

Natural-Licks use by Orangutans and conservation of their habitats in Bornean tropical production forest

Abstract

The use of natural-licks by orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus*) was investigated with camera traps in the Deramakot production forest, Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. The results showed that 1) Although orangutans were in the top three species at all the natural-licks, visitation frequency differed at the natural-licks depending on the surrounding environment; 2) Natural-licks use by orangutans was impacted more by human activity than concentration of the minerals; and 3) Visiting proportion of each orangutan class: flanged male, female with infant, and others, showed that flanged male accounted for 31%; female with infant, 17%; and others, 52%; although we had anticipated a bias toward the flanged male. These results suggest that the natural-licks are key habitats for all classes of orangutans and suitable sites for ground monitoring. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that other production forests adopt protection of natural-licks and managed as a monitoring site for orangutan habitat conservation. Furthermore, as orangutans are vulnerable to human activity, it is necessary to manage natural-licks as protected area with buffer zones of reduced human activity.