Asian Journal of Conservation Biology, July 2020. Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 56-70 AJCB: FP0122
ISSN 2278-7666 ©TCRP Foundation 2020

Species Richness and Conservation Status of Cave Bats in Agusan Del Sur, Philippines

Ian Carlmichael J. Perez[1] and Olga M. Nuñeza[1,*]

[1]*Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science and Mathematics, MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Philippines*

**Corresponding Author's E-mail: olgamnuneza@yahoo.com*

(Received: November 27, 2019; Revised: February 24 , 2020; Accepted: April 05, 2020)

ABSTRACT

Cave bats are constantly threatened by human encroachment in caves. Species richness of cave bats and conservation issues in caves in Agusan del Sur, in particular, are still poorly known. In this study, conservation status and species richness of cave bats were determined using a combination of mist netting, abundance estimates, and key informant interview methods. Seven species of bats were recorded with low endemism of 29%. The most abundant species was *Hipposideros diadema* which was documented in three caves. Agpan cave was the most species-rich with four species of bats. All the documented bats have "Least Concern" status, however, *H. diadema, Ptenochirus jagori* and *Rousettus amplexicaudatus* appear to be locally threatened due to bat hunting pressure and human encroachment inside the caves. All caves were found to be moderately to highly disturbed. Thirteen signs of cave disturbances were recorded where vandalism, treasure hunting, and bird's nest collection showed high prevalence. Wilderness/Epheso Cave, Magdaguhong Cave, Agpan (Paraiso 2) Cave, and Sampyagit Cave were found to be the most impacted. Results indicate a need to strengthen conservation efforts and mitigate the identified local threats.

Key words: conservation, disturbances, endemism, hunting, threats.