

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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VISAYAN BROADBILL

Eurylaimus samarensis



Critical —
 Endangered —
Vulnerable **A1c; A2c; B1+2a,b,c,d,e; C1**

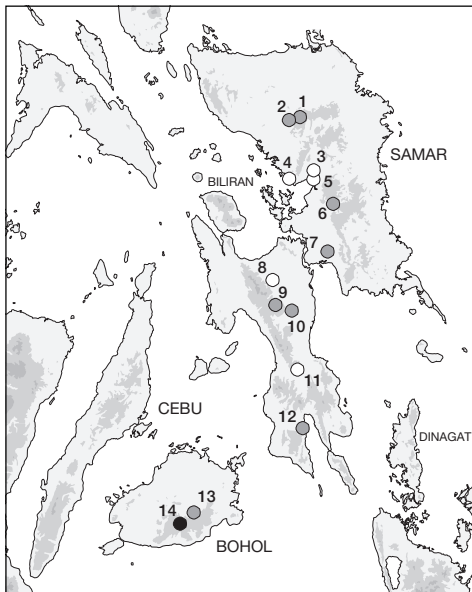
This lowland forest specialist qualifies as Vulnerable because of its very small occupied range and small population, both of which continue to decline rapidly as a result of extensive habitat loss.

DISTRIBUTION The Visayan (Wattled) Broadbill or Samar Broadbill (see Remarks 1 under Mindanao Broadbill *E. steerii*) is endemic to the Philippines, occurring on Samar, Leyte and Bohol. Records are as follows:

■ **PHILIPPINES** **Samar** **Mt Capoto-an**, 400–600 m, and **Matuguinao** including San Isidro, at 100–400 m, April–May 1957 (27 specimens in AMNH, FMNH, UPLB, YPM, ZMH; also Rand and Rabor 1960); **Bonga**, May and June 1896 (two specimens in AMNH); **Catbalogan**, April 1888 (four specimens in AMNH, BMNH) and August 1892 (two specimens in CM); **Paranas**, June 1896 (two males in BMNH, hence Ogilvie-Grant 1897); **Buluan**, Calbiga, April 1969 (three specimens in PNM); **Asgad**, Guirang, Basey, May 1969 (four specimens in PNM);

Leyte northern mountains (evidently near **Jaro**), August 1896 (specimen in AMNH; hence Ogilvie-Grant 1897); **Mt Lobi** at Dagami, Patok, July and August 1961 (17 specimens in AMNH, ANSP, DMNH, PNM; also Parkes 1973); **Buri**, May 1964 (Parkes 1973); **Helosig**, midway between Baybay and Abuyog (Rabor 1938); **Tomas Oppus** at Tinuggahan, 600 m, August 1968 (female in DMNH), and Anahawan, April 1979 (male in DMNH);

Bohol **Cantaub**, Sierra Bullones, 700–750 m, May 1955 (Rand and Rabor 1960; female in FMNH); **Rajah Sikatuna National Park**, not infrequently at this site in deep forest in recent



The distribution of Visayan Broadbill *Eurylaimus samarensis*: (1) Mt Capoto-an; (2) Matuguinao; (3) Bonga; (4) Catbalogan; (5) Paranas; (6) Buluan; (7) Asgad; (8) Jaro; (9) Mt Lobi; (10) Buri; (11) Helosig; (12) Tomas Oppus; (13) Cantaub; (14) Rajah Sikatuna National Park.
 Historical (pre-1950) Fairly recent (1950–1979)
 Recent (1980–present)

years (Brooks *et al.* 1995c, B. Gee *in litt.* 1997, F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1997), in one account at 300–400 m (Lambert 1996) and including Logarita, January 1994 (Hornbuckle 1994), and Bilar, April 1986 (female in NCSM), April and May 1987, when up to 10 birds were seen daily (Hornskov 1995a), and 1995 (A. J. Long verbally 1997). Lambert (1996) listed “Pamilacan” as a site on Bohol, but the only traced locality of this name is a tiny island some distance off the south-west coast of Bohol.

POPULATION The species was patchily abundant on Samar in the last century (McGregor 1909–1910, Hachisuka 1931–1935). That it was at least until recently a moderately common bird on the island can be gauged by the considerable number of specimens (45 itemised) available to construct the Distribution account above; and on Bohol Hornskov (1995a) judged from his observations (see Distribution) that the species might be “locally quite common”. Even so, Rand and Rabor (1960) reported it to be rare throughout Samar and “very rare” on Bohol in 1955 (Rand and Rabor 1960); and it was judged scarce on the latter (albeit “unobtrusive and certainly under-recorded”) in a subsequent general assessment (Brooks *et al.* 1995c).

ECOLOGY Habitat The Visayan Broadbill is restricted to primary forest (Rabor 1938, Rand and Rabor 1960), tolerating little disturbance (e.g. at Bilar in Rajah Sikatuna National Park: A. J. Long verbally 1997). Some, if not all, areas are characterised by limestone outcrops (Lambert 1996); however, limestone may not be a crucial element of habitat, rather it may simply be where forest remains, since limestone areas are frequently too rocky to cultivate and often have no above-ground streams (thus no drinking water or irrigation) (D. Allen verbally 1997). It is clear from the information assembled under Distribution that this is a bird of lowland forest habitats (nowhere explicitly higher than 750 m), and Rabor (1938) noted that the species was rare in the highlands of Leyte. On Bohol in 1955 it was only found in original forest, while on Samar in 1957 it was encountered “only inside original forest among the low growths, including bushes” (Rand and Rabor 1960).

Food Insects are taken (BMNH, NCSM label data), and one shot bird had a “green caterpillar still in the mouth” (Rand and Rabor 1960). Presumably fruit is also consumed, given its use by the Mindanao Broadbill *Eurylaimus steerii* (see relevant account). The species sometimes forages with mixed-species flocks (see Lambert 1996).

Breeding Birds appear to breed from February to June (Lambert 1996). A March female from Samar was breeding (FMNH), while another from the island in April had an active ovary, although four males taken at the same time were in primary moult (Rand and Rabor 1960). The April female from Bohol (NCSM) was granular (inactive). Of four birds, May, two had gonads undeveloped and two had them slightly developed (PNM label data). There is a juvenile male from Mt Capoto-an in May and immature males were collected on Samar in April, July and August (FMNH, USNM). An adult and juvenile were seen together on Bohol in July 1994 (Lambert 1996; see Remarks 1). A female on Bohol in March was carrying a leaf, which may have been nesting material (Lambert 1996). The nest (in an account lumping this species with *E. steerii*) is “large, elaborate [and] shaped like a hanging purse” (Gonzales and Rees 1988).

Migration It is not known if this bird makes any seasonal movements.

THREATS The destruction of forest within the elevational range of this species has been extensive and constitutes the principal threat to its survival: it is not clear what proportion of forest has been lost on Samar and Leyte, where mining applications are a severe potential threat (NADM), but the situation is thought to be similar to that on Bohol, which currently retains a mere 4% forest cover (T. M. Brooks verbally 1997). Certainly PEWG (1996), using 1989 DENR statistics, credited Samar and Leyte with possessing as little as 433 km² of old-

growth dipterocarp, but other sources of information put forest cover considerably higher (see Threats *Habitat loss* for Samar and Leyte under Philippine Eagle *Pithecopaga jefferyi*). At Rajah Sikatuna National Park on Bohol, limited illegal tree-cutting was observed in January 1997 (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997), although Brooks *et al.* (1995c) had considered such threats minimised by the management activities of DENR.

MEASURES TAKEN The species occurs in only one protected area, Rajah Sikatuna National Park (see Appendix). This is clearly an extremely important bastion for this broadbill and should be formally designated under the NIPAS process.

MEASURES PROPOSED Apart from the areas targeted for conservation above, the species is known from one “key site” (Mt Lobi range on Leyte; see Appendix) and this deserves further survey and formal designation, at least in part, under the NIPAS process. The islands of Samar and Leyte have endured great biological neglect in the past few decades, and are now very ripe for rapid assessment of the status and contents of their habitats. This bird is one of the key indicators in such a survey, confined as it is to lowland primary areas. It may well prove rather sedentary, like other broadbills (see Lambert 1996), and if so it would make an excellent target for a biological study, using mist-nets to establish a marked population, to determine the significant components of its ecology and annual cycle.

REMARKS (1) This record is mistakenly attributed by Lambert (1996) to Brooks *et al.* (1995); it is apparently by G. C. L. Dutson (T. M. Brooks *in litt.* 1998).