

Civets in trade in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia (1997–2001) with notes on legal protection

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Abstract

During wildlife market surveys carried out in North Sumatra, Indonesia, between 1997 and 2001, three species of civets were observed in trade, including Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata* and Small-toothed Palm Civet *Arctogalidia trivirgata*. No harvest quotas are allotted to the latter two species in Indonesia and therefore trade of these is considered illegal. Very little is known of the extent of the trade in civets in Indonesia, or of the impact trade may have on wild populations. This report calls for increased monitoring of the wildlife trade and increased enforcement of wildlife trade regulations. Further research to be carried out on civets and their status in Indonesia is also recommended.

Keywords: CITES, harvest quotas, legal protection, Viverridae, wildlife trade

Abstrak

Selama survei-survei pasar perdagangan satwa liar di Sumatra Utara yang dilakukan dari tahun 1997 sampai tahun 2001, ditemukan tiga jenis musang yang diperdagangkan, yaitu Musang Luwak *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Musang Galing *Paguma larvata* and Musang Akar *Arctogalidia trivirgata*. Kuota penangkapan belum ditetapkan untuk kedua jenis terakhir. Oleh karena itu perdagangan jenis ini merupakan kegiatan ilegal. Belum ada banyak informasi mengenai perdagangan jenis-jenis musang di Indonesia dan belum diketahui dampak dari perdagangan ini terhadap populasi liar. Melalui laporan/kajian ini kami mengusulkan peningkatan pemantauan terhadap perdagangan satwa liar dan peningkatan penerapan aturan-aturan yang mengatur perdagangan satwa liar. Dianjurkan pula penelitian yang lebih mendalam terhadap jenis-jenis musang dan statusnya di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: CITES, musang, Indonesia, Viverridae, perdagangan satwa liar

Introduction

Indonesia is home to 11 species of civets (family Viverridae *sensu lato*), ten of which are found on the island of Sumatra and its associated outlying islands (Corbet & Hill 1992). During surveys carried out in wildlife markets (usually referred to locally as 'bird markets' due to the predominance of caged birds on sale) in Sumatra's largest city, Medan, between 1997 and 2001, civets were frequently observed for sale. Very little is known of the status of civets in Indonesia (Schreiber *et al.* 1989, Holden 2006), or of the impact trade has on these species.

Civets are generally regarded as pests in Indonesia, because they are seen as a threat to orchard fruits and poultry and are often killed on sight, or captured (e.g. Schneider 1905, Van Strien 1982: 104–106, Melisch *et al.* 1993). Captured civets, like many small species of vertebrates in Indonesia, are often taken to local bird markets for sale. Young civets are popular as novelty pets, and are more frequently observed in the markets than are adults.

Only three species of civets are totally protected by national legislation in Indonesia: the Binturong *Arctictis binturong*, Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* and Sulawesi Palm Civet *Macrogalidia musschenbroekii*. The remaining eight species are not totally protected, and therefore may be traded domestically or internationally, following a harvest and export quota system. According to Indonesian regulations, only 10% of the entire legal harvest quota may be used domestically, with the remainder of the harvested volume permitted to be exported (Shepherd *et al.* 2004, Shepherd 2006).

The Decree of the Ministry of Forestry No. 447/Kpts-11/2003 (revised from Decree of the Ministry of Forestry No. 62/Ktps-II/1998) requires any harvest or capture and distribution of wild

plant and animal specimens to be done under a licence. Sending or transporting wildlife from one location to another within Indonesia must be covered by legal documents, according to Article 42, Chapter X of the Regulations of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 (1999), whether the species is protected by law or not. Collectors and suppliers (or middlemen) must be registered with regional offices for the Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), the agency under the Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA, the Indonesian Management Authority of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [CITES]) responsible for the regulation of wildlife trade at the provincial level (Siswomartono 1998).

Quotas are set on an annual basis for all non-protected species, including species listed in the Appendices of CITES and those not there listed. Only two of Indonesia's viverrid species are listed in the Appendices of CITES, Banded Civet *Hemigalus derbyanus* and Banded Linsang *Prionodon linsang*, both in Appendix II (see Table 1). The quota-setting process is conducted annually, via a meeting of various stakeholders including PHKA, and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI, the CITES Scientific Authority), relevant non-government organisations and licensed wildlife traders. The quotas are reported by PHKA to the CITES Secretariat at the beginning of each year. CITES requires science-based assessments, known as 'non-detriment findings', to be carried out prior to the export of a CITES-listed species. These can be undertaken by the authorities themselves, which sometimes rely on collaboration with non-governmental organisations and research institutions. However, such studies are currently not being carried out in any robust fashion prior to the quotas being set and therefore there is no accurate baseline information from which to gauge levels of

Table 1. Status of viverrid species in Indonesia.

| Species | Presence on Sumatra | IUCN Red List status 2007 | Totally Protected in Indonesia | CITES Appendices | Annual national harvest quota | Legal export quota |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Arctictis binturong</i> | Yes | LC | Yes | NA | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Arctogalidia trivirgata</i> | Yes | LC | No | NA | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Cynogale bennettii</i> | Yes | EN | Yes | NA | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Hemigalus derbyanus</i> | Yes | LC | No | II | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Macrogalidia musschenbroekii</i> | No | VU | Yes | NA | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Paguma larvata</i> | Yes | LC | No | NA | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i> | Yes | LC | No | NA | 200 | 180 |
| <i>Paradoxurus lignicolor</i> * | Yes (Mentawai Islands only) | Not assessed | No | NA | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Prionodon linsang</i> | Yes | LC | No | II | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Viverra zangalla</i> | Yes | LC | No | NA | 100 | 90 |
| <i>Viverricula indica</i> | Unclear | LC | No | NA | 100 | 90 |

*Sometimes treated as a subspecies *P. hermaphroditus lignicolor*; IUCN Red List Categories: LC – Least Concern, VU – Vulnerable, EN – Endangered; CITES Appendices: NA – Not listed.

sustainable off-take. Furthermore, the harvest and export limits are not adequately monitored or enforced (Shepherd 2006).

All wildlife traders in Indonesia must be registered with PHKA. Anyone not registered is not permitted to harvest and trade wildlife. National harvest quotas are divided by province, with a limited amount being allowed from each designated area (Table 2). Wildlife cannot be harvested legally from a province that has no allotted quota. If an exporter does not finish the allotted quota in a calendar year, it is forfeited; and the remaining volume that was not realised cannot normally be added to the following year's quota.

Only three civet species, Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Small Indian Civet *Viverricula indica* (sometimes referred to by its former name *V. malaccensis*, as in the 2007 quota) and Malay Civet *Viverra zangalla* have allotted quotas in Indonesia (Table 2), meaning that it is prohibited to capture or trade in any of the other species. Furthermore, the capture of those species that are permitted in trade outside the designated localities is also illegal. Table 2 gives all allotted localities where harvest of civets may take place and the total numbers allowed for harvest and export each year (the Ministry of Forestry, Republic of Indonesia: <http://www.dephut.go.id>).

Very little is known of the trade in civets and other small carnivores in Indonesia. The purpose of this paper is to provide some insight into the trade of these species in bird markets in Indonesia, but more importantly to highlight the fact that the trade in these species is very often carried out in violation of wildlife trade and conservation regulations.

Table 2. Annual harvest and export quotas for civets from designated locations in Indonesia (2006).

| Species | Harvest quota | | Annual export quota |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|---------------------|
| | Location | Total | |
| Malay Civet | South Sumatra | 100 | 90 |
| Small Indian Civet | South Sumatra | 100 | 90 |
| Common Palm Civet | West Java | 50 | 180 |
| | Central Java | 50 | |
| | Lampung | 50 | |
| | North Sumatra | 50 | |
| Total | | 400 | 360 |

Source: Ministry of Forestry, Republic of Indonesia, 2007

Methods

The three largest bird markets in Medan, Jalan Bintang, Petisah and Sembaha, were surveyed on a monthly basis over a five-year period (1997–2001), with species present and the quantities of each recorded. Information was gathered from dealers regarding the origins of the species and purposes for trade. Because surveys were carried out only once a month, it is impossible to gauge the rate of turnover in the markets, and the numbers recorded should be considered a conservative estimate. Additional information was compiled from published and unpublished literature, and from government regulations and laws.

Observations

During monthly surveys in 1997–2001, three species of civets were observed (Table 3), including Common Palm Civet, Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata* and Small-toothed Palm Civet *Arctogalidia trivirgata*. Assuming that none of the civets were in the market for more than a month (dealers claimed that turnover was rapid), a total of 270 civets was observed in the three main bird markets of Medan during this study. Common Palm Civet was the most frequently available species, with a total of 264 individuals observed over this five-year period. Fewer of the other species were observed: only nine Masked Palm Civets and six Small-toothed Palm Civets.

Discussion

While none of these three civets is listed as protected species in Indonesia, there are no harvest quotas for Masked Palm Civet or Small-toothed Palm Civet, and therefore there should be no trade. Of the protected species, dealers stated that Binturong was sometimes available, but had no knowledge of Otter Civet or Sulawesi Palm Civet, which last is endemic to Sulawesi. Dealers acknowledged that they did not have permits to trade in civets, and transit permits were not used. Furthermore, dealers were not aware that quotas were in place and should be adhered to for Common Palm Civet. As a result, all observed trade in civets from the markets of Medan was illegal. These observations highlight the lack of effort regarding monitoring, regulation, and enforcement by the authorities in North Sumatra, and often an ignorance of or a bla-

Table 3. Observations of civets in trade in Medan, North Sumatra, 1997-2001.

| Year | Common Palm Civet | Masked Palm Civet | Small-toothed Palm Civet | Total |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 1997 | 60 | 2 | 0 | 62 |
| 1998 | 33 | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| 1999 | 66 | 1 | 2 | 69 |
| 2000 | 52 | 0 | 2 | 54 |
| 2001 | 53 | 1 | 0 | 54 |
| Total | 264 | 9 | 6 | 279 |

tant disregard for legislation by the dealers. The Government of Indonesia should be encouraged to ensure that the wildlife traders are aware of the annual quotas and to take action against wildlife traders failing to abide by legislation pertaining to harvest, possession, and trade by carrying out arrests and prosecutions which entail sufficient penalties to establish deterrents against future or repeat offences. While none of the three species observed in trade during this study is immediately threatened with extinction, it is clear that little is known of the trade and the potential impacts on wild populations. Further research is required to assess the impact of trade on the conservation status of Indonesia's civets.

Of further concern is the fact that Indonesia has allotted a quota for Small Indian Civet in South Sumatra, whereas the status of this species in Sumatra is uncertain. It is known on the island only from a few records from North Sumatra and there are no published records from southern Sumatra (W. Duckworth *in litt.* 2007), although the harvest and export quota restricts harvest in Indonesia to South Sumatra. Because the status of this species on Sumatra is vague, a zero quota for this species should be implemented immediately until further studies have been carried out.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Fourth Brazilian Mammal Congress

18 – 22 August 2008, São Lourenço, Minas Gerais

The organizing committee of the Fourth Brazilian Mammal Congress would like to announce that, owing to logistical reasons, the date and venue of the Congress have changed. The Congress will be held during 18-22 August 2008, in Hotel Guanabara in the city of São Lourenço, Minas Gerais. Registration forms and more information may be found at the congress website: <http://www.sbmz.org/cbmz2008>. Owing to the increase in the number of participants in recent congresses of the SBMz, this year the congress registration will be limited to 900 participants. The prior congress, held in 2005 in Aracruz, Espírito Santo, had 723 participants, and the 1st South American Congress, held in 2007 in Gramado, Rio Grande do Sul, had nearly 900. An equal or greater number of participants are expected for the Fourth Congress in São Lourenço in 2008. Participants who are current members of the SBMz will receive a discount on registration for the congress.

Organizing Committee: Dr. Marcus Vinicius Vieira (SBMz President), Dr. Helena Bergallo (Vice-President), Dr. Carlos Eduardo de Viveiros Grelle, Dr. Leonardo dos Santos Avilla, Ms. Natalie Olifiers.