

Conservation among oil palm plantations? Mammalian diversity in protected forest areas of a mixed-use landscape in Indonesian Borneo

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Abstract

Conservation among oil palm plantations? Mammalian diversity in protected forest areas of a mixed-use landscape in Indonesian Borneo. Deforestation for land-use change in Borneo has global impacts on biodiversity. Mixed-use landscapes are spatially integrative countermeasures to conserve critical forest habitats for wildlife along with economic development. We used camera-traps to inventory remnant mammalian diversity, species richness, detection counts, and diel activity functions in protected forest areas in a large oil palm plantation landscape in East Kalimantan, Bornean Indonesia. From among 2,286 independent detections of species, our results provide evidence of the presence of at least 33 mammals in these forest areas, including species of high conservation value such as the critically endangered Bornean orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus* and the Sunda pangolin *Manis javanica*. Additionally, we provide diel activity patterns for 14 of the detected species and reflect on their meaning in the context of their habitat. Due to plantation activities, the protected areas may underlie characteristic ecological dynamics with an impoverished large carnivore guild and a majority of small mammals and small carnivores interacting as predator and prey. Abundant oil palm crops likely benefit large populations of small mammals (highest detection counts) while simultaneously supplying resources for a diverse carnivore community (highest species-richness) preying on small mammals. We highlight the potential of the forested protected areas as wildlife refugia in mixed-use landscapes for conservation and production efforts. We recommend further monitoring to ensure fulfilling this potential in the continuous management.

Key words: Borneo, Biodiversity, Diel activities, Protected areas, Ecosystem services, Camera-trapping

Resumen

¿Medidas de conservación en las plantaciones de palma aceitera? La diversidad de mamíferos en zonas forestales protegidas de un paisaje de uso mixto en la parte de Borneo perteneciente a Indonesia. La deforestación para cambiar el uso del suelo en Borneo tiene repercusiones mundiales en la biodiversidad. Los paisajes de uso mixto son contramedidas espacialmente integradoras dirigidas a conservar hábitats forestales críticos para la vida silvestre junto con el desarrollo económico. Usamos cámaras trampa para hacer un inventario de la diversidad de mamíferos remanente que incluye la riqueza de especies, recuentos de detección y las funciones de actividad diurna en las zonas forestales protegidas de un extenso territorio de plantaciones de palma aceitera en Kalimantan Oriental, en Borneo (Indonesia). De las 2.286 detecciones independientes de especies, nuestros resultados indican la presencia de un mínimo de 33 mamíferos en las zonas forestales, incluidas especies de alto valor de conservación, como el orangután de Borneo, *Pongo pygmaeus*, en peligro crítico de extinción, y el pangolín de Sunda, *Manis javanica*. Además, proporcionamos los patrones de actividad diurna de 14 de las especies detectadas y reflexionamos sobre su significado en el contexto de su hábitat. Debido a las actividades de plantación, en las zonas protegidas puede subyacer una dinámica ecológica característica con un gremio de grandes carnívoros empobrecido y una mayoría de pequeños mamíferos y pequeños carnívoros que interactúan como depredadores y presas. Los abundantes cultivos de palma aceitera como recurso probablemente

beneficien a grandes poblaciones de pequeños mamíferos (los conteos de detección más elevados) y, a su vez, abastezcan a una comunidad diversa de carnívoros (la mayor riqueza de especies) que se alimentan de pequeños mamíferos. Destacamos la posibilidad de utilizar las zonas forestales protegidas como refugios de vida silvestre en paisajes de uso mixto en las iniciativas de conservación y producción. Recomendamos hacer un mayor seguimiento para que esta posibilidad se pueda materializar en la gestión continua.

Palabras clave: Borneo, Biodiversidad, Actividades diurnas, Zonas protegidas, Servicios ecosistémicos, Cámaras trampa

Introduction

Tropical forests host an estimated half to two-thirds of the Earth's species (Dirzo and Raven 2003, Barlow et al 2016) but are also the most threatened forest biomes, accounting for over half the deforestation on Earth (Potapov et al 2017). The island of Borneo in Southeast Asia is a hotspot for both tropical forest biodiversity and severe deforestation (Myers et al 2000, de Bruyn et al 2014). Thanks to its evolutionary old age and isolated geography at the barrier of Wallace's Line, Borneo has an extraordinary richness of species and functions (de Bruyn et al 2014). However, since the 1930s, over half of the island's forest habitat has disappeared (van Steenis 1935, Langner et al 2007, Cushman et al 2017), largely due to land-use change for commercial palm oil *Elaeis guineensis* cultivation (Gaveau et al 2018, Meijaard et al 2018). The increasing national and international demands for palm oil produced in Indonesia, with its leading production area in Borneo (Abood et al 2015), have grown to dominate the country's economy (Varkkey, 2012), and are expected to be met with plantation expansions or sharp yield improvements by 2025 (Khatiwada et al 2021). Mitigation strategies are thus needed to trade off economic demands and an intensifying biodiversity crisis (Strang and Rusli 2021).

Because oil palm plantations fail to substitute habitats for many forest species (Yue et al 2015, Harich and Treydte, 2016), forest persistence and integrity form the most important basis to mitigate biodiversity loss (Dirzo and Raven, 2003, Lee and Jetz, 2008). Given that potentially productive land is seldom assigned for sparing on large scales (e.g., by establishing national parks; Fischer et al 2013), alternative strategies for forest conservation are spatially integrative countermeasures (Hutton and Leader-Williams 2003, Meijaard et al 2018). Such measures integrate protected area networks into 'mixed-use' landscapes, resulting in a fragmented mosaic of land used for economical purposes, typically used for cultivation of commercial crops, and compensational areas aiming to conserving the ecological values of the overall landscape, such as biodiversity forest habitats (Stuebing 2007). Although mixed land use for oil palm plantations along with protected forests has been widely introduced across Borneo, few data on the conservation potential for biodiversity is collected and shared, and establishment and report remains voluntary (Nurhidayah and Alam 2020).

Previous studies from Borneo suggest that several mammal species in protected forest patches within oil palm plantations withstand human disturbance and habitat fragmentation (Wahyudi and Stuebing 2013, Love et al 2018, Milne et al 2021). Their remnant diversity is what mediates the functionality of the protected areas within the mixed-use landscape as ecosystems (Flynn et al 2009). A diverse mammal community can drive ecological dynamics for the integrity of their habitats, but it can also provide ecosystem services benefitting economic activities, such as, for example, via key roles in bioturbation, nutrient cycling, seed and spore dispersal, and pollination (Lacher et al 2019). Moreover, predation pressures have regulatory effects on ecosystem dynamics by limiting populations (Sinclair et al 2003), which can also include crop pests (Williams et al 2018). For preying on rodent pests in South African rural farming crops, Williams et al (2018) ascribed small carnivores great potential to replace the use of environmentally problematic poisons. Inventories of mammalian diversity thus provide a crucial baseline for planning and managing mixed-use landscapes in the interest of both conservationists and economists.

Mammalian diversity of relevance to assess the utility of mixed-use landscapes for conservation and ecosystem services includes taxonomic diversity, commonly measured as species richness and evenness, and functional diversity as traits in ecological niches (Mason and De Bello 2013). Species diel activity niches, for example, reflect adaptations to temporal regimes, largely of predation or competition, resource availability, and human disturbance (Hut et al 2012, Gaynor et al 2018). Despite a long coevolution of temporal partitioning between predator and prey (Wu et al 2018), interactions with human disturbance can create complex activity patterns in mammals. A study from the US found that an overarching drive to temporally avoid human activities led rodents and lagomorphs to avoid their coyote predator less in human-disturbed areas (Caldwell and Klip, 2022). Red foxes in Spain, on the other hand, avoided human diel activity patterns more than matching those of their lagomorph prey (Díaz-Ruiz et al 2016). Although in Bornean mixed-use landscapes, we can expect humans to disturb the mammals' habitat (Yasuda and Tsuyuki, 2012), the landscape is also characterized by habitat heterogeneity and high resource abundance starting with cultivated oil palm crops, which may be able to nourish a high level of mammalian diversity (Williams et al 2018).

Here, we provide rare insight into the mammalian diversity of fragmented forest conservation patches, protected by a large-scale palm oil production company in Bornean Indonesia. Using camera-traps as effective tools to sample a large set of ground-dwelling mammals, we report our species detections with special emphasis on their conservation value (i.e., rare and threatened species; Butchart et al 2006). Furthermore, from detection counts and extrapolated diel activity patterns, we estimated potential functions within the forest ecosystem (e.g., interaction dynamics) and their services to the plantation activities (e.g., crop pest control). Our findings provide insight into using mixed-use landscapes as an approach to biodiversity conservation and may guide decision-makers in the future.

Material and methods

Study area

Our study area is situated on the island of Borneo, in the Indonesian province East Kalimantan, within the Upper Belayan River Basin. It covers a network of protected forest areas that constitute an integrated part of a mixed-use landscape that constitute an integrated part of a mixed-use landscape, serving the production of palm oil for the global market. This land is currently under the management of UK-based company PT.REA Kaltim Plantations and Group (hereafter, REA) that has been granted rights to cultivate ('Hak Guna Usaha'). During their initial operations from 1996 to 2019, REA constituted c. 2.5% of the province's palm oil cultivation (Directorate General of Estate Crops 2019). Since 2007, the company has been pursuing sustainable management using the mixed-use landscape approach. At the time of our data collection, REA's concession of c. 800 km², covered c. 360 km² of land converted for oil palm cultivation and c. 200 km² fragmented protected areas. Under the local lowland tropical climate, these areas comprise mainly humid and dipterocarp secondary forest remnants, regenerated from wildfires or logging (Goldammer and Seibert 1990, Hoffmann et al 2000), or old swidden cultivation for at least 12 to 20 years. These protected areas also include a few remnant primary forest patches, peat swamps, wetlands, steep areas, riparian buffers, and other land types considered unsuitable economic land. Habitats surrounding REA's concession have been extensively logged for timber by the company and local communities, leaving it in a highly degraded state.

Camera-trapping protocol

From June 8th 2018 to December 16th 2019, we surveyed REA's protected areas over a total area of 140,12 km², using camera-traps (Bushnell Trophy Cam HD, USA; fig. 1). We attached the camera-traps to tree trunks 30 cm above ground and cleared the vegetation in front of the camera to 2-4 m. Sampling locations were chosen to maximize detection probabilities of ground-dwelling mammals, that is, at water sources, natural salt licks, fruiting trees, and animal trails as signs of recent activity (Gordon and Stewart 2007). To further enhance trapping success, we placed lure-

coated sticks (O'Gorman's Powder River Paste Bait, USA) in front of our cameras. This lure was initially designed for carnivorous mammals, yet has attracted the attention of numerous wildlife species in previously collected data from the study area. Monthly relocations of our camera-traps to further sampling locations helped us to expand the spatial coverage and resulted in 357 deployments and 10,714 (mean: 29.46, range: 20-35) trap nights per deployment). Collected image data were identified to species level when possible. To ensure independence of species detection events, we kept only one species record per hour per sampling location and disregarded the number of individuals. Due to often insufficient image quality resulting in especially high numbers of misidentifications in smaller, barely distinctive species (REF) (Clevenger et al 2013), we grouped small mammals into three major families, Tupaiidae, Sciuridae, and Muridae, and only used their detection counts for our analysis. It is of note, however, that Muridae detections are predominantly represented by relatively large rat species, while smaller mice are particularly difficult to detect. Similarly, due to rather fine-scale distinguishing characteristics in local muntjac and chevrotain species, we report them on genus level, i.e., *Muntiacus* and *Tragulus* spp., respectively. Therefore, when we refer to 'species' detections, each of these groups (Tupaiidae, Sciuridae, Muridae, *Muntiacus* spp. and *Tragulus* spp.) is considered to represent at least one.

Diel activity analysis

With little seasonal variation in the tropical climate and constant activities within the oil palm plantation sites, we did not account for seasonality in our data analyses. Furthermore, the diel photoperiod remained largely stable throughout the study and refers to the marked sunrise at c. 5:30 h and sunset at c. 18:30 h \pm < 0.5 h in East Kalimantan's capital, Samarinda (BMKG 2020). Time-stamped camera-trap samples during this period show the proportion of detections of species at a given time of day. Following Niedballa et al (2019), we extrapolated diel activity patterns of species with > 20 independent detections and broadly classified them as diurnal, nocturnal, crepuscular, or cathemeral (van Schaik and Griffiths 1996). We did this by plotting the density distributions of their diel detections non-parametrically, using kernel density functions (Ridout and Linkie 2009) with a von Mises kernel and density curves fitted by nonnegative trigonometric functions (Meredith and Ridout 2016). All statistics were performed in R 4.0.2 (R Core Team 2020).

Results

Species detections

Our camera-trap survey yielded significant insight into the mammalian diversity of the protected forest areas of REA's mixed-use landscape. We documented detection of 2,286 independent species of which we identified at least 33 mammal species (table 1). Among these, we report species of particularly high conservation value, including vulnerable carnivores

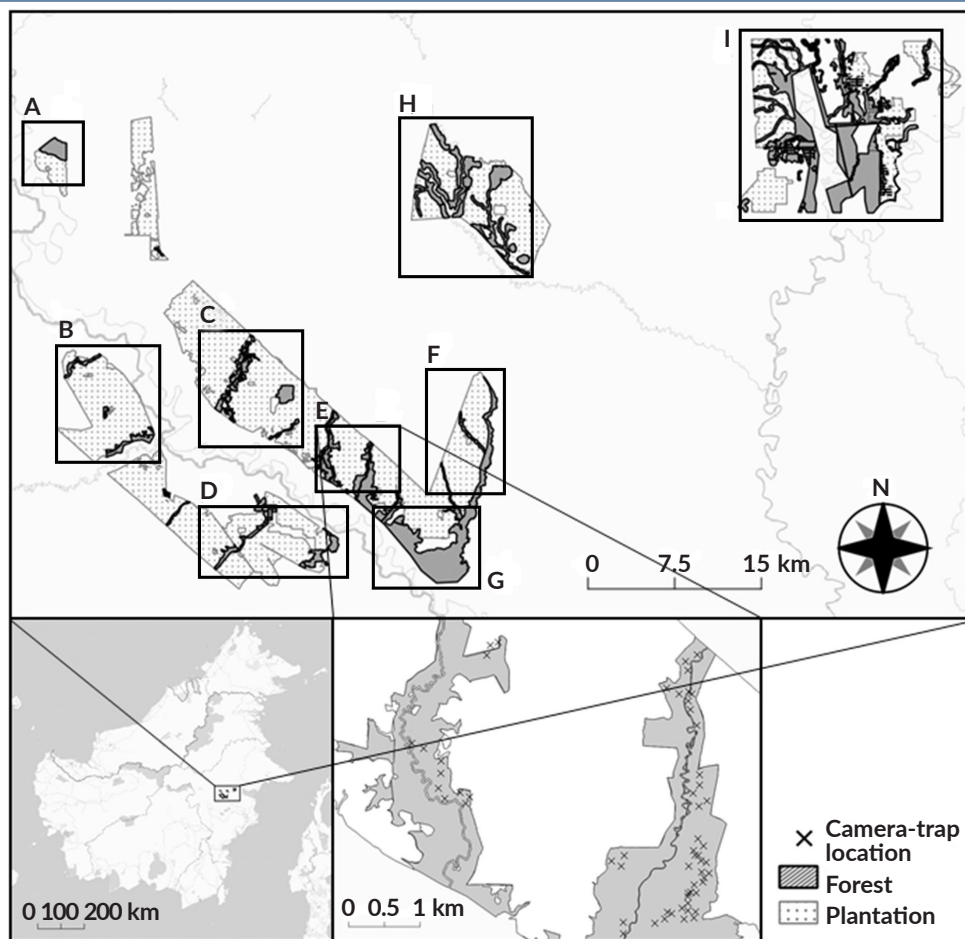


Fig. 1. Map of the mixed-used landscape on PT.REA Kaltim Plantations concession ($0^{\circ}15'N$, $116^{\circ}11'E$) in East Kalimantan, Bornean Indonesia. Oil palm plantations (dotted areas) are traversed by conservation reserves of predominantly secondary forest (striped areas). Camera-traps were relocated monthly across the protected forest areas, resulting in 26 deployments in block A, 28 deployments in block B, 68 deployments in block C, 37 deployments in block D, 60 deployments in block E (camera-trap locations depicted by crosses), 49 deployments in block F, 27 deployments in block G, 57 deployments in block H, and 5 deployments in block I.

Fig. 1. Mapa del paisaje de uso mixto en la concesión de plantaciones PT.REA Kaltim ($0^{\circ}15'N$, $116^{\circ}11'E$) en Kalimantan Oriental, en Borneo (Indonesia). Las plantaciones de palma aceitera (áreas punteadas) están atravesadas por reservas ocupadas predominantemente por bosques secundarios dedicadas a la conservación (áreas rayadas). Las cámaras trampa se cambiaron de sitio una vez al mes dentro de las zonas forestales protegidas, lo que dio lugar a 26 instalaciones en el bloque A, 28 instalaciones en el bloque B, 68 instalaciones en el bloque C, 37 instalaciones en el bloque D, 60 instalaciones en el bloque E (las ubicaciones de las cámaras trampa se indican con cruces), 49 instalaciones en el bloque F, 27 instalaciones en el bloque G, 57 instalaciones en el bloque H y 5 instalaciones en el bloque I.

such as the Sunda clouded leopard *Neofelis diardi* and the binturong *Arctictis binturong*, as well as, instead and critically endangered species such as the Bornean orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus*, and the Sunda pangolin *Manis javanica* (IUCN 2021). Almost half of our species inventory (45.46%) is based on rare detections with an independent detection count of < 10. Across all species detected, carnivores were most diverse regarding species richness (16 species, comprising mainly small carnivores), although their overall detection count was relatively low (fig. 2). The most frequently detected species were rodents (984 independent detections), with 87.7% being rats (Muridae) and squirrels (Sciuridae). Together with the similarly-classified family of treeshrews (Tupaiaidae) as the only representative of the order Scandentia, they

constitute a large part of all small mammal detections (43.18%). We also frequently camera-trapped Primates and Artiodactyla (499 and 295 independent detections, respectively), while we could identify a minimum species richness of 5 and 4, respectively, at the same time. Eulipotyphla and Pholidota were both only represented by one species (the moonrat *Echinosorex gymnura* and Sunda pangolin *Manis javanica*), yet moonrats were also relatively frequently detected (225 independent detections) while the pangolin appeared only 8 times.

Diel activity patterns

Based on detection frequencies across the diel cycle, we were able to extrapolate activity patterns for 14 of our recorded mammal species (fig. 3). We found distinct variations in detection frequencies according to the presence

Table 1. Camera-trapping inventory of mammals observed in the protected forest areas of PT.REA Kaltim Plantations, East Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo, in 2018/19. Species counts and independent detection counts are given for order and family levels. Muridae can be biased towards larger rat species due to camera-trapping limitations. Species are presented by their individual independent detection counts and conservation status category according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (LC least concern, NT near threatened, VU vulnerable, EN endangered, CR critically endangered, DD data deficient; IUCN, 2021).

Tabla 1. Inventarios de los mamíferos captados por las cámaras obtenidos de las zonas forestales protegidas de PT.REA Kaltim Plantations, en Kalimantan Oriental, en Borneo (Indonesia), en 2018/19. Los conteos de las especies y los conteos de detección independientes se indican a nivel de orden y de familia. Debido a las limitaciones de las cámaras, es posible que los muridos estén sobrerrepresentados por incluir a especies de roedores más grandes. Las especies están representadas por sus conteos individuales de detección independiente y su estado de conservación según la Lista Roja de la UICN de Especies Amenazadas™ (LC preocupación menor, NT casi amenazado, VU vulnerable, EN en peligro, CR en peligro crítico, DD datos insuficientes; UICN, 2021).

Order					
Family					
Species	Common name	IUCN	Species count	Detection count	
Artiodactyla			4	295	
Cervidae			2	27	
<i>Rusa unicolor</i>	Sambar deer	VU		12	
<i>Muntiacus</i> spp.	Muntjac	-		15	
Suidae			1	52	
<i>Sus barbatus</i>	Bearded pig	VU		52	
Tragulidae			1	216	
<i>Tragulus</i> spp.	Chevrotain	LC		216	
Carnivora			16	151	
Felidae			3	22	
<i>Neofelis diardi</i>	Sunda clouded leopard	VU		1	
<i>Pardofelis marmorata</i>	Marbled cat	NT		4	
<i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i>	Leopard cat	LC		17	
Herpestidae			1	7	
<i>Herpestes brachyurus</i>	Short-tailed mongoose	NT		7	
Mustelidae			4	11	
<i>Aonyx cinereus</i>	Asian small-clawed otter	VU		6	
<i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i>	Smooth-coated otter	VU		2	
<i>Martes flavigula</i>	Yellow-throated marten	LC		2	
<i>Mustela nudipes</i>	Malay weasel	LC		1	
Prionodontidae			1	2	
<i>Prionodon linsang</i>	Banded linsang	LC		2	
Ursidae			1	35	
<i>Helarctos malayanus</i>	Sun bear	VU		35	
Viverridae			5	74	
<i>Arctictis binturong</i>	Binturong	VU		1	
<i>Arctogalidia trivirgata</i>	Small-toothed palm civet	LC		3	
<i>Hemigalus derbyanus</i>	Banded palm civet	NT		11	
<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i>	Common palm civet	LC		24	
<i>Paguma larvata</i>	Masked palm civet	LC		2	
<i>Viverra zangluna</i>	Malay civet	LC		33	
Eulipotyphla			1	225	
Erinaceidae			1	225	
<i>Echinosorex gymnura</i>	Moonrat	LC		225	
Pholidota			1	8	
Manidae			1	8	
<i>Manis javanica</i>	Sunda pangolin	CR		8	

Table 1. (Cont.)

Order					
Family					
Species	Common name	IUCN	Species count	Detection count	
Primates			5	499	
Cercopithecidae			3	444	
<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	Crab-eating macaque	VU		153	
<i>Macaca nemestrina</i>	Southern pig-tailed macaque	EN		290	
<i>Nasalis larvatus</i>	Proboscis monkey	EN		1	
Hominidae			1	54	
<i>Pongo pygmaeus</i>	Bornean orangutan	CR		54	
Tarsiidae			1	1	
<i>Cephalopachus bancanus</i>	Horsfield's tarsier	VU		1	
Rodentia			5	984	
Muridae					
	Rat	-		88	
Sciuridae					
	Squirrel	LC		775	
Hystricidae			3	121	
<i>Hystrix brachyura</i>	Malayan porcupine	LC		45	
<i>Hystrix crassispinis</i>	Thick-spined porcupine	LC		71	
<i>Trichys fasciculata</i>	Long-tailed porcupine	LC		5	
Scandentia			1	124	
Tupaiaidae					
<i>Tupaia</i> spp.	Treeshrew	LC		124	

of daylight in over half of them (64.29%): Squirrel species (Sciuridae), the bearded pig *Sus barbatus*, recorded primates (Bornean orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus*, crab-eating macaque *Macaca fascicularis*, and Southern pig-tailed macaque *M. nemestrina*) showed clear diurnal activity patterns, contrasting to the moonrat *Echinorex gymnura*, rat species (Muridae), treeshrew species (Tupaiaidae), and the thick-spined porcupine *Hystrix crassispinis* that were predominantly detected at night. We found the activity peak of the thick-spined porcupine just before sunrise, while the close-related Malayan porcupine *H. brachyura* was most active shortly after sunset. Cathemeral activity patterns of multiple activity peaks without clear preference for phases of daylight were exhibited by the Malayan porcupine as well as the presented small carnivore species (common palm civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* and Malay civet *Viverra zibetha*).

Discussion

Our findings provide comprehensive indications about the conservation status and potential functional roles of mammalian diversity in the protected forest areas of REA's mixed-use landscape in Borneo. Despite the pressure of human disturbances in form of plantation activities adjacent to the habitat fragments, we

inventoried a rich species community, including even several species of high conservation value that were rarely detected and internationally classified to be threatened by extinction. It remains unclear whether the protected habitat patches buffer the disappearance of a formerly intact community or whether they may sustain the mammals in a long-term manner. However, we identified a landscape-specific ecological dynamic in the area: Bottom-up from abundant oil palm crops, this dynamic seems to be largely driven by small mammal and small carnivore predator-prey interactions. Small mammals, that may likely benefit from the oil palm fruits as well as their insect pests, were detected extremely frequently and showed distinct diurnal or nocturnal activity. We found their cathemeral small carnivore predators to be the species-richest group. Moreover, herbivorous or partly herbivorous primates, Artiodactyla, and also insectivorous moonrats, were strongly represented in our data. Large predators, such as the Sunda clouded leopard, were rarely detected. In view of these dynamics, the sustainability of wildlife refugia within these mixed-use landscapes with plant cultivation focus requires careful consideration.

When grouping taxa according to our identification method (Muridae, Sciuridae, and Scandidae families, and *Muntiacus* and *Tragulus* genera), camera-trap sur-

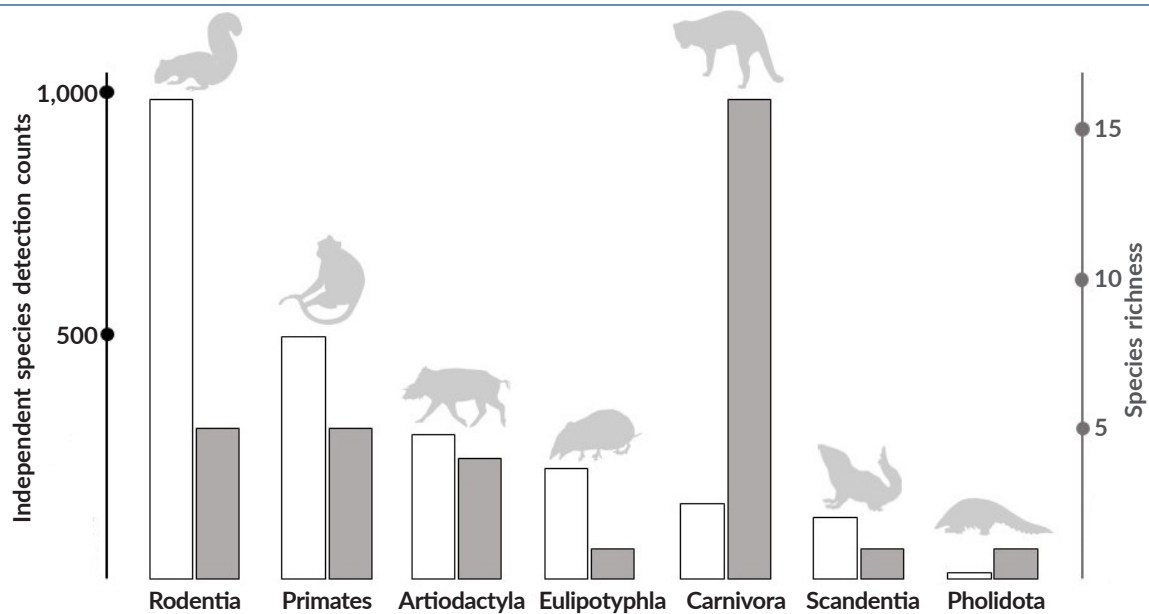


Fig. 2. Independent species detection counts (white bars) and minimum species richness (grey bars) for camera-trapped mammal orders in protected forest areas within oil palm plantations in East Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo. Rodentia are represented by Hystricidae and grouped detections for the families Muridae and Scuriidae, and Scandentia are grouped by Tupaiidae. Artiodactyla include grouped detections for *Muntiacus* and *Tragulus* spp.

Fig. 2. Conteos independientes de detección de especies (barras blancas) y riqueza de especies mínima (barras grises) de los órdenes de mamíferos capturados con las cámaras en zonas forestales protegidas situadas entre plantaciones de palmas aceiteras en Kalimantan Oriental, en Borneo (Indonesia). Los roedores están representados por la familia Hystricidae, las detecciones agrupan de las familias Muridae y Scuriidae y las detecciones agrupan de Tupaiidae. Artiodactyla incluye las detecciones agrupadas de *Muntiacus* y *Tragulus* spp.

vey results from other Bornean forest habitats yielded a similarly high species richness of 33, such as 36 mammals in Malaysian Sabah (Wearn et al 2016) and 35 mammals in Indonesian East Kalimantan (Wall et al 2021). In mixed-use landscapes, only a small share of species occupies both forest and plantation areas, as McShea et al (2009) showed in Malaysian Borneo. There, 18 out of 24 mammals used *Acacia* plantations for transiting or foraging activities, while maintaining a close distance to the next forest (McShea et al 2009). Similar forest associations have been observed in orangutans and in Amazonian mammals in oil palm plantations (Ancrenaz et al 2015, Mendes-Oliveira et al 2017), suggesting the indispensability of forest refugia for wild mammals in mixed-use landscapes.

Regulatory regimes within the protected areas, e.g., originating from mammalian predators or humans, may act as diversely as is the mammal community. Responses to human disturbances, such as those from activities in adjacent plantation areas, can be expressed in temporal avoidance (Caldwell and Klip, 2022). Commonly, this results in increased nocturnality activity due to mainly diurnal human activity (Gaynor et al 2018), yet plantation and protected areas differ. For example, capybaras in Colombia were more nocturnal in oil palm plantations than in adjacent riparian forests (Pardo et al 2021), suggesting that habitat reserves can release wildlife from temporal partitioning against their preferred niche. We found activity patterns in the protected forest areas to

be widely within the species' biological norm (Bernard et al 2013, Mohd-Azlan et al 2018, Ruppert et al 2018). Even those known to show high adaptability in their diel activity, e.g., bearded pigs, corresponded to their undisturbed diurnal activity pattern (Mohd-Azlan, 2004). Under human disturbances from visitors or hunters, they have been found to exhibit cathemeral or nocturnal patterns, respectively (Mohd-Azlan and Engkamat 2013, Mohd-Azlan et al 2018). Moreover, our results indicate that predation pressure plays a minor role for medium- to large-sized mammals, such as bearded pigs, macaques, or chevrotains, as we found an impoverished equivalent large carnivore community. We detected a Sunda clouded leopard only once. As opposed to small mammals, large carnivores in particular are prone to be highly disturbed by the presence of humans (Suraci et al 2019). This could be observed in black bears that avoided areas of high human presence, where a predator-prey community of rodents, lagomorphs, and coyotes thrived (Caldwell and Klip 2022).

While most mammals seem to be resilient habitation in REA's protected areas, the community appears to follow dynamics characteristic to mixed-use landscapes.

Plantations provide resources that may be a prevailing factor for ecological dynamics in mammal communities and their ecosystems. For instance, abundantly cultivated fruits of oil palms may form a basis for correspondingly abundant animal populations feeding

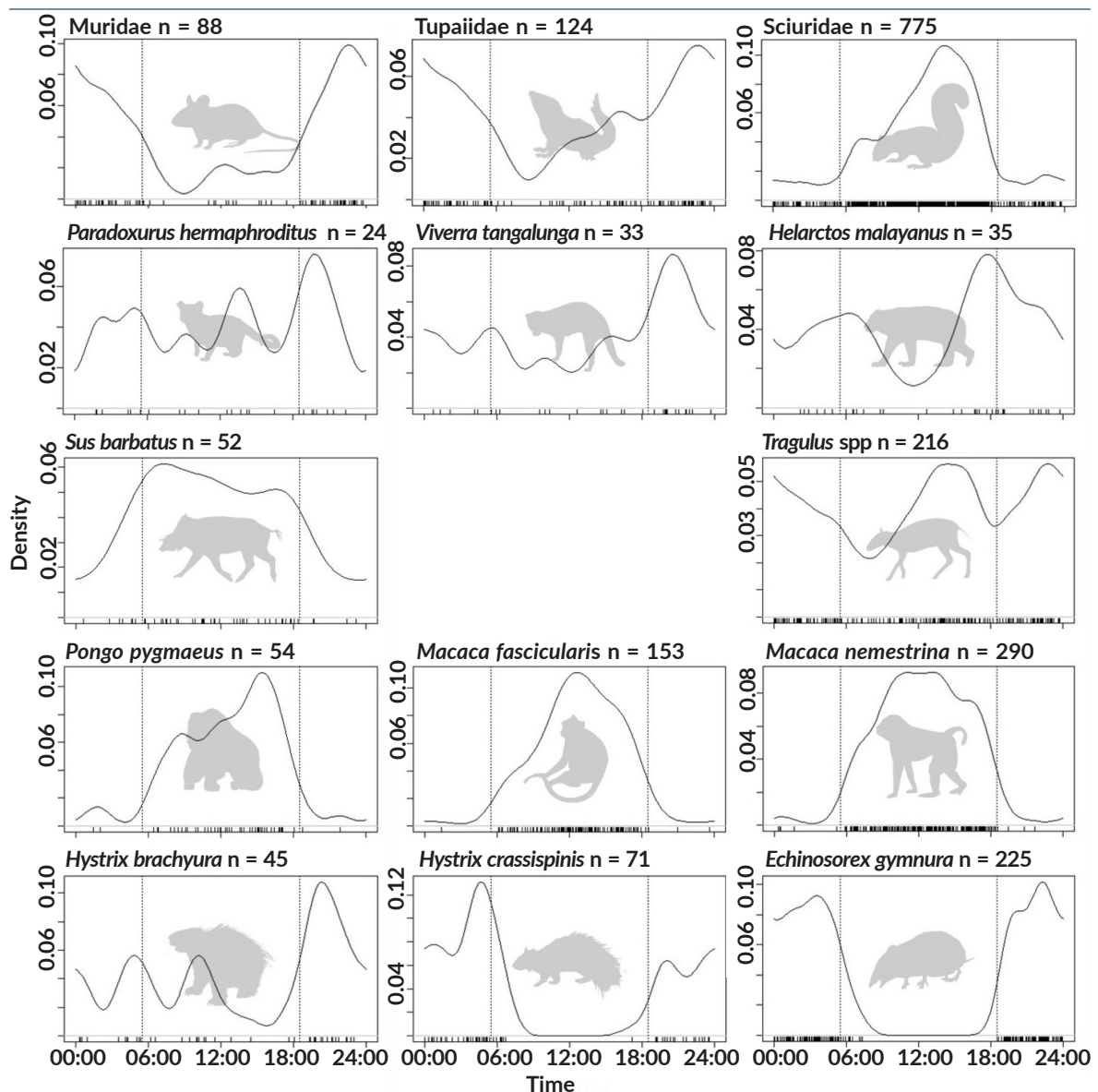


Fig. 3. Diel activity plots showing kernel density curves of proportional species detection counts over 24 hours. Sunrise and sunset are marked by dotted lines. Each plot is based on more than 20 independent detections (the exact count is represented by the sample size n for each species). The data were collected using camera-traps in protected forest areas in a mixed-use landscape among oil palm cultivation activities by PT.REA Kaltim Plantations, East Kalimantan, Bornean Indonesia. Muridae can be biased towards larger rat species due to camera-trapping limitations.

Fig. 3. Gráficos de la actividad diurna en los que se muestran las curvas de la densidad del kernel de los conteos proporcionales de la detección de especies durante 24 horas. La salida y la puesta de Sol se marcan con líneas discontinuas. Cada gráfico se basa en más de 20 detecciones independientes (el número exacto está representado por el tamaño de la muestra n de cada especie). Los datos se recopilieron utilizando cámaras trampa en zonas forestales protegidas en un paisaje de usos mixtos en el que PT.REA Kaltim Plantations llevan a cabo actividades de cultivo de palma aceitera en Kalimantan Oriental, en Borneo (Indonesia). Debido a las limitaciones de las cámaras, es posible que los muridos estén sobrerrepresentados por incluir a especies de roedores más grandes.

on them (Narayana et al 2024). These populations include semi-arboreal primates such as macaques and orangutan (fig. 4), civets, and, foremost, small mammals such as rats, squirrels, and treeshrews (Meijaard et al 2018). In high numbers, small mammals can become pests to the economic efforts of the plantations, yet in their role as prey, they can also supply carnivore com-

munities of, for example, felids, civets, and mustelids (Moreno-Rueda and Pizarro 2010). We emphasize that small mammal species can provide diverse temporal niches (e.g., competing nocturnal rats and diurnal squirrels) that may promote a diversity of sympatric predators overlapping with their diel activities. In line with previous studies that have pointed to the



Fig. 4. Bornean orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus* camera-trapped in a subsequent 2020/21 survey, while feeding on the red fruits of an oil palm *Elaeis guineensis* in a protected forest area among oil palm plantations in East Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo.

Fig. 4. El orangután de Borneo *Pongo pygmaeus* captado por una cámara en un estudio posterior de 2020/21, mientras se alimenta de los frutos rojos de una palma aceitera *Elaeis guineensis* en una zona forestal protegida entre plantaciones de palmas aceiteras en Kalimantan Oriental, en Borneo (Indonesia).

predator-prey relationship between small mammals and small carnivores of oil palm plantations (Jennings et al 2015, Verwilghen 2015, Nurdiansyah et al 2016), we recorded the highest detection counts in small mammals and the highest species richness in small carnivores, which may be additionally released from predation pressure in absence of large carnivores. Williams et al (2018) reported comparable findings of crop areas supporting most small carnivore species. Thus, in the context of resource-rich ecosystems such as mixed-use landscapes with fruit-bearing plants at the base, bottom-up forces may be the prime driver of their dynamics.

Although we can expect Bornean mixed-use landscapes (*sensu* Stuebing 2007) to be severely impacted by humans, these landscapes are also characterized by habitat heterogeneity and high resource abundance, shaping a special ecological dynamic (Narayana et al 2024). After roughly 40 years of extensive oil palm cultivation in REA, our findings reaffirm the potential of spatially integrative countermeasures to conserve a valuable mammalian diversity within protected forest areas, functioning to support the stability and services of their ecosystems (Emmerson et al 2016, Lacher et al 2019). Mitigating threats posed by deforestation in this stronghold for global biodiversity (de Bruyn et al 2014) is of major importance, as the mammals of Borneo's lowland forests have already lost roughly one third of functionally connected habitat over

the last four decades (Ocampo-Peñuela et al 2020), which has led to rapid population declines (FAO and UNEP, 2020). The amount of forest among plantations was previously estimated to be the best measure of conservation potential (Naranjo and Bodmer 2007). Facilitating conservation and production support through forest areas in mixed-use landscapes relies on ecological guidance for decision-makers based on assessments from the field that document the status and developments. Despite valuable insights gained from this study, methodological differences allow only limited links to past states of the area, such as during the first species inventory in 2008-2012 (Wahyudi and Stuebing 2013), only one year after REA has implemented first conservation actions.

We propose further monitoring is needed to provide key momentum for timely adaptations in conservation management (DeFries et al 2010, Rovero and Ahumada et al 2017), based on further continuity and an improved survey standard. Temporal effort as a main factor for inventorying species (Tobler et al 2008) has been surpassed when comparing our over 10,000 trap nights with a species accumulation curve plateau of 4,600 trap nights in Malaysian Borneo (Azlan 2006). However, taking into account the different habitat types in mixed-use landscapes as well as the vertical habitat stratification of tropical forests from forest floors into canopies might further advance the completeness of survey results. For example, ground-based

camera-traps can represent a significant portion of the mammal community, but arboreal camera-traps can improve species detections by a further 12%, as shown for strictly arboreal species (Moore et al 2020). Also, tracking species across habitat types, including the plantations they use (Harich and Treydte 2016) and the forest strata, may help capture a more complete spectrum of activities in order to interpret their lives in the mixed-use landscape (Haysom et al 2023). Sun bears, for example, might not be as nocturnal as their detections on our camera-traps indicate. While a similar nocturnality was found in several camera-trapping studies (Guharajan et al 2018, Nakabayashi et al 2021), radiotelemetry previously provided insight into a rather diurnal pattern (Te Wong et al 2004), suggesting foraging activities in the trees. Future surveys could act as reliable early-warning systems regarding land-use impacts, saving temporal efforts by half while extending spatial efforts by combining ground-based and arboreal camera-traps.

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Author contributions

K. Kasper: conceptualization, validation, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, writing original draft; **N. Devriance:** conceptualization, methodology, investigation, validation, writing, review and editing; **K. Aran:** conceptualization, methodology, investigation and validation; **B. Martin:** conceptualization, investigation, writing, review and editing.

Conflicts of interest

No conflicts declared.

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