

Malayan Tapir *Tapirus indicus* in Hadabuan Hills, North Sumatra Province, Indonesia

Gregory Edward McCANN
greg.mccann1@gmail.com

Observer: Gregory Edward McCann (camera trap installer).

Photograph by: Gregory Edward McCann.

Subject identified by: Gregory Edward McCann.

Location: Hadabuan Hills (Rantau Prapat District), North Sumatra Province, Sumatra, Indonesia.
(2° 03.306'N, 99° 36.730'E; WGS 84).

Elevation: 493 metres (based on GPS fix)

Habitat: Mosaic of disturbed forest, semi-evergreen forest and old growth forest.

Date and time: (i) 10 August 2016, 19:20 hrs. (ii) 13 September 2016, 21:48 hrs. (iii) 14 September 2016, 18:10 hrs. (iv) 15 September 2017, 06:18 hrs.

Identity of subject: Malayan Tapir, *Tapirus indicus* (Mammalia: Perissodactyla: Tapiridae).

Description of record: Three images of a lone adult Malayan Tapir were initially acquired in semi-evergreen forest, close to disturbed forest and agricultural encroachment, during a single trigger event on 10 August 2016, three weeks after deployment of the camera trap (Fig. 1). Two further images were subsequently acquired in separate trigger events on 13 September 2016 and 14 September 2016, but these were extreme close-ups and as such it cannot be determined if these were the same animal.

On 15 September 2017 a pair of adult Malayan Tapir were recorded at the same camera trap station, however it is not possible to determine whether these two had been previously photographed as no distinctive markings are visible in the images.



Fig. 1.

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Remarks: The Hadabuan Hills landscape is a mountain massif located around 50 km to the southeast of Lake Toba, on the island of Sumatra. This range of hills, which is best described as an unmanaged commons area, appears to have no legal protection, however a non-governmental organisation, the Sumatran Tiger Rangers, attempts to raise grassroots awareness and local protection of the flora and fauna in the area.

Records of the Malayan Tapir have been documented at Batang Toru (Linkie *et al*, 2013) which lies around 80 kilometers southwest of Hadabuan Hills. To the south of Batang Toru the species is known to occur in Bukit Tigapuluh National Park (range map in Traeholt *et al*, 2016), Kerinci Seblat National Park (Holden *et al*, 2003) and other protected areas.

The current range map in use by the Tapir Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Pedraza, 2008), appears to show that the Hadabuan Hills roughly mark the northernmost limit for this species on the island of Sumatra. These recent records are consistent with the current known range. However, tapirs are mentioned as occurring in the Dolok Surungun Wildlife Reserve, which is located approximate 40 kilometers to the northeast of Hadabuan Hills, which would place any extant populations there at the very northernmost limit of the species' range. Local people who have been contacted say that approximately four tapirs still live in the shrinking forests of the Dolok Surungun Wildlife Reserve (Dolok means 'Mountain' in the ethnic Batak language). Additionally, a video recorded in North Labuhanbatu Regency, which is located approximately 60 km east of Hadabuan Hills, appeared on Facebook showing a Malayan Tapir wandering into a village and being captured by villagers. This tapir may have either roamed south out of the Dolok Surungun Wildlife Reserve or it derived from one of several very small patches of native forest amid the oil palm plantations in that region.

Thus, to the best of our knowledge, our camera trap footage from the Hadabuan Hills confirm one of the northernmost populations of this species on Sumatra.

Additional camera trap surveying in another part of the Hadabuan Hills landscape was carried out in July 2017 at a more remote location at 1,300 meters elevation, but the Malayan Tapir was not detected. Conservation efforts should be directed at the Hadabuan Hills to ensure the survival of this population of Malayan Tapir.

References:

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