



***ANURAN SPECIES ABUNDANCE IN TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL  
LANDSCAPES***

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**ANURAN SPECIES ABUNDANCE IN TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL  
LANDSCAPES**

**By**

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## DEDICATION

**For my beloved family:**

Mohamad Ismail B. Angu

Rosseliiah Bt. Bokhari

Also my siblings.

To all my friends,

and Lalah River Village residents

Thank you for your encouragements supports

And the sacrifices that you have given.

Last but not least,

I dedicated this dissertation to Dr. Mohamad Roslan Mohamad Kasim and

Dr. Badrul Azhar Md. Sharif

Who has encouraged me, helped and give so much support during  
conducting this research.

Thank you for everything. May Allah Bless All of us.

## ABSTRACT

The expansion of agricultural crops throughout the tropical region has become the biggest threat to biodiversity. Therefore, study aimed to gain baseline data on anuran abundance in the Malaysian oil palm plantation (OPP) and traditional fruit orchard (TFO). Present study was conducted in Kuala Lumpur Kepong Oil Palm Plantation (OPP) and Kampung Sungai Lalah and Kampong Sungai Batu Traditional Fruit Orchard (TFO), in Pedas, Negeri Sembilan. Data collection was conducted from July till August 2017 and January till February 2018. A total of 40 points were set up in both TFO and OPP with two cycles of observation, giving it a total of 160 observations. The survey design for this research was the systematic point sampling with random start. The survey was conducted during night time, 8.00 p.m to 10.00 p.m where it is the active period for the anurans. Aural and visual search method were used in this study. The result showed the total number of anurans for OPP in both visits are 394 individuals while 290 individuals in TFO. However, analysis indicated that the anuran abundance has no significant difference in both tropical agricultural landscapes. Overall, there were four families of the anuran species recorded in both tropical agricultural landscapes. The four families of anurans consist of Rhacophoridae (*Polypedates leucomystax*), Microhylidae (*Microhyla heymonsii*, *Microhyla butleri* and *Kaloula pulchra*), Dicroglossidae (*Fejervarya limnocharis*) and Ranidae (*Hylarana glandulosa*). These species are typically inhabit disturbed habitats associated with human activities.

## ABSTRAK

Perkembangan tanaman pertanian di seluruh rantau tropika telah menjadi ancaman terbesar kepada kepelbagaian biodiversiti. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mendapatkan data asas mengenai taburan anura di ladang kelapa sawit Malaysia (OPP) dan kebun buah (TFO). Kajian ini dijalankan di Ladang Kelapa Sawit Kepong (OPP) Kuala Lumpur dan Kampung Sungai Lalah dan Kampung Buah Kampong Sungai Batu (TFO), di Pedas, Negeri Sembilan. Pengumpulan data telah dijalankan dari Julai hingga Ogos 2017 dan Januari hingga Februari 2018. Sejumlah 40 titik sampel ditubuhkan di kedua-dua TFO dan OPP dengan dua pusingan pemerhatian, dengan memberikan sejumlah 160 pemerhatian. Reka bentuk kajian untuk kajian ini adalah pensampelan titik sistematik dengan permulaan rawak. Tinjauan ini dijalankan pada waktu malam, 8.00 p.m hingga 10.00 p.m di mana ia merupakan tempoh aktif untuk anura. Kaedah pencarian aural dan visual telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Hasilnya menunjukkan jumlah anura bagi OPP dalam kedua-dua lawatan ialah 394 orang manakala 290 individu dalam TFO. Walau bagaimanapun, analisis menunjukkan bahawa taburan anura tidak mempunyai perbezaan yang signifikan bagi kedua-dua kawasan. Secara keseluruhan, terdapat empat keluarga spesies anura yang dicatatkan di kedua-dua kawasan. Keempat-empat keluarga anura tersebut terdiri daripada Rhacophoridae (*Polypedates leucomystax*), Microhylidae (*Microhyla heymonsii*, *Microhyla butleri* dan *Kaloula pulchra*), Dicroglossidae (*Fejervarya limnocharis*) dan Ranidae (*Hylarana glandulosa*). Spesies- spesies ini kebiasaannya menghuni habitat terganggu yang berkaitan dengan aktiviti manusia.

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## APPROVAL SHEET

I certify that this research project report entitled “Anuran Species Abundance In Tropical Agricultural Landscapes” by Siti Wahdaniyah Bt. Mohamad Ismail 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, Univeristi Putra Malaysia.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OPP	Oil Palm Plantation
TFO	Traditional Fruit Orchard
PL	<i>Polypedates leucomystax</i>
FL	<i>Fejervarya limnocharis</i>
KP	<i>Kaloula pulchra</i>
MH	<i>Microhyla heymonsii</i>
MB	<i>Microhyla butleri</i>
HG	<i>Hylarana glandulosa</i>



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background

Forests is particularly significant in the Malaysian context where the Malaysian forests are rapidly disappearing while its conversion into 'forest' plantations areas are expanding. Malaysia currently has 32.8 million hectares of land area, of which 24.8 million hectares - 75.5 per cent of total land - are classified as forest and tree cover. Of these, 19.5 million hectares are forest cover and 5.3 million hectares are tree cover (Ngo, 2008).

Forest cover is any area with a lot of trees [tree canopy density more than 10%] whether it is officially protected by the government or not (Viswanathan, 2015). Meanwhile, tree cover comprises of tree patches outside the recorded forest area exclusive of forest cover and less than the minimum mapped area (1 ha) (Open Government Data Platform India, 2015).

Of the total forest cover, 9.2 million hectares (47.4 per cent) are found in Sarawak, 5.9 million hectares (30.1 per cent) are found in Peninsular Malaysia and 4.4 million hectares (22.5 per cent) in Sabah. Moreover, Sabah claims it has the least forest (Ngo, 2008).

Although Malaysia is known as the equatorial rain forests of the world due to its location and its forested area, the historical fact is that in the year of between 1990 and 2005, Malaysia has lost 6.6% of its forest cover, or around 1, 486 000 hectares (Ngo, 2008).

Deforestation is the removal of a forest or tree stand where the land is thereafter converted to a non-forest use such as conversion of forestland to agriculture or urban use. The removal of trees without sufficient reforestation has resulted in damage to habitat, biodiversity loss and aridity (Ngo, 2008). Biological diversity loss is most commonly attributed to habitat loss and alteration (Todd et.al, 2009).

The rise in global demand for agricultural commodities is a major driver of habitat modification, and the amount of land under cultivation is predicted to expand substantially in the next 4 decades (Wanger et. al, 2009). A large component of this conversion to cropland is for oil-palm plantations, much of which has occurred in Southeast Asia (Koh 2007). The effects of habitat loss and alteration on amphibian biological diversity in the worldwide have been recognized. Yet, results of studies of anurans responses to such changes are inconsistent among studies (Hecnar & M'Closkey, 1997; Gibbs, 1998; Parris, 2004).

Moreover, pollution, overharvesting, and infectious diseases have contributed to a global amphibian decline, but habitat alteration consistently ranks as the largest threat (Faruk et al., 2013). Therefore,

Faruk et al., (2013) stated that land-use changes can make an area improper for anurans reproduction and survival. However, in other circumstances disturbed or converted areas are still be known to support a substantial subset of the original anuran community (Gibbs, 1998).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

A major topic to be given attention to is the impoverishment of Southeast Asian forest due to the expansion of agricultural activities. The widening of this equatorial crops throughout the tropical region has become the biggest threat to biodiversity (Green et al., 2005). Equatorial crops production and the expansion of the forest area into the conventional agricultural area has caused damage to natural environment and the effect of this damage to the environment is irreversible (Aikanathan et al., 2011). It was stated that the impacts of deforestation also includes the habitat loss of critically endangered species. All faunas have their own conservation value since they have their own ecological role or niche that helps to balance the ecosystem cycle.

The natural forest habitat is more complex and diverse compared to oil palm monoculture plantation and fruit orchard conventional agricultural practices. Generally, natural forest is the best place for these faunas since it owns a stable microclimate, less human disturbance and variety age structures, compared to this both agricultural systems (Corley and Tinker, 2003). These two different agricultural systems especially the

equatorial crops usually hold only 15% of the forest species and the remaining 85% were considered lost during the area conversion.

The affected species were vertebrate group especially small mammals, bats, anurans, reptiles, carnivores and birds. It is stated that, the reduction in species richness, species diversity and shifts in community composition of beetles (Chung et al., 2000), reptiles (Glor et al., 2001), birds (Koh & Wilcove, 2008) and ants are all related to equatorial crops which include both agricultural practices. Besides that, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List reports 41% of 6300 described, extant anuran species are at risk of extinction (IUCN, 2010).

The impoverishment of wildlife from this land conversion has encouraged environmental NGO's especially from external Southeast Asian region to campaign against equatorial crops production (Lam et al., 2009). There is a need to study anurans ecology, focusing on the interaction between anurans abundance and habitat quality. Hence, past study have been contradictory in whether the abundance and diversity of a species is positive correlated with habitat quality. In this two different agricultural landscapes, the habitat quality is closely associated with the agricultural practices in each of the area such as herbicides and pesticides types, frequency application and cutting which will affect the anurans abundance in both equatorial crops due to their close relation with the habitat quality and the sensitivity to habitat change.



It is essential to manage these two different equatorial crops practices for conservation outcomes since biodiversity has taken place on both agricultural area due to rapid expansion of both crops. Moreover, this equatorial crops has taken place on the area that was once a forested area.

Knowing the key factor which is most correlated with anurans abundance and richness, the anurans community in this two different type of agricultural landscapes can be improve. Since agricultural area are now expanding very fast, replacing the forest cover, it was crucial to protect the biodiversity in both of the area. It is also crucial to make the readily exist equatorial crops into a more wildlife area since the population are now increasing and various land will be cleared. Plantation manager and villagers who own the fruit orchard also have to work together in order to manage the wildlife community, especially the anurans species in both of the tropical agricultural landscapes effectively.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The main aim of this study was to determine the anurans species abundance in two different tropical agricultural landscapes consisting of oil palm plantation (OPP) and traditional fruit orchard (TFO) which are closely associated and correlated with the key factors of habitat quality measurement at both of the study site. This study also focused on specific objectives which are:

- i. To quantify number of anurans abundance according to species in both area.
- ii. To compare species abundance between oil palm plantation (OPP) and traditional fruit orchard (TFO).
- iii. To determine the key environmental factors that influence anuran biodiversity in agricultural landscapes

#### **1.4 Significance of study**

This study was conducted to determine the anuran species abundance in tropical agricultural landscapes which include oil palm plantation and fruit orchard located in Pedas, Negeri Sembilan. Faruk (2013) stated that data on anuran diversity in agricultural area are lacking as most of the studies are comparing the frog abundance and richness between forest and agricultural area. Meanwhile, this study is related to the comparison between two tropical agricultural areas with different management systems.

The purpose of this study was also to determine the key habitat quality that influences anurans abundance in both of the area. It is because, most of the previous studies are more comparative type of study instead of finding the relationship between the habitat quality and to what degree of associated does a habitat quality has to relate with anurans abundance in both tropical agricultural landscapes. (Faruk, 2013) stated that the study investigated how anuran biological diversity differs

between forest and oil-palm plantation, and whether observed differences in biological diversity of these areas is linked to specific environmental factors.

In the other hand, these sets of data were important to identify the significant factors that influenced the anurans biodiversity. Under this two different tropical agricultural landscape, these sets of data can be applied as a guideline for the future studies of this anurans species.

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