

The taxonomic status, distribution and conservation of the lowland anoa *Bubalus depressicornis* and mountain anoa *Bubalus quarlesi*

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Abstract

1. The anoas are two species of dwarf buffalo, the lowland anoa *Bubalus depressicornis* and mountain anoa *Bubalus quarlesi* that are endemic to the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia. The classification of the subgenus *Anoa* within *Bubalus* is upheld by assessment of recent genetic and morphological research. The classification of anoas into two species is still debated, but with the absence of significant opposing evidence, this position is adopted here.

2. Information about the distribution of the two species is presented that adds to but largely supports existing reports. However, it is still uncertain whether the two putative species are sympatric or parapatric in their distribution. A review of anoa distribution from historical reports and recent field data (1990s to 2002) highlights their decline throughout Sulawesi, especially in the southern and north-eastern peninsulas. The decline has been attributed to local hunting for meat and habitat loss. Most populations are rapidly becoming fragmented, suggesting that the conservation of viable populations may eventually require management of metapopulations.

3. There is an urgent requirement for conservation efforts to: (i) protect anoas from hunting; (ii) prevent habitat loss in key sites; (iii) complete genetic studies to better determine the number of anoa taxa and Management Units and assess their distribution; and (iv) determine the status of the remaining anoa populations.

KEYWORDS

buffalo • conservation • dwarf buffalo • Indonesia • Sulawesi • Wallacea