

ACTIVITY PATTERN, DISTRIBUTION, AND THREATS OF THE BORNEAN SUN BEAR, *HELARCTOS MALAYANUS EURYSPILUS*

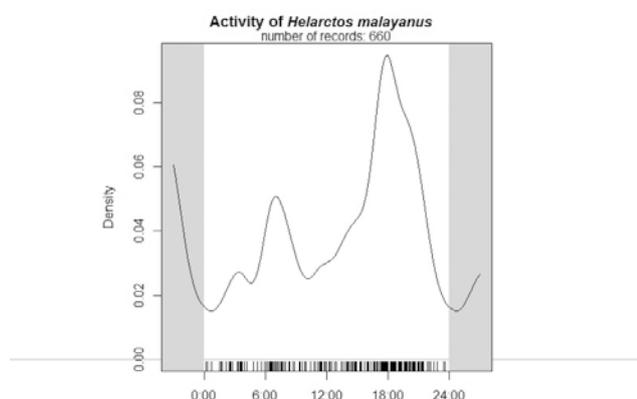


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Being the smallest among the eight bear species in the world and the smallest subspecies of its own species, the “fun-sized” Bornean Sun Bears (*Helarctos malayanus euryspilus*) are facing multiple threats like most of the wildlife around the globe. Usually hunted for their gall bladders with the rise of opportunistic hunters or involved in a wildlife-human conflict, the seemingly cute and cuddly appearance of their cubs has become another by-product of exotic pet trade across the nation. Listed as ‘Vulnerable’ in International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species due to deforestation that has reduced both area of occupancy and extends of occurrence, and has also reduced its habitat quality in remaining fragmented forest. Its distribution has also become increasingly patchy due to the major threats of habitat loss and hunting for its medicinal parts, which are used in traditional Asian medicines (Shepherd and Shepherd, 2012). It is only listed as ‘Protected’ under Sarawak Wild Life Ordinance (SWLPO) 1998 although it falls under Appendix I in Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The SWLPO 1998 allows any person with license to have possession of any wild animal species, and with the outdated penalties against offenders the prosecution is much likely to be inefficient. Based on the recent study, the gall bladder of sun bears were usually kept or sold in the black markets for MYR150 each. They are recorded at low densities from selected localities (Baram, Baleh & Pelagus) in interior Sarawak (RAI= 1.414), and are periodically active during the day and night. Incorporating different management strategies is crucial, with the synergy between various elements (i.e. outreach, law enforcement, animal populations, and biodiversity) in order to produce a successful conservation strategy for this smallest subspecies.

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Activity patterns of the Bornean Sun Bear in three localities: Ulu Baleh, Ulu Baram, and Pelagus in Sarawak



One of the ex-captive Sun Bear from Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre which was previously kept as pet