

Title: Endemic birds in montane forests in Papua New Guinea: Human use and Conservation

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The use and appreciation of bird life is deeply woven into the culture of many societies. This subsistence-based evaluation of birds can take the form of hunted food, traded species or the form of economic development through bird-related eco-tourism. Birds, therefore, sit at an important nexus of biological and cultural diversity and can serve as indicator species that help us to understand the loss of both.

This study addresses the need for further understanding of the vulnerability of endemic montane species to anthropogenic impacts associated with hunting, trade, and the effects of climate change. The research begins by improving the contemporary understanding of trade of bird species in the central highlands and major cities including Port Moresby and Lae (large scale). This was then followed by case study sites (fine scale) to understand how rural forest communities hunt and trade wildlife and the social nuances that affect their choice and locality of hunting activities. The study then collates species identified from trade and hunting to conduct a vulnerability assessment of species most at risk from human use. The assessment may serve as a guide to conservation efforts in the central highlands. Finally, a rare endemic species, *Paradisornis rudolphi* (Blue Bird of Paradise) was selected from the vulnerability assessment to make predictions of its future distribution in relation to climate change.

This research applies an interdisciplinary approach that considers context of culture, society, and conservation. The findings are essential for conservation of the endemic montane species, food security, and supporting local management practices that will promote the persistence of rural livelihood and cultural diversity in Papua New Guinea.



A family at Ubaigubi, Lufa, Eastern Highlands Province.
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