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This study catalogues the bird species and their ecology along two footpaths in the Ilukkumura region of the knuckles Range to develop tools for conservation, field study and educational recreation by creating nature trails. Nine habitats were surveyed between January and April 1988; three natural forests, a small water body, riverine forest, patina, scrubland, home gardens and paddy fields. Ten lists were compiled of the first twenty species encountered in each habitat. Vegetation was examined for species composition and structure.

One hundred and twenty nine species were evenly distributed through nine habitats. Fifteen endemic species were recorded. 70% of species spent time in closed canopy forest habitats. Each habitat had some species unique to it. Seventy plant species were used by

birds. Specialist habitat user fed off climax species such as *Mangifera*, *Ficus* and *Palaquium* spp. and animals. Generalists fed on a combination of climax vegetation and pioneer species such as *Albizzia odoratissima*, *Cipadessa baccifera* and *Lantana camara*. Insectivorous birds predominated. Over half of these fed on insects that live on or within plants.

Birds were most easily observed in habitats with low structure, such as grasslands,, disturbed forests and scrublands. However, new species were discovered more frequently in the forests which also harboured the rarest and most endangered of the endemic species.

The mosaic of habitats found in the Knuckles Range are richer in avifauna than previous studies have recorded. Conservation of closed canopy forests with climax forest species is essential for preservation of rarer species especially endangered endemics.