

New record of Flat-headed Cat *Prionailurus planiceps* at Panti Forest Reserve, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia

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Observer: Meryl Theng (camera trap installer, with Azmi bin Yunus, Vilma D’Rozario, Andrew Tay, Kripa Dubey).

Photographs by: Meryl Theng.

Subject identified by: Meryl Theng, Norhayati Ahmad.

Location: Panti Forest, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 8 metres.

Habitat: Degraded lowland swamp near edge of forest.

Date and time: 27 February 2019, 20:28 hrs.

Identity of subject: Flat-headed Cat, *Prionailurus planiceps* (Mammalia, Carnivora, Felidae).

Description of record: A series of 6 infrared camera trap images of a lone Flat-headed Cat were acquired, with a one-second delay between each image, as the animal walked slowly along the bank of a 10 cm-deep pool, past a camera trap fixed to an elevated position in a tree (Fig. 1: the 3rd image in the sequence). During camera trap set-up, at the edge of degraded lowland swamp (Fig. 2), the presence of small to medium-sized fish in the pool was noted, suggesting a potential foraging site for this individual.



Fig. 1. (Acquired under Research Permit no: UPE 40/200/19/3464)

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Fig. 2.

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Remarks: The cat in this photograph is identified as *Prionailurus planiceps* based on (i) its size, (ii) distinctive narrow, dark stripes behind and below the eye, (iii) absence of markings on the flanks, (iv) sloping forehead, (v) small ears and (vi) short tail.

The Flat-headed Cat is known to occur in low-lying, forest habitat close to water bodies and to feed mainly on fish (Muul & Lim, 1970; Hunter & Barrett, 2011). The species is categorized by IUCN as Endangered (Wilting et al., 2015).

A lone Flat-headed Cat was recorded in the same forest reserve once before, in 2015 (Baker & Chua, 2016): this previous record was around 8 km to the south of this new record (Nick Baker, pers. comm.).

Note: Camera trapping is authorised by Research Permit no: UPE 40/200/19/3464, issued by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (Perhilitan). Field costs and equipment were funded by the Rufford Foundation (24012-1) and the National Geographic Society (WW-266ER-17).

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