

Project Update: October 2022

Our fieldwork started in June 2022, and until today, we have deployed camera traps at 103 stations throughout our study sites. Twenty-eight stations are currently active to record babirusas and other wildlife on the islands. Through preliminary analysis, we found that the Togean Islands babirusa occupancy is affected by the distance to large forest patch. We will run a full set of analysis when the data from all camera trap stations is collected. Besides the babirusa, we also recorded many other species on the islands, including *Tarsius niemitzi*, another endangered and endemic species of Togean Archipelago.

We recruited two locals as our main assistants and trained them to be citizen scientists. When they joined this project, they had zero experience with scientific work. Today, they are very skillful in operating hand-held GPS, set up camera traps, and collect field data. When we worked in a different village territory, we usually involve more locals from that village, allowing us to split into two small teams: one was led by me, and the other was led by one of my main assistants. Next, we will finish the camera trapping, organise the training workshop for the national park staff and citizen scientist, and donate the equipment to the national park in November 2022.



It was raining at a lunch time when we conducted our pilot trial. We quickly set a simple shelter to enjoy our meal.



A mud-pond used by babirusas in the Togean Archipelago



Mr. Suardi, one of our assistants is planning the best route to get to our next camera trap site. Previously, Mr. Suardi didn't know how to use a GPS, but he is now very skillful. Combined with his local knowledge of the Togean Forests, his is an outstanding navigator in our team.



Agus Jati, the PI of this project, is setting up a camera trap.



Ikal, one of our assistants, posing next to a camera trap he just set.



Our team, from left to right: Agus Jati, Ikal, Mr. Suardi, and Bayu Broto.



Mr. Suardi setting up a camera trap.



Shallow reef is a treat to the eye in the Togean Archipelago.



A nest of babirusa we found when exploring the forest. We still don't know how and for what this nest was built.



Shallow reefs of the archipelago.



Mr. Suardi write down information and field data to the datasheet.



Ikal is setting up a camera trap.



Ikal is setting up a camera trap.



Mr. Suardi is writing down information and data to the datasheet.



Ikal is writing down necessary information to the datasheet. The area seen is the camera trap field of view.



Ikal is setting up a camera trap.



Mr. Suardi is setting up a camera trap.



We witnessed deforestation happening in the archipelago. Someone was clearing this forest for agriculture when we arrive at the scene.