

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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Recommended citation

BirdLife International (2001) *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International.

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ISBN 0 946888 42 6 (Part A)

ISBN 0 946888 43 4 (Part B)

ISBN 0 946888 44 2 (Set)

British Library-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

First published 2001 by BirdLife International

Designed and produced by the **Nature**Bureau, 36 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ, United Kingdom

Available from the Natural History Book Service Ltd, 2–3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel: +44 1803 865913 Fax: +44 1803 865280 Email nhbs@nhbs.co.uk
Internet: www.nhbs.com/services/birdlife.html

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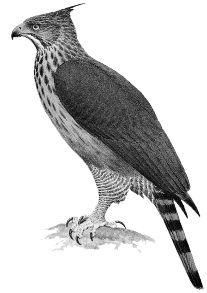
PHILIPPINE HAWK-EAGLE

Spizaetus philippensis

Critical —

Endangered —

Vulnerable A1c,d; A2c,d; C1; C2a



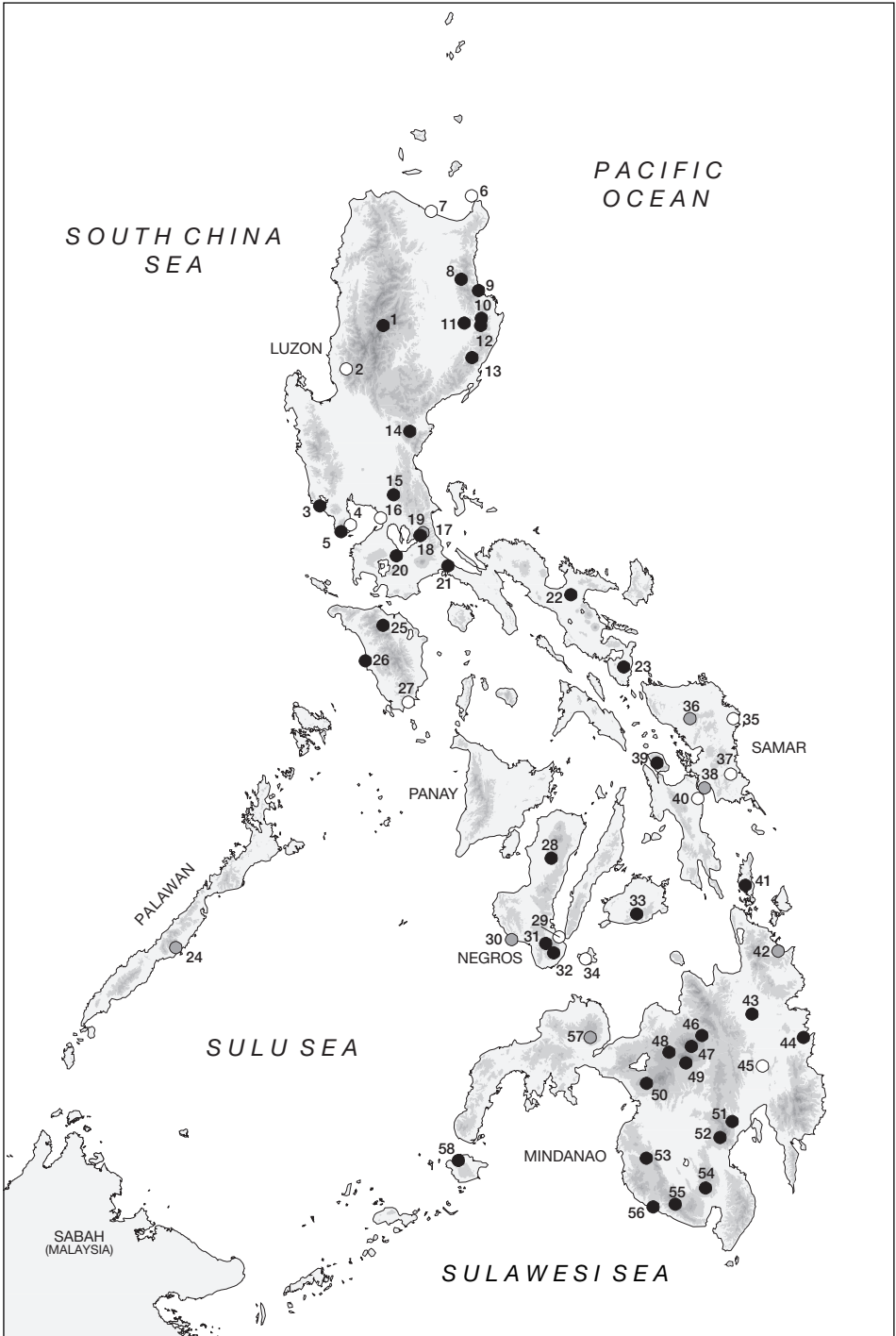
This raptor qualifies as Vulnerable because its small, severely fragmented population is undergoing a continuing rapid decline owing to lowland forest loss, exacerbated by hunting and trade.

DISTRIBUTION The Philippine Hawk-eagle is endemic to the Philippines where records exist for at least 12 islands. A taxonomic revision of the species, separating birds on at least Mindanao as a new subspecies, has recently been completed (Preleuthner and Gamauf 1998). Records from Masbate and Lubang (McGregor 1909–1910) are unacceptable (Dickinson *et al.* 1989, 1991), while an observation from Gaong valley, Sibuyan, March 1992 (Evans *et al.* 1993a), treated as provisional by Goodman *et al.* (1995), has now been retracted (R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 1997; see Remarks 1, also under Mindoro). There were several probable sightings at Sibaliw, north-west peninsula, Panay, in August 1997 (D. Allen verbally 1997). The records that follow have been accepted uncritically, and it needs to be stressed that there are considerable identification problems with this species, so that all the available evidence needs to be treated with a high degree of caution:

■ **PHILIPPINES** Luzon (*western*) **Mt Polis**, September 1984 (Quinnell undated), June 1987 (Jensen and Hornskov 1992), January 1988 (Sargeant 1989); **Irisan**, Benguet (McGregor 1904b), presumably April–June 1903 (see McGregor 1904a); **Mariveles**, Bataan, February 1902 (McGregor 1904b), May 1981 (Fisher mss); **Lamao**, Bataan, 180 m, December 1947 (Gilliard 1950; female in AMNH); **Subic Bay**, March 1997 (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1997); (*eastern*) **Cape Engaño**, April 1895 (Ogilvie Grant 1894, 1896a; male in BMNH); **Rio Grande** in the Cagayan valley, May or June 1894 (Whitehead 1899a); **Mt Palanan**, Isabela, June 1987 (Jensen and Hornskov 1992); **San Mariano**, April 1991 (Danielsen *et al.* 1994); **Los Dos Cuernos**, April/May 1991 (Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995); between San Mariano and **Dipalayag**, April 1991 (Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995) and December 1993 (N. J. Redman *in litt.* 1996); **Maconacon**, April 1983 (Fisher mss); **Diagopanay**, March 1991 (Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995); **Maria Aurora Memorial National Park** at the Kalapnit ISF Project, March 1996, and at the Talaytay watershed, April 1996 (D. W. Billing *in litt.* 1997); (*central*) **Angat Dam**, at least six times since 1990 (Evans *et al.* 1993a, Hornbuckle 1994, N. J. Redman *in litt.* 1996, I. Mauro *per* F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1997); **Mt Makiling**, April 1983 and 1986 (Clarke 1983, Catibog-Sinha 1986, Miranda 1987); **Manila**, 1870s (specimen in BMNH); **Diman**,

The distribution of the Philippine Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus philippensis* (map opposite; sequence not as in text): (1) Mt. Polis; (2) Irisan; (3) Subic Bay; (4) Lamao; (5) Mariveles; (6) Cape Engaño; (7) Rio Grande; (8) Los Dos Cuernos; (9) Maconacon; (10) Mt Palanan; (11) San Mariano; (12) Dipalayag; (13) Diagopanay; (14) Maria Aurora Memorial National Park; (15) Angat Dam; (16) Manila; (17) Diman; (18) Saray; (19) UP Laguna Land Grant; (20) Mt Makiling National Park; (21) Quezon NP; (22) Mt Isarog; (23) Mt Bulusan National Park; (24) Narra; (25) Mt. Halcon; (26) Siburan; (27) Bulalacao; (28) Mt Canlaon; (29) Nueva Valencia; (30) Basay; (31) Lake Balinsasayao; (32) Mt Talinis; (33) Rajah Sikatuna National Park; (34) Siquijor; (35) Cadapan; (36) Matuguinao; (37) Tagaslian; (38) Basulood; (39) Biliran; (40) Palo; (41) Dinagat; (42) Car–Can–Mad–Lan; (43) Libtong; (44) Bislig; (45) Madaum; (46) Dalwangan; (47) Mt Kitanglad; (48) Tikalaan; (49) Kalatungan; (50) Butig Mountains; (51) Baguio; (52) Mt Apo; (53) Kuden; (54) Mt Matutum; (55) Lake Sebu; (56) Luhan; (57) Mt Malindang National Park; (58) Isabela.

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



Balian, Pangil, Laguna, 360 m, January 1969 (two specimens in CMNH, DMNH), and June 1972 (male in DMNH); **Saray**, Pakil, Laguna, 330 m, August 1974 (male in CMNH); **Quezon National Park**, repeatedly since 1983 (Clarke 1983, Sargeant 1989, Greensmith 1990, Jensen and Hornskov 1992, Hornbuckle 1994, W. Simpson *in litt.* 1997, B. Gee *in litt.* 1997); **UP Laguna Land Grant**, May 1992 (Gonzalez 1995); (*southern*) **Mt Bulusan National Park** at San Francisco and San Isidro, two birds caught in 1995 and subsequently placed in an aviary at Dapdap (A. C. Diesmos verbally 1997); **Mt Isarog**, April 1981 (Fisher mss);

Mindoro Mt Halcon, 1991 (Dutson *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993a, A. C. Diesmos verbally 1993); **Siburan**, Sablayan Penal Colony, December 1992 (Evans *et al.* 1993a), but 1991 records there (Evans *et al.* 1993a) have now been retracted (R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 1997); **Bulalacao** between May 1905 and February 1906 (McGregor 1906a);

Samar Cadapnan, Bantayan, Oras, May 1948 (specimen in PNM); **Matuguinao** at 100–400 m, April 1957 (Rand and Rabor 1960); **Tagaslian**, Borongan, June 1948 (specimen in PNM); **Basulood**, Basey, April 1969 (male in PNM);

Leyte west of **Palo**, November 1945 (Parkes 1973; female in CM);

Biliran no locality or date (Dickinson *et al.* 1991);

Bohol Rajah Sikatuna National Park, May 1987 and January 1988 (Sargeant 1989, Brooks *et al.* 1995c, Hornskov 1995a);

Negros Nueva Valencia, August 1871 (Tweeddale 1878c; female in BMNH) and at the start of the century (McGregor 1909); **Basay**, Bayawan, December 1959 (male in YPM); **Mt Canlaon** at Mambucal, 900 m and 1,290 m (Brooks *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993a) and March 1997 (J.-P. Turpin *in litt.* 1997); **Lake Balinsasayao**, 900 m, August 1991 (Brooks *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993a); **Mt Talinis**, 1,000 m, August 1991 (Brooks *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993a);

Siquijor without locality, 1891 (Bourns and Worcester 1894; also Rand and Rabor 1960), but no subsequent records: the most recent survey on the island at three sites also failed to locate the species (Evans *et al.* 1993b);

Dinagat without locality or date (Tweeddale 1878a, duPont and Rabor 1973b, Dickinson *et al.* 1991);

Mindanao (eastern) “**Car–Can–Mad–Lan**”, 300–630 m, May 1963 (female in USNM); **Libtong**, Talacogon, Agusan del Sur, December 1989 (R. S. Digamo verbally 1995); **Bislig** at the PICOP concession, February 1986 (Fisher mss) and subsequently until at least February 1997 (T. H. Fisher verbally 1997, Evans *et al.* 1993a, W. Simpson *in litt.* 1997), including an adult and two juveniles in February 1996 (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1996); **Madaum**, Tagum, October 1946 and in the 1980s (Dickinson *et al.* 1991; female in FMNH); (*central*) **Dalwangan**, Malaybalay, Bukidnon, November 1994 (D. Cedeno verbally 1995); **Mt Kitanglad**, September 1992 (Evans *et al.* 1993a), a juvenile in January 1994 (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1996), February 1994 (Hornbuckle 1994) and January 1997 (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997); **Tikalaaan**, Talakag, April 1989 (BRT); **Kalatungan**, Bukidnon, 1994 (D. Bojo verbally 1995); **Butig Mountains**, Lanao del Sur, June 1994 (BRT); **Mt Apo**, undated (Ogilvie Grant 1906), and at Baracatan, May 1983 (J. W. Wall *in litt.* to D. Sargeant 1987) and March 1988 (Jensen and Hornskov 1992); **Baguio**, Davao City, August 1994 (D. Cedeno verbally 1995); **Kuden**, Senator Ninoy Aquino in the Daguma Range, Sultan Kudarat, August 1997 (A. S. Manamtam verbally 1997); **Mt Matutum** at Tupi, Cotabato, February 1986 (Fisher mss); **Lake Sebu** at Sitio Siete, February 1992 (Evans *et al.* 1993a, R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 1997), December 1994 (W. Simpson *in litt.* 1997); **Luhan**, New Dumangas, T’boli, South Cotabato, between mid-1984 and mid-1985 (Krupa *et al.* 1985); (*western*) **Mt Malindang**, 1956 (Rand and Rabor 1960);

Basilan Isabela, undated (McGregor 1907a, Dickinson *et al.* 1991);

Palawan Narra, 95 km south of Puerto Princesa, August 1977 (Won 1986b); without locality, between 1964 and 1970 (McClure 1974).

On Luzon the species was reportedly caught at Dalton Pass by trappers questioned in 1989–1990 (Alonzo-Pasicolan 1992).

POPULATION Historically, the Philippine Hawk-eagle was a rare species (McGregor 1909–1910), and the spate of recent records—particularly given the uncertainty that must necessarily be attached to most—does nothing to change that impression. Although it was considered relatively common at Tagum, Davao, Mindanao (see Dickinson *et al.* 1991), in the Sierra Madre of Luzon it is uncommon at 300–1,000 m (Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995), it is clearly threatened on Mindoro (Dutson *et al.* 1992) and Negros (Brooks *et al.* 1992), and it is believed to be probably extinct on Siquijor (Evans *et al.* 1993b). Recent fieldwork has resulted in an estimation of 200–220 pairs on Luzon and 320–340 pairs on Mindanao (Preleuthner and Gamauf 1998).

ECOLOGY Habitat The Philippine Hawk-eagle is found only in lowland to mid-mountain forest (McGregor 1909–1910, Dickinson *et al.* 1991). It has been recorded in disturbed, selectively logged and primary forest at 300–1,050 m in the Sierra Madre (Danielsen *et al.* 1994), 100–300 m on Mindoro and 900–1,290 m on Negros (Evans *et al.* 1993a), although these last values are compromised by retrospective doubts about the identity of the birds seen (G. C. L. Dutson *in litt.* 1996). The Lamao specimen, 1947, was collected 25 m up “in deep forest” (AMNH label data), the species at this site being described as a resident of “high open woodlands” being found “perched on the mid-limbs of giant trees” (Gilliard 1950). According to D. S. Rabor’s composite experience of the species, it is “a bird of original forest, perching in the tallest trees” (Rand and Rabor 1960). All records in the Sierra Madre in 1991 were from mid-mountain primary and selectively logged forest (Poulsen 1995), with the exception of a single record in grassland (Danielsen *et al.* 1994). A bird at Lake Sebu was in trees in paddies away from forest (R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 1997).

Food Nothing appears to have been recorded, but Gilliard (1950) provided some notable circumstantial observations: the specimen he collected appeared to have been watching a cock *Gallus* which crossed a trail 100 m away, and in this case and two other observations he found that “food trees frequented by Luzon Tarictic Hornbill *Penelopides manillae*, Rufous Hornbill *Buceros h. hydrocorax*, and Green Imperial-pigeon *Ducula aenea chalybura* were always located near-by”. The relatively short wing of this *Spizaetus* (Rand and Rabor 1960) suggests that the species hunts mainly inside forest.

Breeding A male in Laguna, January, had enlarged gonads (CMNH label data). Two birds were observed displaying in late March 1991 in the Sierra Madre (Poulsen 1995). The ovaries of the female from Lamao, Luzon, December, were undeveloped (AMNH label data). Records of juveniles are from Mt Kitanglad in January and Bislig in February (see Distribution).

Migration Nothing is known, but if the Dalton Pass reports are to be believed then some intra-island movements may occur.

THREATS This forest-dependent species is threatened by habitat destruction throughout its extensive but predominantly lowland range (Brooks *et al.* 1992, Dutson *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993b, Collar *et al.* 1994, Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995). It may not be able to withstand much forest degradation, not having been recorded in the now highly disturbed Quezon National Park by one observer for more than 10 years (T. H. Fisher verbally 1997). At Bislig 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; also Caufield 1983). Habitat loss is exacerbated by considerable hunting and trapping pressure: a bird wounded by gunshot was seen near San Mariano in the Sierra Madre in 1991 (Danielsen *et al.* 1994), while the bird taken at Mt Butig was rescued from an illegal trader by Haribon Ranao (BRT).

MEASURES TAKEN The species occurs in five CPPAP sites (Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park and Bataan Natural Park/Subic Bay on Luzon; Mt Canlaon on Negros; Mts Kitanglad

and Apo on Mindanao) and two NIPAP sites (Mt Isarog on Luzon; Mt Malindang on Mindanao; see Appendix). In addition, Mt Matutum receives FPE funding for conservation-related activities, action which has been proposed for the Mt Talinis/Twin Lakes area on Negros (including the Eastern Cuernos de Negros and Lake Balinsasayao “key sites”) and Dinagat Island (including the Kambinlio/Redondo “key site”). Mt Talinis itself is the target of education campaigns in wildlife and environmental conservation (BRT). In addition it has been recorded from Maria Aurora Memorial National Park, Quezon and Mt Makiling National Parks on Luzon and Rajah Sikatuna National Park on Bohol. These areas receive legal protection through local government decrees, but the efficacy of this legislation is unclear given the recent alterations to the national protected areas system.

The species is listed on Appendix II of CITES.

MEASURES PROPOSED Apart from the areas targeted for conservation above, the species has been reported from localities in or near 13 “key sites” (Mts Los Dos Cuernos and Polis, Angat Watershed, Mariveles Mountains on Luzon; Mt Halcon and Siburan on Mindoro; the north-west Panay peninsula; Mt Bandila-an on Siquijor; Victoria/Anapalan ranges on Palawan; Mts Cabalantian/Capoto-an on Samar; Mts Matutum and Three Kings on Mindanao; Central Basilan; see Appendix). These deserve further survey to ascertain the current status of the species along with formal designation and protection under the NIPAS process.

Enforcement of legislation designed to control hunting and trading of this species, amongst others, is another priority. If possible, field survey work should be targeted at clarifying the eagle’s ecological needs with particular reference to habitat, dispersion, feeding and breeding.

REMARKS (1) It is important to stress that the retraction of records is an honorable course that does not compromise so much as strengthen the integrity of the observer. Particularly in cases where field identification is rendered difficult through lack of published evaluation of characters it is inevitable that species which are rarely and fleetingly encountered, and whose distinctive features remain a matter of uncertainty, will be mistakenly recorded. The Philippine Hawk-eagle is clearly such a bird, and observers are encouraged to keep the fullest details of their records for revaluation and validation to assist in the resolution of the problem of identification.