

Occurrence and abundance of fruit bats in selected conservation areas of North Cotabato, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

A study on the occurrence and abundance of fruit bats (Pteropodidae) was done in two conservation areas in North Cotabato, Philippines: Portion of the Mt. Apo National Park ; Balabag, Kidapawan City and Cotabato Provincial Forest and Ecotourism Park (CPFEP), Amas, Kidapawan City. Seven species were recorded in CPFEP and six were noted in Balabag area identified from 449 individuals captured. Two species (*Eonycteris spelaea* and *Rousettus amplexicaudatus*) were unique to CPFEP while one (*Ptenochirus minor*) was found only in Balabag area. A total of eight species were recorded when accounting the species found in two areas in which, three are endemic to the country namely *Haplonycteris fischeri*, *Ptenochirus jagori*, and *P. minor*. Of these endemics, the first two were noted in CPFEP while all were found in Balabag area. More than half of the bats captured were *Cynopterus brachyotis* hence, considered as the most common species. Remarkable finding was the presence of *Megaerops wetmorei*, a threatened species, to have found in a new altitudinal record. Considering the importance of fruit bats in regenerating forest, urgent conservation measures are highly recommended.

Key words: Chiroptera, Diversity, *Megaerops wetmorei*, Pteropodidae, Reforested Area