

Dynamic interactions between regional development and Kutai National Park, East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

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Abstract:

Kutai National Park, covering an area of 200 000 ha, is a rich tropical ecosystem with highly diverse habitat types ranging from coastal forest (mangrove) to mixed dipterocarps. It is a habitat of three endemic mammal species, namely the Bornean Gibbon, the Maroon Leaf Monkey, and the Proboscis Monkey. In addition, more than 300 species of birds (80% of the bird species of Borneo) reside in the park. The park contains one of the few remaining intact dipterocarp forests in the country, but its integrity is threatened by surrounding incompatible development activities. Oil and gas industries, timber industries, coal mining, settlement and agricultural activities, and the development of the Trans Kalimantan Road and Bontang Administrative City have adversely affected the park either directly or indirectly. Indirect impacts include population pressures and increased access. These threats to the park are considered to be rooted in: (1) misperception of the park's value; (2) sectoral egotism; (3) inappropriate regional development planning; (4) production and export oriented development policies and (5) weak law enforcement. The paper offers suggestions for harmonizing the development and conservation needs of Kutai National Park which include public awareness and education programmes about the inter-dependency between Kutai National Park and economic development and appropriate regional development planning.