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1 **Bearded pig (*Sus barbatus*) utilisation of a fragmented forest-oil palm**
2 **landscape in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo**

3 Running head: Bearded pigs in fragmented tropical landscapes

4

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21 **Context:** Oil palm plantations have become a dominant landscape in Southeast
22 Asia, yet we still understand relatively little about the ways wildlife are adapting to
23 fragmented mosaics of forest and oil palm. The bearded pig is of great ecological,
24 social, and conservation importance in Borneo and is declining rapidly due to habitat
25 loss and overhunting.

26 **Aims:** We sought to assess how the bearded pig is adapting to oil palm expansion
27 by investigating habitat utilisation, activity patterns, body condition, and minimum
28 group size in a mosaic composed of forest fragments and surrounding oil palm.

29 **Methods:** We conducted our study in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, in and around the
30 Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, an area consisting of secondary forest
31 fragments (ranging 1200-7400 ha) situated within an extensive oil palm matrix. We
32 modelled bearded pig habitat use in forest fragments and oil palm plantations using
33 survey data from line transects. Camera traps placed throughout the forest
34 fragments were used to assess pig activity patterns, body condition, and minimum
35 group size.

36 **Key results:** All forest transects and 80% of plantation transects showed pig
37 presence, but mean pig signs per transect were much more prevalent in forest
38 (70.00 ± 13.00 SE) than in plantations (0.91 ± 0.42 SE). Pig tracks had a positive
39 relationship with leaf cover and a negative relationship with grass cover; pig rooting
40 sites had a positive relationship with wet and moderate soils as compared to drier
41 soils. Pigs displayed very good body condition in forests across the study area,
42 aggregated in small groups (mean = 2.7 ± 0.1 SE individuals), and showed diurnal
43 activity patterns that were accentuated for groups with piglets and juveniles.

44 **Conclusions:** Our findings suggest that bearded pigs in our study area regularly
45 utilise oil palm as habitat, given their signs in most oil palm sites surveyed. However,
46 secondary forest fragments adjacent to oil palm remain the most important habitat
47 for the bearded pig, as well as many other species, and therefore must be
48 conserved.

49 **Implications:** Consistent bearded pig presence in oil palm is a potential indication of
50 successful adaptation to agricultural expansion in the study area. The good physical
51 health displayed by most pigs may result in part from year-round cross-border fruit
52 subsidies from oil palm plantations, whilst the predominance of diurnal activity
53 (especially by groups containing piglets and juveniles) may indicate a behavioural
54 response to predation or human hunting. However, the net effect of oil palm
55 expansion in the region on bearded pig populations remains unknown.

56 **Additional keywords:** activity pattern; body condition; habitat use; Lower
57 Kinabatangan; matrix; mosaic; Suidae

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68 **Introduction**

69 One of the most pressing areas of conservation research in recent years has been
70 understanding the extent to which forest species can (or cannot) adapt to habitat
71 loss and fragmentation caused by land use change (e.g. Fitzherbert et al. 2008;
72 Gilroy et al. 2015; Newbold et al. 2015). This is particularly true for large parts of
73 Southeast Asia, where oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) expansion is the primary driver of
74 deforestation and subsequent wildlife loss (Koh and Wilcove 2008). Many taxa –
75 including ants (Fayle et al. 2010), bats (Fukuda et al. 2009), beetles (Chung et al.
76 2000), birds (Aratrakorn et al. 2006), frogs (Konopik et al. 2015), lizards (Glor et al.
77 2001), moths (Chey 2006), primates (Danielsen & Heegard 1995), and small
78 mammals (Yue et al. 2015) – exhibit declines in species richness when tropical
79 forests are replaced by oil palm monocultures. Moreover, even when species are not
80 lost, deforestation caused by oil palm expansion can lead to declines in wildlife
81 abundance, loss of functional diversity, and changes in animal behaviour (Foster et
82 al. 2011; Alfred et al. 2012; Edwards et al. 2014). However, species do not respond
83 uniformly to oil palm expansion and forest fragmentation; species richness and
84 abundance sometimes stay the same or even increase in oil palm as compared to
85 forest (e.g. Liow et al. 2001; Davis & Philips 2005; Luke et al. 2014). Frequently
86 specialist species are the ecological ‘losers’ that are declining in this transition due to
87 habitat loss or modification, whilst generalist species that thrive in human-altered
88 environments tend to be among the ‘winners’ (McKinney & Lockwood 1999,
89 Fitzherbert et al. 2008).

90 Southeast Asia is known for its widespread and highly diverse Suidae, the
91 majority of which are listed as vulnerable or endangered (IUCN 2016), yet the

92 response of wild pigs to oil palm expansion is understudied. The Eurasian wild boar
93 (*Sus scrofa*), perhaps the best-studied wild pig species, has been known to reach
94 high abundances in forest remnants adjacent to oil palm, likely benefitting from fruit
95 subsidies provided by plentiful, year-round fruit production in plantations (Ickes
96 2001). However, whether this pattern is consistent in other areas and with other wild
97 pig species has yet to be investigated. Given the important role played by wild pigs in
98 structuring plant communities (Ickes et al. 2001; Ickes et al. 2003; Cole et al. 2012),
99 understanding how pigs (native or introduced) are responding to tropical land use
100 change could hold major ecological implications for forest-oil palm landscapes.

101 The bearded pig (*Sus barbatus*) has great ecological, social, and conservation
102 importance in its native Sundaland (Caldecott et al. 1993). As a forest-dwelling suid
103 (Bernard et al. 2013), it is adapted to a migratory lifestyle in response to mast fruiting
104 cycles, although it can also be found in oil palm plantations (Yue et al. 2015). It is
105 also an ecosystem engineer, removing saplings to build its nests, turning over soil
106 through its rooting behaviour, and acting as a seed predator of many rainforest tree
107 species (Boogaarts 1938; Curran and Leighton 2000; Curran and Webb 2000; Linkie
108 and Sadikin 2003). Bearded pigs are known to be an important prey species for large
109 predators including the Sunda clouded leopard (*Neofelis diardi*), estuarine crocodile
110 (*Crocodylus porosus*), and reticulated python (*Python reticulatus*) (Pfeffer and
111 Caldecott 1986; Caldecott 1988; Auliya 2003; Ross et al. 2013). Additionally, the
112 bearded pig has been an important protein source for humans in Borneo for over
113 35,000 years (Medway 1958), of which it has been the primary mammalian target for
114 at least 15,000 years (Harrison 1998). The bearded pig continues to provide the
115 majority of wild meat consumed in Borneo, accounting for between 54 and 97% of
116 wild meat consumption by weight (Bennett et al. 2000; Chin 2001; Puri 2005). As a

117 result of its popularity as a game species, overhunting (exacerbated by habitat
118 fragmentation), along with habitat loss, has led to an estimated 30% decline in
119 bearded pig populations over a recent 21-year period, leading to its designation as a
120 Vulnerable species on the IUCN Red List (Kawanishi et al. 2008). Given its vital
121 ecological functions and abundant provision of protein, sustainable bearded pig
122 management should be a high conservation priority in Borneo.

123 Basic ecological research on bearded pig adaptation to forest-oil palm
124 mosaics is therefore a clear first step. We studied several aspects of bearded pig
125 natural history in a fragmented alluvial forest that serves as both an important wildlife
126 corridor and a case study for tropical landscapes characterised by interspersed
127 patches of forest and oil palm. We sought to assess how the bearded pig is adapting
128 to oil palm expansion by comparing pig habitat use between secondary forest
129 fragments and oil palm plantations, as well as collecting data in forest fragments on
130 daily and seasonal activity patterns, minimum group size, and body condition. We
131 present management implications from these findings and outline directions for
132 future research.

133

134 **Materials and methods**

135 *Study area*

136 The study was conducted in the landscape surrounding Danau Girang Field Centre
137 (5.413711, 118.037646), located in the Lower Kinabatangan floodplain in eastern
138 Sabah, Malaysia. The Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (LKWS) consists of
139 ten protected forest lots. The lots display a range of sizes (1200 - 7400 ha) and
140 structural connectivity, including narrow riparian corridors and small areas of

141 privately-owned forest (Abram et al. 2014). In addition to designating protections of
142 wildlife sanctuaries, the Sabah Wildlife Enactment of 1997 declared the bearded pig
143 a protected species, although hunting is allowed outside of protected areas with a
144 license. Mean annual precipitation is approximately 3460 mm, with mean monthly
145 temperatures ranging from 23-40°C (B. Goossens, unpubl. data). In drier areas, the
146 landscape is dominated by secondary lowland dipterocarp forest, with some areas of
147 riparian forest (Ancrenaz et al. 2004). Frequent inundation by flooding causes zones
148 of low-stature forest and grassland, with wetter regions encompassing areas of
149 mangrove and swamp forest (Ancrenaz et al. 2004; Estes et al. 2012). Between
150 1960 and 1995, large parts of the region were logged for hardwoods and cleared for
151 agriculture (Gillespie et al. 2012; Gaveau et al. 2014). Oil palm plantations now
152 occupy at least 48% of the floodplain (Abram et al. 2014).

153 *[Approximate location of Figure 1]*

154 *Data collection*

155 Bearded pig presence was assessed using line transects, and data on body
156 condition, activity patterns, and minimum group size were collected using camera
157 traps. Ten line transects (100 m long x 10 m wide) were randomly placed (minimum
158 2 km apart) in both oil palm and secondary forest sites (Fig. 1). Each transect was
159 surveyed five times by a team of 2-5 surveyors between February and April 2014.
160 One observer (K. Love) was present for all data collection, allowing for
161 standardization of protocol. Intervals between surveys ranged from 12-16 days to
162 allow sufficient time for sign accumulation. Surveyors indirectly recorded pig habitat
163 utilisation along each transect by noting the number of tracks, rooting sites, mud
164 grazes, wallowing holes, scat, and nests (Payne et al. 1985). Pig signs were cleared

165 or marked between transect surveys to prevent duplicate counts. The quantity of
166 individual signs was recorded for each sign type on each transect, and all equivalent
167 signs within 1 m² were used as a single sign count to standardize tallies. A Topofil
168 thread measuring device (Fremaco Devices Inc., Owen Sound, Canada) and
169 compass were used for straight surveying that ensured comparable transect
170 pathways during repeat surveys. Transects were examined with surveyors spread
171 equally across the 10 m wide transect.

172 Soil texture from each survey was categorised using a 1-5 score based on
173 moisture level (1: very wet, 5: dry and dusty). Understory density was recorded every
174 25 m of each transect using a Robel pole, which contained 47 equally partitioned 2
175 cm stripes. Density estimations were made at a height of 0.5 m above ground level,
176 and a distance of 10m between observers. Substratum composition for each transect
177 was estimated from a 2 m² plot placed every 25 m along transects, in which the
178 percentage of the following substrata were recorded: leaves, soil, grass, shrub and
179 stone (Fig. S1). Using ImageJ (version 1.45S) software, we calculated average
180 canopy cover by taking canopy photos at a height of 1.65 m in the middle of each
181 substrate plot. We used Google Earth (version 7.1.2.2041) to calculate the distance
182 from transect mid-sections to water sources and forest-plantation boundaries. For
183 the purpose of the study, we assumed that pigs did not cross the main river during
184 the short sampling period, as crossings are mainly reported during migratory
185 behaviour rather than during typical daily movements (Meijaard 2000).

186 *[Approximate location of Figure 2]*

187 To assess bearded pig body condition and minimum group size, we used an
188 extensive network of 110 camera trapping stations spread across the same forest
189 fragments as the line transects, although covering a much larger area than the

190 transect locations (Figs. 1, 2). Camera traps were not placed in oil palm plantations
191 due to the high risk of theft. Camera trap images of bearded pigs were collected from
192 November 2011 to December 2013 using Reconyx HC500, Hyperfire, and PC800
193 infrared digital camera traps. Each camera station was positioned 30-50 cm off the
194 ground along ridges and existing wildlife trails. Physical condition of pigs was
195 assessed following the categories of Wong et al. (2005) (Table S2). Pigs were given
196 a fat index of 1-5, with 5 being the best possible body condition. Pig age classes (i.e.
197 infant, juvenile, sub-adult and adult) and time of activity (date and time of day) were
198 documented. For photographs of pig groups taken within 1 hr of one another, we
199 considered the independent sample to be the photograph with the highest number of
200 individuals (Bernard et al. 2013, Brodie and Giordano 2013). We removed images
201 that were blurred, too dark, blocked from view, or otherwise unsuitable for assessing
202 body condition.

203

204 *Data Analysis*

205 We used generalized linear mixed effects models in the *lme4* package (Bates et al.,
206 2014) to model the number of bearded pig tracks and rooting sites as a function of
207 nine habitat variables: the percentage ground covered by leaves, soil, shrub, grass,
208 and stone, the distance to the nearest permanent water source (river, oxbows,
209 and/or tributaries) and to the nearest forest-oil palm boundary, ground fruit presence,
210 and soil texture (with textures 1 and 2 considered “wet”, texture 3 considered
211 “moderate”, and textures 4 and 5 considered “dry”). We used a correlation matrix to
212 ensure that all variables were relatively independent ($|r| < 0.6$). We did not model
213 wallow holes, mud grazes, scat, or nests because there were insufficient frequencies

214 of these signs to produce statistically rigorous results. These signs are known to
215 appear relatively infrequently (wallow holes, mud grazes, nests), or are difficult to
216 detect due to high decomposition rates in rainforest conditions (scat, e.g. Heise-
217 Pavlov & Meade 2012). We modelled the number of rooting sites only in forest
218 because there were also insufficient frequencies of rooting sites in oil palm. We
219 included site as a random effect to account for dependence between the transects at
220 each site, and in our models of pig tracks we included habitat type (forest or oil palm)
221 as a variable in every model to account for the strong effects of habitat type on the
222 other environmental variables. We scaled and centered all continuous variables prior
223 to analysis. We created generalized linear mixed effects models for the negative
224 binomial family, which is useful for modelling overdispersed ecological count data
225 (Lindén and Mäntyniemi, 2011). To focus modelling on the most influential variables,
226 we first compared generalized linear mixed effects models of each of the habitat
227 variables independently to a global model and a null model only containing the
228 intercept. We selected the best models to determine the strongest predictors of pig
229 tracks and rooting sites using the Akaike information criterion corrected for small
230 samples sizes (AICc) (Burnham and Anderson, 2004). We considered models with
231 ΔAICc values of at least two less than the null model as plausible models, and
232 considered the model with the lowest AICc value as our best model. Model
233 parameters were determined to be significant if the 95% confidence interval around
234 the estimate did not overlap zero. After we determined which variables had a
235 significant effect on the bearded pig signs independently, we modelled all
236 combinations of significant parameters to determine if any models containing a
237 combination of variables performed better than the single-variable models. All
238 models were run in R statistical software Version 3.2.4. (R Core Team, 2000).

239 All other analyses were conducted using Minitab (version 17) and R (version
240 3.0.1) statistical software. Anderson darling and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to test
241 for normally distributed pig sign and activity data. We used a two-sample t-test to test
242 for differences in the mean number of detected pig signs between forest and oil
243 palm, based on the total number of signs per transect.

244 To characterise pig activity patterns, we pooled photographs in two different
245 ways: (i) using four intervals (0300 – 0859 h, 0900 – 1459 h, 1500 – 2059 h and
246 2100 – 0259 h) representing dawn, daytime, dusk and night (Payne et al. 1985; Ross
247 et al. 2013); and (ii) using two intervals, diurnal (0600-1759 h) and nocturnal (1800-
248 0559 h). The same values could be used throughout the year due to the small
249 variation in day length in our study area. Chi-squared tests were used to compare
250 differences in activity between time classifications. We used body condition scores
251 (Table S3) to determine average body condition for each month. As there were likely
252 pigs that were not captured in our camera trap photographs, group size estimates
253 are considered minimum group sizes and may be underestimates. However, we
254 report group sizes in line with other camera trap studies of wild pigs (Linkie and
255 Sadikin 2003, Bengsen et al. 2011).

256 *[Approximate location of Table 1]*

257

258 **Results**

259 *Habitat use*

260 A total of 93 transect surveys (forest = 44, plantation = 49) across 20 transects
261 (forest = 10, plantation = 10) confirmed bearded pig presence in all transects in
262 forest and 8 of 10 transects in oil palm plantations. Pig sign was 1-2 orders of

263 magnitude more prevalent ($t = 13.07$, $df = 18$, $p < 0.01$) in forest than in plantation
264 transects (Table 1). When comparing the models of pig tracks and rooting sites
265 containing each habitat variable independently and a global model to a null model,
266 every model performed better than the null model; this pattern emerged because the
267 habitat variable (i.e. 'forest' or 'oil palm') had a strong, significant effect in every
268 model, with forest having significantly more pig tracks and rooting sites than oil palm.

269 In the single-variable models of pig tracks, all models had $\Delta AICc$ values of at
270 least two less than the null model because the habitat type variable was highly
271 significant in every model. The other significant variables were percentage of ground
272 covered by leaves and grass. When modelling pig tracks using the combination of
273 the two variables (with habitat type remaining as a controlling variable), the model of
274 percentage of ground covered by leaves still had the lowest $AICc$ value (Table S5).
275 Leaf cover had a significant positive relationship with number of pig tracks (Table 2).
276 Grass cover had a significant negative effect on number of pig tracks when it was the
277 only variable in the model (Table 2).

278 In the single-variable models of pig rooting sites in forest, the only significant
279 variable was soil texture. Moderate and wet soils both had significantly more pig
280 rooting sites than dry soils (Table 2).

281 *[Approximate location of Table 2]*

282 *Minimum group size and encounter rate*

283 Camera traps documented a total of 1995 independent encounters of bearded pigs,
284 with a mean minimum group size of 2.68 individuals (± 0.1 SE, min = 1, max = 32).

285 Pigs were recorded at all camera sites, with a total camera trap encounter rate of
286 0.63 independent photographs/100 hours.

287

288 *Body condition and minimum group size*

289 From the 1995 independent encounters, 4161 individual pigs were scored to body
290 condition. The majority of pigs possessed 'Very Good' (59.4%) and 'Good' body
291 condition scores (35.6%), with relatively few pigs defined as 'Fair' (4.6%) and 'Poor'
292 (0.4%). No pigs classified as 'Very Poor' were identified. During each month of the
293 sampling period, >90% of individual pigs detected had a body condition of 'Very
294 Good' or 'Good'.

295 *[Approximate location of Figure 3]*

296 *Activity patterns*

297 Activity patterns varied significantly over the course of 24 hours (Chi-Sq. = 168.25,
298 df = 3, $p < 0.01$), with far fewer pig occurrences at night (Chi-Sq. = 129.87, df = 1,
299 $p < 0.01$). Activity was mostly diurnal, peaking early in the morning from 0600 – 0700
300 h, and again from 1700 – 1900 h (Fig. 3). Groups containing infants and juveniles (n
301 = 218) were almost exclusively active during daytime hours (Fig. 3).

302 **Discussion**

303 We show that bearded pigs are widespread in a fragmented forest-oil palm mosaic
304 landscape increasingly typical of Southeast Asia. Bearded pigs in our study region
305 appear to preferentially utilise secondary forest habitat as compared to oil palm
306 plantations. Pig habitat utilisation is positively associated with leaf cover and

307 negatively associated with grass cover. Additionally, pigs preferentially used wet and
308 moderate soil types (as compared to drier soils) for rooting behaviour. Bearded pigs
309 tended to aggregate in small groups (mean = 2.7 individuals \pm 0.1 SE) and the vast
310 majority appeared to be in 'Good' or 'Very Good' physical condition (Table S3),
311 suggesting that the population of bearded pigs detected at camera traps was
312 generally healthy throughout the study period. Pigs were largely diurnal, with activity
313 peaks at dawn and dusk, and groups containing infant and juvenile pigs were even
314 more active during the day than groups without piglets and juveniles. These findings
315 provide a basic ecological foundation for future work on the adaptation of a
316 threatened large mammal species to extensive anthropogenic influences, especially
317 deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and over-hunting.

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321 *Implications of bearded pig habitat use*

322 Bearded pig signs were recorded on all forest and most oil palm transects in our
323 study area, although far more signs were documented in forest than oil palm. This
324 pattern could either reflect a difference in habitat utilisation by the pigs or a
325 difference in sign detectability. Given the strong influence of habitat and substrate
326 features in our models, it is likely that the much more abundant pig sign in forest
327 does in fact reflect a higher degree of utilisation of forest by pigs. The positive
328 relationship between leaf cover and pig tracks suggests that certain habitat features
329 within forest (e.g. trees, leaf litter) are preferred by pigs. Additionally, the negative

330 relationship between grass cover and pig tracks may help explain the lower
331 presence of pig tracks in oil palm, which contained a higher proportion of grass cover
332 than forest did (mean grass cover – oil palm: 33.9%, forest: 8.1%). Lower
333 detectability of tracks in grass could also play a role in this relationship. There is also
334 a strong possibility that bearded pigs are using forest and oil palm habitats
335 differently; for example, we did not record wallowing, mud grazing, or nest building
336 behaviours in plantations (Table 1). Furthermore, oil palm habitats may have less
337 favourable conditions for rooting behaviour, given the hotter and drier conditions as
338 compared to forest (Luskin and Potts 2011). Our models show that rooting behaviour
339 was positively associated with wet and moderate soils, which were more frequently
340 found in forest (mean soil texture – forest: 3.4, oil palm: 4.6; lower values are wetter).
341 These patterns align with other studies on wild pig habitat use showing lower levels
342 of pig sign in grassy habitats (e.g. Welander 2000) and a positive relationship
343 between rooting activity and moist soils (e.g. Mitchell et al. 2008).

344 Whilst our results suggest that bearded pigs are using forest more than oil
345 palm to meet many of their ecological needs, they also suggest that bearded pigs
346 may be adapting somewhat successfully to fragmented forest-oil palm landscapes,
347 an encouraging sign for conservation. The healthy body condition of pigs as well as
348 the utilisation of 80% of the oil palm sites surveyed point to the presence of some
349 resources of value to pigs in oil palm. Feral pigs take advantage of agricultural areas
350 near forest habitat in many parts of the world, often increasing in density (Caley
351 1993, Ickes 2001) and/or body size (Dexter 2003) as a result of the extra food
352 subsidies. However, there also appear to be thresholds of agricultural area relative to
353 natural habitat area at which pigs are unable to persist due to their need to access
354 forest and woodlands (Choquenot & Ruscoe 2003, Kawanishi et al. 2008). Finally, it

355 is possible that oil palm plantations may be having adverse effects on bearded pigs
356 by functioning as an “ecological trap” that decouples typical cues from true habitat
357 quality (Weldon & Haddad 2005), attracting pigs to favourable habitat features or
358 food resources and thereby making them more vulnerable to hunting for subsistence,
359 commercial sale, pest control, and/or sport, as is the case with *S. scrofa* in Sumatra
360 (Luskin et al. 2014). However, our study notes only general patterns of bearded pig
361 habitat use; further research in a variety of landscapes is needed to ascertain the net
362 effect of oil palm expansion on bearded pig habitat utilisation, behaviour, and
363 resource selection.

364

365

366

367 *Body condition and fruit availability*

368 Bearded pig body size and condition is known to fluctuate dramatically in sync with
369 the abundance of resources available and the competition for those resources
370 (Wong et al. 2005, Luskin & Ke, in press). Therefore, the year-round good body
371 condition we observed could speak to significant hunting-limited pig densities
372 (as observed elsewhere, e.g. Chin 2001), abundant food availability within our study
373 landscape, or both. Bearded pig meat is easily the most preferred species of wild
374 meat in Borneo, accounting for 54-97% of the wild meat consumed in non-Muslim
375 rural areas on the island (Bennett et al. 2000, Chin 2001, Puri 2005). However, there
376 have been no studies quantifying the effects of hunting on bearded pig populations in

377 the Kinabatangan; while hunting is known to occur, it is not clear how important it is
378 in limiting bearded pig densities and thereby influencing body condition.

379 While bearded pigs feed on leaves, roots, fungi, invertebrates, small
380 vertebrate, and carrion, their cycles of body condition, growth, and breeding have
381 been mainly linked to fruit availability (Caldecott et al. 1993, Curran & Webb 2000,
382 Wong et al. 2005, Luskin & Ke in press). Oil palm fruit subsidies from plantations are
383 widespread in our study area, and *Ficus* sp. are abundant in the LKWS (Azmi 1998)
384 and are likely to be a key food source. *Ficus* sp. fruit has been described as a
385 'keystone resource' that helps sustain bearded pig populations during the extended,
386 inter-mast intervals of low productivity that characterise Southeast Asian rainforests
387 (Appanah 1985; Wong et al. 2005). However, in a human-modified, fragmented
388 landscape like our study area, it is unclear how bearded pig body condition responds
389 to periods of extended drought. The constant supply of year-round fruit from oil palm
390 plantations could mitigate the population-suppressing effects of this natural cycle for
391 bearded pigs in the Lower Kinabatangan, but the complex interactions between oil
392 palm fruit subsidies, rainforest phenological cycles, habitat fragmentation, and
393 bearded pig population dynamics have yet to be untangled.

394

395 *Behavioural implications of minimum group size and activity patterns*

396 Minimum group sizes in the LKWS averaged 2.7 (\pm 0.1 SE) individuals, as compared
397 to 1.9 (\pm 0.3 SE) reported in Kerinci Seblat National Park in Sumatra (Linkie and
398 Sadikin 2003). Given the distribution of pigs throughout most of our study area, the
399 lack of large-scale herding behaviour, and the continuous abundance of oil palm fruit
400 subsidies, pig populations of the LKWS may be largely sedentary (Caldecott et al.

401 1993). Caldecott et al. (1993) reference a bearded pig population state similar to this
402 in the *Koompassia-Burseraceae* forest in Peninsular Malaysia, characterised by
403 populations with local movements that exploit concentrated, predictable food
404 resources that allow for high breeding and growth rates. This would appear to be the
405 closest known population state corresponding to the bearded pigs in our study,
406 although further research is necessary to corroborate this hypothesis.

407 Bearded pigs without young were mostly diurnal, with the highest peaks of
408 activity at dawn (0600-0700 h) and dusk (1700-1900 h) and low levels of activity at
409 night (Fig. 3). These results accord with previous research showing that pigs tend to
410 be diurnal (Pfeffer and Caldecott 1986; Linkie and Sadikin 2003; Ross et al. 2013)
411 and avoid the hottest hours of the day (Caley 1997, Saunders and Kay 1991).
412 Additionally, bearded pigs are known to alter their activity patterns in response to
413 nocturnal clouded leopard hunting patterns (Ross et al. 2013), suggesting that their
414 diurnal tendencies may be in part a response to the clouded leopards present in the
415 LKWS. Groups of pigs including juveniles and infants were more strictly diurnal than
416 those containing only adults, with almost no activity recorded at night (Fig. 3). This
417 accentuated diurnal pattern could be due to the particular vulnerability of young pigs
418 to predation by clouded leopards; past research has shown that female bearded pigs
419 (which raise the young) respond more strongly to clouded leopard activity patterns
420 than male bearded pigs (Ross et al. 2013).

421 In addition to clouded leopard activity patterns, human hunting poses a major
422 threat to bearded pig populations in Borneo (Kawanishi et al. 2008). Bearded pig
423 hunting is extremely common in Borneo (Bennett et al. 2000; Puri 2005), and illegal
424 poaching occurs in our study area (K. Love, pers. obs.). More data on bearded pig

425 movement ecology, e.g. GPS collaring studies collecting location and accelerometer
426 data, are needed to determine to what extent this human hunting activity influences
427 bearded pig activity patterns. Tracking fine-scale pig movements in mixed
428 landscapes would build upon our results on relative habitat utilisation by illuminating
429 the role of forest fragments in bearded pig foraging and behavioural ecology. These
430 data would help determine the minimum threshold, quality, and configuration of
431 forest cover needed to ensure stable and genetically diverse bearded pig
432 populations in the Lower Kinabatangan region and other fragmented tropical
433 landscapes.

434

435 **Conclusions**

436 In a fragmented tropical forest-oil palm landscape, bearded pig signs were found in
437 all secondary forest sites and most oil palm plantation sites. This prevalence
438 throughout the mosaic, coupled with consistently high body condition scores,
439 indicates some adaptability of bearded pigs to fragmented landscapes. Oil palm
440 plantations may have some conservation value for the species by providing valuable
441 supplemental resources to primarily forest-dwelling pigs, whilst likely unable to
442 provide the habitat structure (e.g. wallowing and nest sites) needed to sustain
443 bearded pig populations in the absence of forest. Bearded pig groups, especially
444 those containing piglets and juveniles, are diurnal in the Lower Kinabatangan region,
445 possibly in response to predation or human hunting.

446 Our findings provide foundational data on bearded pig habitat use, activity
447 patterns, minimum group size, and body condition in a forest-oil palm mosaic,
448 providing a starting point for future research on how the threatened pig is adapting to

449 these important and expanding landscapes in Southeast Asia. Future work should
450 extend this study by investigating bearded pig movements through mixed
451 landscapes, migration patterns (or lack thereof) in different parts of Borneo, and
452 genetic diversity and gene flow in relation to fragmentation, as well as the effects of
453 human hunting on bearded pigs in both oil palm plantations and forest fragments.
454 Understanding at finer scales how individual resources and microhabitats within
455 forest and oil palm are utilized for different purposes (e.g. thermoregulation, predator
456 avoidance, food acquisition) by bearded pigs will provide a more detailed picture of
457 their ecological requirements and conservation needs. In the meantime, given that
458 our results suggest that pigs preferentially utilise forest habitat much more than oil
459 palm, protection of secondary forest fragments adjacent to oil palm plantations
460 should be a major conservation priority in order to ensure healthy bearded pig
461 populations in the Lower Kinabatangan.

462

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475

476 **Conflict of Interest Statement**

477 Funding for the research included funds from the Sime Darby Foundation, the main
478 philanthropic arm of Sime Darby Berhad, a multinational conglomerate that owns oil
479 palm plantations. However, no representatives of any of the funding sources were
480 involved in the study design, execution, analysis, or interpretation of results.

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688 **Figure Legends**

689 **Figure 1.** Transect positions for forest transects (red flags) and oil palm plantation
690 transects (blue flags) sites within the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary and
691 surrounding region. The blue boundaries represent permanent water sources. The
692 green lines correspond to the forest regions.

693 **Figure 2.** The camera trap stations within the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife
694 Sanctuary (LKWS) and surrounding areas. Illustrated are twenty corridor sites
695 (yellow icons) and 75 forest patch sites (purple icons). The blue outlines display the
696 Kinabatangan River and neighbouring oxbow lakes. The green markings show forest
697 areas of LKWS. The grey lines show privately owned forest areas and yellow lines
698 display degraded forest within plantation fragments.

699 **Figure 3.** The activity patterns of bearded pigs throughout an average day, based on
700 the percentage of independent camera trap detections (min. 1 hr apart) occurring at
701 various times of day. The solid line displays the diurnal activity pattern of the entire

702 population (n = 1995), whereas the checked line illustrates the more strictly diurnal
703 activity patterns of groups containing juveniles and piglets (n = 221).

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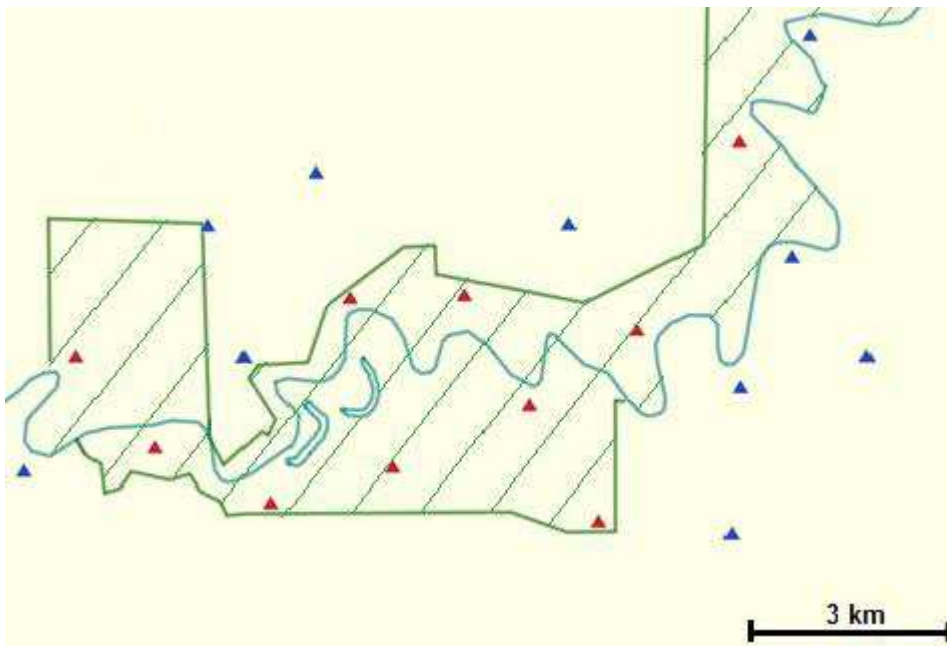
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711 **Figure 1.**



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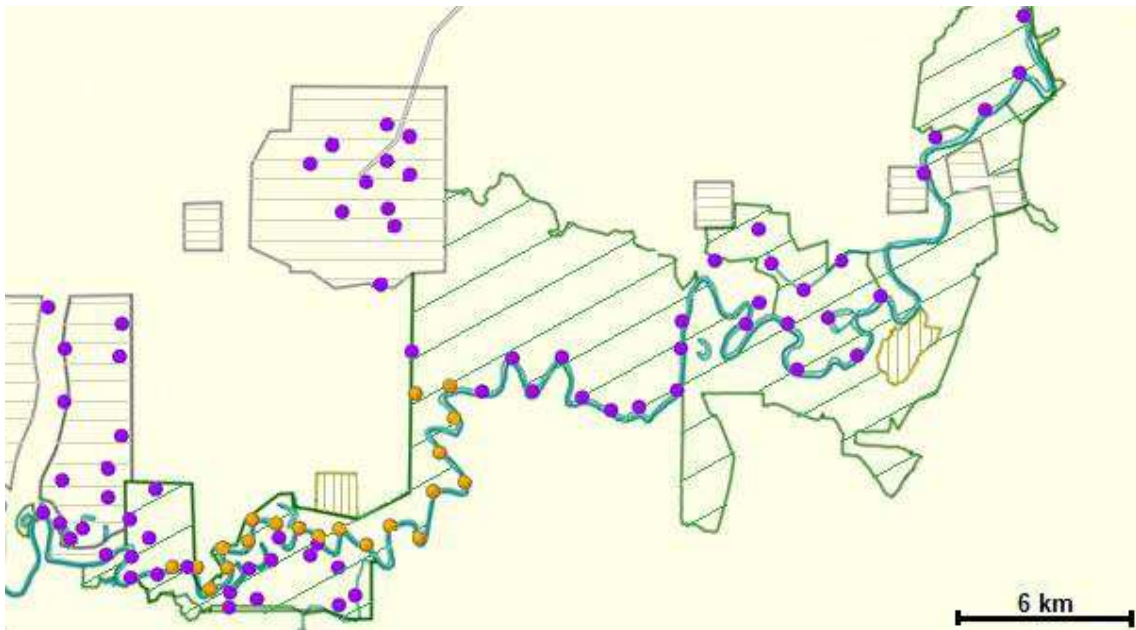
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727 **Figure 2.**



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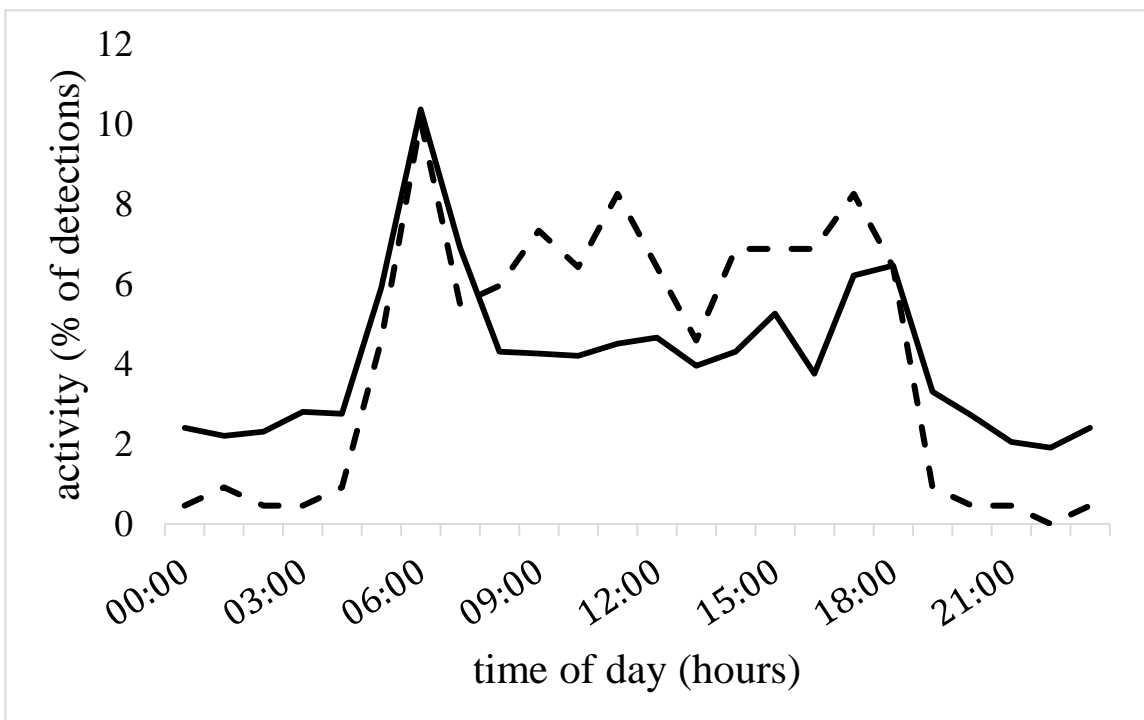
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744 **Figure 3.**



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757 **Table 1.** Summary table displaying the mean number of signs detected (\pm SE) during
758 transect surveys in forest and plantation habitats.

Habitat	Mean tracks	Mean rooting sites	Mean mud grazes	Mean wallowing holes	Mean scat	Mean nest	Mean total sign
Forest	58.57 (± 9.41)	9.02 (± 3.97)	2.39 (± 2.00)	0.02 (± 0.03)	0.00 (± 0.00)	0.02 (± 0.02)	70.00 (± 13.00)
Plantation	0.65 (± 0.18)	0.27 (± 0.30)	0.00 (± 0.00)	0.00 (± 0.00)	0.00 (± 0.00)	0.00 (± 0.00)	0.91 (± 0.42)

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Table 2: Parameter estimates, Standard errors, z-values, p-values, and AICc values of generalized linear mixed effects models using all combinations of predetermined influential variables to predict number of pig tracks and rooting sites. All models of pig tracks contain habitat type as a controlling variable, which had a highly significant effect in every model. Moderate and wet soil textures are compared to the dry soil texture. Significant parameters are in bold.

Model	Parameters	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)	AICc
<i>Pig Tracks</i>						
Leaves	Leaves	0.43	0.15	2.86	0.004	548.29
Leaves + Grass	Leaves	0.32	0.18	1.83	0.067	549.31
	Grass	-0.17	0.15	-1.14	0.254	
Grass	Grass	-0.32	0.13	-2.43	0.015	550.27
<i>Rooting Sites</i>						
Soil Texture	Moderate - Dry	1.39	0.36	3.81	0.0001	238.07
	Wet - Dry	1.90	0.55	3.48	0.0005	

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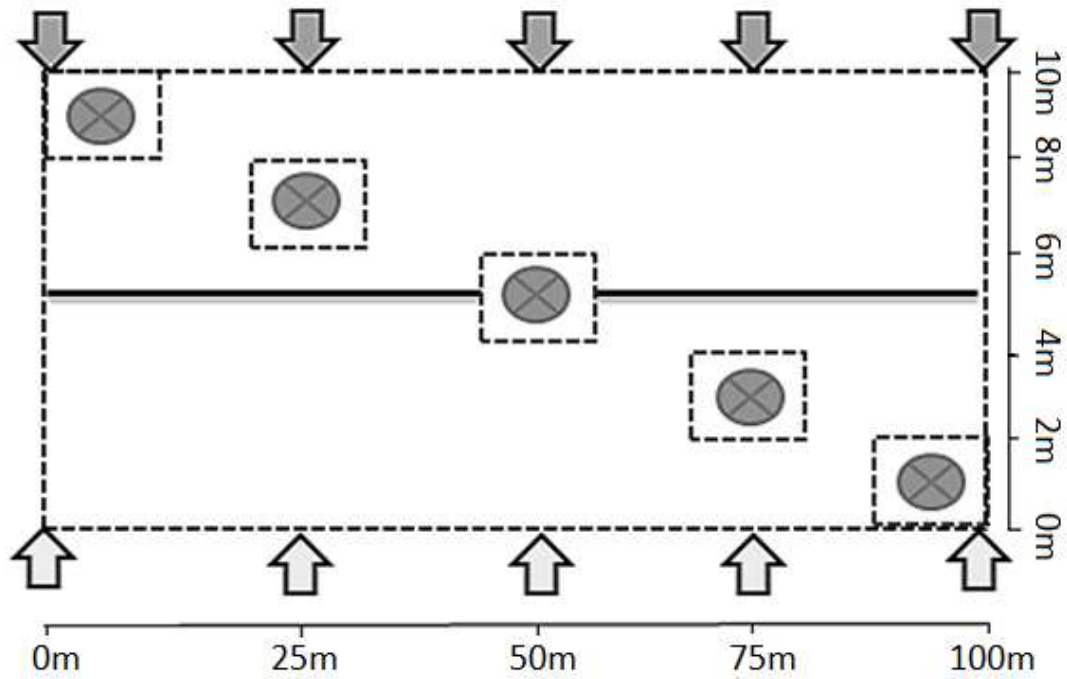
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794 **Supplementary Material**

795 **Figure S1.** A 10 x 100m line transect displaying the habitat analysis layout. The
796 black dashed rectangular box displays the transect area whilst the solid black bar
797 represents the transect midline. The five smaller checked boxes represent the 2m²
798 plots where the substrate composition was estimated. Crossed circles signify five
799 points where canopy cover photos were taken. The grey arrows symbolise five
800 sections where person 1 stood and measured the understory density, whilst the
801 white arrows indicate where person 2 stood and held the Robel pole.




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806 **Table S1.** Example photographs of pig sign used for detecting pig habitat use on
 807 transects.

Sign	Example
Track	

<p>Scat</p>	
<p>Nest</p>	
<p>Rooting site</p>	
<p>Wallowing hole</p>	
<p>Mud graze</p>	

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818 **Table S2.** Visual factors used to determine bearded pig body condition from camera
819 trap images (used with permission from Wong et al. 2005).

Index	Category	Fur condition	Neck size	Body fat and muscle	Bones
5	Very good	Sleek, dense	Thick	Fat, muscular	Not visible
4	Good	Sleek, dense	Thick	Little fat, Muscular	Not visible

3	Fair	Dense	Medium	Lacking in fat, muscular	Slightly visible
2	Poor	Dull	Narrow	Lacking in fat, slim	Visible, less protruding bones
1	Very poor	Dull, sparse	Narrow	Lacking in fat, little muscle	Protruding

820 Bones include the scapulae, vertebral columns, ribs and hipbones


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825 **Table S3.** Example photographs used for categorising body condition of pigs from
826 camera photos.

Category	Example
Very good	

Good



Fair



Poor



Very poor



(Wong et al. 2005)

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835 **Table S4.** Example photographs used for categorising age of pigs from camera trap

836 photos.

Age	Example
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<p>Infant</p>	
<p>Juvenile</p>	
<p>Sub-adult</p>	
<p>Adult</p>	

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Table S5. The null and competing generalized linear mixed effects models investigating the effects of the identified influential parameters on pig tracks and rooting sites. All models of pig tracks include habitat type as a controlling variable. The models are ranked based on the differences in the cumulative corrected Akaike’s Information Criteria (AICc). Table includes the number of estimated parameters (K), the AICc, the difference in AICc with the top model (Delta_AICc), the weight of each model (AICcWt), and the -2log-likelihood output (LL).

	K	AICc	Delta_AICc	AICcWt	LL
<i>Pig Tracks</i>					
Leaves	5	548.29	0	0.51	-268.80
Leaves + Grass	6	549.31	1.02	0.30	-268.17
Grass	5	550.27	1.97	0.19	-269.79
Null	3	603.76	55.47	0.00	-298.75
<i>Rooting Sites</i>					
Soil Texture	5	238.07	0	1.00	-113.24
Null	3	250.45	12.38	0	-121.92

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