

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

Mindoro Bleeding-heart
Gallicolumba platenae

Black-hooded Coucal
Centropus steerii



Right: Mindoro Bleeding-heart (© Sherry P Ramayla); left: Black-hooded Coucal painting (© Hilary Burn)



Haribon Foundation

Background

Mindoro Bleeding-heart is a ground-dwelling pigeon endemic to the island of Mindoro in the Philippines. In common with other Philippine bleeding-hearts, it has a distinctive 'blood' spot on the breast that contrasts markedly with otherwise pale underparts. The species remained locally common throughout much of the twentieth century. However, the rapid destruction of lowland forest has eradicated almost all suitable habitat, and since the 1980s, it has only been recorded from four tiny remnants of native forest. Of these localities, Mount Siburan IBA (effectively part of the Sablayan Penal Colony) constitutes the largest remaining tract of forest on the island and is consequently the focus of efforts to conserve the species. The area remains under considerable pressure from encroaching shifting cultivation and selective logging, whilst hunting for food and for the cagebird trade remains a serious additional threat.

The forests of Silburan are also the key site for another Critically Endangered Mindoro endemic, Black-hooded Coucal. This unobtrusive species favours dense tangled thickets within interior forest. Like the Mindoro Bleeding-heart, it was probably once widespread, but forest loss has left the species with an extremely small, severely fragmented population, which continues to decline.

Actions being implemented

1. An **IBA monitoring system** is in place for Mount Siburan with an organised monitoring team composed of local participants from a variety of different organisations, including the local Site Support Group, the Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm (SPPF), a local NGO (SASAMAKA) and various representative of the local government. Three IBA monitoring training sessions took place in late 2007 and 2008 and three IBA monitoring stations have been established, with the first monitoring taking place in June 2009. The training sessions also resulted in the official declaration of the Mindoro Bleeding-heart as a Flagship Species for Conservation of the SPPF.

2. Actions are underway to strengthen the Sablayan Forest Management Board (SFMB), the main function of which is to oversee the implementation of the **Sablayan Forest Management Plan**. Consultation meetings were held with SFMB members regarding assessments of Forest Management Plans (FMP) for the municipality and barangays in June and August 2008. The municipal FMP review was integrated in the Environment Sector Development Planning Workshop of Sablayan held in September 2009, a workshop designed to integrate the forest, coastal and urban ecosystems assessment and planning as an input to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of Sablayan. The local government have also conducted awareness-raising activities about the impacts of mining in the barangays.

3. An IEC (Information-Education-Communication) Plan is being developed for use in **environmental education**, awareness raising and local advocacy. A survey to generate baseline information on perceptions of the forest and its role and status was conducted for Barangay Malisbong in September 2008. Basic orientations on ecology and environmental law were provided for local people, and training in Community-Based Forest Management Policy was provided to the Community-based Forest Management Association and its members. Haribon has also coordinated with local stakeholders of Sablayan, particularly the Local Government Unit and SASAMAKA, to gather information and campaign against mining in Sablayan.
 Further actions in 2009 included a bird watching lecture to local students, elementary school orientations involving three schools in Sablayan, and the organisation of an anti-mining forum aimed at informing local stakeholder of how to veto proposed mining operations.

4. A **Sablayan Ecotourism Plan** is being developed in collaboration with the Municipal Environment Office and the Municipal Ecotourism Office. A workshop aimed at developing the plan took place in September 2009 and made significant steps towards its completion. In October 2008, 22 participants took part in training to become effective bird tour guides, and discussions have been held with the Ecotourism Office of Sablayan regarding the design of the Ecotourism Planning Workshop. Further training took place in April 2009 and November 2009, included the integration of monitoring using the IBA monitoring framework into the proposed bird ecotourism plan.

5. Efforts have been made to strengthen and consolidate the **Site Support Group's** actions aimed at eliminating logging activities and the accidental snaring of Mindoro Bleeding-heart. The actions of the group currently include annual tree planting, and patrolling and monitoring of the forests of Mount Siburan.



Bird tour guide training; part of the Sablayan Ecotourism Plan which is nearing completion (© Sherry P Ramayla).

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