PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF MAMMALS AT CROCKER RANGE PARK (PARK HEADQUARTERS) SABAH, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

A preliminary survey of mammal community was conducted in the secondary and primary forests along the Keningau-Kimanis Road (near Park Headquarters) from 16-22 October 1999. Traps and mist nets were used to capture small mammals while observational methods were used to record large mammal presence. From a total effort of 316 trap-days, 35 individuals representing 15 species of small mammals were captured. Half ofthe animals caught were bats. Five species were common to both secondary and primary forests, six species were caught in primary forest only and four in secondary forest only. Capture rates was 0.08 animal/trap-day for mousetraps in both secondary and primary forest habitats while the capture rate for bats was 0.39 and 0.13 bat/net-night in secondary and primary forests, respectively. In general, the primary forest seems to be more diverse compared to secondary forest in terms of the number of non-volant species. Bearded pig is the most common large animal in the secondary forest but no sign of this animal or any other large mammals were detected in the primary forest. None of the mammals are classified as threatened or endangered by IUCN.

INTRODUCTION

Crocker Range is a tropical highland that runs roughly parallel to the West Coast of Sabah and separates it from the interior of Sabah. This highland is divided into two management area, Kinabalu Park and Crocker Range Park. Crocker Range Park (CRP), enacted in 1984 and covering an area of 139,919ha, is located on the southwestern part of this range. It was established to protect the watershed of several rivers and to conserve the bill dipterocarp and montane forest which are habitats for a diverse community of flora and fauna. The park is surrounded by hundreds of villages of different ethnic communities who partially depend on the natural resources of Crocker Range for their livelihood.

Kinabalu Park has been the subject of numerous studies on small mammals (Junaini 1986, Lim and Heyneman 1968, Lim and Muul 1978, Lakim 1998 and Shukor 1997). These studies were chiefly concerned with the changes in diversity with increasing altitudes. However, very little published information is available on the small mammals of Crocker Range Park to the southwest of Mt. Kinabalu. For example, as part of a study on fleas and its host, 9 species of rodents were captured along the Kota Kinabalu-Tambunan Road (Injan 1987).

The objectives of this study are to compile an inventory of mammals at Crocker Range Park and to compare mammal species composition in secondary and primary forests. This information will be used to identify species that may require special attention for research and management