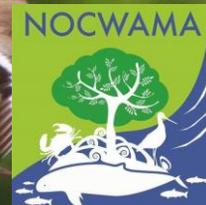


**WORLD
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**UNIFYING
OUR VOICES
FOR BIRD
CONSERVATION**

**Waterbird Identification, Monitoring
and Guiding Training for Local
Communities within Negros
Occidental Coastal Wetlands
Conservation Area**





World Migratory Bird Day 2018 Philippines

Waterbirds Identification, Monitoring and Guiding Training for Local Communities within Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area

Philip Godfrey Jakosalem, Andrew Ross Reintar, Gerrie Mae Flores &
Lisa J. Paguntalan



Acknowledgement



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We would like to thank the Department Environment and Natural Resources for the support particularly Rosie Pablico Ramsar Site Manager, Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Bago City Joan Nathaniel Gerangaya, Department of Tourism Mr. Tim Ticar, San Enrique Tourism Office Dennis Lecaniel and Jose Quitco of the Municipality of San Enrique, Barangay Captain Rafael Quitco, barangay council and staff.

Lastly, the East Asian Australasian Flyway World Migratory Bird Day grant and Department of Tourism Western Visayas for the support provided during the said event.



Introduction

1.1 Project objectives

The Philippine government and conservation organizations identified and protect several wetlands with international importance (Haribon Foundation 1989; PAWB 1993). This resulted to the declaration of four Ramsar sites and two East Asian-Australasian Flyway site network. The wetlands in the Philippines had undergone significant changes over the past century. With a wide spread conversion of wetlands into reclamation and fishponds threatened the crucial staging sites for migratory birds. Preventing and reversing these declines requires accurate information on the importance of wetlands potential for waterbirds conservation. Thus, this project will provide (1.) training to local communities within the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area on waterbird identification and monitoring and guiding. Birdwatching is slowly gaining popularity within the island. (2) bring out elementary students within Eusebio R. Quitco Elementary School Tibsoc, San Enrique on birdwatching and guided by the trained guides within the community.



Fig 1. Group photo with participants, organizers and guest.

1.2 Training participants/organizers

The training workshop attracted participants within the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area (NOCWCA). It was initially anticipated that only thirty participants would attend the workshop, particularly NOCWCA partner local government units and communities. However, there's a need to conduct follow-up training to cater the needs of line government agencies interested in the training. Local bird enthusiast, researchers, conservation organization are interested for the training.

In partnership with the Negros Occidental Tourism Division, the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area Management Alliance, Department of Environment and Natural

Introduction

1.2 Training participants/organizers

Resources, Local Government of San Enrique, Provincial Environment Management Office and Barangay Tibsoc. The training workshop was East Asian Australasian Flyway with the support from the Department of Tourism Region 6 and the Provincial Government of Negros Occidental. The training was conducted in Eusebio R. Quitco Elementary School Tibsoc, San Enrique within the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area.



Fig 2. Ramsar Site Manager Rosie Pablico talk about the importance of Ramsar Site and about the NOCWCA.



Fig 3. Tibsoc, San Enrique Barangay Captain (Community leader) welcome the participant and the team.



Fig 4. DOT Western Visayas representative Mr. Tim Ticar on his inspirational message to the participants.



Fig 5. Engr. Joan Nathaniel Gerangaya talk about the first WMBD celebration in the province.

1.3 Workshop programme

The programme for the workshop is given in Annex I.

Introduction

1.3.1 Module I: Introductory presentations and participants experiences

This session, was all about the introduction with the different participants and instructors and their experience in wetlands and waterbird identification and monitoring. The lecture proper about the waterbirds and wetlands in Negros Island. Each participant of the workshop and facilitators were given a time to talk about their expectation and what they will be gaining after the workshop. All the participants were also given a chance to talk about their experience about wetlands monitoring and waterbird counting general.

In this module we introduce the participants on the importance, values of wetlands and its different habitats and different waterbird flyway. This is also the part were the participants learned about different waterbird families and used of equipment for monitoring. Lastly, we send out the participants to practice the used of binoculars, spotting scopes and field guides as well as initial listings of waterbirds seen to familiarizes the features in its species.



Fig 6. Lead facilitator Godfrey Jakosalem give the overview of the training



Fig 7. Introduction of the participants from Provincial Environment Management Office



Fig 8. Introduction of the participants from Kabankalan City



Fig 9. Introduction of the participants from Victorias City

Methods and Techniques

1.3.2 Module II: Technical Session

The topics discussed are: Identifying shorebirds and bird silhouette; discussing about basic identification, forms and morphology of waterbirds. In this module the participants we introduce to the process in using equipment, identifying waterbirds and the different parts of the waterbirds. The participants were also given a short examination on identification by showing birds and identify each species showed for the first time where we can test weather whom among the participants ae in different levels in identifying waterbirds. The results were impressive in which some participants can identify the more common species they encountered in each of their wetlands using some common names and additional points if the can family or grouping of the species.

The flowing day early morning on time to the low tide we brought the participants to the wetlands for proper identification session and identifying bird on silhouette. We group the participants into 5 different group with trainings divided according to each identification stages. Each group are required to list 10 species of waterbirds and how each species differs on each other. After the field session each group are required to discuss each species listed in the field and what is the difficulties in identifying the different families and individual's species. Based on there list at list four different families identified including the endemic Philippine Duck.



Fig 10. Training proper and overview of the activates



Fig 11. The participants was introduce how to use binoculars and scope

•Size



Fig 12. Overview on bird identification

Details of bill shape and relative size

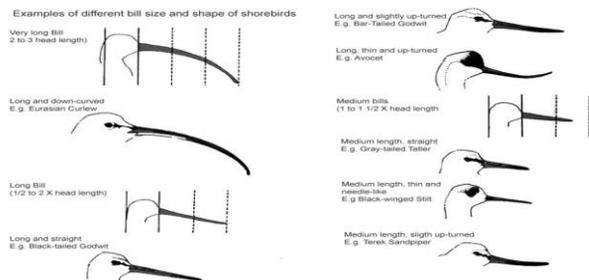


Fig 13. Bird identification on different species

Methods and Techniques

1.3.3 Module III: Techniques in counting

The module was all about identification, basic survey methods and techniques in counting.

- Follow up session on identification of waterbirds and morphology of each species
- Things you need to prepare weeks before counting waterbirds following Shorebird Studies Manual by Howes and Bakewell 1989.
 - Check the list of waterbirds in your area, familiarize with the general features of the waterbirds you are expecting to see
 - Familiarize with the habits and behavior
 - Make sure you know how to use your equipment
 - Ask local experts.

- Things you need in counting and monitoring waterbirds

Binoculars (10 x 42 or higher specs)

Spotting scope

Notebook and pen/pencil

Field guide

Clicker

Hat/umbrella

Water and trail food

- This time we now focus on the basic in counting waterbirds
 - Write the date and time, location (include specific locality), habitat type, observer/s, GPS readings
 - Be conservative in counting (use your common sense)
 - Practice in identifying waterbirds
- We introduce some important techniques in counting waterbirds
 - Initial count colony sizes count using different natural markers or divide the colony in blocks
 - Try to determine how many species and its proportions



Fig 14. Andrew Ross Reintar talks about different similar or look a like species



Fig 15. Discussion about parts and how to used binoculars

Field Guides

Specialist Field Guides

- cover shorebirds and waterbirds only
- significant detail on each species

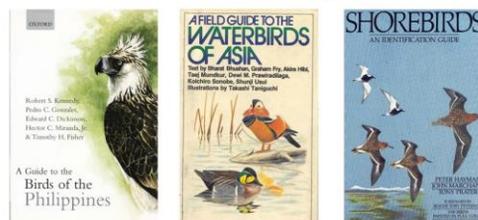


Fig 16. Discussion about different field guide in the country for waterbirds

Methods and Techniques

1.3.3 Module III: Techniques in counting

- The participants now thought to the proper methods in counting waterbirds. We kind of innovate and add some techniques to be more specific and organized. There are two main methods used direct count.
 - Direct count is counting individuals within the colony.
 - This gives us a good estimate or actual population of the waterbird colony and we can provide estimate of species populations.
- Other important practices in counting bats were also introduces to the trainees
 - Finding vantage points
 - Counting is made easier when using clickers
 - Use binoculars and spotting scopes
 - Move slowly and be quit
 - Do not move to close if necessary
 - Get the sun behind you
 - Always note the flying fox behavior
- Using of binoculars/Spotting Scopes. The participants were though how to use a binoculars and spotting scopes and how to care of the equipment's. Most people tent to use it easily but how to use it properly is really important. We discuss the different functions and the most import how to calibrate the binoculars. Lastly how to care and clean its equipment.
- Using data sheets. A standardized data sheets were provided to the participants and fill-up all the information for the Asian Waterbird Census
- For *Direct Count* field techniques, we have several steps used to have more easily and scientifically counting the flying foxes. Direct counts has a different methods in conducting it;
 - *Quick total count (QTC)* this will be conducted first before counting the individuals. This is the quickly estimate the population of the roost before doing actual counting. In cases like the waterbird are highly disturbed.



Fig 17. One of the technical topics on different survey methods used for waterbird study



Fig 18. First bird practical exercise with the trainees on bird identification and used of equipment



Fig 19. Bird identification and listing of bird species observed by its family

Methods and Techniques

1.3.3 Module III: Techniques in counting

- Total Species Count (TSC) or All Species Count (ASC) this will be conducted after quick total count. This is the actual counting of individuals within the colony following different markers or subdivide the colony onto block for easier count
- Single Species Count SSC (do this last) this method will count single species which starts with the less common species first and finish with the most common species or vice versa.
- Check final total against Quick total count (QTC). This point the results of the QTC will be compared to the results of TSC and SSC. For example if the QTC has a total of 3000 individual flying foxes with in the colony. The results of the TSC are 2975 waterbirds composed of Godwits 10% Knots 40% and Stints 50% will have a consensus that we are estimating or counting the exact or true estimate of the population in the colony. This is also same with the SSC or even TSC count. If the group cannot get a consensus like the QTC 5000, SSC 6500 and TSC 7200 then there's a problem the way it counted. If the results is like then counting all over again is recommended.
- Other information was also provided to the participants e.g. exact geographic location (GPS readings) (latitude, longitude) of the wetlands; the general substrate; the number of usual huge colonies; amount of human disturbance present; proximity to human residential areas; anecdotal information about hunting pressure; comments (e.g. sex ratios, ages, marks)
- Lastly we discussed which can be standardized and not to be standardizing among the different methods discussed.
- After discussing the methods we send the participants out to do counting using the different techniques they learned. And a facilitated workshop was conducted after exercise to get the feedback of the participant and how to improve the techniques.



Fig 20. One of the technical topics on different survey methods used for waterbird study



Fig 21. Bird identification and introduction to counting birds in the field



Fig 22. Waterbird counting by group

Methods and Techniques

1.3.3 Module III: Techniques in counting

- After the field outing we continue build on the participants identification process by showing different similar species potential for misidentification. We show different similar species from different families of waterbirds.
- To test if the participants can identify waterbirds, another examination about waterbirds identification with their proper species name and families.
- Another examination also conducted to test the ability of the participants to count waterbirds.
- The participants were also introduced about the basic of birdwatching and how to guide birdwatchers properly and how to locate birds in a birdwatcher's way.



Fig 23. Group reporting on the bird identification and counting exercise

Group Presentation

After several bird count and identification data of waterbird count the participant were ask to present the results of the exercises as a group and the difficulties in count or using the techniques. Most of the participant particularly the first timer in counting waterbirds has the difficulties in identifying the waterbirds. However constant practice in identifying and counting will be important it they really want to pursue higher level of monitoring waterbirds. Aside from that in terms of using the methods introduce are not really matters for monitoring population. Most of the techniques introduces were easy to used and understandable. One of the major concerns is the equipment to be used. Most of them has no binoculars or even spotting scopes.



Fig 24. Group work on the bird counting exercise



Fig 25. Group report on the field practicum on bird counting and used of techniques

Discussions

Way Forward

The session dealt with the integration of monitoring to each of the respected sites. The trainees were asked to identified different waterbirds sites in their different respected areas with easy access in order to practice in identification and potential for bird tourism. Also discuss to have ways to implement a monthly bird count with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources within the Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area. Furthermore, additional orientation was also discussed particularly to the technical staff of Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the creation of the waterbird monitoring team within the region. This training was intended to the local communities within the Ramsar/ EAFFN site however we extended it to some local government units and environment offices within the wetland.

Participation by Local Trainers in Workshop

The other purpose of the training is to develop capacity of potential trainers within the local and regional level. Especially we are in different island and different dialects. It's also a ways of training individuals with potential as a future facilitator in conducting waterbird monitoring.



Fig 26. On the way to the counting area



Fig 27. Bird identification process practice



Fig 28. Bird identification exercise



Fig 29. Bird identification exercise

Discussions

Future Training

The other purpose of the training is to develop capacity of potential trainers within the local and regional level. Especially we are in different island and different dialects. It's also a ways of training individuals with potential as a future facilitator in conducting waterbird monitoring.

Conclusion

The waterbird training workshop was very successful despite the short notice of invitations. We were expected to have 25 participants from local communities, local government units and DENR. All participants significantly increased their level of knowledge and skills in monitoring waterbirds and felt much more confident as they are potential part of the waterbird monitoring team. Each participant has designed two- and half-day learning programs on training topics identified as needed in monitoring. All participants have been sent a copy of the different presentation and a few laminated field guides.



Fig 30. Question and answer on identification and courting



Fig 31. Bird identification exam



Fig 32. Distribution of certification to the participants



Fig 32. She is talking about her experience on the training

Photos



Photos



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The Convention of Migratory Species (CMS) an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation migratory species. The Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention unanimously as second week of October as World Migratory Bird Day.

In line with the celebration a birdwatching and wetlands appreciation was conducted in Negros Occidental Coastal Wetland Conservation Area. The event was participate by local communities and different local organizations within Tibsoc San Juan Wetlands. The activity is lead by the Philippines Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, Negros Bird Conservation Society, Barangay Tibsoc, San Enrique, students from Eusebio R. Quitco Elementary School Tibsoc and Pontevedra.



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Annex I

SCHEDULE	ACTIVITY	RESOURCE PERSON/FACILITATOR
Day 1	Final preparations and briefing	
	Training Proper	
09:00AM	Registration of participants	NTOD
10:00AM	Opening Program	NOTD
	National Anthem	NTOD
	Invocation Prayer	NOTD
	Introduction of participants	NTOD
	Welcome Remarks (by guests)	NTOD / NOCWCA
	Expectation setting/House rules/groups	PBCFI
	Group Photo	PBCFI
	Introduction to the training-workshop	PBCFI
11:30AM – 1:30PM	Lunch and afternoon break	
	Module 1: Introduction	
01:30PM – 02:15PM	About wetlands, Migration and flyway concept/ Different Habitat	Godo/PBCFI
02:15PM – 02:45PM	Guide to waterbird/shorebird families	Andrew/PBCFI
02:45PM – 03:30PM	Equipment and field testing/field guide	Mimi/PBCFI
03:30PM – 03:45PM	Break	
	Module 2: Bird Topography	
03:45PM – 04:15PM	Identifying shorebirds and bird silhouette	Andrew/PBCFI
04:15PM – 05:30PM	Bird Morphology and plumage patterns /Field notes (note taking)	Godo/PBCFI
06:30PM – 07:30PM	Dinner	
Day 2	Module 2: Bird Topography	
06:00AM – 07:00AM	Breakfast	
08:00AM – 10:00AM	Field bird ID session and bird silhouette	PBCFI
	Module 3 Methods and Techniques	PBCFI
10:30AM – 11:00AM	Survey Techniques/Land Use/Tides	PBCFI
11:30AM – 12:00AM	Counting and Monitoring	PBCFI
12:00AM – 01:30AM	Lunch	
01:30AM – 01:45AM	Activity bird counting + ID exercise (LCD)	PBCFI
01:45AM – 02:15AM	Locating Birds	PBCFI
02:15PM – 02:45PM	Field exercise counting (group)	PBCFI
02:45PM – 03:15PM	Bird Guiding	PBCFI
03:15PM – 03:45PM	Field exercise (group) Bird ID	
03:45PM – 05:00PM	Bird Identification practice (field) (lowtide)	
Day 3	Module 3 Methods and Techniques	
07:00AM – 08:00AM	Breakfast	
08:00AM – 11:00AM	Group Bird Guiding Practical (with guest)	PBCFI
11:00AM – 12:00AM	Guiding Synthesis	
12:00PM – 01:30PM	Lunch	PBCFI
	Module 4 Evaluation	
01:30PM – 02:00PM	Interesting Facts, Bird Code, Bird categories	PBCFI
02:00AM – 03:00M	Group presentations	
03:00AM – 04:00PM	Sharing of experiences	PBCFI
04:00AM – 05:00AM	Handing of Certificates	
	Homeward bound	