

## Chapter 3

### Preliminary Baseline Survey of the Avifauna of the Nakauvadra Range, Ra Province, Fiji

*Dick Watling*

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#### **SUMMARY**

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This report is of a preliminary baseline survey of the avifauna of the Nakauvadra Range, Ra, Viti Levu. The report provides observations and comments on the avifauna observed in the study area, as well as observations from other known surveys from the Range.

A total of 34 bird species were recorded in the surveys, 13 of which were endemic species. Four were introduced species and the remainder native.

Three of Viti Levu's globally threatened species were recorded – Long Legged Warbler (Endangered, auditory record only); Black-faced Shrikebill and the Friendly Ground-Dove which was quite common. Notable species not recorded included the Masked Shining Parrot and the Polynesian Starling, though these have both been recorded previously. For birds, the Nakauvadra Range has the same conservation significance as other large forest blocks on Viti Levu.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

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The Nakauvadra Range is a forest refuge, completely surrounded by cleared habitats with the shortest distance to another forest block being approximately four kilometers to the southwest. It is not a large forest block, approximately 114 km<sup>2</sup>, and so the avifaunal composition is of interest in that it may not be large enough to maintain viable populations of species which have large home ranges and/or are poor dispersers over non-forest habitats. Examples of these are the Masked Shining Parrot and the Giant Forest Honeyeater. The only previous record of bird observations in the Nakauvadra Range is Masibalavu (2004).

#### **METHODS AND STUDY AREA**

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##### **Study area and base camps**

The study area comprised the area traversed by the survey roads and paths as marked on Map 4. The team hiked from Vatukaceveceva village to Camp 1 on the confluence of the Nabiya and Toluwalu Streams which are headwaters of the Volivoli Creek on November 18. We spent three nights at Camp 1, then hiked down to Vunisea village on November 21. On November 22 we hiked from the village to Camp 2 on the Vuniqesa Creek. Dick Watling returned to Vunisea village on November 23. Alifereti Naikatini and Vido Senivasa remained at Camp 2 and hiked out to Camp 3 on