



The Bornean Wild Cats & Clouded Leopard Project

3-year project underway to help conserve Borneo's wild cats

Overview

The 'Bornean Wild Cats & Clouded Leopard Project' is an international collaboration between the Global Canopy Programme (GCP), UK and the Institute for Biology & Conservation (ITBC) at the University Malaysia Sabah. The project aims to facilitate the conservation of Borneo's endangered wild cats by merging pioneering research, host country capacity building and environmental education.

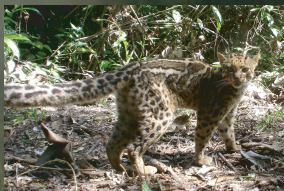
Background

The tropical rainforests of Borneo support five species of wild cat: clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), bay cat (*Catopuma badia*), flat-headed cat (*Prionailurus planiceps*), marbled cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*), and leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*). Of these five felids, three are considered by the IUCN as Vulnerable, and one, the endemic bay cat, as Endangered.

The main threats to the Bornean wild cats are believed to stem from habitat degradation and fragmentation, and from hunting. These threats are exacerbated by the lack of knowledge regarding the natural history and ecology of these felids, which is needed to facilitate the development of effective management and conservation measures.



A Clouded leopard of *Neofelis nebulosa* recently captured by a camera trap in Danum Valley.



A bay cat (Catopuma badia) captured on camera in Danum Valley. These animals are thought to be highly elusive.



Photographs of the extremely rare bay cat (*Catopuma badia*) at Danum Valley, the last wild photos of this species in the wild. This bay cat is found only in Borneo, in early 2000.

Project Aims

- Study the behaviour and ecology of all five species of Bornean wild cat.
- Investigate the effects of habitat alteration on Bornean wild cats.
- Increase awareness of the Bornean wild cats and their conservation needs, using the clouded leopard as a flagship species.
- Train host country scientists/students in a range of ecological/behavioural field techniques.
- Investigate threats to the Bornean wild cats from hunting and trade in Sabah.

Progress to date

Ecological research

Our camera trapping efforts at Danum Valley have resulted in over 100 photographs of wild cats, including clouded leopard, bay cat, marbled cat and leopard cat. These photos are being used to investigate wild cat ecology and to provide the first camera trap based population density estimate for clouded leopards on Borneo.

Data obtained from our camera trapping efforts and field sign surveys will be used to guide the placement of wild cat live-traps over the coming few months. Captured cats will be fitted with radio collars and later tracked on foot with radio telemetry receivers.

Capacity building/training

In June 2007 we hosted 2, one-week 'Mammal Field Research Training Courses' at Danum Valley Field Centre, during which 33 Conservation Biology undergraduates and Malaysian scientists received training in techniques such as radio tracking, camera trapping and live trapping. Enhanced capacity for mammal research in Sabah will also result from the training of a post graduate from the ITBC, Daniel Pamin, who is currently receiving 3 years on-the-job training.



During the Mammal Field Research Training Course at Danum Valley, students gain hands-on experience of using live-traps to capture species for research, capture and releasing animals.



The most common of the Bornean wild cats, the leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), triggers a camera trap along an abandoned logging road in Danum Valley.

Project personnel

- Principal Investigators:** -Andrew Hearn M.Sc., Research Associate, GCP.
-Joanna Ross M.Sc., Research Associate, GCP.
- Research assistant / fieldwork counterparts:** -Daniel Pamin, ITBC
- Project Manager:** -Katherine Szonyi, GCP
- Scientific Advisors:** -Prof. David Mearns, Director, ITBC.
-Dr. Henry Bernard, Research scientist, ITBC.
-Prof. David Macdonald, Director, WildCRU, University of Oxford

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