

# Indigenous Edible Flora and Fauna in the Province of Abra

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## Abstract

*Survey and characterization of the indigenous edible flora and fauna in the province of Abra were taken through a participatory approach with identified key informants. Data were later presented to the community for validation. Scientific identification was taken care of by museum researchers at the National Museum, Manila. Findings revealed that there were 25 species of flora belonging to 19 families, 15 species of fauna belonging to six classes, and five species of fungi.*

*In order to increase awareness on the utilization of these important food crops and animals, a monograph on the indigenous edible flora and fauna of the province of Abra must be developed. Laws on the protection, conservation, and management of these indigenous resources should also be promulgated. Propagation of the diminishing indigenous edible flora as claimed by the indigenous people should also be undertaken.*

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Abra is a landlocked province of the Philippines in the Cordillera Administrative Region in Luzon. Hemmed in the towering mountain ranges of the Ilocos on the west and the Cordillera on the east, the province occupies the western portion of the Cordillera region. It is bounded on the north by Ilocos Norte and the South by Ilocos Sur and Mountain Province. Towards the east is Kalinga and on the west, the province of Apayao. As it straddles the Ilocandia and the Cordillera, this province is a melting pot of the lowland people of dominant Spanish ancestry and the unique ethnicity of the upland Tinguian tribe.

Insulated by the mountainous gazebo, nature has remained pristine in Abra. The province teems with impressive natural resources. More than half of its land are forest lands which are repository of a myriad of forest products and minerals such as gold, clay guano, rock phosphate, and cement raw materials. The forest also serves as a habitat of diverse flora and fauna which are important genetic sources of food, medicine, and other economic products.

The indigenous knowledge of members of the Tingguian tribe on plant and animal use has evolved for many generations. These indigenous uses are integrated in every facet of their lives which include the most basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and other uses. The everyday life of most of the Tingguians depends on the varied resources obtained from the forests.

Climate change has tremendously altered the habitats of indigenous plants and animals thereby affecting their diversity, or even to the loss of many species.

This study is deemed important and meaningful for it will provide the people of the province of Abra information on the present status of the indigenous edible flora and fauna. Results of this study will also serve as a basis for the protection and conservation of these very important natural resources. Furthermore, data would also enable resource managers and decision-makers to plan and implement rational judgments as to the proper utilization and disposition of these resources when in danger of depletion

### Objective of the Study.

To determine the indigenous edible flora in terms of their common, scientific and family names, edible fauna in terms of their common name, scientific name, and class, and fungi in terms of their scientific name.

### Review of Related Literature

In the 5-7 million years spent as Aunter-gatherers, humans' knowledge base has evolved with the ecosystems within which it existed and has further developed as a result of historical continuity of local resource dependence. Knowing which mild animals and plants are palatable and have nutritious content has long been a survival strategy for the rural poor, indigenous peoples and tribal communities. This information is essential to supplementing diets when harvests fail due to insect blights, disease, or adverse weather conditions. Hence, wild nutritional resources are often termed the "hidden harvest."

In a study conducted by Adekunle (2008) on the diversity and abundance of lesser-known plant species of food and ethnomedicinal potential in tropical rainforest ecosystem of southwest Nigeria, he found out that most of the plant species (60%) had food and medicinal values. The relative density and frequency of these species shows that most of them are rare while others are threatened with extinction.

Colting (2007) documented the indigenous vegetables in the Cordilleras. Results revealed that there are 49 indigenous vegetables, most of which are prepared for food. The knowledge on the use of these plants is part of the indigenous knowledge systems and practice (IKSP) of the indigenous people in the region. The indigenous vegetables show varying amounts of protein, ash, fiber, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. The antioxidants capacity also varied considerably from one kind of vegetable to another.

In an article published by the Philippine Star dated April 18, 2004, farmers in Abra have a reason to be happy, since their indigenous rice variety, "ballatinaw" now yields more, through a technology developed by the Department of Agriculture - Phil. Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice).

## Methodology

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Selection of Sampling Areas

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Key Informants

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Face to Face Interview

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Focus Group Discussion

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Direct Observation

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Botanical Description

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Field and Herbarium Research

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Scientific Identification

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From the 27 municipalities of Abra, 18 upland municipalities were chosen as sampling areas. Survey of the indigenous fauna and survey and botanical characterization of the indigenous flora were undertaken through a participatory approach with the local folks. Botanical descriptions of the flora were done in their wild state. Herbarium sheets were also prepared for the flora and fungi species. Scientific identification was done at the National Museum, Burgos, Manila.

## Results and Discussion

Table!. Summary Distribution of Indigenous Edible Flora in Terms of Common Name, Scientific Name, and Family Name

Common Name	Scientific Name	Family
Allagat	<i>Uvaria rufa</i> Blume	Annonaceae
Anabiong	<i>Trema Orientalis</i> ( Linn) Blume	Lumaceae
Alugbati	<i>Basel/a alba</i> Linn	Basellaceae
Ballatinaw	<i>Oryza sp.</i>	Poaceae
Biga	<i>Calla maxima</i> Blanco	Araceae
Boa	<i>Areca catechu</i> Linn	Palmae
Bugnay	<i>Antidesma binius</i> Linn	Euphorbiaceae
Buri	<i>Corypha rumpii</i> Perr	Palmae
Bread Fruit	<i>Artocarpus altilis</i> Forberg	Moraceae
Bulak-bulakan	<i>Thespesia sublobata</i> Blanco	Malvaceae
Coffee	<i>Coffea arabica</i>	Rubiaceae
Giant corms	<i>Cyrtosperma chamissonis</i>	Araceae
<b>Kakaw</b>	<i>Theobroma cacao</i> Linn	Sterculiaceae
Kalabua	<i>Otelia alismoides</i> Linn	Hydrochariceae
Kalunay	<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i>	Amaranthaceae
Kamangcg	<i>Disocorea alata</i>	Dioscoreaceae
Lankanas	<i>Languas pyramidata</i> Blume	Zingiberaceae
Pako	<i>Diplazium esculentum</i> Retz.	Athyriaceae
Ngalog	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i> Linn	Portulacaceae
Papait	<i>Molugo oppositifolia</i> Linn	Hydrocharitaceae
Sabawil	<i>Mucuna sp</i>	Leguminosae
Singkamas	<i>Pachyrhizus erosus</i> Linn	Leguminosae
Tabtabukol	<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i> Linn	Nyctaginaceae
Tugi	<i>Dioscorea esculenta</i> Burkill	Dioscoreaceae
Wild yam	<i>Dioscorea hispida</i> Dennst	Dioscoreaceae

Table 1 shows the twenty-five species of indigenous edible flora which were documented, belonging to 19 families. All were scientifically identified.

Table 2. Summary Distribution of the Indigenous Edible Fauna in Terms of the Common Name, Scientific Name, and Class

Common Name	Scientific Name	Class
Bennek	<i>Corbicula fluminea</i>	Pelecypoda
Bisukol (Native)	<i>Ampullaria</i> sp.	Gastropoda
Bunog	<i>Phinogobius gurimus</i>	Osteichthyes
Duriken	<i>Melanoides granifera</i>	Gastropoda
Frog	<i>Rana</i> sp.	Amphibia
Iwet	<i>Anguilla</i> spp.	Osteichthyes
June Beetle	<i>Phyllophaga</i> sp.	Insecta
Kampa	<i>Platycephalus indicus</i>	Osteichthyes
Kuros	<i>Caridina</i> sp.	Crustacea
Leddag	<i>Syncera</i> sp.	Gastropoda
Osoos	<i>Hyporhamphus intermedius</i>	Osteichthyes
Palileng	<i>Batygobius</i> sp.	Osteichthyes
Suso	<i>Melanoides tuberculata</i>	Gastropoda
Tang-al	<i>Gobius</i> sp.	Osteichthyes
Udang	<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>	Crustaceae

Table 2 shows the fifteen species of indigenous edible fauna, belonging to six classes. All the animals were identified to the genus level.

Table 3. Indigenous Edible Fungi in Terms of Common Name and Scientific Name

Common Name	Scientific Name
1. Common carthball	<i>Scleroderma citrinum</i>
2. Jelly fungi	<i>Tremella</i> sp.
3. Jew's ear	<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>
4. "Kuwat"	<i>Lactarius</i> sp.
5. Straw mushroom	<i>Volvariella volvacea</i>

They were only five indigenous edible fungi documented and all were scientifically identified.

## Conclusion and Future Directions

There are 25 species of indigenous edible flora in the Province of Abra, and they are distributed into 19 different families, fifteen species of the indigenous edible fauna are distributed into six classes, and there are five species of indigenous edible fungi.

A monograph on the indigenous edible flora and fauna of the province must be developed. Laws on the protection and conservation of these very important indigenous resources should be promulgated, and lastly, propagation of the diminishing indigenous edible flora should also be done, since overexploitation of such plants can lead to extinction of certain species if not normally grown as a crop.

## References

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*Volvariella volvacea*   *Auricularia auricula – judae*   *Diplazimn esculentum*   *Scleroderma citrinum*



*Corbicula fluminea*   *Anguilla spp.*   *Platycephalus iacus*   *Phinogobius gurinus*

### Indigenous Edible Flora and Fauna