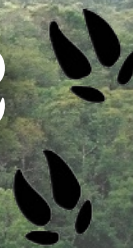




Pig pipeline

Warty

- BEKI Updates -



Face to face with the warty pigs!



Group of Bawean warty pigs (August 2015, photo: Sandy Leo)

When we analysed the videos of the camera traps in May this year, we were surprised to see videos of warty pigs together with cows. While the cows were grazing in the pasture, a big group of warty pigs visited a mud wallow. Since they showed a lot of interesting behaviour on the videos, for example bathing in the mud, playing or fighting, we decided to try to directly observe warty pigs at these locations. As most videos were taken during dusk and dawn, we decided to enter the area around 4pm and choose a spot where we could see most of the pasture and the forest edge, but not be too exposed to the animals.

In August, we were fortunate to observe a big group of warty pigs on two different occasions. The groups consisted of 7 and 10 individuals respectively, including offspring. The pigs didn't seem to be bothered too much by the team watching them and stayed for more than 30 minutes each time. One pig even approached Putri and Silvi curiously, coming as close as a few meters! As the pigs can be dangerous, they scared them off before the animals came too close! Of course we took very detailed notes of all behaviour we saw. Although we were not lucky every time that we waited patiently for the pigs to appear, the team that is currently on Bawean will continue the behaviour observations. We hope that we can add enough data to be able to analyse it and maybe even compare it to the behaviour of Javan warty pigs in captivity. By doing so, we may be able to identify species-specific behaviour, and also formulate recommendations to improve husbandry and conservation breeding success.

The Bawean deer (*Axis kuhlii*)

The Bawean deer is endemic to Bawean island. Although historically the deer were also found on Java, they became extinct, most likely due to competition with two other species, the Javan rusa and the southern red muntjak. In the last decades, the Bawean deer's numbers have shrunk to about 250-300 animals due to deforestation, conversion of forest into teak plantations, and uncontrolled hunting. Numbers are reported to be stable but there has not been a systematic survey.

Bawean deer seem to prefer secondary forest with dense undergrowth where they can rest in hiding during the day. They feed on herbs and grasses, young leaves and twigs. The animals sometimes enter openings and croplands in search for food. Rut season is in September and October, and most times a single fawn is born during the birthing period from February to June. The Bawean deer are solitary and are active during the night. They seem to be quite shy, staying away from areas with high human activity and retreating to inaccessible areas during the day.

The small population of the deer and the fact that almost all animals of the population live in one location leads to the Red List status "Critically Endangered". The species is legally protected and benefits from the protected areas on Bawean island. A captive breeding programme on Bawean holds a small group of animals, and there are about 300 animals held in zoos and captive facilities off Bawean island. Although a handful of animals are sometimes killed accidentally during pig hunts, hunting is no longer a major threat. The effect of invasive plant species on the grazing areas is believed to pose a major threat to the species.



Male Bawean deer (video taken by BEKI on 23 May 2015)

Since December 2014, we have had up to 20 camera traps in the forest for a total of 2109 days. While we have collected hundreds of videos of warty pigs, we have only 8 videos of Bawean deer. As we place camera traps in random places and the camera traps are installed at a good height to also record deer, we are a bit worried about the wild population. It may be that the deer mainly use very dense undergrowth (where we cannot place camera traps) for moving, and it may also be that we did indeed not have many camera traps in rather inaccessible forest parts. However, we think that our study is reliable and we must assume that the deer population is much smaller than the pig population (estimated at 180 to 400 animals, Rademaker et al., in review). The good news is that in August, the BEKI team was lucky enough to once hear the voice of a deer and once see an animal entering an opening. Additionally, one of the videos shows a doe with a fawn!



Upper frame: doe with fawn in the background (reflecting eyes near rear of the fawn). Lower frame: fawn following its mother (video taken by BEKI on 1 April 2015)



Male and female Bawean deer in the captive breeding centre on Bawean island (photo: Iing Iryantoro)

Bawean spotted wood owl



Bawean spotted wood owl (left) and barn owl (right) in comparison (photos: Putri Diana, Sandy Leo)

Bawean island lies very isolated in the middle of the Java Sea—around 120 km north of Java and 300 km south of Borneo. Based on biogeographic studies, Bawean island became isolated from Java about 10,000 years ago. One of the endemic taxa that lives on the island is the Bawean spotted wood owl (*Strix seloputo baweana*).

During one of our forest surveys looking for warty pigs, we discovered a single Bawean spotted wood owl on a branch. The forest ranger Mr. Rahim informed us that the species is called “Kukuk beluk” in Bawean language. While the round face and the body shape look similar to a barn owl (*Tyto alba*), the spotted pattern on its body clearly distinguishes the species.

The spotted wood owl has three subspecies, namely *S. seloputo seloputo* (South Myanmar, Malay Peninsula, Sumatera and Java), *S. seloputo baweana* (Bawean Island) and *S. seloputo wiepkeni* (South Philippines). The Bawean spotted wood owl is morphologically different from the other subspecies, for instance the birds on Bawean island have a smaller body size.

On Bawean, spotted wood owls probably have a large distribution over the island, but very little is known about their detailed abundance and distribution. There is a need for more research including surveys and monitoring to get to know more about this beautiful endemic bird. This knowledge is necessary to make effective conservation action plans in order to protect this endemic bird from potential threats to its longterm survival.

Who can draw the best pig?

In August, the BEKI team with Putri, Sandy and Silvi visited an elementary school on Bawean island. The team gave a short presentation about Bawean warty pigs. We were surprised that most children do not know that this pig only occurs on their island! After showing them pictures, we let the kids draw a warty pig themselves, which they very much enjoyed. The winner of this drawing competition was Syarif. As the kids were very happy to have us visit their school and do activities with them, we plan to repeat similar education activities during October and November.



Putri explains about warty pigs



The winner of the drawing competition, Syarif, proudly shows his warty pig

>>Our favourite frame<<



Our favourite video from June and July: warty pig feeding peacefully together with macaques!

Team October 2015



In October, BEKI has a highly motivated new team going to Bawean island. Shafa was on Bawean island with Mark and Simen from November 2014 until January 2015, and then returned again in May for a week. She is now accompanied by Rifanti Diana Lutfi (Fanty) and Dinda Rahayu Istiqomah (Dinda). They are graduates from the department of forestry management at Bogor Agriculture University. In their final project, Fanty studied elephants in a sanctuary and Dinda studied leaf monkeys in the wild. On Bawean island they want to gain more experience in the field. Iing Iryantoro, education and media officer from Cikananga Wildlife Center, will join the team during the beginning of November to organise a conservation research workshop.

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.jespprogramme.weebly.com>

Thanks to our generous sponsors:

people's
trust for
endangered
species



Please support us by sending a **donation** via Paypal:
jesp.donate@gmail.com