1887 and March 1898 (five specimens in BMNH, RMNH, USNM);

Jolo unspecified locality, September 1891 (female in USNM; also Bourns and Worcester 1894);

Tawitawi **Tataan**, October 1891 (three specimens in CM, USNM); **Lubbuk**, north of Balimbing, December 1996 (D. Allen *in litt.* 1996); **Tarawakan**, May 1995 (D. Allen *in litt.* 1996); **Balimbing**, March 1987 (Hornskov 1995a); **Batu-batu**, December 1971 (duPont and Rabor 1973a; five specimens in DMNH);

Sanga-sanga May 1958 and October and December 1971 (11 specimens in DMNH; also duPont and Rabor 1973a), with a specific record from **Balabek** around 1987 (Krupa and Buck 1988; see Remarks 3);

Bongao July 1893 and October 1971 (Sharpe 1894a, Manuel 1941, Parkes 1966, duPont and Rabor 1973a; five specimens in AMNH, BMNH, DMNH), August 1994 (G. C. L. Dutson and T. M. Brooks *in litt.* 1994, Dutson *et al.* 1996); **Bongao Peak**, March 1987 (Hornskov 1995a);

Papahag February 1908 (Mearns 1909, Manuel 1941, Parkes 1966; male in USNM).

In addition, duPont and Rabor (1973a) simply stated that the species “was fairly common in the densely forested regions of the larger southern islands of Sulu” in 1971, without indicating which (beyond those where specimens were obtained).

POPULATION The true status of this species is very hard to judge. Whitehead (1899c) only collected a single specimen, on Negros, which doubtless helped fuel the view that the bird is very rare and possibly endangered (Hachisuka 1933, Dickinson *et al.* 1991). The specimen collected on Calico-an in 1945 was the only bird seen in the period February–November that year (Potter 1953). However, F. S. Bourns and D. C. Worcester (in McGregor 1909–1910) remarked that “familiarity with its habits and with its note enabled us to procure it in many islands where it was not previously known”, clearly implying that its rarity is in part an artefact of human ignorance; it calls at very first light (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1997), so experience of its voice and presence in the field before dawn are important in assessing its status. McGregor (1907a) found it “fairly abundant” on Basilan in 1906–1907. That the species was indeed “fairly common” in the Sulu archipelago in 1971 (duPont and Rabor 1973a) is borne out by the fact that no fewer than nine birds were collected on Sanga-sanga in the period 3–6 October and five at Batu-batu over 1–6 December (material in DMNH). In May 1995 on Tawitawi it was found to be common at Lubbuk and reported by local inhabitants to be common at Tarawakan (D. Allen *in litt.* 1996). On Sibuyan it was much commoner than on other islands visited in the Philippines (Evans *et al.* 1993a), although in the table they provided

only two birds were recorded. At Bislig on Mindanao, it was considered common (on dawn vocalisations) in February 1997 (T. H. Fisher verbally 1997). Despite this evidence and the size of its range, however, the total numbers of the Rufous-lored Kingfisher do indeed seem likely (at least, now) to be very small, with only some 12 sites recorded for the species since 1980, at some of which the populations seem likely to be relictual. Numbers on Siquijor are now judged “tiny” (Evans *et al.* 1993b). On Negros the bird is very possibly now extinct (Brooks *et al.* 1992).

ECOLOGY Habitat The remarkable distribution of the Rufous-lored Kingfisher, with its penchant for small islands and localities adjacent to coastlines (see, e.g., Evans *et al.* 1993b), yet with a handful of records from inland foothills and sometimes highly degraded habitats, poses some questions about its needs. The view that it is an extreme lowland forest specialist (Collar *et al.* 1994) does not easily square with encounters at elevations of 1,000 m or so on Mt Matutum on Mindanao and ones of 700 m or more on Bohol, Sibuyan and Leyte (see Distribution). Moreover, the nature of its association with fresh water (obligate or optional) is not clear, and the matters of whether its rather surprising absence from many islands is real, and, if it is, what ecological factors are responsible, remain a challenge. The general evidence suggests that it selects habitat near boulders and (often limestone) cliffs (see, e.g., Hornskov 1995a), which inevitably makes it tolerant of more open and sometimes degraded forest, and which may simply explain its link with small islands (presence of cliffs and rocks) and its prevailing but not obligate lowland status; alternatively, it may simply be that its preference for large trees is in many places now only satisfied in uncultivable, streamless limestone areas with few trees of commercial value (D. Allen verbally 1997). Indeed, Hornskov’s (1995a) experience of the bird in limestone forests caused him to query its threatened status, given that such habitat is “not... under immediate threat by human activities”.

McGregor (1909) and F. S. Bourns and D. C. Worcester (in McGregor 1909–1910) described the species as a deep woods form (also labels on birds in BMNH, USNM), usually seen perching in trees at a considerable height from the ground, although it goes to the ground to feed; duPont and Rabor (1973a) also referred to its habit of “perching on the higher branches of the tall-tree species in forests”, frequently moving “to a high branch of another tree some distance away”. On Bohol it was found “only in original forest” (Rand and Rabor 1960). On Sibuyan it was found in heavily disturbed to intact forest areas between 30 and 900 m, in two cases over a stream, one of these being “near the ocean” (Goodman *et al.* 1995, FMNH label data, R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 1997). On Basilan it was found “at a long distance from water” by J. B. Steere (Sharpe 1877). On Biliran a bird (in CMNH) was collected adjacent to a river; at Ugdangan, Negros, “on a branch overhanging a creek in deep highland forest” (in FMNH); and at Cadburan, Mindanao, in “second growth beach forest” (in FMNH). At least on Tawitawi, Bohol and Mindanao it does not appear to be allied to water (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1996, D. Allen verbally 1997). One observer has thought it shy, frequenting higher branches (C. R. Robson *in litt.* 1994); another has not seen it more than 7 m above ground (D. Allen verbally 1997). The curious single record from Masbate was of a bird in mangrove swamps (Curio 1993, 1994).

Food According to Forshaw (1985), who provided no source, the species feeds on “insects and their larvae, particularly large cicadas, beetles and grasshoppers, as well as spiders and grubs, procured either on the ground or in the treetops”; this inventory was repeated by Fry and Fry (1992). A bird collected in “deep woods” had been eating large ants (USNM label data), another “saw bugs” (AMNH label data), and another “beetles, dragon-flies” (Sharpe 1877). Of five stomachs of birds from Sibuyan, 1992, one held insects, one held two isopods and a lizard, one was empty and two were saved (Goodman *et al.* 1995, FMNH label data). Bright green beetle-like insects were in the stomach of a bird taken in May on Calico-an (Potter 1953).

Breeding The testes of a bird (in CMNH) from Biliran, April, were moderately large, while a female (in FMNH) from Bohol, also in April, held “ripe eggs”. Of five Sibuyan birds (in FMNH) from February and March 1992, three males were only moderately developed (two had skulls 80% ossified) but both females were more advanced. Two four-fifths-grown juveniles (in AMNH) were taken on Basilan in April, and a similar-sized bird (in BMNH), described as a nestling by Sharpe (1894a), was taken on Bongao in July. The only bird found on Calico-an, May, had moderately enlarged testes (Potter 1953). Two juveniles were seen in late August 1992 on Siquijor (Evans *et al.* 1993a).

Migration There is no information that this bird performs any movements in response to seasons, and it has been judged “surely resident and sedentary” (Fry and Fry 1992), but its occupancy of small islands might suggest some dispersive capability.

THREATS The virtual confinement of this species to habitat below 1,000 m, and indeed its apparent preference for extreme lowland conditions, means that the continuing clearance of lowland forest throughout the Philippines poses a very significant threat, possibly greatly compounded by a need for freshwater habitats within this broader habitat type. At Bislig on Mindanao, where the species is considered common (T. H. Fisher verbally 1997), good primary forest is being clear-felled (under the PICOP logging concession) and the land planted with exotic trees for paper production (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997). The deliberate conflagration of forests—associated with insurgency—is a problem, particularly on the Zamboanga Peninsula (D. Allen verbally 1997). On Tawitawi—despite claims of a possible stronghold—in 1994 forest was being cut very rapidly (see under Sulu Bleeding-heart *Gallinolumba menagei*). On Sibuyan within the Kuyasian Forest, March 1992, there was considerable logging activity, particularly of the remaining large hardwoods, with the Atlas Mining Corporation on the neighbouring island of Masbate being the biggest purchaser in spite of no legal logging concession existing on the island (Goodman and Ingle 1993, Goodman *et al.* 1995). On Siquijor only four forest patches remain, and this species was only found in one, Lilo-an, which is so degraded it now appears “like parkland” (Evans *et al.* 1993b). In 1945 Calico-an was being converted into a naval base, with only a central strip of forest expected to be left (Potter 1953); there seems to be no recent information on forest cover there. At Rajah Sikatuna National Park on Bohol, limited illegal tree-cutting was observed in January 1997 (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997); Brooks *et al.* (1995c) had considered such threats minimised by the management activities of DENR. Tablas, which still held “a considerable area of undisturbed forest remaining on the slopes of the high hills and low mountains in its interior” in 1905 (McGregor 1906c), appeared to possess only a few small tracts of degraded cover in 1992 (R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 1997).

MEASURES TAKEN The Rufous-lored Kingfisher has been recorded from sites in or near two NIPAP sites (Mt Guiting-guiting on Sibuyan; Mt Malindang on Mindanao) and three CPPAP sites (Mt Canlaon on Negros; Agusan Marsh and Mt Apo on Mindanao; see Appendix), although suitable lowland habitat has become scarce at some of these localities. In addition, conservation-related activities on Mt Matutum are supported by FPE funding (see Appendix). Coastal areas of Tawitawi and the Mt Talinis/Twin Lakes area on Negros (including the Eastern Cuernos de Negros and Lake Balinsasayao “key sites”) have been proposed for FPE funding. A population of the species survives in Rajah Sikatuna National Park on Bohol, which is regarded as a stronghold of the species (Collar *et al.* 1994). The tiny site at Tabunan on Cebu is receiving attention on behalf of the Cebu Flowerpecker *Dicaeum quadricolor* (see relevant account). The remaining four patches of forest on Siquijor, covering a total of 781 ha, are all in reserves controlled by DENR (Evans *et al.* 1993b).

MEASURES PROPOSED Apart from the areas targeted for conservation above, the species is known, currently or historically, from localities in or near four “key sites” (Mt Bandila-an

on Siquijor; Central Basilan; Mt Lobi range on Leyte; Mt Matutum on Mindanao; see Appendix) and these deserve further survey and formal designation and protection, at least in part, under the NIPAS process.

There is possibly scope for a specialist study of Philippine kingfishers, with particular emphasis on the most problematic species (see equivalent section under Silvery Kingfisher *Alcedo argentata*). Searches for this bird in its historical range are needed, and studies of its ecology in areas where it is currently still present in some numbers would be valuable in determining the basic elements to be considered in conservation planning for the species. A proposal on the reservation of southern Negros and other comments on forest conservation in the Western Visayas were made in 1980 (see account under Visayan Wrinkled Hornbill *Aceros waldeni*). An overview of conservation proposals in portions of this kingfisher's range is in the equivalent sections under Sulu Hornbill *Anthracoceros montani* (for Tawitawi) and Blue-capped Kingfisher *Actenoides hombroni* (for Mindanao).

REMARKS (1) McGregor (1909–1910) and Delacour and Mayr (1946) originally considered the Rufous-lored Kingfisher a monotypic species. Currently it is regarded as having evolved at least five diagnosable subspecies within the archipelago (duPont 1971, Dickinson *et al.* 1991), although the differences are very slight; if indeed it is dispersive, then the characters on which subspecies have been based may prove simply to be artefacts of small sample sizes. (2) Dickinson *et al.* (1989) listed Samar as an island for which they could find no specimen evidence to substantiate Steere's (1890) claimed record; this is evidently it. (3) The account by Krupa and Buck (1988), apart from lacking a date, is ambiguous about the locality involved in this record, since their title refers to Tawitawi while the landbirds mentioned in the article seem (and are here assumed) all to have been recorded at Balabek Forest, Sanga-sanga.