



Centre for Sustainability

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FIRST LARGE CAMERA TRAP STUDY IN PALAWAN CAPTURES UNIQUE MATERIAL OF PALAWAN'S ENDEMIC MAMMALS

STUDY SITE: CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE, PALAWAN, PHILIPPINES

INTRODUCTION

As part of the conservation project of the Centre for Sustainability at Cleopatra's Needle, Palawan, Philippines, a team of biologists is studying the islands unique mammal diversity. All almost all Palawans' mammal species are endemic, meaning that they occur only in Palawan. As Palawans' forest are slowly declining and as hunting pressure is increasing, the islands unique mammals need protection but without understanding the biology of these species, conservation is hard. Especially species like the Palawan Pangolin are under severe threat due to high demand for Pagolins as traditional Chinese medicine.

For these reasons, the Centre for Sustainability has initiated this study with funding of the GIZ, Global Wildlife Conservation and the Dutch Otter Fund. Research Associate Paris Marler (University of California) and Melanie (Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières), under the supervision of Lyca Castro (Western Philippines University) are placing high-tech camera traps to study the small-clawed otter, the Palawan Leopard Cat and others mammals found in the area.

Using battery operated, waterproof cameras with a remote sensor and night vision, the team are able to make pictures and videos of animals that are passing by. By doing so data can be collected on the species diversity, species density, and dispersal of different mammal species. This data will later be used to develop conservation strategies for these species.



RESULTS

This is the first time that these endemic mammals are studied in the wild in Palawan and this is the first time ever that most species have been recorded on camera in the wild. Although the study has just started one month ago some amazing data has been collected. All Palawans' endemic larger mammal species have been recorded so far and include:

Hystrix pumila / Palawan Porcupine

Sus ahoenobarbus / Palawan Bearded Pig

Arctictis binturong / Palawan Bearcat

Aonyx cinerea / Asian Small-clawed Otter

Manis culionensis / Palawan Pangolin

Macaca fascicularis philippensis / Crab-eating Macaque

Prionailurus bengalensis heaneyi / Palawan Leopard Cat

The study will continue until august 2015.

CONCLUSION

A high number of endemic and threatened species were found during the survey. Already the results of the assessment show the uniqueness of the area in terms of biodiversity making Cleopatra's Needle one of the Philippines top biodiversity hotspots. As this is maybe the last largest remaining intact primary forest in the Philippines, government agencies and conservation NGO's should work together and prioritize the conservation of the area, thereby preserving the homeland of the Batak and Tagbanua tribes and protecting the Palawans' unique biodiversity for future generations.

DOWNLOADS

Additional pictures and videos can be download via the following DropBox link.

Pictures and Video's:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ag9a813vllldy9u2/AAAmPUtqfXplmkwPsE77Y4fNa?dl=0>



Centre for Sustainability

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