



DISTRIBUTION OF SRI LANKA YELLOW-EARED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus penicillatus*) IN TROPICAL MONTANE CLOUD FOREST - HORTON PLAINS NATIONAL PARK

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ABSTRACT

The distribution of Sri Lanka Yellow-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus penicillatus*) was studied at the Montane Cloud Forests of Horton Plains National Park, situated in the highland plateau of the Nuwara Eliya District at the eastern extremity of the Central Highlands from September 2015 to May 2016. It is an endemic, Near Threatened (NT) species that occurs in forests and adjacent gardens situated between 900-2000 m. Three main habitats in the Horton Plains were identified as Cloud Forest habitat, Cloud Forest Die-back habitat and Grassland habitat. Three 300m fixed line transects were marked in each of the habitats using a global positioning system device (GPS). Yellow-eared Bulbuls were recorded on three consecutive days each month while travelling along transects from 0530h to 1030h. Birds were observed through a 10x50 binocular. Microsoft Excel™ and Minitab 14™ were used to analyze the data. Maximum number of individuals (n=602) were recorded from the Cloud Forest habitat followed by 445 individuals at the Cloud Forest Die-back habitat. Yellow-eared Bulbul was not recorded from the Grassland. Highest number of 138 birds in the Cloud Forest habitat was recorded in October 2015 and the least number of 27 birds were recorded in May 2016. Highest number of 150 birds in the Cloud Forest Die-back habitat was recorded in February 2016 and the only one bird was recorded in March 2016. Relative abundance of the Yellow-eared Bulbul was 13.3% in the Cloud Forest habitat, and they were the third abundant species in that habitat. In the Cloud Forest Die-back habitat relative abundance of the species was 23.8%, and they were the second abundant species in that particular habitat. Findings of the present study revealed that the Cloud Forest is the preferred habitat of the Yellow eared Bulbul followed by the Cloud Forest Die-back habitat.

Keywords: Sri Lanka Yellow-eared Bulbul, Endemic Birds, Horton Plains National Park, Distribution, Tropical Montane Cloud Forest

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