



**DISPARITY IN BIRD COMMUNITIES OF OIL PALM (*Elaeis guineensis*)
PLANTATION AND ADJACENT FOREST IN ABORLAN, PALAWAN:
IMPLICATIONS TO AVIFAUNAL CONSERVATION**

Alejandro A. Bernardo Jr^{1*}

¹ College of Arts and Sciences, Western Philippines University,
Aborlan, Palawan, Philippines

*Corresponding author: tagwati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT – Widespread plantation of oil palm replaced most of the forest bird habitats in Palawan. To compare the avifaunal communities thriving in an oil palm plantation and a forest, standard avifaunal transect walk surveys were conducted from August to November 2014 in selected oil palm plantation and its adjacent forest in Aborlan, Palawan. Bird communities were compared using attributes such as species richness, abundance, evenness, diversity index, feeding guilds and presence of endemic and conservation priority species. The study revealed that the bird community in oil palm plantation was depauperate as indicated by the low species richness, abundance and diversity index relative to the adjacent forest. The low similarity index between the bird communities highlights the disparity in bird assemblages. The number of species and individuals of frugivore, nectarivore, omnivore and insectivore birds were relatively fewer in oil palm plantation than in the forest. Moreover, the remarkably low species richness and abundance of endemic and the absence of high conservation priority birds in oil palm plantation further emphasized the threat of widespread oil palm cultivation to Palawan's avifaunal diversity. To improve the bird diversity at the landscape level, conservation and establishment of forest fragments within or near the oil palm plantations are highly recommended.

Keywords: Oil palm, avifaunal assemblage, forest, conservation



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