TABURAN, KEPELBAGAIAN DAN KELIMPAHAN SPESIES KELAWAR DI TIGA KAWASAN HABITAT VEGETASI DI HUTAN SUKAU, SANDAKAN, SABAH

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ABSTRACT

This research was carried out with the aim to record and compare information on the diversity, distribution and abundance of bat species at three different habitats of Sukau Rainforest. These were the primary forest, oil palm plantation and village area. Sampling was conducted for six days at each habitat using three mist net and a sweep net. A total of 248 individuals of 15 species were caught in this study. Results showed that the village area has the highest bat diversity (H'=1.9) followed by primary forest (H'=1.4). The oil palm plantation area recorded the lowest diversity (H'=0.9). The presence of Sungai Kinabatangan nearby, the close proximity of Gua Keruak, the presence of human settlements and the mixed vegetation were identified to contribute to the high diversity at the village area. It was expected that the primary forest area has higher bat diversity as compared to the oil palm plantation area due to the abundance of food available for bats at this forest and the presence of undisturbed roosting sites. In contrast, the lower diversity recorded at the oil palm plantation was probably because of the less abundance of food available for bats particularly nocturnal insects which is the main diet of Microchiropterans. However, the occurrence of Megachiropterans was high at the oil palm plantation area which is probably because of the presence of oil palm fruits. It can be concluded from this study that there is a difference in terms of bat diversity and this maybe correlated with variation of the vegetations whereby suitability and availability of food and roosting sites play an important role.