First Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* photographed in Sabangau Peat-swamp Forest, Indonesian Borneo

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Abstract

Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* was photographed twice in the Sabangau Peat-swamp Forest, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, in May 2009, an area with records of several other threatened species of carnivores.

Keywords: camera-trap, lowland forests

Very little is known about Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* across its range, other than that its distribution is patchy and restricted to wetlands. The destruction, degradation and drying out of wetlands is likely to be the biggest threat to this little-known carnivore (Duckworth et al. 2008). Otter Civets have previously been thought to inhabit predominantly peat-swamp forests and primary forest. They have been recorded in logged and secondary forests as well (Heydon & Bulloh 1996, Wilting et al. 2010). Much remains to be discovered about the life history and ecology of this species. Veron et al. (2006) reported six sightings from Indonesia, with only two from Indonesian Borneo, none from Central Kalimantan. Of seven museum specimens collected from Indonesian Borneo, only one came from Central Kalimantan.

The Sabangau Felid Project was initiated in May 2008 in a collaborative effort between WildCRU, Panthera, and the Orangutan Tropical Peatland Project: Cheyne et al. (2009) described the site. Cameras are set in pairs using Cuddeback Expert units and cover 15 km² in the core study area. Cameras are placed on man-made trails and around old logging canals where they form a more accessible route for the animals (Fig. 1). Camera-trapping confirmed the presence of Sunda Clouded Leopard *Neofelis diardi* (BBC 2008, Cheyne & Macdonald in press), Flat-headed Cat *Prionailurus planiceps* (Cheyne et al. 2009) and Leopard Cat *P. bengalensis*. Otter Civet had not been reported in this area.
Two individuals have been photographed since May 2008 (Fig. 2). The cameras on which the Sabangau animal was photographed have been in location since July 2008; 602 trap-nights were required to obtain two photos of the Otter Civet, compared with (time to obtain one photo) 85 for Malay Civet Viverra tangalunga, 182 for Yellow-throated Marten Martes flavigula and 258 for Collared Mongoose H. semitorquatus. All cameras are set in mixed-swamp forest at an elevation of about 11 m a.s.l. Cameras on which the Otter Civets were camera-trapped, also photographed other wildlife including Clouded Leopard, Malay Civet and Sun Bear Helarctos malayanus. Only one location was near a semi-permanent source of water. Elsewhere, Veron et al. (2006) reported 59 pictures of Otter Civets from lowland forests of Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra (January 1996 – December 1998) in 3,920 camera-trap days.

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References

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