

## The Wildlife Hunting in Papua

### Perburuan Satwa di Papua

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Many people in West Papua value forest for the benefits obtained from the extraction of plants and animals. Hunting and gathering of wild animals has always been and continues to be an important aspect of life in rural West Papuan communities. Even in modern days, some ethnic groups in West Papua depend almost entirely on hunting as a part of their tradition (Pattiselanno, 2003). In other words, hunting is one of the main ways of living.

This paper aimed to present current information on wildlife hunting by West Papuan natives. In this paper, hunting is used to include all capture by humans of wild mammals, birds, and reptiles, whether dead or alive irrespective the techniques to capture them.

Hunting is generally done for one or combination of the following purposes: (1) Food sources, nutrition or animal protein supply (MacKinnon, 1984; Petocz, 1994; Pattiselanno, 2004). Limited access to animal protein supplied by domestic livestock, and available food source from wildlife are the major reason to acquire wild animals for consumption. (2) Commercial or economy, in which, wild animals would be raised or bought. It is also acknowledged hunting is performed to obtain income from selling dead or alive animals (Noviarto, 2000; Pattiselanno, 2004). (3) Sociocultural, consists of two aspects: first is the acquisition of animal trophies as cultural artifacts or for personal adornment, e.g., feathers, skins and teeth (Kwapena, 1984, McKinnon, 1984; Beehler, 1985; Petocz, 1994, Wibowo and Suyatno, 1998). Second, in cultural occasions, when large account of meat is required, wild animal meat is the most accessible source in rural areas (Pattiselanno, *et al.*, 1999; Pattiselanno, 2003).

Normally, the native of Papuan related hunting techniques to the traditional

tools/weapons. They adopted the used of forest materials to build traps, arrow, bow, and spears. Pajman (1976), Chahya (2000), and Pattiselanno (2004) indicated that material utilized for weapons usually taken from the forest includes various timbers, bamboo, lianas, palm leaves and plants fiber. Some often bring dogs or using fire for chasing and steering the animals (Manembu, 1991; Flannery, 1995).

According to Lee (2000), hunting can be broadly divided into active hunting, requires the hunter actively pursue the animal, labor intensive and time consuming, while passive techniques require intensive effort at first e.g. building a trap, setting a snare. Therefore, in West Papua, both active and passive techniques are included in performing hunting.

Target animals hunted varies from one site to another site. However, wildlife species being hunted in West Papua were generally similar. For example, terrestrial mammals and birds were the most commonly hunted. Among these animals, wild pig and deer are the most commonly hunted in all study sites. This is because of these species are widely distributed in West Papua.

Crocodile and turtle are mostly hunted around coastal areas or wetland sites such as Jamursba Medi, Mamberamo River Basin, and Wasur, Merauke. Certain species are extremely popular by particular tribes therefore they are commonly hunted for some reasons (Clayton and Milner-Gulland, 2000).

It is important to note that choice of animals for hunting are depends on difficulty in catching them as well as the economic values of a species in each study site. Some studies have recognized different reasons in species chosen for hunting. For example, hunting is significantly correlated to biomass yield and economic value combining both market and subsistence value (Bodmer 1995;

Escamila, *et al.*, 2000; Fa, *et al.*, 2000; Peres, 2000).

It was common in most areas in West Papua, the villagers have no doubt that there are sacred places in the forest, and they are not allowed to hunt in the sacred place. The belief being applied is this particular place should be protected and could not be disturbed because it was served as the place of the departed spirit of the ancestors.

However, in some areas, hunting is usually restricted to areas belonging to the clan. In this case, people who are not belong to the clan or outsiders have to get permit from landowners and share the results with landowners of the forest/places.

There are certain beliefs or practices that were deliberately designed for conserving wildlife but undoubtedly have incidental effects on conservation, and they involve a variety of species and traditions. It is commonly practice in almost study sites and found applicable presently.

In addition, particular fauna species (Birds of paradise, Victoria crown pigeon) are not killed for their plumes because people acquire them as symbol, emblem or totem to their tribe, so those birds are conserved indirectly.

Hill and Padwe, (2000); Leuwenberg and Robinson, (2000) indicated that social taboos traditionally provide another safeguard against overharvesting certain species. This taboos can be widespread across a region, or limited to a certain ethnic group, clan or family (Bennet and Robinson, 2000). Taboos related to beliefs or culture practice is considered as traditional wisdom among the tribes.

In conclusion, some constraint factors that currently facing in the development of wildlife conservation are (1) logging concessionaries give negative impact to wildlife habitat lose, (2) competition with other intensified land use purposes (mining, agriculture development, new infrastructure, transmigration) which destroyed and reduced large area as wildlife sanctuary, (3) wildlife trade especially for particular birds plumes, mammals skin, antler, tusk, etc., have triggered people to exploit more than normal condition, and (4) easily access to firearms, instead of using traditional weapons (arrow, bow, traps, snare).

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