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THE HERPETOFAUNA OF LOAGAN BUNUT

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Abstract

This report presents data from assessments made with the purpose of gathering information on the occurrence and biology of the herpetofauna of Loagan Bunut National Park (LBNP), Sarawak, East Malaysia (Borneo). The fauna, as understood at present, comprises 23 species of amphibians and 34 species of reptiles. Doubtlessly, this is an underestimate, and the faunal list will grow with additional effort spent to sample it, especially the species-rich lowland dipterocarp forests at the edge of the lake, and also, the riparian regions and the peat swamps. Management recommendations made include elimination of poaching, predator control, monitoring of selected herpetofaunal species (such as turtles and crocodilians), upgrading the interpretation centre within the Park Headquarters, incorporation of conservation education into the school curriculum, enhancing ecotourism opportunities, including opportunities for employment of the local inhabitants who live around the national park.

INTRODUCTION

Located in the floodplains of Sungai Tinjar, northern Sarawak, is the vast lake (Loagan in Berawan) of Bunut, protected (since 1990) as the LBNP. This national park covers an area of 10,736 hectares (ha), and is demarcated by Sungai Tinjar and Sungai Teru, on the eastern and western borders. Vegetation types represented include the lowland mixed dipterocarp forest, the mixed swamp forest, as well as cultivated land and secondary vegetation. Further details of the geology and vegetation of the area is in Hazebroek and Abang Kassim (2000). Loagan Bunut is one of only two Protect Areas of Sarawak occurring in peat swamp forest (PSF). The other is the Maludam National Park. LBNP is known for its spectacular wetland fauna, especially its avifauna and the indigenous Berawan tribesmen who subsist on the fish and other aquatic produce of the lake.

This communication presents data from a rapid assessment of the herpetofaunal diversity of LBNP, conducted over a period of 10 days, in the early part of the dry season, between 29 March and 7 April, 2004, and a long-term ecological study of *Anyda cartilaginea* and of follow-up inventory work, conducted between November