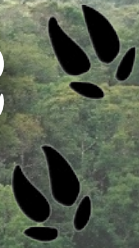




Pig pipeline

Warty

- BEKI Updates -



BEKI & the local community

In May the BEKI team made its way to Bawean island again. The two main aims we had were to deliver awareness and education activities about the Bawean warty pigs and the work of BEKI, to retrieve a new round of camera trap data, and to deliver a DNA sampling kit to the protected area management head Mr. Nur. As warty pigs are not protected they unfortunately can be killed when they leave the protected area zone and for instance enter the agricultural land of a farmer to raid crops. If a pig gets killed Mr. Nur will take a sample for a genetic analysis to confirm the species' taxonomy.

The team - Shafia, Hendra, Bram and Budi - arrived on Bawean island after an 8-hours ferry ride. They brought a Landrover that (despite a few cars on Bawean) attracted a lot of attention. This attention was immediately used to distribute the first BEKI stickers! We printed many different stickers and an information leaflet before going to the island in order to distribute as many as possible and tell people about their endemic and very special nature including the Bawean warty pig, and the work that BEKI is doing. The children were very happy about their new stickers!



The team arriving at the harbour on Bawean, greeted by Mr. Nur, the head of the protected area management, and the harbour officers



In the next days the team visited different schools. Shafia, who had been involved in the 3-months study from November to January and who studied biology, has a very good insight into the project, its background, aims and methods. So she took the lead in talking to the students about BEKI. More than 800 stickers and 500 leaflets were distributed to the schools and local people who live on Bawean.



Last but not least, we made a uniform for the team and the protected area management staff to create a feeling of collectivity, to create pride in the people helping us, and as a general capacity building measure. The long-sleeve shirts with boosted elbow and shoulder patches were deemed as perfect for field work.



Mr. Nur with the new BEKI uniform

fighting. A couple of videos showed females with very small piglets, indicating that the birth season may be around March and April. Some videos showed impressive males with really big warts and beards. One very clear video shows a male together with a female. This is quite important, because females do not have warts and resemble females of European wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*). If a video shows only females, it may be unclear what species it is. Having a video that shows a male and female together lets us examine the female's appearance in detail and we are able to compare it to all-female videos.



The warty pig on the right is backing up from the one on the left

New videos!!!

The other most important aim of this visit was to download and review the new videos from our cameras. Unfortunately more than three camera traps were stolen and two are broken. However, the other camera traps still revealed great footage! One camera trap had been placed at such a good spot that it took about 700 videos of wildlife, with most videos showing long-tail macaque groups that stayed in front of the camera for several hours at a time. Amongst these videos there was suddenly a surprise: a warty pig together with a monkey! The monkey seemed to be full of respect for the pig, but still, this is a proof of how close the species live and that they share their habitat.



Three piglets running around their mother, finally hiding behind her



Long-tail macaque leaving the frame, while Bawean warty pig enters



Female and male Bawean warty pig

We caught Bawean warty pigs in many different situations: feeding, travelling, socialising, even

Warty pig behaviour in captivity

From April to Juli 2015, Mark Rademaker from the BEKI team is staying in Cikananga Conservation Breeding Centre to investigate the behaviour of captive Javan warty pigs (*Sus verrucosus*). Through this captive study, we hope to gain more insight into general warty pig behaviour and activity and how this relates to the behaviour and activity observed in the wild. Next to this, we aim to provide recommendations to further improve the captive husbandry of the species. At the moment the exact distribution and population size of Javan warty pigs on the mainland are still unknown. Therefore the management of safety populations in captivity plays a very important role in the species conservation planning.

Mark observes three groups of adult warty pigs and a group of eleven juveniles housed together with an adult hybrid between domestic pig and warty pig. Especially the adults (which are wild-born) seem to quickly get highly excited. As constant excitement may cause chronic stress, Mark not only examines the general behaviour of the adults, but also investigates what exactly are the factors responsible for this unusual behaviour. As adults will remain in captivity for conservation breeding, a calmer behaviour may be better for the animals' welfare and makes breeding more likely. So far it seems that only very close-up visual or noisy human contact (such as a researcher walking towards his observation tent and clumsily stumbling over a trunk) results in the pigs showing restless behaviour. Fortunately, other frequent sounds such as loud motorbikes, a chainsaw cutting a tree in the distance or the famous Indonesian "dangdut" music ringing from cars on the road do not seem to bother the pigs. Thus, it is unlikely that they cause a high level of stress. On the other hand, it is good that the pigs do maintain natural shyness towards the sight and smell of humans passing by the enclosure, as they seem to retain their wild and natural behaviour, making successful reintroduction more likely.

In the juvenile group another specific question is addressed. Being housed together with an adult hybrid pig, we want to find out how far this influences the behaviour of the juveniles and whether it negatively impacts their reintroduction potential. To investigate this we choose a number of focus individuals and note down how closely they follow the hybrid and copy its behaviour. Eleven animals are a big group and,

perhaps not surprisingly, the smallest show the shyest behaviour and keep a distance to the adult hybrid. The oldest juveniles stick closely and copy a lot of the behaviour of the hybrid, sometimes appearing to be more bold in approaching disturbances (including people) than the half-domestic animal itself! Overall, all the juveniles seem to have adapted well to the captive environment, spending a lot more time social and a lot less time alert and out of sight than the wild-caught adults. Perhaps the juveniles do not show ideal behaviour for release (yet), but they do show good potential for starting additional captive safety populations, which at the moment has the highest priority of the breeding efforts. The apparent ease with which escaped domestic pigs have been observed to "rewild" and thrive in many parts of the world gives hope that future reintroduction could be successful, even if the captive behaviour of the juveniles is still not really very wild anymore.



Observations are made from a camouflage tent on top of a platform overlooking the enclosures



Two juveniles engaged in a play bout mimicking aggressive postures in adults

CONTACT

BEKI is part of the Javan Endemic Species Programme (JESP).

Contact us:
jesp.info@gmail.com; johanna.margono@gmail.com

More infos on the web:
<http://www.jesprogramme.weebly.com>

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