



COMPARISON OF HERPETOFAUNAL DIVERSITY AMONG FOUR MAJOR ISLANDS OF BATANES PROVINCE, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES

Aurora V. Lacaste^{1*}, Leticia E. Afuang², and Juan Carlos T. Gonzalez²

¹Faculty of Education, University of the Philippines Open University, Los Baños, Laguna 4031 Philippines

²Animal Biology Division, Institute of Biological Sciences, University of the Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna 4031 Philippines

*Corresponding author: aurora.lacaste@upou.edu.ph

ABSTRACT – A comprehensive study of amphibians and reptiles (herpetofauna) using a variety of standard methods was completed at selected study sites on the islands of Itbayat, Batan, Sabtang, and Ivuhos in Batanes Province, Philippines. This paper reports a total of 19 species representing one frog (Family Rhacophoridae) and 18 species of reptiles for Batanes Group of Islands. Species richness is highest in both Batan and Sabtang (58%), followed by Itbayat (47%), and Ivuhos (32%). Endemicity is higher in Batan (26%) and Sabtang (21%) compared to Itbayat (11%) and Ivuhos (11%). In addition to the five Batanes reptilian endemics reported by previous workers, namely *Draco jareckii*, *Gekko porosus*, *Lepidodactylus balioburius*, *Trimeresurus mcgregori*, and *Lycodon alcalai*, we documented additional four new distributional records for the province. As a whole, isolation and relatively small cumulative area in Batanes group of islands are attributed to the limited representation of herpetofauna. However, its landscapes and habitat types serve as microhabitats to unique and geographically restricted species, making this group of islands an important area for herpetological endemism.

Keywords: Batanes Islands, herpetofaunal diversity, amphibians and reptiles, herpetological endemism



JOURNAL OF NATURE STUDIES
(formerly Nature's Bulletin)
ISSN: 1655-3179

To cite this paper: Lacaste, A., Afuang, L. and Gonzalez, J.C. 2015. Comparison of Herpetofaunal Diversity among Four Major Islands of Batanes Province, Northern Philippines. *Journal of Nature Studies*. 14 (1): 36-46