

The Current Status of Bird Diversity in Yunnan Province

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(Received June 15, 1994; Revised February 28, 1995)

ABSTRACT

Yunnan is the richest province in bird species in China. Seven hundred and ninety-two species of birds were recorded in Yunnan before 1994, accounted for 63.6% of the records in China. Among them, one hundred and twenty-seven species were very rare, two hundred and eighty-eight species were rare, two hundred and forty-two species were common and thirty-five species were large in number. In China, Podargidae and Hemiprocidae were only recorded in Yunnan, Trogonidae, Bucerotidae, Eurylaimidae, Pittidae, Campephagidae, Irenidae, Dicruridae, Timaliinae, Dicaeidae and Nectariniidae mainly distributed in Yunnan, and one hundred and twelve species were only recorded from Yunnan. One hundred and thirty-six species belonged to the nation's prior protected wildlife. Their status in Yunnan were: five species extinct, seven species endangered, five species vulnerable, ninety-eight species rare and twenty-one species common. Twenty-five species were listed in 1988 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals. *Anser anser* and *A. indicus* were the province's prior protected birds. Thirty nature reserves have played an important role in protecting birds and their habitats, especially Xishuangbanna, Gaoligongshan, Ailaoshan and Wuliangshan. The public education about the protection of birds and their habitats has been made universal since 1982. It is important to protect their habitats both inside and outside nature reserves and recover of destroyed habitats. Illegal hunting and capturing must be prohibited, breeding of economic birds in captivity should be started, and the education concerning the protection of birds and their habitats must be continued.

Key words bird diversity, conservation, protected birds, status, Yunnan

1 Introduction

Yunnan Province, which is located in southwest of China (21°08' ~ 29°08'N, 97°31' ~ 106°12'E), is geographically the main part of Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. Its total area is about 383 000 square kilometers. About 94% of the total area are mountainous areas. It slopes downward from northwest to southeast. The highest point is Kagebo Peak of Meli Snow Mountain, at an elevation of 6740 m, in the northwest of Yunnan. The lowest point is 76.4 m above sea level in Yunjiang (Red River) outlet of southeast of Yunnan.

Yunnan Province is within the zone of monsoon climate in tropics and subtropics. The complex topography endows this Province with climate differences horizontally and vertically. The composite climate of frigid, temperate and torrid zones can be found here. Vegetation is mainly composed of tropical rain forest, monsoon forest, subtropical evergreen broad-leaved forest and subalpine coniferous forest. Tropical rain forest and monsoon forest are in southern part at low altitude and elevation. Subtropical evergreen broad-leaf forest scatters in the most of mountainous parts of the Province. Pine forest, shrubs or grassland begin to

grow where broadleaf used to after destruction. Subalpine coniferous forest is found in high mountain in northwestern part. The complex topography, climate and vegetation in Yunnan Province provide various ideal habitats for birds.

2 Species diversity and current status

Seven hundred and ninety-two species of birds, which were recorded in Yunnan before 1994, belonged to 19 orders, 68 families (4 subfamilies). Compared with other provinces (autonomous regions) in China, Yunnan is the richest province in birds. Table 1 showed the results of the comparison of bird species between Yunnan and its adjacent provinces.

Table 1 Illustrates bird species in China, Yunnan and its adjacent provinces

Regions	Orders	Families	Species	Percentage *	Resource
China	21	82	1244(2?)	100	Cheng Tso-hsin, 1994
Yunnan	19	69	792(4?)	63.6	Authors
Sichuan	19	59	571	45.9	Shi Bainan et al., 1984
Guizhou	17	51	403	32.4	Wu Zhikang et al., 1986
Guangxi	19	56	496	39.8	WAE, 1985
Xizang(Tibet)	19	57	473	38.0	CSEQXP, 1983

* Of total species in China

In China, Podargidae and Hemiprocnidae were only recorded in Yunnan, Trogonidae, Bucerotidae, Eurylaimidae, Pittidae, Campephagidae, Irenidae, Dicruridae, Timaliinae, Dicaeidae and Nectariniidae mainly distributed in Yunnan, and one hundred and twelve species were only recorded from Yunnan.

Based on the data from the field work and data from some publications, the status of seven hundred and ninety-two species in Yunnan can be roughly divided into very rare, rare, common and dominant species. Table 2 showed the results.

Table 2 The number of species and percentage of their different status

Status	Very rare	Rare	Common	Dominant
Number of species	127	288	342	35
Percentage (%)	16.04	36.36	43.18	4.42

3 The protected birds and their status

Among the seven hundred and ninety-two species of birds, eighteen species belonged to the nation's prior first-ranked protected birds, accounting for 49% of those in China. One hundred and eighteen species belonged to the second-ranked protected birds, accounting for 71% of total second-ranked protected birds in China. Twenty-five species were listed in 1988 IUCN Red List of Threaten Animals. The protected birds, their important levels in protection in China, status and distribution in Yunnan were listed in appendix.

Among the protected birds recorded in Yunnan, Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*), Painted Stork (*Ibis leucocephalus*), Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*), Black Ibis (*Pseudibis papillosa*) and Malaya Fish-Owl (*Ketupa ketupu*) were not found over past 50 years. It seemed that they were extinct in Yunnan. Seven species such as Spoonbill

(*Platalea leucorodia*), Black Vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) and Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) were common at the end of 1950s and the beginning of 1960s, but it has been very difficult to see them ever since then. They have become the endangered birds in Yunnan. Five species were vulnerable, accounting for 3.68% of total protected birds in Yunnan, ninety-eight species were rare, accounting for 72.06%, twenty-one species were common, accounting for 15.44%.

In addition to all these nation's prior protected birds, Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*) and Bar-headed Goose (*A. indicus*) were the province's prior protected birds because of their small population in Yunnan. *Crypsirina temnura*, *Brachypteryx hyperythra*, *Garrulax maesi*, *G. galbanus*, *G. lunulatus*, *G. formosus*, *Paradoxornis flavirostris*, *P. ruficeps*, *Sitta magna*, *S. formosa*, and *S. yunnanensis*, which were not listed as protected birds in China, were listed in 1988 IUCN Red List of Threaten Animals. Among them, *Crypsirina temnura* and *Garrulax formosus* were vulnerable, *Garrulax lunulatus* and *Paradoxornis flavirostris* were common, all others were rare.

4 Conservation and recommendations

The main reason for the reduction of bird diversity and the decreasing in number of many species was due to the destruction of their habitats. When forest was cut down and burnt, and wetlands were drained and polluted, many forest birds disappeared or their population decreased rapidly in Yunnan because of the loss of their habitats. Since 1980, 30 nature reserves have been reestablished in Yunnan, and they have played a very important role in protecting birds. Among them, Xishuangbanna, Gaoligongshan, Ailaoshan and Wuliangshan Nature Reserves are the most important reserves because of their large size and unique location (Table 3).

Table 3 The most important reserves in Yunnan Province

Reserves	Size* (hm ²)	Species		Protected birds		Literature
		Number	%**	Number	%***	
Xishuangbanna	241 776	427	53.9	79	58.1	Yang Yuangchang et al., 1987
Gaoligongshan	123 900	343	43.1	38	27.9	Author
Ailaoshan	50 360	323	40.8	13	9.6	Wei Tianhao et al., 1988
Wuliangshan	23 355	290	36.3	30	22.5	Author

* From FSPIYP, 1989; **: Of the total species in Yunnan Province; ***: Of the total protected birds in Yunnan Province

Yunnan is a province consisted of many minority nationalities. Most of them like hunting, which is another threat to birds. Hundreds and thousands of partridges, pheasants, ducks and doves were killed each year for their meat, beautiful plumage or down feather. Among thirty-two Galliformes birds in Yunnan, five species were very rare, seventeen species were rare, eight species were common and only two species were large in number. Among twenty-five Anseriformes birds, four species were very rare, nine species were rare, eight species were common and four species were large in number. Because of over-hunting, the population of many species, especially the economic species, were decreasing rapidly. From 1954 to 1963 purchasing of pheasant skins (main Ring-necked, Lady Amherst's and Silver Pheasant) in Yunnan was 32 867 yearly, which was much more than that from 1964 to

1984. From 1964 to 1984 the yearly average of purchasing of pheasant skins was 14 057. The decrease rate was 703 skins per year. Every year hundreds and thousands of traditional ornamental birds such as Red-breasted parakeet, Gray-headed parakeet, Hill Myna, White-vented Myna, Hwamei, Silver-eared Leiothrix, Red-billed Leiothrix, Rosefinchs also were captured and sold in markets.

Since 1982, "Love Birds Week" in every spring was nation-wide inaugurated. Every year from April 1 to April 7 it is the "Love Birds Week" in Yunnan Province. During this week the citizens were educated by posters, newspapers, radio and TV. Competitions of birds watching among middle-school students and competitions of the knowledge about protecting birds and their habitats among citizens were held from 1986 to 1988. Most people in cities and towns have come to understand the importance of protecting birds and their habitats. On November 8, 1988, the Chinese Wildlife Protection Law was adopted by National People's Congress. With that people began to know it was illegal to hunt and trade wildlife, but the illegal hunting and trading of wildlife still happened occasionally, especially in the remote countryside.

Most species occurred in thirty nature reserves. Some protected birds now can be found only in nature reserves. These reserves have taken an important role in protecting birds. However, their sizes were too small to protect all birds. So, the protection of bird habitats outside nature reserves and the recovery of their destructed habitats are also important. To breed economic birds in captivity should be started so that the hunting and capturing pressure in field can be decreased. The education concerning the protection of birds and their habitats must be continued also in order to protect birds.

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Appendix The distribution and status of protected birds in Yunnan Province

Names	ILP	Status	Distribution record
1 <i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>	2nd	Ex	Honghe
2 <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Lincang, Southern Yunnan
3 <i>Ibis leucocephalus</i>	2nd	Ex	Honghe
4 <i>Ciconia nigra</i>	1st	R	Diqing, Lijiang, Dali, Baoshan, Kunming, Qujing, Honghe
5 <i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	2nd	Ex	Honghe
6 <i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	2nd	Ex	Southwestern Yunnan
7 <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	2nd	E	Kunming, Qujing
8 <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	2nd	V	Diqing
9 <i>Aix galericulata</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Zhaotong, Qujing, Lincang, Chuxiong
10 <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Qujing, Yuxi, Baoshan, Dali, Wenshan, Xishuangbanna, Simao
11 <i>Aviceda jerdoni</i>	2nd	R	Lincang, Xishuangbanna
12 <i>A. leuphotes</i>	2nd	R	Honghe, Xishuangbanna
13 <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Honghe, Lincang, Baoshan, Lijiang, Xishuangbanna, Chuxiong
14 <i>Milvus migrans</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Baoshan, Lijiang, Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Dehong, Zhaotong
15 <i>Haliastur indus</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Gaoligongshan, Lijiang, Simao
16 <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Zhaotong, Lijiang, Honghe, Xishuangbanna
17 <i>A. badius</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Baoshan, Gaoligongshan
18 <i>A. trivirgatus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Qujing, Simao, Honghe, Baoshan, Gaoligongshan, Xishuangbanna
19 <i>A. nisus</i>	2nd	C	Xishuangbanna, Simao, Lincang, Nujiang, Kunming, Zhaotong
20 <i>A. virgatus</i>	2nd	C	All parts of Yunnan
21 <i>Buteo rufinus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming
22 <i>B. hemilasius</i>	2nd	R	Kunming
23 <i>B. buteo</i>	2nd	C	All parts of Yunnan
24 <i>B. lagopus</i>	2nd	R	Lijiang
25 <i>Butastur indicus</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Honghe
26 <i>B. liventer</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Simao
27 <i>Spizaetus nipalensis</i>	2nd	R	Lijiang, Weixi
28 <i>S. cirratus</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
29 <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	1st	R	Kunming, Baoshan, Diqing
30 <i>A. heliaca</i>	1st	R	Dehong
31 <i>A. rapax</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Yuxi, Lijiang, Honghe, Xishuangbanna
32 <i>A. fasciata</i>	2nd	R	Kunming
33 <i>A. pennata</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
34 <i>A. kienerii</i>	2nd	R	Dehong
35 <i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Baoshan, Gaoligongshan
36 <i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>	2nd	E	Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Simao
37 <i>Aegypius monachus</i>	2nd	E	Southern Yunnan
38 <i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	2nd	R	Gaoligongshan, Nushan, Zhaotong
39 <i>G. bengalensis</i>	1st	E	Xishuangbanna, Dehong
40 <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	1st	R	Northwestern Yunnan
41 <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Qujing, Yuxi, Zhaotong, Dali, Baoshan
42 <i>C. melanoleucos</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Honghe, Simao, Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Lincang
43 <i>C. aeruginosus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Yuxi
44 <i>C. spilonotus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Honghe, Xishuangbanna
45 <i>Spilornis cheela</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Baoshan, Lincang, Honghe, Xishuangbanna
46 <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	2nd	E	Honghe
47 <i>Microhierax caeruleus</i>	2nd	R	Dehong
48 <i>M. melanoleucos</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Honghe, Wenshan, Zhaotong

Appendix (Continued)

49	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Xishuangbanna
50	<i>F. subbuteo</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Baoshan, Dehong, Lijiang
51	<i>F. severus</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Simao, Xishuangbanna
52	<i>F. columbarius</i>	2nd	R	Dehong
53	<i>F. vespertinus</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
54	<i>F. naumanni</i>	2nd	R	Qujing, Western Yunnan
55	<i>F. tinnunculus</i>	2nd	C	All parts of Yunnan
56	<i>Tetrastes sewerzowii</i>	1st	R	Diqing
57	<i>Tetraogallus tibetanus</i>	2nd	R	Diqing
58	<i>Tetraophasis obscurus</i>	1st	R	Lijiang, Diqing
59	<i>Ithaginis cruentus</i>	2nd	R	Northwestern Yunnan
60	<i>Tragopan satyra</i>	1st	R	Gaoligongshan
61	<i>T. blythii</i>	1st	R	Gaoligongshan
62	<i>T. temminckii</i>	2nd	C	Baoshan, Nujiang, Lijiang, Diqing, Jingdong, Xiping
63	<i>Lophophorus sclateri</i>	1st	R	Gaoligongshan, Nushan
64	<i>L. thuyi</i>	1st	R	Zhongdian
65	<i>Crossoptilon crossoptilon</i>	2nd	R	Lijiang, Diqing
66	<i>Lophura leucomelana</i>	2nd	R	Nujiang
67	<i>L. nycthemera</i>	2nd	C	Dehong, Baoshan, Lincang, Simao, Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Wenshan, Zhaotong
68	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	2nd	C	Dehong, Lincang, Simao, Honghe, Xishuangbanna, Wenshan
69	<i>Pucrasia macrolopha</i>	2nd	R	Lijiang, Nujiang, Diqing
70	<i>Syrnaticus humiae</i>	1st	R	Dehong, Baoshan, Lincang, Simao, Chuxiong, Dali, Lijiang, Diqing
71	<i>S. reevesii</i>	1st	V	Zhaotong
72	<i>Chrysolophus amherstiae</i>	2nd	C	Most parts of Yunnan
73	<i>C. pictus</i>	2nd	R	Zhaotong
74	<i>Polyplectron bicalcaratum</i>	1st	R	Dehong, Xishuangbanna
75	<i>Pavo muticus</i>	1st	R	Dehong, Baoshan, Lincang, Dali, Chuxiong, Honghe, Xishuangbanna
76	<i>Grus grus</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Qujing, Honghe, Diqing, Xishuangbanna, Lijiang, Zhaotong
77	<i>G. nigricollis</i>	1st	R	Kunming, Diqing, Zhongdian, Lijiang, Zhaotong, Qujing
78	<i>G. japonensis</i>	1st	R	Zhaotong
79	<i>G. antigone</i>	1st	E	Xishuangbanna, Dehong, Gaoligongshan, Lincang, Zhongdian
80	<i>Porzana bicolor</i>	2nd	R	Lijiang, Yuxi
81	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>	2nd	V	Xishuangbanna
82	<i>Glareola lactea</i>	2nd	V	Honghe, Xishuangbanna, Dehong
83	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Dehong
84	<i>Treron apicauda</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Dehong
85	<i>T. sphenura</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Yuxi, Simao, Honghe, Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Dehong, Baoshan, Dali, Nujiang, Lijiang, Zhaotong
86	<i>T. phoenicoptera</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Dehong, Simao
87	<i>T. curvirostra</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Simao, Yuxi, Baoshan
88	<i>T. pompadora</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
89	<i>Ducula aenea</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Simao
90	<i>D. badia</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Simao, Lincang, Dehong
91	<i>Macropygia unchall</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Dehong, Wenshan
92	<i>M. ruficeps</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
93	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	2nd	R	Yuxi, Simao, Lincang, Baoshan, Dehong, Honghe, Xishuangbanna
94	<i>P. derbiana</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Simao, Lincang, Baoshan, Lijiang, Diqing
95	<i>P. himalayana</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Yuxi, Simao, Lincang, Baoshan, Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Dali, Nujiang
96	<i>Loriculus vernalis</i>	2nd	V	Simao
97	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	2nd	C	Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Simao, Lincang, Honghe, Wenshan

Appendix (Continued)

98	<i>C. toulou</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Yuxi, Simao, Baoshan, Honghe, Xishuangbanna, Wenshan
99	<i>Tyto alba</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Simao, Xishuangbanna
100	<i>T. capensis</i>	2nd	C	Kunming, Simao, Xishuangbanna, Honghe
101	<i>Phodilus badius</i>	2nd	E	Xishuangbanna
102	<i>Otus spilocephalus</i>	2nd	R	Simao, Lincang
103	<i>O. scops</i>	2nd	R	Yuxi, Honghe, Dali, Nujiang, Xishuangbanna
104	<i>O. bakkamoena</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Simao, Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Dehong
105	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>	2nd	R	Honghe
106	<i>B. bubo</i>	2nd	C	All parts of Yunnan
107	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Honghe, Xishuangbanna, Baoshan
108	<i>K. flavipes</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Zhaotong
109	<i>K. ketupu</i>	2nd	Ex	unknown
110	<i>Glaucidium brodiei</i>	2nd	C	Simao, Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Yuxi, Honghe, Dali, Chuxiong, Nujiang
111	<i>G. cuculoides</i>	2nd	C	All parts of Yunnan
112	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Simao, Lincang, Baoshan
113	<i>Strix leptogrammica</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Dehong, Baoshan
114	<i>S. aluco</i>	2nd	R	Kunming, Baoshan, Diqing, Lijiang, Zhaotong
115	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	2nd	R	Simao, Xishuangbanna, Baoshan
116	<i>Hemiprocne longipennis</i>	2nd	R	Lincang, Xishuangbanna
117	<i>Harpactes oreskios</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Lincang, Baoshan
118	<i>Alcedo meninting</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
119	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
120	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>	2nd	C	Xishuangbanna, Simao, Yuxi, Honghe, Dehong, Lincang, Nujiang
121	<i>M. orientalis</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Simao, Xishuangbanna, Chuxiong, Yuxi
122	<i>Ptilolaemus tickelli</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
123	<i>Aceros nipalensis</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Honghe
124	<i>Anthraceroceros coronatus</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Lincang, Simao, Xishuangbanna
125	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>	2nd	R	Dehong, Lincang, Xishuangbanna
126	<i>Dryocopus javensis</i>	2nd	R	Simao, Lijiang, Xishuangbanna, Nujiang
127	<i>Serilophus lunatus</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Lincang
128	<i>Psarisomus dalhousiae</i>	2nd	C	Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Lincang, Dehong, Wenshan, Simao
129	<i>Pitta nipalensis</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Honghe
130	<i>P. soror</i>	2nd	R	Honghe
131	<i>P. cyanea</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
132	<i>P. nympha</i>	2nd	R	Wenshan
133	<i>P. brachyura moluccensis</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna
134	<i>P. sordida</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Honghe
135	<i>P. oatesi</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna, Simao, Dehong, Honghe, Wenshan
136	<i>P. phayrei</i>	2nd	R	Xishuangbanna

ILP: Important Levels in Protection in China: 1st: First-ranked protected species in China; 2nd: Second-ranked protected species in China; Ex (Extinct); Species were only recorded before 1926 and not found since then; E (Endangered); Species had a small population before 1965 and almost were not found since then; V (Vulnerable); Species only have a few records since 1970, or species have a very narrow range and their habitats were destructed seriously; R (Rare); Species have a narrow range, and/or definitely have a small population in Yunnan and found many times in recent years; C (Common); Species have a wide range, and have a large population and were not difficult to be found in recent years.