

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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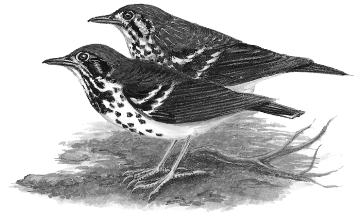
ASHY THRUSH

Zoothera cinerea

Critical —

Endangered —

Vulnerable **A1c,d; A2c,d**



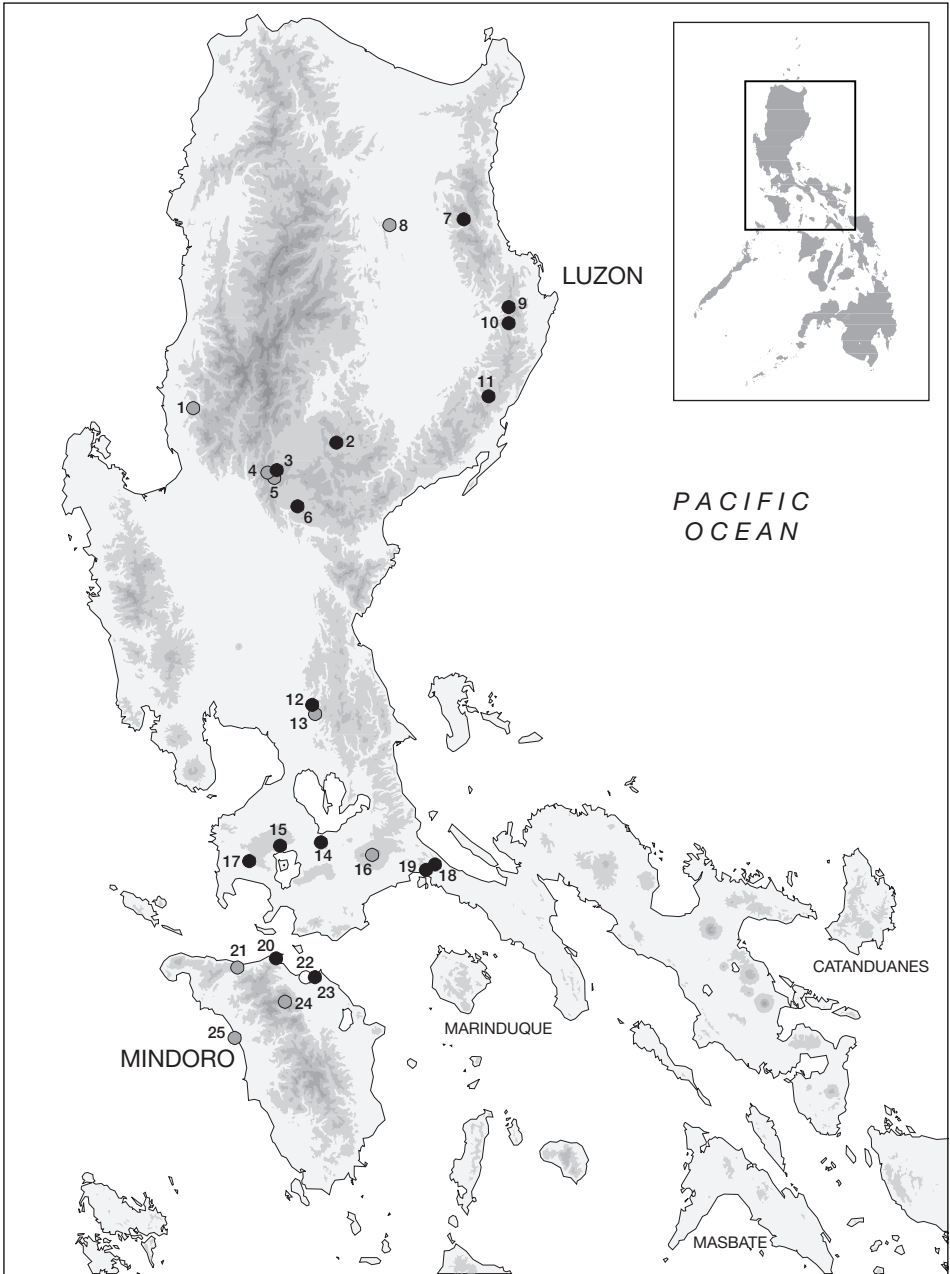
The continuing rapid reduction in the area of lowland forest throughout this species's range, coupled with more localised trapping pressure, is thought to be causing a rapid population decline, which qualifies it as Vulnerable.

DISTRIBUTION The Ashy Thrush is a monotypic species (see Remarks 1) endemic to the Philippines where it occurs on two islands, Luzon and Mindoro. Records (north to south) are from:

■ **PHILIPPINES** *Luzon (western)* **Liwan** at Kenama, Liwan, Kalinga-Apayao, 450 m, January 1971 (Dickinson *et al.* 1991; four specimens in DMNH); **Sablan**, 520–900 m, May 1959 (six specimens in FMNH, UPLB, YPM; also Amadon and duPont 1970); **Casibo** (Kasibu), Nueva Vizcaya, 450 m, April 1980 (female in DMNH); **Imugan**, Nueva Vizcaya, 1,560 m, December 1971 and December 1972 (six specimens in DMNH); **Santa Fe**, 300–450 m, May 1985 (six specimens in CM, NCSM); **Dalton Pass**, where 130 birds were ringed over seven years (McClure and Leelavit 1972), plus six specimens taken from April to November 1969 (Amadon and duPont 1970), and an additional five in July 1963, June 1966 and the Decembers of 1965, 1967 and 1969 (specimens in PNM); **Carranglan**, 1994 (S. Alonzo-Pasicolan verbally 1995); *(eastern)* **Los Dos Cuernos**, two juveniles found together in May 1991 (Altamirano 1993, Danielsen *et al.* 1994), with two adults together, 1,100 m, February 1995 (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1996); **Mt Palanan**, May 1987 (Jensen and Hornskov 1992); **Mt Dipalayag** at 1,100 m, April 1991 (Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995); **Diagopanay** at 500 m, March 1991 (Altamirano 1993, Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995); *(central)* **Ipo Dam**, Bulacan, where 10 specimens (in AMNH, DMNH, labelled 360 m) were obtained in December 1969 (Amadon and duPont 1970); **Angat Dam**, Bulacan, many times in recent years (Jensen and Hornskov 1992, Hornbuckle 1994, many observers *in litt.* 1996–1997); **Batulao**, Cavite (Dickinson *et al.* 1991); **Mt Makiling**, 1976 (Alviola 1977) and subsequently until at least November 1997 (Fisher mss, Greensmith 1990, Dickinson *et al.* 1991, N. J. Redman *in litt.* 1996, J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997, JCL; specimen in UPLB); **Mt Banahaw**, 1976 (Miranda 1977); near **Malicboy**, February 1988 (Scharringa 1988); **Quezon National Park**, March 1983 (Clarke 1983), February 1984 (Gibbs 1984), June 1987 (Jensen and Hornskov 1992), March 1990 (Greensmith 1990), 1993 (N. Bostock verbally 1993) and February 1997 (B. Gee *in litt.* 1997); **Tagaytay**, April 1994 (J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997, specimen in UPLB);

Mindoro **Abra de Ilog** at Cabacao, Bongahan, 90 m, May 1979 (female in DMNH); **Puerto Galera** at Mt Alinbayan, March 1991 (Gonzalez 1993, J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997); **Balete**, on the Baco River, near Mt Halcon, April 1891 (Dickinson *et al.* 1991) and May 1905 (McGregor 1905c; male in FMNH; see Remarks 2); **Tarugin**, Naujan, Mt Halcon, 360 m, March 1972 (two males in DMNH); **Tilago**, Santa Cruz, 150 m, June 1966 (two specimens in AMNH); **San Vicente**, in the watershed of Tauga River below Mt Hinundunang, Roxas, August 1991 (Dutson *et al.* 1992, Evans *et al.* 1993a).

POPULATION The species is considered to be uncommon (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), and records of it were scarce in the Sierra Madre mountains, with one seen once at Diagopanay, two seen and one netted at Dipalayag, and two juveniles found together at Los Dos Cuernos



The distribution of Ashy Thrush *Zosterops cinerea* (sequence not as in text): (1) Sablan; (2) Casibo; (3) Santa Fe; (4) Imugan; (5) Dalton Pass; (6) Carranglan; (7) Los Dos Cuernos; (8) Liwan; (9) Mt Palanan; (10) Mt Dipalayag; (11) Diagopanan; (12) Angat Dam; (13) Ipo Dam; (14) Mt Makiling National Park; (15) Tagaytay; (16) Mt Banahaw; (17) Batulao; (18) Quezon National Park; (19) Malicboy; (20) Puerto Galera; (21) Abra de Ilog; (22) Balete; (23) San Vicente; (24) Tarugin; (25) Tilago.

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

(Altamirano 1993, Danielsen *et al.* 1994). However, owing to its secretive behaviour the species is likely to be more abundant than other evidence suggests (Danielsen *et al.* 1994, P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1996); indeed, the ringing of 130 over a seven-year period up to 1970 (McClure and Leelavit 1972) suggests that it was recently fairly common (Collar *et al.* 1994); now that its voice has been taped (see Dickinson *et al.* 1991), and given that it has been found in secondary growth on both Luzon and Mindoro (see Habitat), it may conceivably prove to be a relatively common species.

ECOLOGY Habitat The Ashy Ground-thrush is a bird of the forest floor in secondary growth, selectively logged and primary forests, from 400 to 1,100 m in the Sierra Madre but apparently (judging from certain sites under Distribution) much lower elsewhere in its range (Dickinson *et al.* 1991, Altamirano 1993, Gonzalez 1993, Danielsen *et al.* 1994, Poulsen 1995). In Quezon National Park the species has been recorded in forest with jagged limestone outcrops (Poulsen 1995). The bird at Tagaytay was in one of a few remnant ridge-top forest patches (each no more than 50 ha) by a heavily disturbed recreation area, while those at Puerto Galera and Mt Makiling were in secondary growth (J. C. T. Gonzalez verbally 1997); the species has also been recorded at the latter site in mossy forest (Fisher mss) and in forest with a relatively open understorey dominated by rattans (J. C. Lowen verbally 1997).

Food Four specimens (in NCSM) are labelled as containing insects (two), insects and “balete” (one), and “balete” (one), “balete” being fig. Large rainforest thrushes are commonly specialists on leaf-litter and topsoil invertebrates in the darker, damper, bush-free areas of the forest.

Breeding A male in UPLB collected at Mt Makiling in February had enlarged testes. A full-grown juvenile was collected in Luzon in early October (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). Two juveniles were noted in Los Dos Cuernos in May 1991. An immature female was obtained in December (Amadon and duPont 1970).

Migration The capture of 130 birds at Dalton Pass suggested “post-breeding dispersal” to Dickinson *et al.* (1991), although another construction might be that some regular movements occur between the Sierra Madre and Cordillera Central in response to differences in rainy season (Poulsen 1995).

THREATS The restriction of this species to lowland forested areas of Luzon and Mindoro exposes it to substantial loss of population through habitat destruction (Poulsen 1995). It may also suffer in the Sierra Madre from hunting with snares, as ground-haunting thrushes are easily caught in this way (Poulsen 1995). It appears that bird-catching activities at Dalton Pass may take a considerable toll of this species.

MEASURES TAKEN Only one site at which the species has been recorded is afforded legal protection as a CPPAP site (Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park on Luzon; see Appendix). The sites surveyed by Danielsen *et al.* (1994), for which see Distribution, all lie within this protected area. The species also occurs in Mt Makiling and Quezon National Parks, while Mt Banahaw is an FPE site. San Vicente on Mindoro has been targeted for improvement by the local DENR (Evans *et al.* 1993a); for Puerto Galera see equivalent section under Mindoro Bleeding-heart *Gallicolumba platanae*.

MEASURES PROPOSED Apart from the areas targeted for conservation above, the species is known from three “key sites” (Mt Los Dos Cuernos and Angat Watershed on Luzon; Mt Halcon on Mindoro; see Appendix). These deserve formal designation and protection under the NIPAS process. In conjunction, field surveys must be designed to establish the extent of migration by this species within Luzon, since fully migratory birds cannot be conserved at only one site; indeed, clarification of its year-round ecology is needed. A conservation strategy

for Luzon should take into account the requirements of several threatened species wholly or largely reliant on the island's forests (see equivalent section under Green Racquet-tail *Prioniturus luconensis*), identifying localities at which they are sympatric and prioritising them for protection. Some measures to restrict the impact of bird-catching at Dalton Pass could particularly help this species.

REMARKS (1) Hachisuka (1938) suggested that the closest relative of this species is Slaty-backed Thrush *Zoothera schistacea* of Tanimbar. (2) Hachisuka (1938) deduced that the elevation of Balete must be around 1,000 m, given the montane character of other species McGregor (1905c) had then collected, but there is no reason why a specimen might not be many hundreds of metres up- or downslope from the locality named on the label. Moreover, the narrative in McGregor (1905c) indicates that Balete was a camp established "in the virgin forest as near as possible to the base of Mount Halcon", and further that "we found it impossible to make a station on the mountain" owing to lack of porters. This all tends to suggest that Balete was in low-lying country up the Baco river.