

PERSISTENCE OF MEDIUM TO LARGE TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS IN A PRODUCTION FOREST IN INTERIOR SARAWAK



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Sarawak has lost a significant portion of its primary forest mostly due to logging and land conversion to agriculture. While economic growth through timber industry is important for the advancement of human societies, this in turn may have shifted the species composition and ecosystem function in production forest. In general, logging has been perceived as destructive and resulting in negative impact on biodiversity. However, some species including those that of conservation importance have been reported to occur in production forest and very little is known on such extent in Sarawak. In view of this camera trapping was conducted from July 2017 until August 2018 in three logging coupes with different logging regime in the Kapit Forest Management Unit (FMU) to evaluate the implementation of Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) techniques. Preliminary results show that Kapit FMU is extremely rich in medium to large terrestrial animal diversity, harboring a community of at least 34 species from this category. This includes the critically endangered pangolin and several endangered and rare endemic species (e.g. Bornean Bay Cat, Hose's Civet). The study also revealed nine species that are totally protected and another 24 species protected under the Sarawak Wild Life Protection Ordinance 1998. Therefore, the protection of habitat through High Conservation Value Area (HCVA) for wild animal populations is vital in these production areas. Analysis on activity pattern and occupancy indicate that there is no significant difference in activity and occupancy between old growth forest, active RIL forest and RIL forest with a fallow period of two years. The findings suggest that the strict implementation of sophisticated logging techniques and the willingness of the industry to sustainably manage forest may aid biodiversity conservation in production forest which in the end can benefit human society environmentally and economically.

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Borneo Bay Cat (*Catopuma badia*), one of the rarest wild cat in the world, recorded early in the morning in a production forest in interior Sarawak.



Red Muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjac*), a relatively common species in secondary and primary forest appears widely distributed in the study area.