

# Threatened Birds of Asia:

## The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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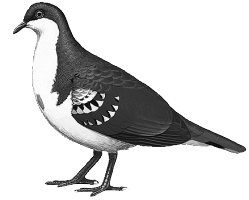
## MINDORO BLEEDING-HEART

### *Gallicolumba platenae*

Critical ■ C1; C2a

Endangered □ B1+2a,b,c,d,e; D1

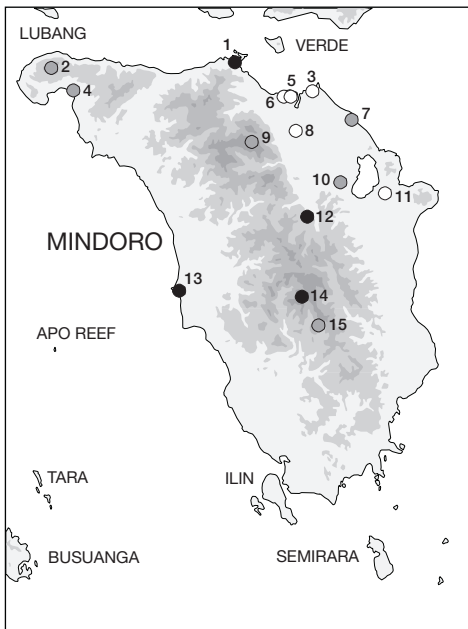
Vulnerable □ A1c,d; A2c,d; D2



*This species has an extremely small, severely fragmented population which is declining owing to lowland forest destruction, combined with hunting and trade, thereby qualifying it as Critical.*

**DISTRIBUTION** The Mindoro Bleeding-heart (see Remarks 1) is endemic to the island of Mindoro in the Philippines. Records are from:

■ **PHILIPPINES** *Mindoro* **Puerto Galera** at Mt Talipanan, 1991 (R. Sison *per* J. C. T. Gonzalez *in litt.* 1997) and at Villaflor, October 1990 (Gonzalez 1993) and by report during the fruiting of the “balete” fig (J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997); **Mt Calavite** on the western slope at 120–180 m, February–March 1964 and April 1965 (11 specimens in AMNH and PNM); **Calapan**, May, June and November 1890 (four specimens in AMNH, MCML and ZMB); **Paluan** at Igmanukan, May 1964, and Tubili, June 1965 (three specimens in AMNH and PNM); **Balete**, April and May 1905, and **Chicago**, near Rio Baco, March 1905 (McGregor 1905c, 1909–1910, Hachisuka 1931–1935; three specimens in BMNH, FMNH), with “Baco” listed also by de Elera (1895); **San Luis**, Naujan, 30 m, April–May 1954 (Ripley and Rabor 1958, specimen in UPLB); **Bayog**, May 1937 (Peters 1939); **Mt Halcon**, December 1888 or January 1889 (Hartert 1891a), specifically at Calapan, May and November 1890 (Hartlaub 1899a; two specimens in AMNH) and northern slope at Naujan, April/May 1954 and July



#### The distribution of Mindoro Bleeding-heart

***Gallicolumba platenae***: (1) Puerto Galera; (2) Mt Calavite; (3) Calapan; (4) Paluan; (5) Balete; (6) Chicago; (7) San Luis; (8) Bayog; (9) Mt Halcon; (10) Alcate; (11) Subaan; (12) MUFRC Experimental Forest; (13) Siburan; (14) Mt Iglit-Baco National Park; (15) Mt Roosevelt.

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

1964 (three specimens in AMNH, YPM), and by local report, December 1994 (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995); **Alcate**, Victoria, Occidental Mindoro, 60 m, April 1954 (Ripley and Rabor 1958), and at the Mindoro Horticultural Center in Alcate, 30–60 m, March 1971 (two specimens in DMNH); near **Subaan**, December 1906 (male in USNM); **MUFRC Experimental Forest**, 1980 (Catibog-Sinha 1982); **Siburan** (Sablayan Penal Colony), 150–300 m, December 1991, December 1992 and (two captive birds) August 1994 (Dutson *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993a, Brooks *et al.* 1995b, T. M. Brooks *in litt.* 1997) and irregularly captured by prisoners (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997); **Mt Iglit-Baco National Park**, at 90–500 m, recently (Rubio and Castillo 1992) and by local report, 1997 (J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997); **Mt Roosevelt**, 575 m, July 1963 (male in PNM). In addition, interviews with local people produced the following unconfirmed records, all but the last dated 1994: Pakyas, Victoria, overlooking Naujan Lake; Mt Katmuran-Kiblatoy, Victoria; Mt Kantulin near Carabawen, Bulalacao; Mt Pungsalaboy near Batangan, Bongabong; Mt Malasimbo near Anuman, Puerto; Mts Hagulgoy-Matbaw-Agmaling, near Saclag, San Teodoro, Puerto; Amnay Watershed, Santa Cruz, locally extinct about ten years before 1993 (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995). Additional local reports come from Malpalon and San Vicente in 1991 (Dutson *et al.* 1992), Puerto Galera at Mt Malasimbo in June 1997 (J. C. T. Gonzalez *in litt.* 1997), and an unspecified locality in the “far south” of Mindoro in 1991, where the species was reported to be “relatively common” (Evans *et al.* 1993a).

**POPULATION** Although B. Schmacher considered the species “very rare” (Hartlaub 1899a), F. S. Bourns and D. C. Worcester found it “common in the old forests in the interior... but very difficult to shoot” (McGregor 1909–1910). In 1905 at Balete the species was abundant, “although owing to its habit of feeding on the ground and flying at the slightest noise, it might easily be overlooked” (McGregor 1905c). Hachisuka (1936) also judged that it was less rare than hard to obtain. By 1954 it was still thought “not really rare, but very local”, and this comment appears to relate to the fact that “large areas of the forest would be covered” without birds being found, but then, when one bird was located, several would quickly prove to be present (Ripley and Rabor 1958). By the early 1990s the scarcity of recent records from hunters, coupled with a very low encounter rate by fieldworkers, suggested that the species’s total number had become very low (Dutson *et al.* 1992), and it is now regarded as extremely rare with very few birds remaining (Collar *et al.* 1994). Diesmos and Pedregosa (1995) reported it to occur at very low densities in remnant lowland forest over a wide area of Mindoro, with recent local extinction at only one of nine localities; however, villagers they questioned reported it to be around a half to a quarter as common as the Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*, and to have become increasingly rare (but the reliability of these reports is difficult to gauge).

**ECOLOGY Habitat** The Mindoro Bleeding-heart is a bird of primary and secondary lowland forest, preferring dry forest substrates especially on gentle slopes (Ripley and Rabor 1958, Dickinson *et al.* 1991, Dutson *et al.* 1992) and extending upslope only to 600–750 m (Evans *et al.* 1993a). All *Gallicolumba* live on the forest floor, only perching in trees when roosting or breeding (Delacour 1932) or when flushed (D. Allen verbally 1997). In December 1991 at Sablayan (i.e. Siburan), the largest tract of lowland forest known on Mindoro, single birds were observed (1) in an open area of the forest floor under closed-canopy forest bounded by limestone outcrops and boulders, (2) in a bamboo thicket with numerous rattans, surrounded by primary closed-canopy forest, (3) close to a pool in a dry riverbed in closed-canopy forest on flatter, less rocky ground than most of the site, (4) foraging on the ground with an Emerald Dove in notably shady, level forest with minimal rocky outcrops, a habitat present in just a few small patches scattered within the forest (Evans *et al.* 1993a). Birds at Pakyas, Victoria, were reported as occasionally using plantation forests of popular *Gmelina*

and mahogany *Swietenia* adjacent to closed-canopy secondary growth (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995).

**Food** A single bird was reported feeding with a group of green-pigeons *Treron* during the fruiting season of “balete” (fig) trees (J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997), which indicates that food is at least occasionally taken in trees.

**Breeding** The gonads of two birds from Alcate, March, were slightly enlarged (DMNH label data). Two nests were collected at Balete in 1905: the first, containing two eggs in an advanced state of incubation, was found on 28 April and placed 1.5 m from the ground on the horizontal limb of a small tree; the second (no date given) also held two well-incubated eggs and was “similarly placed in a shrub” (McGregor 1905c, 1909–1910). A nest with two young was found in a tangle of vines about 2 m above the ground in May (McGregor 1909–1910). Villagers questioned over a wide area of Mindoro by Diesmos and Pedregosa (1995) reported the breeding season to be February–May.

**Migration** It is not known if this species undertakes any vertical, seasonal or nomadic displacements.

**THREATS** Lowland forest destruction has eradicated almost all of this bird’s habitat, and on current rates Mindoro is in danger of losing all primary cover below 900 m within just a few years (Evans *et al.* 1993a). Direct exploitation by hunting for food and the pet trade also occurs (Evans *et al.* 1993a, B. Gee *in litt.* 1997). Exploitation is particularly frequent in the dry season from February to May (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995). Dutson *et al.* (1992) reported that “much of the forest on Mindoro has large numbers of snares set for terrestrial animals; two paths in different forests at Malpalon were flanked by a continuous line of snares, totalling several hundred metres”. Forest at Siburan/Sabluyan is, however, largely free of snaring, but the species may be threatened by disturbance to the forest undergrowth owing to the collection of rattan by prisoners for furniture production, and by occasional selective logging of large trees, for milling on site, again for furniture production (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997), and also by encroaching *kaingin*, illegal tree-cutting and collection of forest products by locally resettled people and Mt Pinatubo refugees (Custodio *et al.* 1994, Brooks *et al.* 1995b). The same holds true of the majority of the sites from which Diesmos and Pedregosa (1995) obtained reports of the species. A mining company is apparently operating on Mt Malasimbo (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995).

**MEASURES TAKEN** Mt Iglit-Baco National Park is a NIPAP site (see Appendix), but there is very little forest habitat within its boundaries (G. C. L. Dutson *in litt.* 1996). The largest tract of lowland forest known on Mindoro (c.5,000 ha) is adjacent to Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm, notably at Siburan (a “key site”); it is not clear how much of the area receives protection from the penal colony itself or from the F. B. Harrison Game Reserve (Dutson *et al.* 1992). The Sablayan forest is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995), and an integrated social forestry project is running in the region (Custodio *et al.* 1994). Elsewhere on the island, hunting has been locally prohibited at Mt Malasimbo in secondary forest controlled by a nearby Mangyan community (Diesmos and Pedregosa 1995) and the MUFRC Experimental Forest covers 7,853 ha (Catibog-Sinha 1982). The UPLB Foundation has received USAID funding for biodiversity conservation round Puerto Galera focusing on the tamaraw *Bubalus mindorensis* as a flagship species; the resulting activities—including baseline faunal inventories and community-based educational awareness initiatives—are likely to be of indirect benefit to the bleeding-heart and other threatened birds in the area (A. T. L. Dans verbally 1995). In the mid-1990s the species was featured on an environmental awareness poster focusing on bleeding-hearts as part of the “Only in the Philippines” series, funded by British Airways Assisting Conservation and FFI, with text in English and Tagalog (W. L. R. Oliver verbally 1997).

**MEASURES PROPOSED** Apart from the areas targeted for conservation above, the species is known from two “key sites” (Mt Halcon and Lake Naujan; see Appendix) and these deserve formal designation and protection, at least in part, under the NIPAS process (although in the case of Lake Naujan it needs to be established if and where sufficient forest occurs to support this species). The status and ecology of this species requires study; research into the latter is most urgent since existing evidence strongly suggests that its status is dire. Understanding how to address this difficulty requires basic knowledge of the species’s needs in terms of breeding, foraging and dispersal. If possible, its vocalisations should be tape-recorded and used in field surveys; in the meantime, playback of calls of the congeneric Luzon *G. luzonica* and Mindanao Bleeding-hearts *G. criniger* is recommended (Evans *et al.* 1993a). Forest at the Siburan/Sabluyan Penal Colony harbours most of the important endemic birds of Mindoro, and a system must be found by which its management as a prison can be reconciled with its strict preservation as a site of critical importance for biodiversity.

Any conservation strategy for Mindoro should consider the distributions and requirements of several other endemic or near-endemic threatened species. A detailed map of forest habitats on Mindoro, with a status-weighted inventory of the key species each contains, is urgently needed as the basis for a plan of long-term forest conservation. A study of hunting on Mindoro, and specifically of its past and present effects on pigeons and hornbills, is needed together with practical measures to reduce and preferably eliminate such pressure.

**REMARKS** (1) Although Hachisuka (1930) separated *keayi* and *criniger* as species, he retained *platanae* within *luzonica* (he did not deal with *menagei*); but Hachisuka (1931a, also 1932b) listed *luzonica*, *platanae*, *keayi*, *criniger* and *menagei* all as species.