

# First Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* photographed in Sabangau Peat-swamp Forest, Indonesian Borneo

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## Abstract

Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* was photographed twice in the Sabangau Peat-swamp Forest, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia, in May 2009, an area with records of several other threatened species of carnivores.

*Keywords:* camera-trap, lowland forests

## Foto Pertama Musang Air *Cynogale bennettii* di Hutan Gambut Sabangau, Borneo, Indonesia

### Abstrak

Musang Air *Cynogale bennettii* berhasil difoto dua kali pada bulan Mei 2009 di hutan gambut Sabangau, Kalimantan Tengah, Indonesia, kawasan yang tercatat memiliki beberapa jenis karnifora langka lainnya.

*Kata-kata kunci:* distribusi; kamera-trap; tanah rendah

Very little is known about Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* across its range, other than that its distribution is patchy and restricted to wetlands. The destruction, degradation and drying out of wetlands is likely to be the biggest threat to this little-known carnivore (Duckworth *et al.* 2008). Otter Civets have previously been thought to inhabit predominantly peat-swamp forests and primary forest. They have been recorded in logged and secondary forests as well (Heydon & Bulloh 1996, Wilting *et al.* 2010). Much remains to be discovered about the life history and ecology of this species. Veron *et al.* (2006) reported six sightings from Indonesia, with only two from Indonesian Borneo, none from Central Kali-

mantan. Of seven museum specimens collected from Indonesian Borneo, only one came from Central Kalimantan.

The Sabangau Felid Project was established in 2008 in the Sabangau Peat-swamp Forest, Central Kalimantan; Cheyne *et al.* (2009) described the site. Cameras are set in pairs using Cuddeback Expert units and cover 15 km<sup>2</sup> in the core study area. Cameras are placed on man-made trails and around old logging canals where they form a more accessible route for the animals (Fig. 1). Camera-trapping confirmed the presence of Sunda Clouded Leopard *Neofelis diardi* (BBC 2008, Cheyne & Macdonald *in press*), Flat-headed Cat *Prionailurus planiceps* (Cheyne *et al.* 2009) and

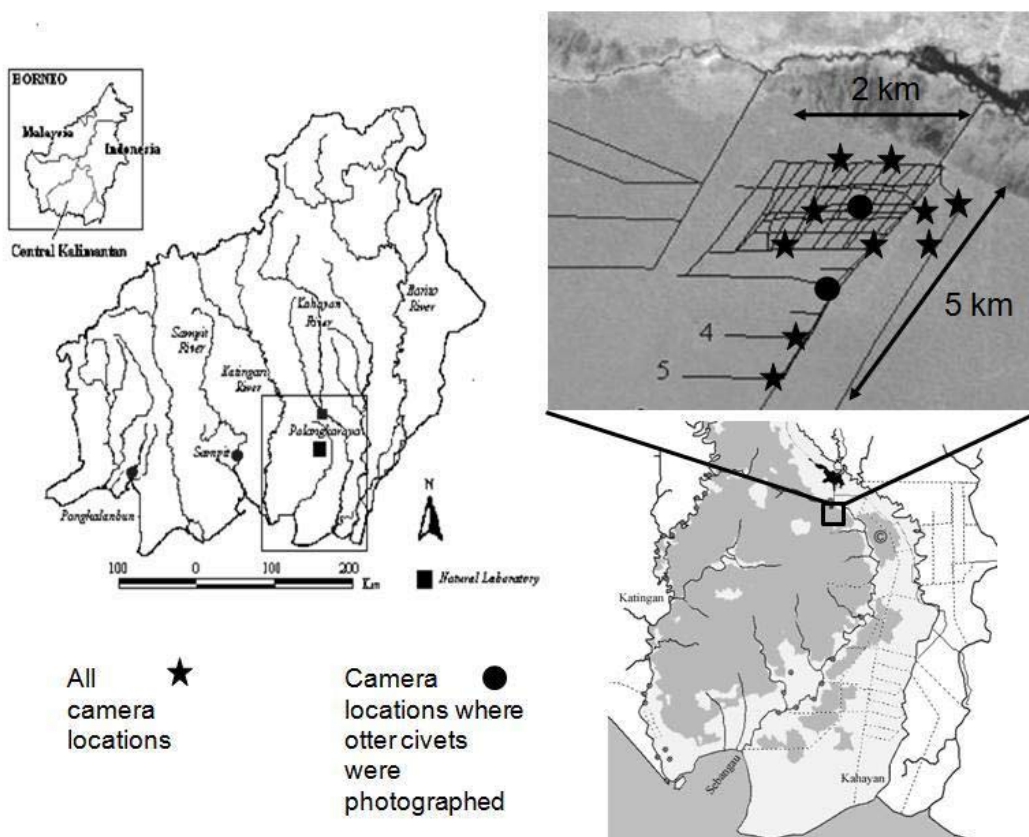


Fig. 1. Study site in north-eastern corner of Sabangau forest showing locations of cameras where Otter Civets were photographed (Fig. 2). Numbers on transects refer to transect names.



Fig. 2. Otter Civet *Cynogale bennettii* (A) taken at 02h17 on 3 May 2009 on cameras set about 3 km south of the Setia Alam base camp (2°33'S, 113°89'E) and about 4.5 km south of the Sabangau River; (B) taken at 21h27 on 26 May 2009 on cameras set 3.5 km south-west of the first photo (2°32'S, 113°89'E) and about 2.5 km south of the Sabangau River.



Leopard Cat *P. bengalensis*. Otter Civet had not been reported in this area.

Two individuals have been photographed since May 2008 (Fig. 2). The cameras on which the Sabangau animal was photographed have been in location since July 2008; 602 trap-nights were required to obtain two photos of the Otter Civet, compared with 85 for Malay Civet *Viverra zibetha*, 182 for Yellow-throated Marten *Martes flavigula*, 204 for Short-tailed Mongoose *Herpestes brachyurus* and 258 for Collared Mongoose *H. semitorquatus*. All cameras are set in mixed-swamp forest at an elevation of about 11 m a.s.l. Cameras on which the Otter Civets were camera-trapped, other wildlife including Clouded Leopard, Malay Civet and Sun Bear *Helarctos malayanus* were also photographed. Only one location was near a semi-permanent source of water. Elsewhere, Veron *et al.* (2006) reported 59 pictures of Otter Civets from lowland forests of Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra (January 1996 – December 1998) in 3,920 camera-trap days.

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