

AVIFAUNA IN MADURUOYA NATIONAL PARK

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This study was restricted to forest birds in Maduruoya area, with the main objective of identifying existing variations between bird species that inhabit different habitat types in Maduruoya National Park.

Capture and release technique was used in this study employing 2.6 meters high, 6 meters long, 4 shelved, 36 mm eye sized black nylon mist nets. Each bird captured was banded with a coloured plastic ring on its tarsus for future identification. Morphological measurements such as length of beak, tarsus, wing and body weight were taken. Moulting pattern, colour of irides, tarsus and feet also observed. If there were recaptures these were also noted with respect to netting stations. Each net was given a number and date were recorded under this number for easy reference.

A constant plot of one hectare was used in all habitat types. On many occasions more than two plots were sampled from each habitat type to find out the diversity of avifauna.

The habitat types included grasslands, scrub, degraded forests, riparian forests, reservoir edges, homesteads and climax forests. The data were analysed using dendrograms and species lists.

The highest number of species was recorded in a riparian forest habitat at Kottagashandiya. The highest species count was in riparian forest, and it decreased in the following habitat order - scrub, homesteads and degraded forests, climax, reservoir edge with grassland showing the least. However scrub, homestead and degraded forest habitat types do not show significant difference in species richness.

White Browed Bulbul was the most abundant bird species in the scrub degraded forests, homesteads, reservoir edge and riparian forest habitats while Shama and Orange Breasted Blue Flycatcher were the most abundant species in the climax forests.