

Study of Proboscis Monkey at Bako National Park (Past, Present and Future) and its Implication to the Park Management

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Abstract

Proboscis monkey (*Nasalis larvatus*) and also popularly known as Orang Belanda or Rasong to the local people, is a totally protected animal in Sarawak, a species endemic to Borneo. At present, there are only five recorded sites in Sarawak where proboscis monkey can be found namely Bako National Park, Samunsam Wildlife Sanctuary, Maludam National Park, Kuching Wetland National Park and the Kuala Lawas Forest Reserve. It has been estimated by Salter & Mackenzie (1985) that only about 2000 individuals are found in Sarawak. Few studies have been done at Bako National Park since the past 20 years. Salter & Mackenzie, among the first researchers in 1981 has estimated a population of about 106 to 144 proboscis monkeys, students led by Brundell from University of Nottingham in 1990 estimated 213 individuals, Zaini & Illias (2004 & 2005) estimated 275 and 111 individuals respectively found at Bako. It is suggested that continuous follow-up studies should be done, either adopting past methodologies or introducing new effective ones, and also to consider applying the Population Viability Analysis (PVA) and Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) models, a new know-how to predict future population and probability of extinction. Proboscis at Bako has now become the focal icon to the park and visitors of which must be well managed to ensure its viability and healthy habitat. Its therefore, very relevant for scientists and experts to enhance studies on proboscis monkeys, not only for Sarawak but be able to incorporate their studies with other neighboring states and countries in Borneo, such as Sabah, Brunei and Kalimantan Indonesia.
