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COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON THE EXISTENCE OF WILDLIFE (CASE STUDY IN TALANG PONIJAN AND SIDODADI I)

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ABSTRACT

Community perspectives are important for wildlife, as they impact their contribution to wildlife conservation. This study aims to analyze community perspectives on wildlife in the Talang Ponijan and Sidodadi I forest farmer groups, Lampung Province, Indonesia. The method in this study uses a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, involved observation, and documentation studies. The data collected was analyzed descriptively to illustrate how the community's perspective on the existence of wildlife. The results showed that there are similarities in the views of the Talang Ponijan and Sidodadi I communities towards the existence of wildlife. The people of Talang Ponijan and Sidodadi I have a negative view of the existence of wild boar (Sus scrofa), bear (Helarctos malayanus), bajing (Callosciurus notatus), tiger (Panthera tigris), monkey (Macaca fascicularis), and macaque (Macaca nemestrina). Negative views arise because they are considered crop pests and destroy gardens. They are also considered a nuisance and a threat to safety. Gibbon (Symphalangus syndactylus), bats (Chiroptera sp.), and birds have a positive impact as they act as seed dispersers, pest controllers, and coffee quality indicators. However, their behavior towards wildlife sustainability shows differences. Some people in Talang Ponijan are still involved in practices that harm wildlife, such as monoculture, poaching and land clearing. Meanwhile, the Sidodadi I community tends to prioritize wildlife-sustainable agricultural practices such as shade coffee systems and planting high canopy trees. The government needs to provide guidance to increase community capacity and strict and effective law enforcement is important to prevent illegal activities.

Keywords: *Community perspective, conservation, forest, wildlife.*

INTRODUCTION

Forests serve a vital role in balancing life systems and preserving ecological functions on earth (Mashizi and Sharafatmandrad, 2023). Forests have functions that can be felt directly or indirectly. Forests as an ecosystem unit are also a habitat for most biodiversity, both plants and wildlife (Fichtner and Härdtle, 2021). Forests provide a variety of ecosystem services such as oxygen provision, carbon storage, water management, timber and non-timber forest products, cultural services, and fulfillment of human needs (Tan *et al.*, 2024). An estimated 0.78 billion people live in and around forests (<1 km distance) worldwide, mainly in tropical countries and low- and middle-income countries (Newton *et al*., 2020). Preserving forest functions is essential to ensure the many benefits they provide, including provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services (Garland *et al.,* 2021). Biodiversity is also essential

for the sustainability of healthy ecosystems and the global environment, due to its benefits for human well-being as well as its intrinsic value (Buijs and Jacobs, 2021).

Biodiversity which includes plants and wildlife, is a supporting service component in preserving the ecological function of forests (Mori *et al.,* 2017). Wildlife diversity plays a role in food chains, pollinators, seed dispersers, plant pest control (Iswandaru *et al.,* 2018), and bioindicators of environmental change (Tesfahunegny *et al*., 2016). In addition, wildlife also provides socio-cultural value as it can inspire works of art and provide spiritual meaning (Toone, 2024). Forests are critical habitats for biodiversity and are also important for the provision of a wide range of ecosystem services essential for human well-being (Brockerhoff *et al.,* 2017). However, pressures from anthropogenic activities cause forest destruction (Newbold *et al*., 2015). Land conflicts in forests often arise from local communities, the private sector, or the government, and overlapping rights in resource use (Wulandari *et al.,* 2021). Forest management conflicts can lead to habitat destruction, decreased biodiversity, and decreased quality of forest resources (Repo *et al.,* 2024). Forest degradation affects the wildlife in the forest, the environment and even impacts the welfare of the community. Habitat loss causes species to lose shelter, forage for food, and breed, putting them at risk of population decline (Duenas *et al.,* 2021). Wildlife population declines can disrupt ecological interactions and reduce ecosystem quality capabilities due to anthropogenic activities (Plas *et al.,* 2016).

Communities living around forests often interact with forest wildlife (Martin, 2024). Interactions between humans and forests have existed for a long time (Hill, 2021). This is a form of human effort to fulfill the needs of life and maintain their existence through the utilization of forest resources. The interaction between humans and forests is very complex and different (Newton *et al.,* 2016). One form is the utilization of wildlife. People utilize wildlife for traditional medicine (Koutchoro *et al.,* 2024), socio-cultural values, food sources, customs, and traditional rituals (Toone, 2024). Human interaction with wildlife is an experience that determines human existence (Nyphus, 2016). The simultaneous presence of humans and wildlife creates the potential for both positive and negative interactions (Eklund *et al.,* 2023). However, rampant deforestation has led to an increase in interactions between humans and wildlife, often resulting in negative interactions in the form of conflict (Martin and Almas, 2022). In general, if an interaction has a positive (or neutral) outcome, it is called coexistence and if it is negative, it is called conflict (Ullah *et al.,* 2024). Communities living near forests have a deep understanding of traditional ways of managing plants and wildlife (Mavhura and Mushure, 2019). Local perspectives, knowledge, beliefs, and techniques for land and forest management have become the reference point for communities to understand how they interact with nature. Communities have developed their own knowledge and perspectives on forest and wildlife conservation through daily experiences (Mavhura and Mushure, 2019).

The existence of wildlife is closely related to community perspectives due to interactions (Nyphus, 2016). People's views or perceptions of forests and wildlife have different influences on the formation of human relationships with forests (Basak *et al.,* 2022). Perception can be defined as a unique individual experience, drawn from what is known to the self (McDonald, 2012). Bennett (2016) defines perception as the way individuals observe, understand, interpret and evaluate a reference object, action, experience, individual, policy or outcome. Thus, direct observation of wildlife can influence people's perspectives on wildlife. People have the same or different perspectives and behaviors towards wildlife in their environment (Nyphus, 2016). Perspective is an individual's ability to see, hear, realize, and interpret something through the five senses (Lucungu *et al.,* 2022). The perspective of the community around the forest is built by traditions or habits that are seen and done. Different perspectives are basically different reactions to wildlife, which we understand as the result of an individual's assessment of wildlife in relation to their activities (Eklund *et al.,* 2023). Local people's knowledge and perspectives on the presence and role of wildlife in the ecosystem are derived

from their daily experiences (Nyphus, 2016). However, it should also be understood that perceptions are not solely based on personal experience, but also on social and cultural norms or beliefs (Dickman, 2010).

Perceptions also determine whether people will participate or ignore conservation programs in forest area management (Wulandari *et al.,* 2024). People's negative or positive attitudes towards wildlife will impact their contribution and participation in conserving the wildlife (Biru *et al*., 2017). Attitude comes from a person's assessment of a situation, whether favorable or unfavorable (Kidane *et al.,* 2024). People's attitude towards wildlife will be positive if they perceive it as beneficial and vice versa (Lucungu *et al.,* 2022). Considering community perspectives in the formulation of management policies will result in increased compliance and legitimacy of conservation programs (Ainsworth *et al.,* 2020). A clear understanding of different perceptions of wildlife will result in more effective management (Pour *et al.,* 2023). These community perspectives are critical in determining how wildlife is managed, protected or utilized. Thus, community perspectives support the sustainability of various forest management programs involving local communities. The purpose of this study was to analyze community perspectives on wildlife in the Talang Ponijan and Sidodadi I Forest Farmer Groups in Tanggamus District, Lampung Province, Indonesia.

METHOD

This research was conducted from October to December 2024 in the Batutegi Forest Management Unit managed by Talang Ponijan Forest Farmer Group, Sirna Galih Village, Ulu Belu Sub-district and Sidodadi I Forest Farmer Group, Sinar Jawa Village, Air Naningan Sub-district, Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province, Indonesia. The two locations were chosen because they are located close together but have different land cover. The method used in this research is using a qualitative approach. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, involved observation, and documentation studies. Key informants were selected by purposive sampling, including Gapoktan administrators (1 person), community leaders (2 people), and coffee farmers (8 people). The data analysis used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Data obtained from in-depth interviews regarding the existence of wildlife were then analyzed by making data transcripts, coding, data categorization, interim conclusions, triangulation, and final conclusions so that the results obtained describe the community's perspective on the existence of wildlife in KTH Talang Ponijan and Sidodadi I.

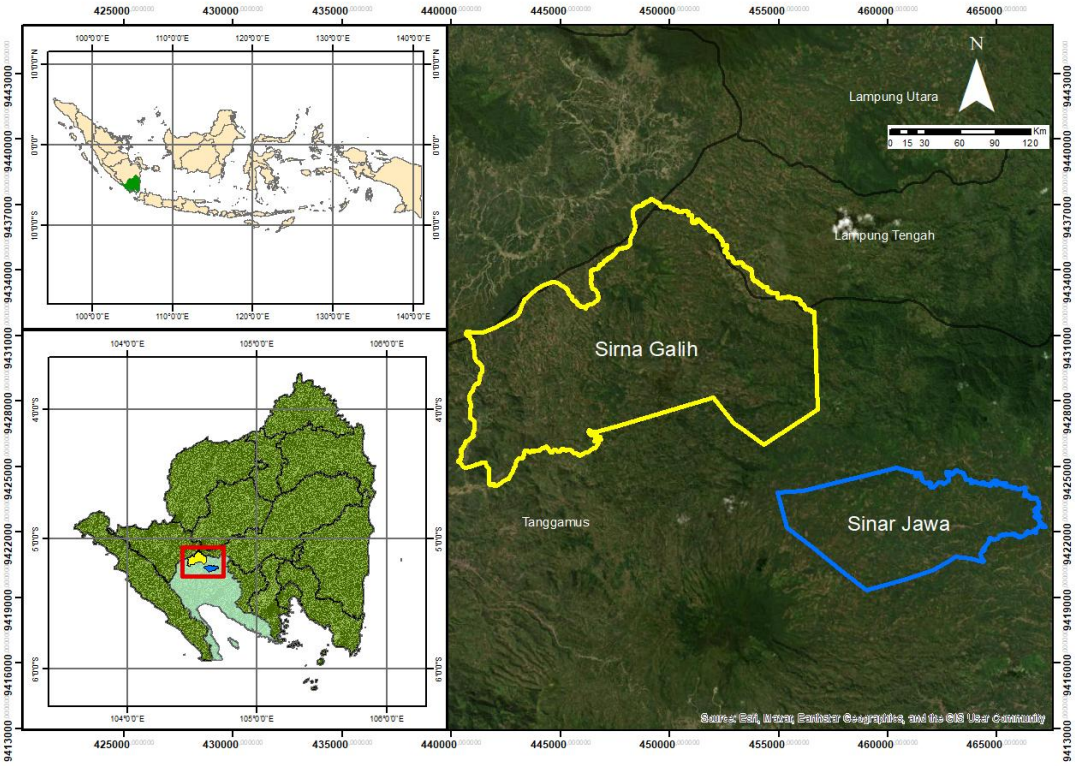

Figure 1. Research location map

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Community Perspectives on the Existence of Wildlife in the Talang Ponijan Forest Farmer Group

The Talang Ponijan Forest Farmer Group is located in Sirna Galih Village, Ulu Belu District, Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province. The location is included in the management area of Ulu Semong Resort Register 39 Kota Agung Utara, Batutegi Forest Management Unit. The land cover in the Talang Ponijan KTH is dominated by monoculture coffee, agroforestry and natural forest. Coffee is the main commodity developed in the area (Almaidah *et al*., 2025). Most of the managed land uses a monoculture coffee system without shade trees (Figure 2). According to the community, monoculture coffee can increase production and meet high market demand. However, the monoculture coffee system degrades soil quality in the long run (Zhao *et al.,* 2018). Agroforestry systems are applied to minimize the negative impacts of coffee monoculture. Agroforestry systems can also provide habitat for a variety of flora and fauna, including birds, mammals, insects, primates and plants (Islam *et al*., 2022). Agroforestry increases their income, provides shade to reduce heat when farmers work, and supports soil and water conservation (Febryano *et al.,* 2024). People's activities in managing the land influence their perspective and behavior towards wildlife (Basak *et al.,* 2022).

Figure 2. Condition of the Talang Ponijan forest group area

The Talang Ponijan community has a unique view on the existence of wildlife in the surrounding forest area. The presence of wildlife has both positive and negative impacts from wildlife interactions with humans. Wildlife has a negative impact if its presence disturbs farmers' activities and destroys crops (Singh *et al*., 2020). Wildlife that are still visible include wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*), bear (*Helarctos malayanus*), squirrel (*Callosciurus notatus*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*), bats (*Chiroptera* sp.), and birds. Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) are the most commonly seen animal in the area. In the past, the wild boar population was very significant. However, as human activity increases, the presence of wild boar is declining. This is due to wild boar hunting. According to the community, hunting wild boar is a common activity. Pig hunting is done as a pastime and is hunted using dogs. Although their numbers have now decreased, wild boars are still seen in farmers' gardens. Wild boars are negatively perceived as they damage banana and yam crops. As seen in Figure 3, it shows wild boar-disturbed soil located in a farmer's coffee plantation. The dredged soil is an activity of wild boar to find food (Fauzi *et al.,* 2023). When wild boars are spotted, people drive them away without using any special tools. They use simple methods such as hanging sacks to anticipate attacks on crops.

Figure 3. Wild boar (Sus scrofa) soil scars

Apart from wild boars, other animals such as gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*) are still found in the forest (Figure 4a). Their presence is considered unobtrusive and they tend to avoid humans. Gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*) is a primate species that plays an

important role in the forest ecosystem. Siamangs play a role in forest regeneration through seed dispersal and are an indicator of forest health (Meylia and Mustari, 2022). However, their population is in danger of declining due to habitat loss and fragmentation (Naher *et al*., 2021). Snakes are also still often seen around settlements. People are accustomed to the presence of snakes. However, snakes are often negatively perceived by the community because they have preyed on their livestock. In addition, they feel disturbed when their presence is harmful. People use traditional techniques by sowing salt to prevent snakes from entering the house.

In addition, rare birds such as peafowl are now rarely seen. According to the community, the bird population is declining due to poaching. However, the nests of polar lorikeets (*Pycnonotus aurigaster*) (Figure 4b) and woodpeckers (*Picus* sp.) (Figure 4c) still exist. Poachers target birds with high economic value for pets and trade. The decline in bird populations is also thought to be due to reduced availability of food sources. Farmers are underutilizing high canopy trees, so there are very limited food sources available for wildlife. Despite the decline in numbers, the community recognizes that the presence of birds is very important for the balance of the ecosystem. Birds help with seed dispersal and integrated pest control for crops (Garcia *et al*., 2024).

Bears (*Helarctos malayanus*) are also still present although rarely seen. This is indicated by bear excavation sites (Figure 4d). According to the community, the presence of bears does not have a detrimental impact. However, they tend to avoid bears to reduce the risk of conflict and maintain safety. A bear once made a den on top of a tree as a temporary shelter. After staying there for one day, the bear left the den. Although the population is small and rarely seen, bears are part of the forest ecosystem. For people who have lived there for a long time, the presence of tigers is nothing new. Tigers are negatively perceived because their presence disrupts farmers' activities. Their negative perception of tigers is “fear”. A more negative view of tigers is due to perceived threats such as livestock predation and even attacking humans (Malviya *et al.,* 2022). According to the community, there used to be a herd of elephants in this area. To chase the elephants away, the community worked together to make a big bonfire so that the elephants returned to the forest area. Now, the elephants are no longer known to exist. Land clearing poses a serious threat to wildlife.

Figure 4. Wildlife nests and tracks
Description: (a) gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*); *(b) hornbill (Pycnonotus aurigaster) nest; (c) woodpecker (Picus sp.) nest; (d) bear (Helarctos malayanus) scavenging activity.*

The presence of other wildlife such as civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) and squirrel (*Callosciurus notatus*) is considered to have a negative impact on farmers. They become crop pests because they eat and damage coffee plants. In addition, cloves planted by farmers are often skinned by bajing. Therefore, clove plants die young. The presence of bats (*Chiroptera* sp.) tends to have a positive impact on farmers. Bats are active at night. They fly around the coffee plantation in search of food. Although the presence of these bats can affect the amount of coffee harvested, the community chooses not to drive them away. Codot coffee, or bat coffee, is coffee produced when fruit bats (codots) consume and regurgitate coffee beans (Figure 5). Bat coffee has a high economic value (Audia *et al*., 2019). Codot coffee provides additional economic opportunities for farmers, with factors such as geographic suitability, accessibility, and quality influencing its value (Audia *et al.,* 2019).

Figure 5. Bat coffee

Bats feed on red coffee cherries, but do not take the cherries away from the plants. Bat-fed coffee tends to congregate in one area without causing significant disturbance to coffee farmers. According to farmers, bat-fed coffee tends to be better. Bats only like ripe, good quality coffee fruits. In addition, their presence is sometimes considered an indicator of the quality of the coffee plants. Bats can also help with pollination and seed dispersal in coffee plantation areas (Ramírez-Fráncel *et al.,* 2021).

Community Perspective on the Existence of Wildlife in Sidodadi I Forest Farmer Group

The Sidodadi I Forest Farmer Group is located in Sinar Jawa Village, Air Naningan District, Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province. The location is in Resort Banjaran Register 32 of Bukit Rindingan Protected Forest Area, Batutegi Forest Management Unit. Land cover conditions in the village include mixed dryland agriculture (2174.79 ha), shrubs (119.73 ha), and open land (11.48 ha) with an altitude of 500-1200 masl. The forest condition in this location is lush with mahogany trees (*Swietenia mahagoni*) dominating (Figure 6). According to farmers, the presence of mahogany trees is also used as a shade for coffee. Other vegetation types include candlenut (*Aleurites moluccana*), coffee (Coffea sp.), jengkol (*Archidendron pauciflorum*), durian (*Durio zibethinus*), nutmeg (*Myristica fragrans*), rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) and banana (*Musa paradisiaca*). Coffee shade trees are utilized by wildlife as habitat and food sources (Campera *et al*., 2021). The people of Sidodadi I have a complex relationship with wildlife in the forest area around them. The relationship is the result of reciprocal interactions between humans and wildlife around the forest (Glikman *et al.,* 2021). They experience direct impacts from interactions with wildlife, both positive and negative. People's interactions with wildlife are the result of their experiences while managing forest land (Almaidah *et al.,* 2025).

Figure 6. Site condition of KTH Sidodadi I

Primate wildlife such as gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*), macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*) and monkey (*Macaca fascicularis*) are often seen around community cultivated land. Siamangs are found in large trees. Their habitat is characterized by high plant diversity, with dominant tree species (Meylia and Mustari, 2022). According to the community, siamangs often make a distinctive sound to indicate their territory. Siamangs are considered positive for the community because they are considered to maintain the balance of nature. Siamangs help in seed dispersal and forest regeneration (Adyn *et al*., 2022). They disperse seeds through endozoocytes that contain seeds of various plant species (Adyn *et al*., 2022). People consider siamangs as “forest guardians” in the ecosystem.

Monkeys and macaques are often found around streams. Monkeys and macaques are considered to have a negative impact because they damage crops. They utilize farmers' cultivated gardens as a source of food. They often come to coffee plantations when the fruit is ripe, defoliate and eat coffee and fruit (Figure 7), and cut off the buds. Monkeys are also a pest to banana and cassava crops. Farmers suffer losses from these incidents. Monkeys and macaques are considered pests. The high level of wildlife disturbance experienced by the community, especially farmers, has led the community to have a negative understanding. Efforts to drive them away are carried out with the threat of gunshots. Rifles produce sounds to scare away the animals. However, based on interviews with the community, if conflict between monkeys and farmers cannot be avoided, they shoot the animals because they disturb farmers' gardens and cause losses. Community-wildlife conflicts arise from a series of direct and indirect negative interactions (Abrahms, 2021). This occurs when the needs and requirements of humans and wildlife overlap, usually to the detriment of local people and animals when one negatively impacts the other (Basak *et al.,* 2022).

Figure 7. Fruit damage due to wildlife attacks

There are wildlife whose existence is decreasing, such as birds. The bird population used to be quite large. However, over time the bird population is now increasingly rare. In fact, several types of birds such as the magpie and kacer have decreased drastically. According to the community, the cause of this decline is hunting by humans and reduced food sources in their habitat (Almaidah *et al.,* 2025). These birds also no longer make nests around the area. In fact, the community views birds in their area positively. Birds that perch and make distinctive sounds provide their own pleasure. The practice of poaching animals including birds is still seen in forest areas. Sinar Jawa Village is suspected of being a route for poaching practices. Hunters usually use rifles to take down wild animals. Efforts by the community and authorities to reduce poaching activities. However, challenges in law enforcement and supervision mean this practice still continues. The existence of this poaching threatens the wildlife population in the area and disrupts the balance of the forest ecosystem (Khan *et al.,* 2024). According to farmers, wildlife such as bats, birds, and civets provide ecosystem services because they are useful in controlling insect pests. The presence of these wildlife is considered positive and somewhat beneficial for the harvest. They contribute to seed distribution and as an indicator of coffee fruit quality. Farmers are not too bothered because coffee eaten by bats actually has a higher selling value. Other animals such as snakes are rarely seen because they mostly come out at night, so farmers rarely encounter them.

Large mammals such as bears (*Helarctos malayanus*), tigers (*Panthera tigris*), and elephants (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*) have also been seen in this area. Bears are animals that are wary of the people in Sinar Jawa Village. Bears sometimes destroy farmers' huts, especially huts that are abandoned by their occupants. Bears plunder food supplies such as oil and sugar that may be left in the huts. This incident has created a negative view of the presence of bears around their homes. Uniquely, when humans and bears meet, both parties will feel afraid. Bears tend to run away when they see humans. Conversely, humans will also avoid them. Tigers are no longer found in this area. In 2003, elephants often passed through the village. The community had to herd them into the forest every time they came. Although these elephants often destroyed huts, the community was still able to adapt. The community did not hunt or capture these animals, but chose to live side by side and respect their existence. As stated by the key informant: "*Actually it is not important for farmers, especially for animals that cause damage. But we must be able to live side by side with wild animals, if we are disturbed it is already a risk.*" According to the community, the existence of wild animals in this forest is important for the environment. However, if there are too many of them, it will cause losses for farmers. Wildlife not only plays a role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem, but also provides natural beauty that can be enjoyed by the community.

Table 1. Community perspectives on wildlife

Wildlife	Views	Reasons	Response
Wild boar	-	Destroy banana plants	Chased away using machetes and wood
Gibbon	+	Protecting the forest	Allowed
Birds	+	Seed dispersers	Previously hunted, now allowed
Snake	+	Maintaining the food chain	Allowed
Sunbear	-	Looting farmers' huts	Avoided
Sumatran tiger	-	Disturbing farmers' activities	Avoided
Bat	+	Seed dispersers	Allowed
Squirrel	-	Damaging avocados	Allowed
Long-tailed macaque	-	Damaging crops	Shot if severely damaging crops
Pig-tailed macaque	-	Damaging crops	Shot if severely damaging crops
Sumatran elephant	-	Demolishing farmers' huts	Driven out en masse and using bonfires

Indonesian Government Efforts in Wildlife Protection

Conservation efforts are often complex challenges, involving the roles of governments, environmental organizations, and local communities. Wildlife conservation is a task that requires collaboration between various parties. The conservation status of wildlife reflects the condition of the species' existence in nature and the level of extinction risk they face.

Table 2. Wildlife conservation status

Local Name	Nama Internasional	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Babi hutan	Wild boar	*Sus scrofa*	Least Concern
Siamang	Gibbon	*Symphalangus syndactylus*	Endengered
Burung kutilang	Sooty-headed Bulbul	*Pycnonotus aurigaster*	Least Concern
Beruang madu	Sunbear	*Helarctos malayanus*	Vulnurable
Harimau Sumatera	Sumatran tiger	*Panthera tigris sumatrae*	Critically Endangered
Kelelawar	Bat	*Chiroptera*	Least Concern
Bajing	Squirrel	*Callosciurus notatus*	Least Concern
Monyet ekor Panjang	Long-tailed macaque	*Macaca fascicularis*	Endangered
Beruk	Pig-tailed macaque	*Macaca nemestrina*	Endangered
Gajah sumatera	Sumatran elephant	*Elephas maximus sumatranus*	Critically Endangered

The Indonesian government plays an important role in wildlife conservation through legislation and law enforcement. Wildlife conservation efforts in Indonesia have developed since the late 19th century, starting with hunting habits that later gave rise to the idea of preservation (Gustaman, 2019). The government has established various regulations to protect wildlife. The government has established various conservation areas, including nature reserves and national parks, to protect wildlife in their natural habitat (Tyas and Najicha, 2023). However,

various challenges such as illegal wildlife trade and habitat loss remain (Raditya, 2023). The efforts of the Indonesian government include the following:

1. Wildlife Protection Law
   Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems provides legal protection for endangered species (Raditya, 2023; Suradnya *et al.,* 2021). The law regulates the conservation of natural resources including endangered species, and prohibits hunting, capturing, and trading of endangered species without official permits, as well as providing a legal basis for enforcement and supervision of wildlife management. In addition, Government Regulation No. 7 of 1999 concerning the Preservation of Plant and Animal Species was issued. Efforts to preserve plant and animal species are carried out in the habitat (in-situ conservation) or outside the habitat (ex-situ conservation).
2. Determination of Conservation Areas
   The government has implemented various programs to protect and preserve conservation areas, such as National Parks, Forest Parks, Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Hunting Parks, and Nature Tourism Parks. Conservation area management aims to optimize the use of natural resources without damaging the environment.
3. Support for Conservation Organizations and Programs
   Several wildlife conservation organizations and programs include the SAVE Wildlife Conservation Fund, ISCP (Indonesia Species Conservation Program), PRCF (People Resources and Conservation Foundation), SEIS (Save Indonesian Endangered Species), and RAN (Rainforest Action Network) (Tyas and Najicha, 2023). These organizations and programs work to protect and preserve endangered species in Indonesia.
4. Collaboration of Various Parties
   The Indonesian government also collaborates with other countries, international organizations, and global conservation institutions for environmental conservation and protection of endangered species. This collaboration includes the exchange of information, technology, and experience, as well as assistance in financing and implementing conservation programs (Wijayanto *et al.,* 2022).
5. Community-Based Forest Management
   The government encourages communities to be actively involved in conservation efforts, such as reporting poaching and trade in endangered species to the authorities to prevent future violations. Socialization, outreach, habitat protection, supervision, and involvement of local communities are important parts of the wildlife conservation strategy in Indonesia.

Community-Based Forest Management as an Effort to Strengthen Wildlife Conservation

Local community understanding of wildlife conservation is one of the keys to realizing the goal of sustainable forest management. Communities around forests have an interest in protecting and preserving forests because of their sense of dependence on the resources provided by forests. The high interaction of local communities with forests requires ways to manage, utilize, and protect forests as well as possible to maintain their function. Forest management that involves communities is considered to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of forest resource utilization (Golar *et al.,* 2021). In Indonesia, the social forestry program emerged as an effort to realize sustainable forest management while improving the welfare of communities around forests. The social forestry program consists of 5 schemes, namely customary forests, community forests, forestry partnerships, village forests, and community plantation forests (Adi *et al.,* 2024). The system of cooperation between forest managers and communities around forests is known as community-based forest management.

Community-based forest management is a forest management system that involves the active participation of local communities in managing forest resources. With active participation, communities can contribute to the protection and management of forests wisely, ensuring sustainable benefits for the environment and their lives. Active community participation in forest conservation is strengthened by access to social identity and social relations (Febryano, 2015). Community-based forest management allows them to be involved in decision-making that directly affects their environment and well-being (Situmorang and Noviana, 2022). PHBM

also encourages community empowerment in the use of forest resources wisely and judiciously (Pulhin *et al*., 2024). This empowerment results in a stronger commitment to conservation efforts. Community-based forest management is an effective strategy to strengthen wildlife conservation by actively involving local communities in forest resource management. This approach empowers communities to make decisions related to the sustainable use of their natural resources, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for the environment. Community forestry programs can make a major contribution to the community if they include good forest management (Lubis *et al.,* 2019). Local community understanding of wildlife conservation is also one of the keys to realizing the goal of sustainable forest management.

Community-based forest management programs can restore wildlife and provide financial benefits to local communities. Indirectly, changes in attitudes towards wildlife are not so visible, but in the long term positive attitudes can be an important determinant of sustainability in the program. Community-based conservation programs will be successful if local communities have control and ownership over biodiversity management and see tangible benefits from this management (*Störmer et al.,* 2019). Community initiatives and participation can mobilize and organize them to take collective action in sustainable forest management (Febryano *et al.,* 2014). Forest and wildlife conservation practices based on community knowledge continue to support rural livelihoods without endangering biodiversity and ecosystems (Reniko *et al.,* 2018).

Research conducted in Kafta-Sheraro National Park in Northern Ethiopia, wildlife conservation is strongly influenced by compensation schemes, access to forest use rights. In addition, research findings show that wildlife conservation is interrelated with the re-demarcation of the Area and law enforcement. Increasing community environmental conservation education is also positively correlated with support for wildlife conservation. In general, the results show that increasing the benefits obtained by local communities from forest areas will be a strong contribution to increasing the willingness to participate in wildlife conservation (Kidane *et al.,* 2024). In other countries such as the Namibian Conservation Area, it has been shown that when local communities are empowered to manage their resources, wildlife populations can thrive, deforestation rates can decrease, and ecosystems can be restored. Ultimately, CBFM not only enhances wildlife conservation efforts but also contributes to the socio-economic development of communities, creating a scenario that benefits both humans and nature (Kahler *et al.,* 2015). The linkage between communities and wildlife suggests that communities should play a key role in the planning and implementation of forest resource management activities. Community-based forest management can promote wildlife conservation as well as sustainable use through direct forest protection measures and the establishment of collective resource institutions (Pulhin *et al.,* 2024). Therefore, this approach results in a stronger commitment to wildlife conservation efforts. Community participation needs serious attention because the long-term success of local institutions can only be achieved through their involvement (Salampessy *et al.,* 2024).

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION

The Talang Ponijan and Sidodadi I communities have almost the same perspective on the existence of wildlife. The Talang Ponijan community tends to have a negative view of the existence of wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), bears (*Helarctos malayanus*), squirrels (*Callosciurus notatus*), tigers (*Panthera tigris*). These animals often damage crops in farmers' gardens. They are also considered to disrupt activities and threaten safety. Gibbon (*Symphalangus syndactylus*), birds, and bats (*Chiroptera* sp.) are considered positive because of their role as seed dispersers, pest controllers, and indicators of coffee quality. The Sidodadi I community also has a positive view of the existence of wildlife. Negative views arise towards monkeys, macaques, and squirrels because they are considered plant pests. They damage farmers' gardens and cause losses. However, their behavior towards the sustainability of wildlife shows

differences. Some of the Talang Ponijan community are involved in detrimental practices such as monoculture systems, poaching and the opening of new cultivated land. Meanwhile, Sidodadi I Community tends to prioritize sustainable agricultural practices such as shade coffee systems and planting high canopy trees. Government support in developing community capacity such as agricultural extension and nature conservation, community economic empowerment needs to be done. In addition, strict and effective law enforcement is important to reduce illegal activities that occur.

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