

Fiji bird may become extinct

FIJI has received a "wake-up" call from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service that has put the Long-legged Warbler on its list of endangered worldwide birds facing extinction.

Senior Conservation Officer with Birdlife International's Fiji Programme, Vilikesa Masibalavu said that the Long-legged Warblers are only found in Fiji and was thought to have become extinct until 2003, when one was sighted in the Wabu Nature Reserve in Central Viti Levu.

"There are only an estimated 230 of these birds left in the world so we are fortunate to have confirmed that a few still exist in the forests of Viti Levu," he said.

"The Long-legged Warbler is a ground living bird which means its eggs and young chicks are prey

to the Mongoose and rats," he added.

"We have already lost 14 species of ground nesting birds from Fiji islands inhabited by mongoose and an added concern is the unsustainable logging of our forests," Masibalavu said.

He also stated that this does not only affect the birds, but all other forms of life including the fauna and flora.

Masibalavu said he was working closely with the landowners and the Government on a project sponsored by the UK Government Darwin Initiative to develop managed areas of forest "to protect our natural heritage."

Masibalavu also stressed the importance of protecting Fiji's birds from predators like the mongoose and from deforestation.



The Long-legged Warbler has been placed on the endangered list and could become extinct if not protected from predators.