



***FOREST SPILL OVER EFFECTS OF BUTTERFLY COMMUNITY INTO  
DIFFERENT AGRICULTURE LANDSCAPES***

**SATHIYARUBINI A/P SATIMURTY**

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**FOREST SPILL OVER EFFECTS OF BUTTERFLY COMMUNITY INTO  
DIFFERENT AGRICULTURE LANDSCAPES**

**By**

**SATHIYARUBINI A/P SATIMURTY**

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the Degree of Bachelor of Forestry Science in the Faculty of Forestry  
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## **DEDICATION**

**For my beloved family:**

SATIMURTY A/L KANNAN

MALLIKA A/P RAMASAMY

Also my siblings

To all my friends,

Thank you for your encouragements supports

And the sacrifices that all of you have given.

Thank you for everything

## ABSTRACT

Forest conversion into agricultural land has become a major concern in South East Asia due to its negative impact on overall biodiversity specifically insects. Insects may adapt and survive under human dominated landscapes as seen in some species of butterflies (Insecta:Lepidoptera). However, most butterfly species experience population decline as a result of land use changes. The present study was conducted to investigate forest spillover effect of butterfly community into different agricultural landscapes namely rubber plantation, oil palm plantation and fruit orchard. The study was conducted at Kampung Ulu Sepri, Kampung Empangan Batu and Kampung Batang Sepri located in Pedas, Negeri Sembilan. Butterfly sampling was conducted using active and passive sampling. in all study sites (a total of 90 sampling points). For active sampling, butterflies were observed based on point count method using binocular and camera for 10 minutes at each point. Meanwhile, for passive sampling, butterfly trap with fruit bait were placed at two meter above ground for all sampling points. Habitat quality characteristics between agricultural landscape were also assessed by measuring canopy openness and closure, vegetative structure, air temperature, relative humidity and proximity to forest between different agricultural landscape. In overall, a total of 1608 Lepidoptera individual belonging to 61 species and 5 families were recorded. The results recorded the highest butterfly abundance in oil palm with 600 individuals followed by rubber plantations and fruit orchard with 585 and 423 individuals, respectively. For butterfly species richness, rubber plantation represent the highest species recorded with 24 species followed by orchard and oil palm with 22 and 15 butterfly species, respectively. Greater butterfly abundance and species richness in monoculture plantations compared to polyculture landscapes indicates spillover of butterfly community into adjacent agricultural landscapes. This study provide evidence of butterfly spill over from forest into agricultural lands. Therefore, agricultural management in monoculture plantations should emphasize on biodiversity friendly management systems by reducing agrochemical applications to help maintain butterfly resilience in human dominated landscape.

## ABSTRAK

Penukaran hutan ke tanah pertanian telah menjadi kebimbangan utama di Asia Tenggara kerana kesan negatif terhadap keanekaragaman biodiversiti secara keseluruhannya serangga. Serangga boleh menyesuaikan diri dan bertahan di bawah landskap yang dikuasai oleh manusia seperti yang dilihat dalam beberapa spesies rama-rama (Insekta: Lepidoptera). Walau bagaimanapun, kebanyakan spesies rama-rama mengalami penurunan akibat perubahan penggunaan tanah. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menyiasat kesan limpahan spesies rama-rama hutan ke landskap pertanian yang berbeza iaitu ladang getah, ladang kelapa sawit dan dusun buah. Kajian ini dijalankan di Kampung Ulu Sepri, Kampung Empangan Batu dan Kampung Batang Sepri yang terletak di Pedas, Negeri Sembilan. Rakaman rama-rama dilakukan menggunakan persampelan aktif dan pasif di semua tapak kajian (sejumlah 90 titik pensampelan). Untuk pensampelan aktif, rama-rama diperhatikan berdasarkan kaedah kiraan titik menggunakan binokular dan kamera selama 10 minit pada setiap titik. Sementara itu, untuk pensampelan pasif, perangkap rama-rama dengan umpan buah ditempatkan pada dua meter di atas tanah untuk semua titik pensampelan. Ciri-ciri kualiti habitat antara landskap pertanian juga dinilai dengan mengukur keterbukaan dan penutupan kanopi, struktur vegetatif, suhu udara, kelembapan relatif dan jarak dekat antara landskap pertanian yang berlainan. Secara keseluruhan, sejumlah 1608 individu Lepidoptera yang terdiri daripada 61 spesies dan 5 keluarga direkodkan. Hasilnya mencatat kelebihan rama-rama tertinggi di kelapa sawit dengan 600 individu diikuti oleh ladang getah dan kebun buah dengan masing-masing 585 dan 423 individu. Bagi kekayaan spesies rama-rama, ladang getah mewakili spesies tertinggi yang direkodkan dengan 24 spesies diikuti oleh kebun buah dan kelapa sawit dengan 22 spesies dan 15 spesies rama-rama. Kelimpahan rama-rama yang lebih besar dan kekayaan spesies di ladang monokultur berbanding dengan landskap polikultur menunjukkan limpahan rama-rama ke dalam landskap pertanian bersebelahan. Kajian ini memberikan bukti limpahan rama-rama dari hutan ke tanah pertanian. Oleh itu, pengurusan pertanian di ladang monokultur harus memberi penekanan kepada sistem pengurusan mesra biodiversiti dengan mengurangkan aplikasi agrokimia untuk membantu mengekalkan daya tahan rama-rama dalam landskap yang dikuasai manusia.

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## APPROVAL SHEET

I certify that this research project report entitled “Forest Spill Over Effects Of Butterfly Community Into Different Agriculture Landscapes” by Sathiyarubini a/p Satimurty has been examined and approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Forestry Science in the Faculty of Forestry, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

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Dr. Norhisham Razi  
Faculty of Forestry  
University Putra Malaysia  
(Supervisor)

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Prof Dr Mohamed Zakaria Bin Hussin  
Dean  
Faculty of Forestry  
University Putra Malaysia

Date: 21 June 2019

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANNOVA	Analysis of Variance
KKK	Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad Company
HSD	Honestly Significant Difference
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of United States



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background

Rapid decrease of tropical forest cover has received much attention in recent decades (FAO, 2012). Across the world, conversion of natural habitats to agriculture landscapes has resulted in the loss of biodiversity (Millenium Ecosystem Assesment, 2005). Sutrisno said in their study forest loss happens concurrently with the loss of tropical biodiversity which stems from forest clear cutting for monoculture plantations (Houlihan, Harrison & Cheyne 2013). In Southeast Asia, major forest loss is mainly caused by the expansion of oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis* Jacq plantations as mentioned by McMorow (Lucey & Hills 2012). Massive agricultural expansions has led to forest degradation and biodiversity losses which affect ecosystem services. Moreover, biodiversity of agricultural land such as oil palm plantation is relatively lower compared to tropical forest (Fitzherbert et al ., 2008)

Insects occupy various types of ecosystem and play a vital role in ecosystem stability as pollinators, decomposers and plant propagation (Ghazanfar et al., 2016). Due to this, they provide important role as biological indicator for habitat quality as they respond quickly to environmental changes. Insects such as Lepidopterans comprise of highly diverse taxon and has receive reasonable attention worldwide (Ghazoul, 2002). Lepidoptera (butterflies) are the second

largest order of arthropods and are most easily identified (Inuoye, 2001; Erhardt 1984; Kremen, 1994). Thomas (2005) added that butterflies are probably the best known taxonomically and ecologically throughout the world making them particularly useful for biodiversity survey. Butterflies can be categorized based on feeding guilds such as, nectar feeders and fruit feeders. Butterflies can be found in a wide range of habitat ranging from undisturbed areas such as tropical forests into urban parks. Butterflies sensitivity to environmental changes due to their physiological characteristics as most species require certain habitat quality (i.e temperature, relative humidity, floristic compositions and vegetation cover) and diverse food resources , which is mostly met under natural forest conditions (Bonebreak et al., 2010).

Butterflies are important pollinators for wild plant and crops. They depends on vegetations as foraging resources and refuge for reproduction and survival. Other than pollinators, butterflies also provide important function in ecosystem restoration as food source to birds, reptiles and amphibians (Ghazanfar et al., 2016). Conversion of natural forest area into monoculture plantations significantly affects insect biodiversity specifically butterflies. Agricultural intensification as seen in monoculture systems are most likely to support lower insect community compared to polyculture due to lower vegetation structural complexity and floristic diversity (Matson et al.1997; Ghazali et al.,2016). Polyculture systems provide the opportunity of a biodiversity friendly agriculture practices that support both

agricultural production and biodiversity conservation specifically insects (Asmah et al., 2016).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Agricultural expansion adjacent to forest area may lead to over dispersion of certain butterfly species into human dominated landscape leading to population decline. Due to this, the current study was carried out to investigate spillover effects of butterfly community in different agricultural landscapes. In addition, butterflies may become adaptive under environmental changes, so it is essential to distinguish suitable species as indicator for habitat disturbance. This study is important to highlight relevant butterfly species for conservation and habitat restoration effort. Agricultural management such as monoculture practice is not biodiversity friendly due to single crop management. Poor landscape complexity due to lower plant diversity limits butterfly persistency under environmental changes. However, butterfly species dispersal to human dominated landscape occurs due to forest loss. This study is important to highlight the importance of conservation effort in human dominated landscape especially agricultural areas by increasing habitat heterogeneity through plant diversity that promote the survival of diverse butterfly species and their abundance.

### **1.3 Significance of study**

Agricultural practices which are widely practiced worldwide, requires sustainable approach to priorities conservation effort by being biodiversity friendly in both monoculture and polyculture systems. Butterfly (Lepidoptera) are good indicators because they respond quickly to environmental disturbance that affect habitat quality such as plant diversity and agrochemical applications. Thus, this study is essential to highlight how modified habitats influence butterfly diversity and abundance (Rickets et al., 2001).

### **1.4 Research Objective**

The core objective of this research was to investigate spillover of butterfly community from natural forest into different agricultural landscapes between monoculture and polyculture systems. Different agricultural landscapes between oil palm plantation, rubber plantation and orchard may maintain different butterfly community. The specific objectives were to; (i) compare butterfly species richness and abundance between different agricultural landscapes based on proximity to the forest, and (ii) determine the relationship of microclimatic condition and vegetation structure with butterfly species richness and abundance.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

Two research questions were posed to meet the objectives of this research. (i) What are the key habitat quality which supports the butterfly abundance and diversity between agricultural landscapes? And (ii) Do butterfly abundance and diversity varies between agricultural management and proximity to forest?



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