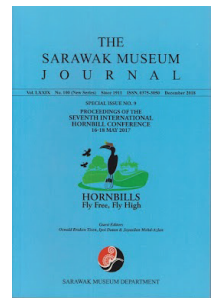




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DO PEOPLE CARE? THE AWARENESS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN MIRI TOWARDS HORN BILLS AT PIASAU NATURE RESERVE, SARAWAK

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ABSTRACT

Hornbills are a major attraction for ecotourism at the Piasau Nature Reserve, near Miri, Sarawak. Hornbills, in general, are believed to play important ecological roles in tropical forests, especially as agents of seed dispersal. At the Piasau Nature Reserve, the Oriental Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros albirostris*) is the most popular species and has caught the attention of some conservationists. This survey was conducted to investigate the perception of local communities in the Miri area about hornbills at this Park. Our survey suggests that the Miri residents are positive towards hornbill conservation at this park after the case of a Oriental Pied Hornbill called Faridah that was killed. More than half of our respondents are aware of the existence of this hornbill species at Piasau.

Keywords: Piasau Nature Reserve, hornbill, local communities, awareness

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INTRODUCTION

We believe awareness play an important role to conserve hornbill for a better future and to understand what locals think about hornbills at Piasau. Piasau is famous with the Oriental Pied Hornbill and has caught the attention of some conservationists. We think what makes this study interesting is that, obtaining more information from the non-conservationists, non-biologists, non-zoologists, or those who are not involved in taking care of wildlife. This is achieved by recording public opinion on this hornbill species at Piasau Nature Reserve.