



COMMONWEALTH of the
NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

- Farallon de Pajaros (Uracas)
- Maug
- Asuncion
- Agrihan
- Pagan
- Alamagan
- Guguan
- Sarigan
- Anatahan
- Farallon de Medinilla
- Saipan
- Tinian
- Aguiguan
- Rota

* Distribution in the CNMI



PHOTOS BY SCOTT VOGT and TETSU SATO



NATIVE FOREST BIRD COLLARED KINGFISHER

Sihek **Waaw**
Chamorro *Carolinian*

IDENTIFICATION

Collared kingfishers are medium-sized birds with long, sharp beaks. They have white heads and under parts and blue or turquoise backs and wings. Females tend to be slightly more greenish than males. Collared kingfishers have distinctive harsh laughing calls.

HABITAT and FEEDING

Collared kingfishers are one of the five widespread species in the Marianas Islands. They are found near coasts and around open areas where they hunt for food. They use cliffs, tree branches, fences and wires as perches. They are sit-and-wait predators, scanning an area for food before they make their move. Collared kingfishers feed on fish, crabs, mollusks, small reptiles, insects, worms and smaller birds. To catch gecko or skink prey, the kingfishers stun them by thumping them loudly on trees. Hard-shelled prey is broken open by hammering it on their perch.

Collared kingfishers are solitary and territorial except during mating. They defend their feeding territories and will chase away other kingfishers, including their offspring. They are especially aggressive towards other bird species.

REPRODUCTION

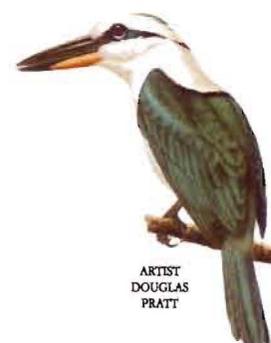
Collared kingfishers pursue each other during courtship flights. Males feed the females tidbits of food during this ritual. Once a pair has bonded, they will build a nest together by excavating a hole in a dead tree trunk. Good nest sites are often reused during the next breeding season.

Females lay two to four white eggs. Hatchlings are naked and blind. Parents must keep them warm until their feathers emerge. The period from egg laying to the chick leaving the nest is about forty-four days.

THREATS and CONSERVATION

Potential threats to kingfishers are habitat loss and degradation and increased human presence. Habitat destruction limits suitable nesting and feeding sites. Kingfishers are very sensitive to disturbances. Chicks are born naked and can die of the cold if parents cannot re-enter their nesting areas due to human presence.

Collared kingfishers are free from human disturbances in designated sanctuaries of the southern islands and in uninhabited northern islands.



ARTIST
DOUGLAS
PRATT

Halcyon chloris

THUMPIER

To kill gecko or skink prey, the kingfishers stun them by thumping them loudly against trees.

FACTOID!



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