Conservational significance of the Upper Hanthana secondary forest in the Central Province of Sri Lanka based on avifaunal diversity and endemism

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As a habitat option for the rapidly declining old-growth forests, secondary forest patches will serve as refugia for forest species in the tropics. The present study was carried out to determine the conservational significance of the Upper Hanthana secondary forest patch in Sri Lanka, based on its avifaunal diversity and endemism. The field survey was conducted from March–November 2019. Data were collected using line transects along with point counts. Peak observation hours were during 0700–1000 h and 1500–1800 h in the sites selected by systematic random sampling. Results were compared with those of a nearby village area. According to statistical analysis, the Upper Hanthana secondary forest patch harbours a comparatively higher avifaunal diversity

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with 87 bird species and remarkable endemism of 17 endemic bird species out of total 34 endemic bird species in Sri Lanka. The present study highlights the significance of the Upper Hanthana forest patch for biodiversity conservation. Further studies are required to evaluate the total biodiversity of this secondary forest patch and assess better conservational measures.

Keywords: Avifaunal diversity, biodiversity, conservational significance, endemism, secondary forests.