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Anuran Species Richness and Endemism in Four Long-Term Ecological Research Sites in Mindanao, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Anurans or frogs and toads have high endemism in the Philippines but their presence is threatened due to continuous habitat loss. This study was conducted to determine the species richness and endemism of anurans in four Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) sites in Mindanao, namely: Mts. Apo, Kitanglad, Hamiguitan and Malindang. Twelve randomly selected 20mx20m plots inside the 1-hectare plot were surveyed. Forest floor, leaf litter, fern fronds, tree branches, leaves, trunks, soil, and holes were surveyed extensively for occurrence of anurans. Eighteen species of anurans were documented in four LTER sites with eight species (44%) endemic. Among the four LTER sites, Mt. Malindang had the highest species richness (n=11) with six endemic species while Mt. Apo showed the least richness (n=5). Both Mts. Kitanglad and Apo had the least number of endemic species (n=4). Five species such as the Mindanao endemic *Ansonia muelleri, Philautus acutirostris,* and *P. poecilius* and the Philippine endemic *Megophrys stejnegeri* and *Oreophryne anulata* are of vulnerable conservation status. Results indicate the need for strengthened conservation efforts on anurans and habitats in Mindanao LTER sites.

Key words: Frogs, Mt. Apo, Mt. Hamiguitan, Mt. Kitanglad, toads