

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS ON THE HUNTING ACTIVITIES IN SELECTED AREAS IN INTERIOR SARAWAK

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Accepted 20 February 2018, Published online 31 March 2018

ABSTRACT

Archaeological records showed that human have lived in Borneo for at least 40000 and evidence of wildlife hunting for at least 35000 years. Wildlife is used for a variety of reasons, including subsistence, economy, pest control, and traditional needs. Technology has fuelled the course of human cultural evolution but the use of wildlife is still prevalent throughout the world especially in tropical forest. In Sarawak, local communities are allowed to hunt non-protected species outside protected areas. This study was focused on the effects of hunting on the distribution and diversity of terrestrial medium to large mammals in interior parts of Sarawak. By undertaking interview surveys with the local communities, information on hunting pressure and dependency of the communities towards these mammals were obtained. A total of 170 respondents were interviewed from three study sites: Ulu Baram, Ulu Baleh, and Pelagus. In general, the local communities are dependent of wildlife in Sarawak where the access to commercially available poultry and meat sources are scarce in these areas. A long term multi-prong approaches need to be considered to reduce the dependency on wild meat and prevent hunting of the endangered and protected species.

Key words: Ethnozoology, interior Sarawak, hunting, terrestrial mammals

INTRODUCTION

Wildlife is used for a variety of reasons, including subsistence, economy, pest control, and traditional needs (Alvard *et al.*, 1997; Bennett and Robinson, 2000; Prins *et al.*, 2000; Alves & Pereira Filho, 2007; Alves *et al.*, 2009; Inskip & Zimmermann, 2009; Alves & Souto, 2015). Such uses have caused impacts that often threaten the exploited species, which sometimes could lead to the extinction of species with low density and slower reproduction rate. Technology has fuelled the course of human cultural evolution but the use of wildlife is still prevalent throughout the world especially in tropical forest (Chin, 2001).

Different approaches are used in Malaysia for the protection of wildlife: Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 (Peninsular Malaysia), Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997, and Sarawak Wild Life Protection Ordinance (SWLPO) (1998). In Sarawak, the SWLPO 1998 allows the indigenous to consume or use any wild animals, and any person

who have not more than five kilograms of wild animals for own consumption (SWLPO 1998, Section 37 (1)). Under the same Section, any person with license under SWLPO 1998 can have possession of any wild animal species. However, any offences without license towards protected and totally protected wildlife can be punished under Section 29 (1), where a maximum penalty up to five years imprisonment and fine up to MYR 50,000 can be prosecuted against the offender. However the local communities do not apply licence to hunt non protected species and in general license are not given to hunt protected species in Sarawak.

The study of community knowledge regarding the use of animals is a crucial step in designing conservation strategies, because this knowledge reflects the values and attitudes adopted by a community or population regarding the local fauna (de Melo *et al.*, 2014). Indeed fossil evidences in Sarawak suggest that hunting has contributed to the local extinction of several larger species such as the tiger, rhinoceros, and tapir (Cranbrook, 1986; Cranbrook & Piper, 2007; Phillipps & Phillipps, 2016). Archaeological records showed that human

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