

Records of Sunda Stink-badger *Mydaus javanensis* from Rajuk Forest, Malinau, North Kalimantan, Indonesia

RUSTAM¹ and A. J. GIORDANO²

Abstract

Several records of the little known Sunda Stink-badger *Mydaus javanensis* from North Kalimantan, Indonesia, on the island of Borneo were gathered during a pilot survey of local mammals. Recent records from Indonesian Borneo are few. Field observations and records of hunted individuals suggest a locally abundant population.

Keywords: Borneo, camera-trap, hunting, Mephitidae, sight records, Teledu

Catatan Kehadiran Teledu Sigung *Mydaus javanensis* dari Hutan Rajuk, Malinau, Kalimantan Utara, Indonesia

Abstrak

Beberapa catatan kehadiran jenis yang masih sangat jarang diketahui, Teledu Sigung *Mydaus javanensis* dari Kalimantan Utara, Indonesia, di Pulau Kalimantan berhasil dikumpulkan selama survey pendahuluan mamalia secara lokal. Catatan terkini tentang jenis ini dari Pulau Kalimantan wilayah Indonesia sangat sedikit. Observasi lapangan dan catatan temuan dari para pemburu menunjukkan bahwa populasi jenis ini melimpah secara lokal.

Sunda Stink-badger *Mydaus javanensis* is a small ground-dwelling Old World relative of skunks (Mephitidae) that appears to be patchily distributed across the islands of Borneo, Java, Sumatra and the Natuna archipelago (Corbet & Hill 1992, Hwang & Larivière 2003, Meijaard 2003, Long *et al.* 2008). Although listed as Least Concern by *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (Long *et al.* 2008), too little is known about its range and ecological requirements to be sure of its conservation status. Samejima *et al.* (in prep.) mapped most of the approximately 170 records that they traced from Borneo as part of a species distribution model; those excluded were either too old or spatially imprecise to be useful for the model. Of those included, most hail from the island's northernmost part, the Malaysian state of Sabah. Among those from Indonesian Borneo are a few recent records from Bukit Soeharto (Yasuma 1994) and Sungai Wain Protection Forests in East Kalimantan (G. Fredriksson *in litt.* 2011). Previous records from elsewhere in Kalimantan include one each from the Sintang district of West Kalimantan (location unknown; G. Semiadi *in litt.* 2011), PT. Sari Bumi Kusuma timber concession area of Seruyan & Katingan Districts in Central Kalimantan, and the Meratus Forest of South Kalimantan (G. Semiadi *in litt.* 2011). The validity of much older published localities in Kalimantan for the species (collated by Payne *et al.* 2005) is not reviewed here.

Long Ketrok Protection Forest (Long Ketrok PF) lies south of the Mentarang River in North Kalimantan province, Indonesian Borneo. It is largely contiguous with other forest in the Malinau district (see Blom 2010), including an area of forest very roughly 200 km to the south where Samejima *et al.* (in prep.) mention two recent Stink-badger records. A December 2012 – February 2013 exploratory mammal survey of Long Ketrok PF focused on a part of this 600 km² area known locally as Rajuk Forest (Fig. 1), near a small village of the same name. The vegetation of Rajuk seems typical of lowland mixed dipterocarp rainforest in Borneo in that it is dominated by a

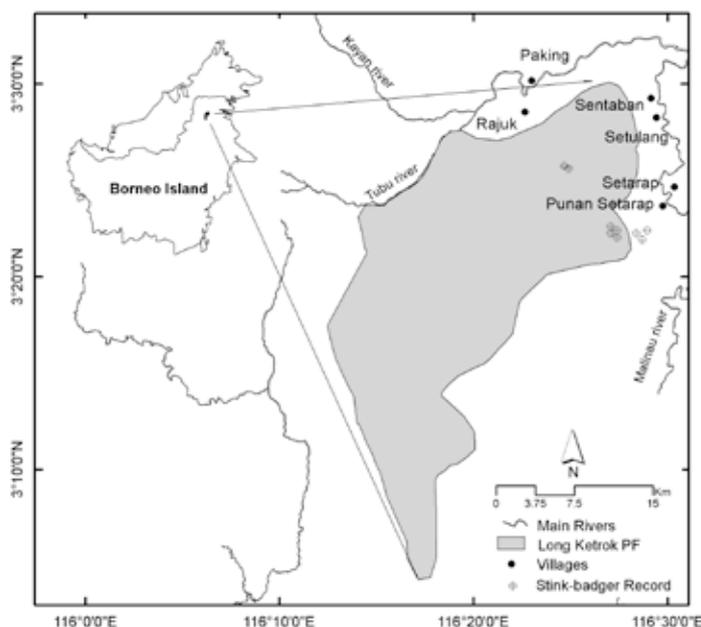


Fig. 1. Long Ketrok Protection Forest, Malinau, North Kalimantan, Indonesia, showing approximate location of Sunda Stink-badger *Mydaus javanensis* records in the Rajuk Forest.

native climax tree community of Dipterocarpaceae and Lauraceae (GIZ 2013). This 'protected forest' has been designated for limited use by six villages (Rajuk, Paking, Punan Setarap, Sentaban, Setarap and Setulang) comprising four dominant Dayak ethnic communities (Punan, Kenyah, Lundaye and Abai). Villages are prohibited from cutting and extracting trees, particularly in the forest core, but non-timber forest products are harvested frequently, including many wildlife species.

Nine Stink-badger point locations from Rajuk forest (Table 1; direct field sightings, recently killed animals, detections

Table 1. Sunda Stink-badger *Mydaus javanensis* records from Rajuk forest, Malinau, North Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Geographic coordinates (recorded altitude) ¹	Date (time)	Type of record	Habitat characteristics
3°25'28"N, 116°24'34"E (112 m)	16 Dec 2012 (21h00)	Field sighting	Secondary forest near river
3°25'46"N, 116°24'22"E (106 m)	17 Dec 2012 (21h21)	Field sighting	Primary forest near river
3°22'39"N, 116°29'13"E (37 m)	2 Feb 2013 (11h19)	Two individuals, killed by hunter*	Secondary forest near river
3°22'54"N, 116°28'29"E (56 m)	2 Feb 2013 (17h22)	Field sighting	Primary forest near river
3°23'00"N, 116°27'48"E (165 m)	5 Feb 2013 (16h30)	Odour ²	Secondary forest near logging road
3°22'30"N, 116°26'59"E (113 m)	6 Feb 2013 (18h29)	Field sighting	Primary forest near river
3°22'46"N, 116°26'31"E (58 m)	9 Feb 2013 (11h00)	Odour ²	Secondary forest near river
3°22'42"N, 116°27'12"E (145 m)	9 Feb 2013 (08h18)	Killed by hunter* (hunting dog ³)	Secondary forest near paddy field
3°22'41"N, 116°29'13"E (40 m)	10 Feb 2013 (09h00)	Killed by hunter*	Secondary forest near paddy field

¹Recorded via personal GPS unit under the WGS84 datum. ²As for skunks, the distinctive odour of Sunda Stink-badger is pronounced and once recognised, is unlikely to be confused with anything else (authors' pers. obs.). ³Dogs indicate Stink-badgers in low tree cavities, which then are killed by the hunter. *Carcases of hunter-killed specimens observed first-hand.

by odour) were recorded from forest below 200 m asl (the entire area lies below 300 m). Although none was greater than 200 m from riverine or streamside habitats, this may not be a biologically relevant pattern but rather a result of chance alone. These particular characteristics, largely consistent with records from Sabah (Payne *et al.* 2005), differ somewhat from records of the species from Sarawak (at similar latitude to North Kalimantan province). Many of the latter originate from montane habitats (Giman & Jukie 2012), which were not present in Long Ketrok. Preliminary niche distribution models



Fig. 2. Hunter-killed Sunda Stink-badger *Mydaus javanensis* from Rajuk Forest, Malinau, North Kalimantan, Indonesia.

(Samejima *et al.* in prep.) suggested that habitat was of moderate to moderately high suitability for Stink-badgers in the vicinity of Long Ketrok PF.

Four Stink-badger carcasses, reportedly killed by local people in nearby forest, were observed (see Fig. 2). Most ethnic Dayak appeared to be effective hunters, especially the Punan. One might expect the animal's odour to affect the taste of its meat, although the rank quality of Hog Badger *Arctonyx collaris* meat is esteemed by some rural hill minorities in Lao PDR (J. Chamberlin per J. W. Duckworth *in litt.* 2013). The Punan demonstrated how the animal's strong odour is mitigated. The animal is initially roasted thoroughly in an effort to remove hair and expel internal fluids, reportedly to allow easier separation of the stomach from the abdominal cavity. Once the stomach bulges over the fire, presumably from internal gases, it and glands are removed, and the rest of the meat is then edible.

Sunda Stink-badger appears to be taken not infrequently by hunters in this area. In Rajuk Forest, local people claim that its odour is frequently encountered. The animal's use of riverine habitats close to human paths may make it easy to locate. The impacts, if any, of hunting on the local Stink-badger population are unclear, as is how the population density of Long Ketrok compares with other parts of North Kalimantan. Records, including evidence of scarcity or absence, from other habitats in Kalimantan such as disturbed forests, higher elevations, non-forest habitats and further from watercourses, would help to clarify this species's ecological range. Finally, a more accurate assessment of Sunda Stink-badger's conservation status requires ascertaining impacts of hunting on local populations.

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¹Faculty of Forestry, Mulawarman University, Samarinda, East Kalimantan 75119, Indonesia.

Email: bahandang@gmail.com

²Department of Natural Resources Management, Texas Tech University, Lubbock TX 79409, U.S.A.; and S.P.E.C.I.E.S., LifeScape International,

Lindenhurst, NY 11757, U.S.A.

Email: species1@hotmail.com

A case of colour aberration in Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis* in the Western Ghats, India

Divya MUDAPPA and R. GANESH

Abstract

A colour-aberrant Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis* has been observed over three years near the town of Valparai in the Anamalai hills, Tamil Nadu, India. This individual lacks the black and grey colours on its face, legs and tail-tip and the dark stripe on the neck is pale brown. Thereby, the animal looks uniformly pale orange in colour.

Keywords: Anamalai hills, mutation Brown, pelage coloration, Valparai

The Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis*, the largest of the mongooses in Asia, is found along the Western Ghats in south India and in Sri Lanka. The species occurs in a wide range of habitats ranging from wet evergreen forests to dry deciduous forests, and some non-forest habitats (Mudappa 2013).

The typical pelage colour of the Stripe-necked Mongoose is rufous, sometimes grizzled. The head is small, pointed and greyish in colour. The chest and legs are dark to nearly black in colour. The tail, reddish with a black tip, is usually carried horizontal with the tip turned upwards. The species gets its name from the distinct black stripe, bordered by white, marked on either side of the neck, behind the ears (Fig. 1). Along the Western Ghats, the colour varies: individuals in the southern Western Ghats are redder than those in the northern parts (Van Rompaey & Jayakumar 2003). However, Van Rompaey & Jayakumar (2003) in their review of the species have not reported the occurrence of any colour aberration in Stripe-necked Mongoose.

Here, we report a colour aberration in Stripe-necked Mongoose seen in the town of Valparai, Anamalai hills, Tamil



Fig. 1. A Stripe-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis* of typical colour in Valparai, Anamalai hills, India (July 2010). Note the colours – rufous and grizzled body and tail; dark chest and legs, grey face, black tail-tip (Photo: Kalyan Varma).