

Project Update: May 2013

The Bornean Wild Cats Veterinary Project has been recognised as a wildlife research programme by the Sabah Wildlife Department since October 2012. In the beginning of 2013, the project to began the capture and sampling of the carnivores of the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary.

During these first months, we can distinguish the following aspects within the project:

- Live trapping.
- Wildlife casualties reports.
- Participation in conferences.

Live trapping

Within live trapping operations, we make a distinction between small felids/carnivores trapping and Sunda clouded leopard trapping.

Small carnivore trapping

- Trapping success (total captured civets/total of trap nights) = $14/137 = 0.1021 \rightarrow 10.21\%$
- Trapping success (Malay Civet) = $12/137 = 0.0875 \rightarrow 8.75\%$
- Trapping success (Common Palm Civet) = $2/137 = 0.0145 \rightarrow 1.45\%$
- Non-target species captured: monitor lizard (five); crested eagle (one)
- Three recaptured civets (Malay civet)
- Box trap capture rate (civet caught/civet caught + civet entering the trap but missed) x 100 = $(14/14 + 2) \times 100 = 87.5\%$
- Trapping failure (total of trap closed with no civet inside*/total of trap nights) = $10/137 = 0.0729 \rightarrow 7.29\%$

* Civets closing the traps from outside by stepping in the walls of the traps or by climbing the traps



Above: F.Nájera sampling a Malay civet



Research assistant K.Kaufman handling blood samples



Above: Malay civet during the recovery time



Above: Male 1 showing interest in the lure, but wary enough to get inside the trap

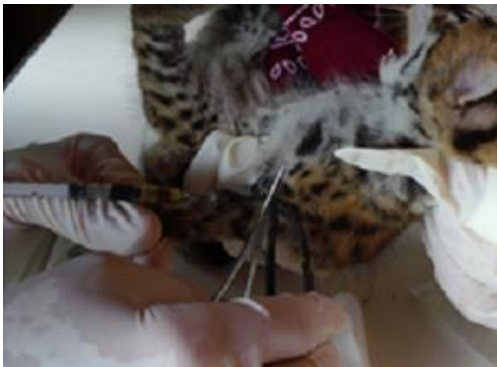
Clouded leopard trapping

Total of trap nights: 82

No individuals captured

Wildlife casualties' reports

During these first months we were able to recover an orphan leopard cat rescued from an attack of feral dogs in an oil palm plantation. His mother was killed but this kitten was found in a healthy condition. We performed a medical exam and we took samples (see below). The leopard cat is currently kept at the facilities of Lok Kawi Wildlife Sanctuary (Kota Kinabalu) managed by the Sabah Wildlife Department.



Unfortunately, we performed a necropsy in an adult leopard cat found road killed next to the Sanctuary (see below detail of the female leopard cat road killed).



The most relevant finding was a road killed female clouded leopard (see below). This is the first time that this species is recorded road killed between oil palm plantations. The necropsy revealed that she was a sub adult. Severe fractures revealed a high impact collision as her cause of death.



Above: Sunda clouded leopard road killed in the Lahda Datu road.



Above: F. Nájera and Malay MSc student Gilmoore, during the necropsy of the Sunda clouded leopard

Participation in conferences

The Bornean Wild Cats Veterinary Project was asked to participate in the Sabah Society conference held at Danau Girang Field Centre at the end of May 2013. We focused our talk on the significance of disease transmission between feral dogs and cats and wild felid populations.



Future Plans

Due to the poor results during the first phase of felid trapping, we will extend this phase period until November 2013. Feral cats and dogs will be sampled during the same months but at different time frames.

The number of clouded leopard traps will be increased by 50%. Arrangements with Lok Kawi Wildlife Center have been made in order to get urine samples from a female kept at these facilities (samples used during these first months have been collected just from captive males). Other lures will be used as well (catnip, valerian), or other baits.

The project is studying other methods and techniques to improve the trapping success of small felids (such as leopard cats). Number of traps will be increased and different lures will be used as well.