Volume 1 (2005)

IRPA and FUNDAMENTAL

RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

Research & Innovation Management Centre
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

IRPA and Fundamental

RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

Volume 1 (2005)

A collection of research papers for projects funded through IRPA and Fundamental grants

Research & Innovation Management Centre
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Published by

Research & Innovation Management Centre (RIMC)
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
94300 Kota Samarahan
Sarawak, Malaysia
Ph: 6082-671000
Fax: 6082-671903
E-mail: ted@rimc.unimas.my

Research Paper Series Volume 1 (2005)
Editor: Murtedza Mohamed

08-02-09-1007 EA001

Evaluation of the Biodiversity of The Kelabit Highlands, Sarawak

Fatimah Abang, Indraneil Das, Cheksum Tawan, Mustapha Abd Rahman, Andrew Alek Tuen, Sepiah Muid, Mohd. Tajuddin Abdullah, Isa Ipor, Petrus Bulan and Charlie Laman.
Faculty of Resource Sciences and Technology
University Malaysia Sarawak

Abstract

Reported herein are the preliminary results of an evaluation of the biota of Mount Murud, Sarawak's highest mountain massif within the Kelabit Highlands. Supported by an IRPA grant, inventories, systematic and ecological studies of selected groups of plants and animals were conducted in an attempt to evaluate the biodiversity and compile baseline data of this montane region for the management and conservation of these vital resources. This study reveals several new records of montane endemics and distribution. Several species found are new records for Mt. Murud, being reported in the past only from Mt. Kinabalu, the Crocker Range massifs, Gunung Mulu and G. Api, and in the case of macromoths, Bukit Retak, Brunei. The colubrid snake *Stoliczkia borneensi,* the scincid lizard *Brachymeles apus* and the ranoid frogs *Meristogenys whiteheadi* and *Rhacophorus angulirostris* are among these new records. Well-known endemics among the butterflies, which are previously only known from Mt. Kinabalu, Mulu and the Crocker range massifs are now also known from the Kelabit Highlands. These are *Ptychandra talboti, Parantica crowleyi, Delias ninus parthenia, Kaniska canace maniliana,* and *Eurema tominia nabalua.* All these represent range extensions of over 1,000 km to the south-west. Several new species are reported for the first time for Mt Murud and these include the amphibians and reptiles, *Pelophryne* sp. 1, *Pelophryne* sp. 2, *Polypedates* sp., *Megophrys* sp. and *Sphenomorphus* sp., respectively. For scarcity of previous work in Mount Murud, a large number of unidentified specimens remain, including a number of species that do not readily fit into currently recognised species. These include representatives of all the biota. An overall impression of the flora and fauna of Mount Murud as compared to Mt Kinabalu is that it is reminiscent of that of the middle elevations of Mt. Kinabalu.

Keywords: Mt Murud, biodiversity, montane, Borneo

Introduction

The Kelabit Highlands lies in the interior uplands of northern Sarawak. It consists of a central forested area with an altitude of about 900 m, separated from the coastal lowlands by a 2000 m mountain belt, of which Mount Murud, at 2,423 m, is the highest peak, as well as being the highest mountain in the state of Sarawak. Because of its relative inaccessibility, the biota of these mountains was to remain unknown till Eric Georg Mjöberg (1882-1938), Curator of the Sarawak Museum and a mountaineer, between 1922-24, conducted an expedition in 1922 (described by Mjöberg, 1925). During this