



## A REVIEW OF BIODIVERSITY-RELATED REPORTS IN THE CORDILLERA HIGHLANDS, NORTHERN LUZON, PHILIPPINES

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**ABSTRACT** – The Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) is not only considered as “Watershed Cradle” but likewise an “Ecological Zone” of Northern Luzon, Philippines having the Key Biodiversity Areas. Biological diversity is a precious asset for it provides supporting, regulating, provisioning, and cultural services unique to the Cordillera. However, is the richness of the Cordillera natural heritage adequately documented to reference the future generation? Therefore, this paper assesses the status of biodiversity-related studies in the region and how these data are being shared with the public. It highlights the strength of biology in biodiversity studies. We gathered biodiversity datasets from various sources such as libraries, research offices, universities, and internet search engines with open access. These materials were categorized to capture the three levels of organization: genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. The distribution of studies was also assessed based on study sites, and the year these were reported. Results show that the accessibility of these biodiversity data is deficient and only concentrated in Benguet Province. The majority of the biodiversity-related studies in Cordillera are unpublished, with only 54 out of 226 reviews (24%) reaching the global audience through international publication. Available resources were mostly focused on utilizing plants, followed by species diversity assessment on limited taxa. An ecosystem approach to the study of flora and fauna found in different habitats is wanting. Some of the proposed explanations for this dearth of information from a supposedly rich biodiversity area are the lack of taxonomic experts and field-based researchers, funding opportunities, publishability of taxonomic work, computer databases, inventories, and information networks for the collection and collation of information. By data sharing, we know what exists, what we are losing, and what we need to conserve.

*Keywords: Biodiversity, Cordillera, data sharing, datasets, Taxonomy*



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