

Corvidae

Corvidae, known as the crow family or corvids, display remarkable intelligence for animals of their size and are among the most intelligent birds; thus far studied. They are medium to large in size, with strong feet and bills, and undergo a single molt each year. Majority of the species are found in tropical South and Central America, Southern Asia, and Eurasia (BBC News, 2009).

Large Billed Crow

Local Name: 'Uwak' (Ilocano and Kankanaey); 'Buhaw' (Ibaloi)

Distribution: The Large Billed Crow is found in South East Asian countries including the Philippines. This bird is found in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: These birds prefer to live where food is abundant such as near residential, picnic areas, lowland forest, and pine forest.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, these birds fly in groups in search for food. They have sharp claws and beaks to hold and tear their food. They build their nest using twigs, sticks, pine needles, and other plant debris on top of tall trees like the Benguet pine.

Food: Large Billed Crows are euryphagic. They eat different kinds of insects, seeds, corn, small chicks, bread, rice, mice, rats, and many others.



Figure 9. Large Billed Crow (Tabangaoen Pine Forest, Balili, La Trinidad)

Cuculidae

The Cuculidae is a diverse family of medium-sized to large birds found in woodlands, forests, and jungles. Most are arboreal. Most birds under Cuculidae occur in the tropics and are considered as residents but some are highly migratory, breeding in temperate habitats. They are insectivorous (Boyd, 2007).

Philippine Cauca

Local Name: 'Chakok' (Ilocano) and 'Palagok' (Kankanaey) 'Sagok' (Ibaloi)

Distribution: Luzon

Habitat: Lives among tall grasses or clumps of bushes in fields, farms, or riverbanks.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, the Philippine Cauca are low fliers and are not good fliers. They just perch among tall grasses and shrubs then fly by gliding from nearby bushes or grassy areas. These birds hide in bushes and tall grasses. Their presence can be detected by their 'chakok' or 'gokgok' calls or sounds.

Food: Feeds on insects, such as grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, and caterpillars (Payne, 2016).



Figure 10. Philippine Cauca (Balili River Bank near BSU Organic Farm, Balili La Trinidad)

Scale-feathered Malkoha

Local Name: 'Siyet' (Ibaloi)

Distribution: Benguet, Mt. Province, Marinduque, Catanduanes, Laguna, and other provinces of Northern Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Lives in primary or secondary mossy forests or pine forests in Benguet.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, Scale-Feathered Malkohas have short flight either singly or in pairs silently searching for food under the pine



or remnants of mossy forests in Benguet. Mating for these birds occur during summer time.

Foods: These birds feed on different kinds of insects, cutworms, and small reptiles like lizards and snakes (Rabor, 1977).



Figure 11. Scale-Feathered Malkoha (Tabangaoen and Ampasit Pine Forest, La Trinidad)

Decaeidae

According to Cheke and Mann (2008), the Dicaeidae family is composed of all the genera Dicaeum and Prionochilus of flowerpeckers. Flowerpeckers are found in tropical forests of India to Australasia and the Solomon Islands, but the very high diversity of the species is found in Southeast Asia including the Philippines. Flowerpeckers eat various fruits, nectar, and insects.

Crimson-Breasted Flowerpecker

Distribution: Southeast Asia like Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Lowland dipterocarp forests and lowland montane forests.

Characteristics: The Crimson-Breasted Flowerpecker got its name from the crimson colored vertical line on its breast. As observed during the day, these birds forage in groups, sometimes joining other groups of foraging birds like Yellow-Bellied Sunbirds and Mountain White Eyes in calliandra plants. They breed at the end of the rainy season in Benguet. Young crimson birds were observed foraging in calliandra flowers during the month of December in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Food: Feeds on berries and nectars (Cheke & Mann, 2016); mostly observed sucking nectar of calliandra flowers in La Trinidad, Benguet.



Figure 12. Crimson-Breasted Flowerpecker (Caliandra stand at the back of the College of Forestry building)

Pygmy Flowerpecker

Local Name: 'Kuyotan' (Kankanaey) or 'Pipit' (Tagalog)

Distribution: Pygmy Flowerpeckers are found in many islands of Luzon to Mindanao, Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Pygmy Flowerpeckers live in second growth forests, lowlands and montane forests with flowering and fruiting shrubs and trees.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, Pygmy Flowerpeckers are very tiny noisy restless birds that forage in flowering trees. In BSU, it was observed that these birds are mixed either with the flocks of Elegant Tit, Yellow-bellied Sunbirds, or Crimson-breasted Flowerpeckers sucking nectar from calliandra.

Pygmy Flowerpecker young were observed in January in a calliandra stand at the back of the College of Forestry, Benguet State University.

Food: Feeds on fruits, pollen, nectars, insects, and spiders during sunrise and before sunset.



Figure 13. Pygmy Flowerpecker (Caliandra stand at the back of the College of Forestry building)



Estrildidae

Estrildidae is composed mostly of songbirds, small finchlike birds and are favorite pet or cage birds. Birds under Estrildidae have short, stout bills and legs. They feed on seeds, berries, and insects. The family includes mannikins and munias, fire finches, waxbills, negro, and parrot finches (BirdLife International, 2012_c).

Chestnut Munia

Local Name: ‘Bishing’ (Ibaloi); ‘Buding’ (Kankanaey); or ‘Maya’ (Tagalog)

Distribution: Bangladesh, Hawaii, and Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Found mostly in grasslands, rice fields and among patches of matured grasses in cultivated areas. The nest of Chesnut Munia is made of grasses built on bush or tall grasses.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, Chestnut Munias are small noisy birds flying in groups to search for food. These birds have red feathers and black heads and are also known as Black-headed Munia, ‘mayang pula’ or red maya. The Chesnut Munia was the former national bird of the Philippines but was later replaced by the Philippine Eagle.

The nest of Chesnut Munia is made of grasses built on bush or tall grasses.

Food: Feeds mainly on grains and seeds of many grasses in grasslands and cultivated areas.



Figure 14. Chestnut Munia (BSU Strawberry Farm, La Trinidad)

Scaly-Breasted Munia

Local Name: ‘Putik’ or ‘Pitit’ (Kankanaey)

Distribution: Found in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Southeast Asia including the Philippines

(IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Grasslands close to water and rice fields.

Characteristics: Scale-like markings are observed on the breast and the belly of these birds. Their backs are brown with a dark bill. These birds usually fly in group in grasslands and rice fields searching for food. These birds feed on rice grains; thus, serving as pests to rice growers. During nesting, both pairs construct their nests using dried grasses.

Food: Eats various grass seeds including rice grains, berries, and small insects.



Figure 15. Scaly-Breasted Munia (Balili River, La Trinidad, Benguet)

Hirundinidae

Swallows and martins belong to Hirundinidae, a songbird family, described as streamlined birds, noted for their strong and nimble flight. Birds under Hirundinidae have short beaks, small feet, and long pointed wings. These birds catch insects on their wings while flying (Sheldon, Whittingham, Moyle, Slikas, & Winkler, 2005).

Pacific Swallow

Local Name: ‘Pippingew’ (Ilocano)

Distribution: Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Open farms and fields, towns, and coastal areas.

Characteristics: As observed during the day, these birds hunt their food while flying and only perch on electric wires and sticks when tired. These birds



were seen eating and collecting mud at the BSU Strawberry Farm backfilled area. They use mud in building their shelters in ceilings of tall buildings and rock cliffs. Shelters made of mud were seen on the overhang ceilings of the Benguet Provincial Capitol in La Trinidad, Benguet.

Food: These birds are insectivores. They feed on different kinds of insects like moth, flies, mosquitoes etc.



Figure 16. Pacific Swallow (BSU Strawberry Farm, La Trinidad, Benguet)

Lanidae

The Lanidae family is composed of four genera closely related to the Bush-Shrike Family Malaconotidae. The family name, and that of the largest genus, Lanius, is derived from the Latin word for “butcher”, and some shrikes are also known as “butcher birds” because of their feeding habits. Shrikes feed on various insects, larvae, and small lizards (Yosef, 2008).

Black Headed/Long Tailed Shrike

Local Name: ‘Talal/Aladas, (Kankanaey), ‘Panal/Palal’ (Ilocano) or ‘Taratkamugot’ (Tagalog)

Distribution: South China, Sunda Island, Asia, including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: The Black Headed Shrikes prefer to inhabit grasslands and slightly cultivated areas with patches of trees.

Characteristics: These birds are usually observed perching on stick grasses, trees on farms, or patches of trees while looking around for food.

The mating season for Black Headed Shrikes starts from middle of February to June. Their nests are made of grasses and leaves built on shrubs, small trees, and tall grasses.

Food: Feeds on various insects like crickets, grasshoppers, locusts, beetles, and moths. They also feed on small lizards and earthworms.



Figure 17. Black Headed Shrike (Tabangaoen Pine Forest, Balili, La Trinidad)

Brown Shrike

Local Name: ‘Talal/Aladas’ (Kankanaey) and ‘Panal/Palal’ (Ilocano)

Distribution: Mongolia, Siberia, Myanmar, Northern and Southern Asia including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Found mainly in open fields and farms.

Characteristics: These shrikes are brown colored on their upper parts with black mask and have white broad brow. The under part is creamy with black streaks on both sides of the belly. The wings are brown. These birds were observed in BSU farms perching on sticks or peg wood looking over their surroundings for food.

The population of these birds was observed to increase during the month of September. During the nesting season, they build nests using dried grasses on trees or bushes.

Food: Feeds on insects like crickets, grasshopper, cockroaches, moths, beetles, small lizards, and other insects under Lepidoptera.



Figure 18. Brown Shrike (Strawberry Farm, La Trinidad)



Locustellidae

Locustellidae is a new family of small insectivorous songbirds (“warblers”), previously under Family Silviidae. Birds under the family are Grass Warblers, Grassbirds, and the Bradypterus “Bush Warblers”. The family name is sometimes given as Megaluridae, but the term Locustellidae is more widely used (IUCN, 2001).

Striated Grassbird

Distribution: Australia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Lives in grassy swamps, grasslands, cleared wood lands, pasturelands, and vegetation along creeks and rivers.

Characteristics: Striated Grassbirds are different from Tawny Grassbirds because as observed during the day, they expose themselves outside the vegetation and produce calling sounds while perching. Striated Grassbirds mate during summer time and use dry thin grasses to build their nests in between grasses similar to Tawny Grassbirds.

Food: Feeds on insects like grasshopper, crickets, moth, small beetles, and different kinds of larvae. They likewise feed on seeds and many other invertebrates.



Figure 19. Striated Grassbird (Balili Riverbank, La Trinidad)

Tawny Grassbird

Local Name: ‘Sulak’ (Kankanaey)

Distribution: Found in Australia, Philippines, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. In the Philippines, Tawny Grassbirds are found from Luzon to Mindanao (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Lives in grassy swamps, grasslands, and vegetation along creeks and rivers.

Characteristics: They are medium-sized birds,

endemic to where they are found and have long tails. As observed during the day, they are shy birds that tend to hide inside vegetation. They are birds that call most of the time while moving. According to Rabor, (1977) these Tawny Grassbirds mate during summer time and use dry, thin grasses to build their nests in between grasses.

Food: Feeds on insects like grasshoppers, crickets, moths, small beetles, and different kind of larvae. They likewise feed on seeds and many other invertebrates (Madge, 2016).



Figure 20. Tawny Grassbird (BFAR Experimental Station, Balili, La Trinidad)

Meropidae

The Meropidae family, made up of bee-eaters, are passerine birds containing three genera. Bee-eaters are characterized by their colored plumage, slender bodies, long, decurved bills, medium to long wings, short legs, and usually elongated central tail feathers. They predominantly eat flying insects like bees and wasps, which are caught in the air by flights from an open perch. Their stingers and venoms are removed by repeatedly hitting and rubbing the insects on a hard surface (Fry, 2016).

Blue-Tailed Bee-Eater

Distribution: Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines (IUCN, 2001).

Habitat: Mostly found in open fields, perching on electric wires in rice fields, agricultural areas, and parks.

Characteristics: Blue-Tailed Bee-Eaters perch on high wires in open areas to have a clear view of flying insects. As observed during the day, these birds fly and catch insects using their long beaks and upon catching their prey they immediately return back to the area where they usually perch. This routine is repeatedly done throughout the day. According to Birds International (2012) these birds breed in open rice fields and farms.

