

## Short Communication

### Geographic distribution and conservation status of the bay cat *Catopuma badia*, a Bornean endemic

Mohd-Azlan J. and Jim Sanderson

**Abstract** Despite being one of the rarest felids in the world the Endangered Bornean bay cat *Catopuma badia* has received little conservation attention. Most information consists of historical records, morphological descriptions, and anecdotes from various sources. During 2003–2006 we undertook surveys using camera trapping, interviews and field observations, to determine the species' distribution and document any threats to its persistence. We also examined

museum specimens and completed a thorough literature review, collecting 15 additional geographic records throughout Borneo. Our results show that opportunistic hunting and land use changes are the main threats to the bay cat, and we make recommendations for its conservation.

**Keywords** Bay cat, Borneo, camera trapping, *Catopuma badia*, Endangered, tropical biodiversity.

The bay cat *Catopuma badia*, endemic to Borneo, is one of the rarest felids in the world (Meijaard, 1997; Sunquist & Sunquist, 2002). However, small felids such as the bay cat receive little conservation attention in Borneo because these species are uncommon, rarely seen, and compete for conservation attention with more charismatic species. The bay cat is categorized as Endangered on the IUCN Red List (IUCN, 2006) and is listed in Appendix II of CITES (2007). Although the bay cat is legally protected in all three countries within its range (Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia), all of which are signatories to CITES, enforcement is minimal. Since the bay cat's discovery by Wallace in 1858 and naming by Gray (1874), knowledge of the species' distribution has remained poorly known (Sunquist & Sunquist, 2002). Our aim was to document the distribution of the bay cat and any threats to its persistence, and to recommend areas for further investigation of the species' presence.

Between March 2003 and April 2006 we used camera traps, field observation, interviews with local villagers, hunters and researchers, reviewed literature and local museum records, and examined preserved specimens. Camera trapping was carried out in Sarawak, at Lanjak-

Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary, Loagan Bunut, Lambir Hills, Maludam, and Kubah National Parks, and Ulu Mengiong, Kapit. We used commercially available camera traps (CamTrakker; Camtrak South, Watkinsville, USA, and Deercam; Non-Typical Inc., Park Falls, USA); further details are in Azlan (2005).

We documented 15 recent records of the bay cat (Fig. 1; Table 1), in Kalimantan (Indonesia) and Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysia) but not in Brunei. These records consist of single opportunistic observations (Bricknell, 2003; Dinets, 2003; Hearn, 2003; Meijaard *et al.*, 2005). In national museums within the species' range there are only two specimens, in Sarawak Museum, and none in museums in Sabah (S. Yasuma, pers. obs.), Kalimantan (M. Ibnu, pers. obs.) or Brunei (A. Samman, pers. obs.). There are 8 further specimens in European and American museums. There is photographic evidence of the species from Mulu National Park (Dinets, 2003) and Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary (Azlan *et al.*, 2003) in Sarawak, and from Kalimantan (Augeri, 2003). Almost all the historical and recent records are from close proximity to water bodies such as rivers and mangroves, suggesting that the bay cat may be closely associated with such habitat. There are two color morphs (Sunquist & Sunquist, 2002) but the red morph seems to be more frequently observed than the grey.

We also obtained unconfirmed anecdotal records from Sarawak. A Chinese hunter claims to have shot and consumed a bay cat in 2002 in an unknown location around Long Lama, Baram, an elderly fisherman apparently observed a bay cat repeatedly in the mangrove forest during low tide at Simpang Lubak Rajang, and

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