

Sumatra Report

Progress Report Camera Traps and New Proposal

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Seblat and Vesswic no Longer Supporting Patrols

In recent months the NGO Vesswic have pulled their funding for the entire ERU (Way Kambas) and CRU (Seblat) elephant patrol units they have funded for many years. This was the very basis for carrying out the camera trap projects and without the NGO Vesswic the funded patrol units would ultimately cease and specifically so would my access to place the camera traps and collect valuable data to assist with these patrols.

Since the sudden stoppage of funding from Vesswic I have worked hard to provide possible solutions for the ERU and CRU patrols in order to help them continue on and even improve their success rate. An external NGO (IEF) has provided emergency funding for the next 5 months and I hope to help raise further funding to help the elephant patrol units continue on for the long term.

My Indonesian wife and I have successfully started our own NGO (Berdiri) to help support the ERU and CRU elephant patrol units. We have successfully created proposals and await approval with the local government agencies (BKSDA) to sign off on a local MoU to move forward in implementing these proposals.

New NGO Berdiri

In order to continue assisting with conservation programs through camera traps and implementing new and improved programs and assisting with the long term success for the elephant patrol units it was very important to register a new NGO named Berdiri as Vesswic no longer support the Sumatran Elephant programs. Berdiri is essentially a local Indonesian NGO that I will lead conservation projects under the new conservation programs presented to the local government agencies.

Camera Traps TWA Seblat Conservation Area

At present only 3 camera traps remain in Seblat and have been removed during the fasting month of Ramadan. I am due to travel to Seblat at the completion of Ramadan to re-place the camera



traps and to have discussions with the local mahouts and the government agency to help improve the patrols with the aid of drones utilising infrared (thermal camera) cameras.

In 2015 the camera traps have had a rise in success rate of capturing a great range of species in the TWA Seblat Conservation Area. This success is due to taking more time and trekking deeper into the conservation area away from areas that are frequented by poachers and illegal loggers. Thus allowing the camera traps to remain in place. The success is also due to myself and the patrol unit taking more time to find a cross section of game trails that would be ideal to record. Such areas have allowed us to capture a range of species such as Tapir, Great Argus Pheasant, Leopard Cat, Leaf Monkey, Greater Mouse Deer and Sambar Deer. We still remain hopeful of capturing with the camera traps the Sumatran tiger and some of the remaining wild elephant herds found still residing inside the TWA Seblat Conservation Area.

The latest video results can be seen here > <https://youtu.be/yMoCsvP3P-M> and here > <https://youtu.be/ZIRtst5JWRc>



Drone Patrol Proposal with Thermal Camera

During my last visit and patrol with the CRU team of Seblat I took my own personal drone on the 7 day patrol to give the teams an idea of how they work and with the right camera gear can be very effective. On the first flight the drone spotted an illegal logging location only 500 meters from where we were camping.

Various drone technologies are being used throughout Sumatra but not quad chopper drones with the use of thermal (FLIR) cameras. My proposal for the use of drones is to assist in the elephant patrol units to mitigate HEC (human elephant conflict) and to assist in fighting illegal logging and poaching in the TWA Seblat Conservation Area.



Way Kambas Visit and Proposal

In the month of May I visited the ERU (Elephant Response Unit) of Way Kambas in South Sumatra to also propose the same drone and thermal camera solution to be managed under the Berdiri Conservation Program. The drones will assist with the current ERU patrols and help survey the Way Kambas National park for wild elephant herds, illegal loggers and poachers.

The ERU teams patrol the Way Kambas National Park from 3 different camps and they patrol daily to mitigate HEC with neighbouring villages. The drones will be an invaluable tool to assist with the success of the patrols.



The drone technology will be used in the same way in both TWA Seblat and TN Way Kambas. Flying from patrol camps to survey areas prior to the elephant patrols will give vital information on the location of wild elephant herds and potential illegal loggers and poachers. In May I visited two of the three ERU camps to demonstrate the drone technology and how it will assist in their work.

Discussions have already been held with the head of the local conservation agency (BKSDA) in Way Kambas and a local MoU is currently in progress and should be approved in the month of June and ready to begin in the month of August 2015 after the fasting month of Ramadan.



About the ERU of Way Kambas

The ERU project activities are carried out in and around the Way Kambas National Park (WKNP) located on the southeastern coast of the Lampung Province in Sumatra, Indonesia. The park is one of the oldest nature reserves in Indonesia and occupies about 1,300 km² of coastal lowland forest, which consists of swamp forest and bush around the Way Kambas River on the east coast of the province of Lampung. Since commercial logging activities in the 1960s and 1970s and frequent fires have degraded most of the park, early-successional vegetation types like grassland and sERUb cover much of the area. Nevertheless the forest area has a high potential of biodiversity covering about 125.621,3 hectares (based on the decree of Forestry Ministry No. 670/Kpts-II/1999). The total length of the Park's boundary is estimated at about 227 km with 34 villages lying along a boundary of roughly 148 km. The National Park is home to nearly 200 wild Sumatran elephants, which is about 10% of the remaining population of not more than 2.000. In addition to its importance for Asian elephants, the Park contains populations of many others endangered wildlife such as Sumatran rhinoceros, Sumatran tiger, Malayan tapir and white winged duck.



In an area of 600 hectares on its south-western border, the WKNP houses the Way Kambas Elephant Conservation Centre (ECC WK), which currently is home to 65 captive elephants. The ECC was established in 1985 to train wild elephants captured between 1985 and 2000 from areas where HEC occurred, in order to solve these conflicts. This capture strategy was ended in 2000 because the government authorities recognized that the capture strategy did not result in sustainable HEC resolution. Unfortunately, no formal strategy had been developed regarding the use of these elephants, and funds allocated from the government for the ECC maintenance and elephant care and management were insufficient. This resulted in poor management, lack of fodder and medical attention for the elephants, insufficient staff qualification and training, lack of occupation and socialisation of elephants, and poor condition and illness in many elephants.

This ERU project continues to maintain and use captive elephants for forest patrols as well as to build the capacity of the ERU staff in activities such as patrolling, navigation (maps, GPS, compass etc.), HEC mitigation tools, legal information, record keeping and monitoring. The units are monitoring wildlife and illegal activities, responding to HEC and assessing approaches to mitigate the conflicts in different sites. A community-based approach was recognized as one essential component of the program to ensure a sustainable management of HEC.