

WWF  WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

# YEARBOOK 1980-81

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*Man seems but a speck in the immensity of tropical rainforests such as these in Papua New Guinea. Yet he has the power to destroy them, with all their wealth of plant and animal life. Tropical forests throughout the world are being felled or burned at the rate of 110,000 km<sup>2</sup> a year - an area three times the size of Belgium. WWF's major fund-raising campaign in 1982 will be for the conservation of tropical forests.*

*Photo: Schultze-Westrum*

PROTECTED AREAS - MALAYSIA

Priorities for the coming year's work of the Wildlife Conservation Unit include further and more detailed surveys and an intensive research programme into the ecology of feral cats, with the hope of finding an effective method of controlling their numbers.

Martin Garnett  
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MALAYSIA

Project 1692  
Faunal survey in Sabah  
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Sabah, formerly North Borneo, is the second largest of the thirteen states constituting Malaysia. Two organisations are responsible for wildlife conservation: the Wildlife Section (or Game Branch) of the Sabah Forest Department (WSFD) and a statutory body, Sabah National Parks (SNP). The Faunal Survey of Sabah, a two year project, started in July 1979. Two WWF contractors have been working closely with WSFD and SNP, rangers from both departments having received training in wildlife survey techniques. Apart from ranger participation in surveys, the main aim of the Faunal Survey has been to collect information on the status of larger mammals, birds and habitats throughout Sabah.

Twenty-two areas have been visited, mostly in the east coast lowlands, south of the River Labuk, and in the Crocker Range of hills which extend along the west side of Sabah. Four surveys have been done in National Parks and four in proposed conservation areas.

Surveys are classed as intensive (one camp, and the same path traversed daily) or extensive (a wide area covered by vehicle and foot). It has proved impossible, generally, to estimate the absolute numbers or density of mammals and birds, using either method. The final report will include data on species distribution and relative densities.

All nineteen rangers in WSFD have now been on at least one survey and their performance has been graded. The best men will be selected to make up a permanent survey team, which will continue to receive training for the remainder of WWF involvement, and can continue to work alone thereafter.

## PROTECTED AREAS - MALAYSIA

The most extensive habitats in Sabah may be classified very broadly into three types: Lowland dipterocarp (most endangered), montane and mangrove. Until recent years, the major threat to wildlife has been logging, but now agricultural development is of much greater concern. About 30% of Sabah's forests remain unlogged, mostly steep land and high altitude with low species diversity and density. About 30% more, comprising what was formerly the richest in species diversity and density, is due for agricultural development. A major priority is to aim for the preservation of one large area of lowland dipterocarp forest with an unlogged core area.

The National Parks System protects many islands, with their unique wildlife, and is likely to include a reasonable sample of unlogged montane forest within the next few years. Some attention should be given to peat swamps and coastal habitats, but at present these are of low priority.

### Existing Protected Mainland Areas:

Kinabalu National Park (189,686 acres): A special area with unique wildlife. Many montane forest-dwelling animals are preserved here, including Borneo and Sabah endemics.

Klias National Park (96,000 acres): This Park includes mangrove, nipah and kerangas heath forest. The mangrove area is exploited by people living within and around the park. Excessive hunting and fishing occurs, despite the importance of the area as a fish nursery for Brunei Bay fishermen. Although intended as a mangrove protection area, Klias is one of the most disturbed stretches of mangrove in Sabah.

Tawau Hills National Park (69,120 acres): An isolated hill tract, about 40% damaged by logging. It is of little value either aesthetically or for wildlife conservation, although important as a water catchment area.

Kota Belud Bird Sanctuary: Important for coastal migrant birds despite hunting pressure.

Sepilik-Kabili Forest Reserve (about 10,000 acres): Isolated lowland forest near Sandakan, with an Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and important botanical research plots of long standing.

Sungai Kumamubu Virgin Jungle Reserve in Kretam area (about 1000 acres): Logged and now an important refuge for tembadau (banteng or Bos javanicus) in the middle of massive agricultural development.

Lungmanis Virgin Jungle Reserve (about 1000 acres): This and the other unlogged Virgin Jungle Reserves are small

## PROTECTED AREAS - MALAYSIA

areas that often hold high populations of animals which have moved out of surrounding logged forest. Although unsuitable for permanent preservation, they could act as temporary stocking areas from which animals can be moved, or migrate, to recolonise logged areas as the forest regenerates.

Gomantog Virgin Jungle Reserve and other cave swiftlet areas (about 1000 acres): Particularly important for the preservation of cave swiftlets, of which an ecological study is urgently required.

The present conservation areas on mainland Sabah take care of the endemic wildlife of Kinabalu, but are otherwise unsatisfactory. The important lowland dipterocarp forests are represented only by those Virgin Jungle Reserves which have remained unlogged, and these are too few and too small to contribute to the preservation of the lowland wildlife. A single large area (150,000 acres minimum) of lowland rain forest must be preserved: there is no single area of this size which has not been at least partly logged.

### Proposed conservation areas:

Danum Valley (105,600 acres): Long considered an important conservation area it now remains one of the few unlogged lowland areas within Sabah. It is within the logging concession area of the Sabah Foundation, which has agreed that it will not be logged. Management plans will be developed by WSFD, who are already patrolling the area to minimise hunting, in conjunction with Sabah Foundation, and with aid from WWF.

Silabukan (65,000 acres): This area contains the last known breeding population of the Sumatran rhino (Dicerorhinus sumatrensis) in Borneo. The area has been visited by Faunal Survey personnel four times in 1980 and a special WWF survey is planned for 1981. Anti-poaching measures have been taken by WSFD and more are planned. The future of this important area is bleak, since timber licences have been issued, and the soils and access are well suited for agriculture.

Crocker Range (320,640 acres): This long, narrow range of hills (generally 1500-4000 feet altitude) runs between two densely populated valleys. There are footpaths across the range, and the whole area has been subject to hunting probably for thousands of years. Although of no importance in preserving the larger mammals, the Crocker Range is a valuable area for smaller montane fauna. It is important botanically and an essential water catchment area for the west coast. Every effort is needed to minimise agricultural encroachment by intensive boundary patrols. Boundaries have been proposed for a Crocker Range National Park, and this is likely to be the next

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big area given official protected status. A botanical survey is recommended.

Gunung Lotung: A mountainous area within the Sabah Foundation's logging concession, in the interior of Sabah. Brief surveys to date have shown a rich wildlife, interesting geological features and many portions too steep to log. A thorough survey is needed prior to proposals for protection.

East Coast Mangrove: Surveys of the east coast mangroves need to be done to identify wildlife conservation areas, especially in the east estuaries of the Dent Peninsula.

Tanjung Linsang: A sandy beach with mangrove and swampy hinterland, of no use for agriculture or forestry. The area should be protected for the tembadau (banteng), marbled cat, silvered leaf monkeys and crocodiles which it contains.

### Important animal species

Species which seemed in need of particular attention at the start of the Faunal Survey are listed:

Sumatran Rhinoceros: a small breeding population has been identified in Silabukan, eastern Sabah. Although anti-poaching measures have been initiated by WSFD, a longer-term problem will be logging and probably agricultural development. There are a few scattered rhinos elsewhere in eastern Sabah, but unless these are caught and translocated, they can contribute nothing to the survival of this species. Reports to the Faunal Survey team suggest that at least five rhinos have been killed in Sabah during the past five years.

Tembadau (banteng): Eleven groups of this wild cattle species have been identified in eastern lowland Sabah. They appear to have been extinct in the western plains for at least 25 years. The species is under severe hunting pressure.

Orangutan: occur at low density in primary forest and some logged forest throughout Sabah. They move away from disturbance and become overcrowded into pockets of primary forest. Preservation of the species depends on a single large area of lowland forest protected from logging and hunting.

Elephant: widely distributed throughout the east coast lowlands, but absent from the west and north of Sabah. Although in no immediate danger of elimination, the species range coincides largely with good agricultural soils, so they will become an increasingly damaging agricultural pest. Where there has been agriculture for many years, they have been exterminated. In the long term, the survival of this species in Borneo is uncertain.

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Proboscis monkey: Not endangered at present. In the long term, the best conservation areas will probably be the east coast deltas, especially between the Kinabatangan and Segama rivers.

Clouded leopard: widely distributed throughout Sabah up to 3500 feet, and can survive in forest.

Crocodile: under extreme hunting pressure. Long-term conservation will probably be centred largely in the same areas important for proboscis monkeys.

Bearded pig: currently common, but possibly dependent on dipterocarp forests. An ecological study is required.

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