



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**EDGE-INTERIOR GRADIENT EFFECTS ON THE UNDERSTOREY  
BIRD COMMUNITY IN AN ISOLATED AYER HITAM FOREST  
RESERVE, MALAYSIA**

**HOSSEIN VARASTEH MORADI**

**T FH 2009 9**



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COMMUNITY IN AN ISOLATED AYER HITAM FOREST RESERVE,  
MALAYSIA**

By

**HOSSEIN VARASTEH MORADI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy**

**June 2009**



## **DEDICATION**

Specially dedicated to:

My beloved family

Parisa and Ayda

My mother and my late father

Your love has made me a better and stronger person.

You are always in my heart.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**June 2009**

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The fact that the world is losing its biodiversity due to human activities, particularly around the tropical forest region, has been widely known. One of the biggest threats to biodiversity is the edge effects, especially in isolated and fragmented habitats. Thus, to investigate the edge effects on the community of understorey birds, an isolated tropical rainforest of Malaysia was chosen. The objectives of this study were: (1) to examine the species composition, richness, abundance, and density changes across edge-interior gradient; (2) to detect any distinct bird communities associated with certain habitat types and the factors affecting the association (3) to distinguish the interior and edge specialist species and guilds. The point-count sampling method was used in a 1248-ha lowland rainforest patch of Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve to carry out a survey on the individual understorey bird and species, at each of the 93 survey points, between December 2006 and July 2008.



Birds and environmental variables were recorded within a 25 m radius of each point. A total of 2263 observations, 72 species, representing 19 families were recorded in this study. The species composition, density, abundance, and diversity of birds showed some significant differences across the edge-interior gradient at the guild and species levels. Based on the bird-habitat association, along the edge-interior gradient, two groups were distinguished. These were the edge-specialist group which was positively correlated with ground cover, light intensity, shrub cover, temperature, and percentage of shrub cover between 0.5 and 2 m in height; meanwhile the interior-specialist group was highly sensitive to the forest edge and could indicate good habitat quality of forest interior with high humidity, dense canopy cover, high number of dead trees, high percentage of litter cover, and deep litter layer. At the guild level, the results showed that the terrestrial insectivores and sallying insectivores are sensitive to edge and have positive correlation with distance from the edge, leaf litter depth, canopy cover, and the number of tall trees (>10 m). The presence of some species such as the Yellow-vented Bulbul, Cream-vented Bulbul, and Plaintive Cuckoo was associated with high light intensity and shrub cover, which are the best indicators of the edge. Meanwhile, the presence of Short-tailed Babbler, Moustached Babbler, and Black-caped Babbler was associated with high relative humidity and leaf litter cover, which are the best indicators of forest interior.

Changes in the micro-environment at the edge are a key factor to indicate the understorey avian responses to the edge-interior gradient. As edge

specialists can be widely found in the matrix surrounding the patch, they require less conservation against being declined or endangered; i.e. they can be well managed in the matrix surrounding the forest patches. Interior-specialists, on the other hand, especially terrestrial insectivores, should be given the most attention in conservation of forest areas. From the conservation viewpoint, the forest remnants in the lowlands of Peninsular Malaysia are of considerable concern. Due to the characteristics including thick leaf litter layer, dense canopy cover, high number of dead trees, and high relative humidity, these remnants have the capability of supporting the understorey bird species sensitive to edge effects.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KESAN GRADIEN PINGGIR-DALAM HUTAN TERHADAP KOMUNITI  
BURUNG DI PERINGKAT BAWAH HUTAN DI HUTAN SIMPAN  
TERPENCIL AYER HITAM, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Dunia sedang mengalami kehilangan kepelbagaian biodiversitinya disebabkan aktiviti-aktiviti yang dijalankan oleh manusia terutamanya di kawasan hutan tropika. Salah satu ancaman yang besar kepada biodiversiti adalah kesan peminggiran terutamanya di habitat yang terpencil dan terasing. Sebuah hutan hujan tropika yang terpencil di Malaysia iaitu Hutan Simpan Ayer Hitam telah dipilih untuk mengkaji kesan peminggiran ke atas komuniti burung di bahagian bawah hutan. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk: (1) mengkaji komposisi, kekayaan, limpahan, dan perubahan kepadatan spesies burung di sepanjang gradien pinggir hutan ke bahagian dalam hutan (2) mengesan sebarang perbezaan komuniti burung berkaitan dengan jenis habitat dan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan perkaitan tersebut (3) membezakan spesies khusus dan 'guild' di bahagian dalam dan di pinggir hutan. Kaedah pensampelan 'point-count' digunakan untuk survei individu

dan spesies burung pada setiap 93 titik survei dari Disember 2006 hingga Julai 2008. Burung dan pembolehubah persekitaran dicatatkan dalam sekitar 25 m bagi setiap titik survei. Sejumlah 2263 pemerhatian yang terdiri daripada 72 spesies yang mewakili 19 famili burung dicatatkan. Komposisi, kepadatan, kelimpahan, dan kepelbagaian spesies burung menunjukkan beberapa perbezaan yang ketara di sepanjang gradien pinggir hutan dan bahagian dalam hutan pada peringkat 'guild' dan spesies burung. Dua kumpulan burung dapat dibezakan berdasarkan pada perkaitan habitat dan burung di sepanjang pinggir hutan dan bahagian dalam hutan. Kumpulan burung khusus di pinggir hutan berkait rapat secara positif dengan lapisan litupan tanah, intensiti cahaya, litupan pokok renek, suhu, dan peratusan litupan pokok renek yang berketinggian antara 0.5 hingga 2 m. Manakala kumpulan burung khusus di bahagian dalam hutan adalah sangat sensitif terhadap pinggir hutan dan boleh menjadi petunjuk kepada kualiti habitat yang baik di bahagian dalam hutan dengan kelembapan yang tinggi, kepadatan litupan kanopi, bilangan pokok mati yang banyak, dan peratusan litupan sampah yang tinggi dan lapisan yang tebal. Pada paras 'guild' burung, keputusan kajian menunjukkan insektivor terestrial dan insektivor 'sallying' adalah sensitif kepada pinggir hutan dan mempunyai korelasi positif dengan jarak dari pinggir hutan, kedalaman daun sampah, litupan kanopi, dan bilangan pokok tinggi (>10 m). Kehadiran beberapa spesies burung seperti Merbah Kapur, Merbah Mata-putih dan Sewah Mati-anak yang berkait dengan intensiti cahaya dan litupan pokok renek adalah petunjuk kepada pinggir hutan yang baik. Manakala kehadiran Rimba Ekor-pendek,



Rimba Berjambang, dan Rimba Kopiah-hitam yang berkait dengan kelembapan relatif yang tinggi dan litupan daun sampah adalah petunjuk yang baik kepada bahagian dalam hutan.

Perubahan pada persekitaran mikro di pinggir hutan adalah faktor utama penyebab burung di bahagian bawah hutan respons kepada gradien pinggir ke dalam hutan. Kumpulan burung khusus di pinggir hutan merupakan spesies burung yang kebanyakannya wujud di kawasan matrix hutan pinggir. Oleh itu pemuliharaan mereka bukan menjadi perkara yang wajib dan jika beberapa spesies ini berkurangan atau terancam, mereka mungkin boleh diurus dengan lebih baik di kawasan sekitar matrix hutan pinggir. Manakala spesies khusus hutan dalam terutamanya inaktivor terestrial, memerlukan perhatian yang tinggi bagi konservasi kawasan hutan. Dari perspektif pemuliharaan, saki baki hutan di kawasan tanah pamah di Semenanjung Malaysia yang mengandungi lapisan daun sampah yang tebal, litupan kanopi yang padat, bilangan pokok mati yang banyak, dan kelembapan relatif yang tinggi mempunyai nilai pemuliharaan yang tinggi kerana mereka boleh menampung spesies burung di peringkat bawah hutan yang sensitif kepada kesan pinggir hutan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 30 June 2009 to conduct the final examination of Hossein Varasteh Moradi on his thesis entitled "Edge-interior Gradient Effects on the Understorey Bird Community in an Isolated Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve, Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1988. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

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**HOSSEIN VARASTEH MORADI**

Date: 28 July 2009

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	ii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	vi
<b>AKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	ix
<b>APROVAL</b>	x
<b>DECLARATION</b>	xii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xv
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xviii
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS</b>	xxii
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 General Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement and Scope of Research	3
1.3 Research Aim and Objectives	9
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Features of Malaysia	11
2.2 Tropical Rainforest Biodiversity	15
2.3 Forest Degradation	18
2.3.1 Deforestation	18
2.3.2 Logging	20
2.3.3 Fragmentation	29
2.3.4 Edge Effects	40
<b>3 MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>61</b>
3.1 Study Site	61
3.2 Research Framework	64
3.3 Study Design	70
3.3.1 Bird Sampling	70
3.3.2 Micro-environment Measurement	74
3.4 Data Analysis	77
<b>4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>84</b>
4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Bird survey	84
4.2 Micro-environmental Survey	87
4.3 Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Understorey Birds	95
4.3.1 Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Arboreal Foliage Gleaning Insectivores	119
4.3.2 Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Arboreal Foliage Gleaning Insectivore-frugivores	127
4.3.3 Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Sallying Insectivores	133
4.3.4 Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Bark Gleaning Insectivores	140



4.3.5	Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Nectarivore-insectivore-frugivore	146
4.3.6	Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Terrestrial Insectivores	152
4.3.7	Edge Effects on the Composition and Diversity of Terrestrial Insectivore-frugivores	159
4.4	Edge Effects on the Abundance and Density of Birds	163
4.4.1	Edge Effects on the Abundance and Density of the Understorey Birds and Micro-environment Correlates	163
4.4.2	Edge Effects on the Abundance and Density of Feeding Guilds and Micro-environment Correlates	192
4.5	Summary of the Findings	217
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	224
5.1	Conclusion	224
5.2	Recommendations for Future Studies	227
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	231
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	258
	<b>BIODATA OF THE STUDENT</b>	282
	<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</b>	283



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
2.1	Forested areas, including primary and secondary forest, in Malaysia	11
2.2	Breakdown of forest types in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak	14
2.3	Change in the forest cover in Malaysia	14
2.4	Wildlife biodiversity in Malaysia	15
2.5	Plant biodiversity in Malaysia	15
2.6	Trophic structures and feeding guilds	23
2.7	Summary of the results on the logging effects on the different group of birds	27
2.8	Proposed standard terms and definitions of the common concepts used in the research on forest edges, following consideration of the past definitions and the common usage in the literature, ecological relevance, and usefulness of terms (Harper <i>et al.</i> , 2005)	42
2.9	Summarized effects of edge on abiotic and biotic factors reported by different authors	45
3.1	Breakdown of bird sampling period in 10 visits for 93 sampling points	70
3.2	Breakdown of the number of sampling points for different distances from edge	72
4.1	Habitat variables measured along edge-interior gradient	90
4.2	Contribution of understorey bird species towards differentiating the seven different distances from forest edge (SIMPER Analysis)	97
4.3	ANOSIM pairwise tests for similarities among seven different distances from the forest edge	101



4.4	Expected number of understorey bird species E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	104
4.5	Comparison of Understorey bird diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	106
4.6	Expected number of arboreal foliage gleaning insectivores E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	121
4.7	Comparison of arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	123
4.8	Expected number of arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivore E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	128
4.9	Comparison of arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivore diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	130
4.10	Expected number of sallying insectivores E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	135
4.11	Comparison of Sallying insectivore diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	137
4.12	Expected number of bark gleaning insectivores E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	141
4.13	Comparison of bark gleaning insectivorous diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	143
4.14	Expected number of nectarivore-insectivore-frugivore E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	148
4.15	Comparison of Nectarivore-frugivore-insectivores diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	149
4.16	Expected number of terrestrial insectivores E (Sn) in different distances from the forest edge (rarefraction method)	154
4.17	Comparison of terrestrial insectivorous diversity indices in relation to different distances from edge	156

4.18	Summarized results of the hierarchical agglomerative clustering classification method for the different feeding guilds	160
4.19	Comparison of understorey bird species abundances in relation to edge-interior gradient using Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U-test	164
4.20	Density estimates (individuals per ha) $\pm$ %se for understorey bird species in relation to different distances from the forest edge	168
4.21	Results of stepwise multiple regression models for abundance of understorey avian species related to environmental variables	171
4.22	Summary table of CCA ordination for understorey avian community at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	174
4.23	Summary table of CCA ordination with forward selection procedure for understorey avian community at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	178
4.24	Variance partitioning in the understorey species data	179
4.25	Comparison of feeding guilds abundances in relation to edge-interior gradient at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve using Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney U-test	193
4.26	Density estimates (individuals per ha) $\pm$ %se for different feeding guilds in relation to different distances from the forest edge	195
4.27	Results of stepwise multiple regression models for abundance of understorey avian feeding guilds related to environmental variables	197
4.28	Summary table of RDA ordination for feeding guilds at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	199
4.29	Summary table of RDA ordination with forward selection procedure for understorey feeding guilds at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	202
4.30	Pure participation of distance in observed feeding guilds variations	203
4.31	Summarized findings of edge effects on understorey birds	222



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Map of Malaysia	12
3.1	Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	62
3.2	Research framework	69
3.3	Map showing the position of Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	73
3.4	Map showing the position of sampling points	74
4.1	Number of understorey bird observations in different distances from edge in 93 sampling points	85
4.2	Number of understorey bird species in different distances from edge in 93 sampling points	85
4.3	Number of understorey bird families in different distances from edge in 93 sampling points	86
4.4	Cumulative number of species with increasing number of visits in 93 sampling points	86
4.5	Number of tree species with dbh more than 5 cm assigned to different families in 93 circle plots at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	88
4.6	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the understorey bird species in relation to different distances from edge	103
4.7	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of understorey bird species detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	105
4.8	Isolines of the number of understorey avian species ( $N_0$ ) with the most important environmental variables, plotted in the CCA ordination diagram. The numbers corresponds to the number of understorey birds on the isolines	108
4.9	Isolines of the Simpson diversity index with the most important environmental variables, plotted in the CCA ordination diagram. The numbers corresponds to the value of Simpson diversity index on the isolines	109

4.10	Isolines of the Simpson evenness index with the most important environmental variables, plotted in the CCA ordination diagram. The numbers corresponds to the value of Simpson evenness index on the isolines	110
4.11	Isolines of the number of dominant species ( $N_2$ ) with the most important environmental variables, plotted in the CCA ordination diagram. The numbers corresponds to the number of dominant species on the isolines	111
4.12	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the arboreal foliage gleaning insectivores in relation to different distances from edge	120
4.13	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	122
4.14	Main environmental factors that influenced arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore species number and composition in different distances from edge	125
4.15	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivores in relation to different distances from edge	127
4.16	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivore detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	129
4.17	Main environmental factors that influenced arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivore species number and composition in different distances from edge	131
4.18	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the sallying insectivores in relation to different distances from edge	134
4.19	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of sallying insectivores detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	136
4.20	Main environmental factors that influenced sallying insectivore species number and composition in different distances from edge	138

4.21	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the bark gleaning insectivores in relation to different distances from edge	140
4.22	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of bark gleaning insectivores detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	142
4.23	Main environmental factors that influenced bark gleaning insectivore species number and composition in different distances from edge	144
4.24	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the nectarivore-frugivore-insectivore in relation to different distances from edge	147
4.25	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of nectarivore-insectivore-frugivore detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	148
4.26	Main environmental factors that influenced nectarivore-frugivore-insectivore species number and composition in different distances from edge	150
4.27	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the terrestrial insectivorous species in relation to different distances from edge	153
4.28	Rarefaction curve for the expected number of terrestrial insectivores detected in different distances from edge at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	154
4.29	Main environmental factors that influenced terrestrial insectivore species number and composition in different distances from edge.	157
4.30	Dendrogram resulting from Complete Linkage Clustering method on the terrestrial insectivore-frugivores in relation to different distances from edge	159
4.31	Main environmental factors that influenced terrestrial insectivore-frugivore species number and composition in different distances from edge	162
4.32	Ordination diagrams of the first two axes of CCA for understory bird species and all environmental variables at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	176

4.33	Ordination diagrams of the first two axes of CCA for understorey bird species and important environmental variables at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	179
4.34	Discriminant diagram for distance gradient based on understorey bird species. The stars show centroids of distance classes	189
4.35	Discriminant diagram for distance gradient based on abiotic microclimate and topography factors. The stars show centroids of distance classes	190
4.36	Discriminant diagram for distance gradient based on biotic microhabitat factors. The stars show centroids of distance classes	191
4.37	Ordination diagrams of the first two axes of RDA for understorey feeding guilds and environmental variables at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	200
4.38	Ordination diagrams of the first two axes of RDA for understorey feeding guilds and most important environmental variables at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	204
A1	Birds and microclimate recording data sheet	258
A2	Microhabitat factors recording sheet	259
B1	List of bird species recorded at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	260
B2	The number of independent understorey bird observations based on visual cues in different distances from the forest edge	263
B3	Number of understorey bird species recorded for each family in different distances from the forest edge	267
B4	List of tree species (with dbh more than 5 cm) recorded in 93 circle plots at the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve	268
B5	Micro-environmental variables recorded in different distances from edge	270

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

%	Percent
°C	Degree celsius
a.s.l	Above sea level
AFF	Arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivores
AFI	Arboreal foliage gleaning insectivores
A-g-in-f	Arboreal foliage gleaning insectivore-frugivore
AHFR	Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve
AL	Number of <i>Agrostistachys longifolia</i> trees
ANOSIM	Analysis of similarity
ANOVA	Analysis of variance
Arct-wbl	Arctic Warbler
Ar-g-in	Arboreal foliage gleaning insectivores
Asnb-fly	Asian Brown Flycatcher
Bark-gle	Bark gleaning insectivores
BCB	Black-caped Babbler
BDW	Banded Woodpecker
Bffv-bul	Buff-vented Bulbul
BGI	Bark gleaning insectivores
Blkc-ba	Black-caped Babbler
Blkh-bul	Black-headed Bulbul
Bnd-wod	Banded Woodpecker
BNW	Buff-necked Woodpecker
Brnz-drn	Bronzed Drongo
BSL	Basal area
CCA	Canonical correspondence analysis
CCV	Canopy cover
Chkr-wod	Checker-throated Woodpecker
Chstw-ba	Chestnut-winged Babbler
Cm	Centimeter
Cmn-tlr	Common Tailorbird
Crmv-bul	Cream-vented Bulbul
CTB	Common Tailorbird
CTW	Checker-throated Woodpecker
CVB	Cream-vented Bulbul
CWB	Chestnut-winged Babbler
dbh	Diameter in breast height
DA	Discriminant analysis
DCCA	Detrended canonical correspondence analysis
DDT	dbh of dead trees
DEI	Depth of edge influence
DIS	Distance from the forest edge
Drkth-or	Dark-throated Oriole
Dsk-brdb	Dusky Broadbill
E	East
E(Sn)	Expected number of species
E	Camergo's index of evenness

EI	Edge influences
EMD	Emerald Dove
Emrd-dov	Emerald Dove
$E_{var}$	Smith and Wilson index of evenness
FCB	Finsch's Bulbul
Fflfb-ba	Fluffy-backed Tit-babbler
Fnch-bul	Finsch's Bulbul
FTB	Fluffy-backed Tit-babbler
GCV	Ground cover
GLM	General linear models
GRD	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo
Grt-drng	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo
Gryh-bab	Grey-headed Babbler
GYN	Greater Yellownap
h	Hour
H'	Shannon heterogeneity index
ha	Hectare
HUM	Humidity
Indn-cuk	Indian Cuckoo
Km	Kilometer
Km <sup>2</sup>	Square kilometer
K-W	Kruskal-Wallis
LDP	Leaf litter depth
LPC	Leaf litter cover
LSH	Little Spiderhunter
LUX	Light intensity
m	Meter
m/s	Meter per second
m <sup>3</sup> /ha	Cubic meter per hectare
Mgp-rbn	Magpie Robin
min	Minute
mm	Millimeter
MM	Number of <i>Melastoma malabathricum</i> shrubs
MPR	Magpie Robin
MRW	Maroon Woodpecker
Mstch-ba	Moustached Babbler
N	North
n	Number of observations
$N_0$	Total number of species
$N_1$	Number of abundant species in a sample
$N_2$	Simpson reciprocal index
NDT	Number of dead trees
Ne-in-fr	Nectarivore-insectivore-frugivore
NFT	Number of fruiting trees
NIF	Nectarivore-insectivore-frugivores
NPT	Number of palm trees
NT<2	Number of tree saplings with dbh of less than 2 cm
NT<6	Number of trees less than 6 m in height
NT>10	Number of trees higher than 10 m in height



NT10	Number of trees with dbh of 10-20 cm
NT2	Number of trees with dbh of 2-5 cm
NT20	Number of trees with dbh of 20-30 cm
NT30	Number of trees with dbh of 30-50 cm
NT5	Number of trees with dbh of 5-10 cm
NT50	Number of trees with dbh of more than 50 cm
NT6	Number of trees 6-10 m in height
NTI	Number of tree individuals
NTS	Number of tree species
OBF	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker
Olvb-wod	Olive-backed Woodpecker
Orngb-fl	Orange-bellied Flowerpecker
Orntl-wh	Oriental White-eye
OWB	Olive-winged Bulbul
PCA	Principal component analysis
Pffb-bul	Puff-backed Bulbul
PLC	Plaintive cuckoo
Pln-snbr	Plain Sunbird
Plnv-cuk	Plaintive Cuckoo
PNS	Purple-naped Sunbird
PSH2	Percentage of shrub cover between 0.5 and 2 m in height
PSH6	Percentage of shrub cover between 2 and 6 m in height
R <sup>2</sup>	Coefficient of determination
RDA	Constrained redundancy ordination
Rdey-bul	Red-eyed Bulbul
REB	Red-eyed Bulbul
Rfsc-bab	Rufous-crowned Babbler
Rfs-tlr	Rufous-tailed Tailorbird
Sally-in	Sallying insectivores
SD	Standard deviation
SE	Standard error
SHB	Short-tailed Babbler
SHC	Understorey shrub cover
Shrtt-ba	Short-tailed Babbler
SIMPER	Similarity percentage analysis
SIN	Sallying insectivores
SLO	Slope
SPB	Spectacled Bulbul
Spct-bul	Spectacled Bulbul
Spct-spd	Spectacled Spiderhunter
Spt-dov	Spotted Dove
STB	Striped Tit-babbler
Strpt-ba	Striped Tit-babbler
TEM	Temperature
Ter-in-f	Terrestrial insectivore-frugivores
Ter-inse	Terrestrial Insectivores
TIF	Terrestrial insectivore-frugivores
TIN	Terrestrial insectivores
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia