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Nest Site Selection of Sri Lanka Yellow-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus penicillatus*) in Horton Plains National Park

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The Sri Lanka Yellow-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus penicillatus*) is a member of the Family Pycnonotidae of Order Passeriformes. It is an endemic bird, assessed under IUCN global conservation status of Near Threatened (NT) category, and national conservation status of Vulnerable (VU) category in National Red List. Their nest is more substantially built than the other bulbul nests. This research was conducted from September 2015 to June 2017 in the Horton Plains National Park (HPNP) situated in the Central highlands. The aim of this study is to determine nest site selection of *P.penicillatus.* Three habitats were selected within HPNP as Cloud Forest, Cloud Forest Die-back and Human-induced habitat. Nests were located by following individuals and searching the vegetation. The location of the nests were marked by a GPS. Tree species, nest height, and diameter at breast height (DBH) were measured, after the birds left the nest. Vegetation structure was estimated by observing the surrounding vegetation. Nest concealment in three dimensional directions was measured by using a spherical densiometer. The distance from the nest tree to the adjacent tree, nearest road or walking path was measured. Disturbances affecting the nests were observed and recorded. In this study thirty eight (38) nests were observed. In the Cloud Forest habitat 29 nests were successful, two nests were disturbed at the final stage of construction and one nest was destroyed after completion. The nest which was recorded from the Cloud Forest Die-back habitat was successful. Two nests from the Human induced habitat were disturbed and three nests were destroyed. Furthermore, *P. penicillatus* preferred twelve plant species to construct their nests, including seven endemic tree species. *Berberis ceylanica* was the major nesting plant. They used to construct their nests at a height of 2.67 ±1.21m in trees of 4.43 ±3.04m. The relative height was 0.66 ±0.18 which means the nests were located near canopies. The DBH was 14.09±12.86 cm. Nest concealment was 37.11±25.80%.They highly preferred medium sized trees which were situated at densely packed habitats. They constructed their nests away from human disturbances. The present study reveals that Cloud Forest habitat as the most suitable habitat to construct the nests of *P. penicillatus*. It is important to warrant the protection Cloud Forest habitat and endemic tree species for the assurance of *P. penicillatus* for future generations.

Key words: Nest site selection, *Pycnonotus penicillatus,* Horton Plains National Park.

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