**Hala-Bala Bird & Nature Camp: bird watching as a mean of nature education**

**for children in remote southern Thailand**

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**Abstract**

 Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) has conducted “Bird & Nature Conservation Youth Camp” annually since 2016 for children in Narathiwat, Thailand’s southernmost province. The camp takes place in Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary, Waeng District, Narathiwat and Princess Sirindhorn Wildlife Sanctuary (Phru To Daeng), Sungai Kolok District, Narathiwat. The camp aims to provide opportunity for children in Narathiwat and surrounding area to learn about birds and nature. Narathiwat is one of Thailand’s hot spots for birds and wildlife, especially Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary, which is well-known among bird watchers in Thailand, but local people are not fully aware of such precious resource that they have in their hometown. Through bird watching, children get to appreciate nature and learn about connections in the ecosystem through nature games and other activities. Children who graduated from the first camps have now become mentors for younger children. In the long term, BCST aims to build a network of young generation who cares about birds and nature and works to protect them in areas where most people seldom visit.