

ABSTRACT

The problem of roads in previously inaccessible forest areas have proven to be a serious conservation issue in tropical forests worldwide. While increased access allows greater mobility for rural communities, and for technology to reach these communities, it has also led to greater hunting pressures on wildlife in tropical forests. This study examined the effects of logging access on hunting patterns and wildlife abundance in three study sites in the Upper Baram region of Sarawak. The hypothesis tested was that populations of game animals increase in areas of tropical forest following the advent of logging roads. Surveys were conducted in similar unlogged habitat in three sites; and all areas were occupied by Penan communities. The main difference between the three sites was level of access via logging road. Data were collected from July 1999 to June 2000. Data collection lasted from seven to 14 days each trip. Surveys on the hunting patterns of each community, as well as line transect surveys for wildlife were done. Correlation and regression analyses; and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Kruskal-Wallis tests were applied to data collected. Results showed that as levels of accessibility increased, hunting pressure increased, and hunting success decreased; and that as hunting pressure increased, wildlife diversity and relative abundance declined. The null hypothesis was disproved.