

Vertebrate Biodiversity and Conservation in Peninsular Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This presentation aims to highlight the research trends on vertebrate (or wildlife) ecology, biodiversity and conservation in Peninsular Malaysia. Wildlife management and conservation issues in Peninsular Malaysia have changed tremendously in the last 100 years primarily due to changes in land use. Rapid land conversion to plantations, housing areas and other activities since the beginning of 1960's has sacrificed large track of forest areas in Peninsular Malaysia. At present, rapid loss of forest habitat in the past has threatened the survival of many wildlife species (such as rhino) that are sensitive to changing environment (habitat size and quality). As these species have reduced chances to propagate and survive in the wild, they could be at the brink of extinction. Some species (such as monkeys) can easily adapt to the changing environment, propagating and inhabiting the urban setting. Other species may not increase their populations (such as elephant and tapir) but they are displaced outside their normal habitats. Both groups can cause conflicts to human which could result in economic loss and sometime loss of life. Similarly, the vertebrate or wildlife studies have also changed from solely to document the number of wildlife species (diversity), population and distribution in the early 1900's to recently more to answer important questions such as how to control conflict wildlife and how to save the endangered species. In recent years, wildlife studies in Peninsular Malaysia are focusing more on ecology of both wildlife and habitat, and biology especially reproduction although documentation of available species are continuously being done to monitor the species that are still available especially within the Protected Areas. Several strategies have been implemented to control the conflict wildlife species while several captive breeding programs have been developed to save endangered species. Finally, more organized and concerted research efforts are needed for preservation and conservation of vertebrate species in Peninsular Malaysia.