

# **Human-Wildlife Conflict in Indonesia: Pathways Toward Coexistence Policies**



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Penulis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines, representing the name Amrina Rosyada.

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## **I. Discussion**

Wildlife is an inseparable part of Indonesia. It is estimated that there are more than 300,000 wildlife species or 17% of the world wildlife live in Indonesia, even though Indonesia's land is only 1.3% of the world's land. Indonesia has the most mammals in the world (515 species) and is inhabited by 1,539 bird species. Other than that, 45% of the world fish live in Indonesia waters.

Indonesia also becomes the habitat of endemic wildlife, wildlife which can only be found in Indonesia. There are 259 endemic mammals, 382 endemic birds, and 172 endemic amphibians (IUCN, 2011). The existence of the endemic species is important because if those endemic animals are extinct, it will also be extinct in the world.

Despite rich in biodiversity, Indonesia is also notorious as a country which has long list of the threatened wildlife. According to IUCN, 2011; the threatened wildlife in Indonesia includes 184 mammals, 119 birds, 32 reptiles, 32 amphibians, and 140 fish. There are 68 species which are critically endangered and 69 endangered species, and 517 vulnerable species. This wildlife will be eventually extinct if there is no action to save them from extinction.

Sangihe Islands Regency is a district in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This district originated from the division of the Sangihe and Talaud Islands Regencies in 2000. The Sangihe Islands Regency consists of 105 islands (27 inhabited islands and 78 uninhabited islands) and 15 sub-districts. The land area of Sangihe Islands Regency reaches 11,863.58 km<sup>2</sup> which consists of a land area of 736.98 km<sup>2</sup> (6.2%) and an ocean area of 11126.61 km<sup>2</sup>. The capital of the Sangihe Islands Regency is Tahuna. This district has a population of 139,262 people (2020). Sangihe Islands Regency is located between Sulawesi Island and Mindanao Island, Philippines, and is on the lips of the Pacific Ocean.

There are three mountains that are home to biodiversity in the Sangihe Islands, namely Mount Sandaruman, Mount Awu, and Mount Kakiralong. In addition to mainland mountains, there are also landscapes in the form of underwater volcanoes, namely the Banuawuhu Volcano on Mahengetang Island, and the 6 West Kawio Volcano Cluster. The archipelago is also inhabited by various kinds of animals, orchids, butterflies, and underwater biota. There are still not many studies

that review the biodiversity in each type of ecosystem. This makes it difficult to calculate how much natural wealth the Sangihe Archipelago has.

Last June, news broke that half the area of Sangihe Island would be concessioned to the Mas Sangihe Mining Company (PT. TMS). The company has obtained an environmental permit and a gold mining production business permit covering an area of 42,000 hectares, which covers the southern half of Sangihe Island, including an ancient mountain covering an area of more than 3,500 hectares.

The Sangihe Islands themselves have endemic fauna that are not worth the price. There are at least ten endemic birds of the Sangihe Islands, namely *Erythropitta caeruleitorques* (Sangihe Pitta), *Loriculus catamene* (Sangihe Hanging Parrot), *Aethopyga duyvenbodei* (Elegant Sunbird), *Otus collari* (Sangihe Scops Owl), *Cittura cyanotis sanghirensis* (Sangihe Lilac-cheeked Kingfisher), *Ceyx sangirensis* (Sangihe Dwarf-kingfisher), *Zosterops nehrkorni* (Sangihe White-eye), *Thapsinillas platenae* (Sangihe Golden Bulbul), *Eutrichomyias rowleyi* (Cerulean Paradise Flycatcher), and *Coracornis sanghirensis* (Sangihe Whistler/Shrikethrush). The first five species are classified as Endangered and the last five species are already Critically Endangered according to the IUCN.

If the mining concession continues, various biodiversity in the Sangihe Islands including endemic birds will be threatened. Also, mining activities in the Sangihe Islands also violate the Small Island Law, contrary to Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 27 of 2014 concerning The Management of Coastal Areas and Small Islands or PWP3K (Pengelolaan Wilayah Pesisir Dan Pulau-Pulau Kecil in Indonesian). If an area has been damaged by mining, it will be very difficult to recover and the cost of environmental damage may not be paid off, compared to any amount of compensation. Coupled with the fact that residents were offered land for Rp 5,000 per meter or only Rp 50 million per hectare, this case had many problems from the start and should not be continued.

Indonesia already has a legal protection in protecting the country's biodiversity. The biggest legal protection that aims to preserve biodiversity in Indonesia is Law no. 5/1990 concerning

Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems. One of the derivatives of this regulation is Permen LHK No. P106/2018 concerning the Second Amendment to the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry Number P.20/Menlhk/Setjen/Kum.1/6/2018 concerning Protected Types of Plants and Animals. For information, this regulation was changed twice due to pressure from bird lovers and wood entrepreneurs which caused changes to the contents of the appendix. This change is allegedly able to facilitate bird breeding for hobbies, competitions, contests and facilitate the sale of wood by forest product primary industry institutions. Unfortunately, this is contrary to Article 6 of Government Regulation number 7/1999 which states that "Protected species of plants and animals can be changed to unprotected status if their population has reached a certain growth rate". Therefore, to meet the criteria for the amendment and establishment of a new LHK Ministerial Regulation, at least it must meet the recommendations of scientific authorities and the requirements for fulfilling the criteria stipulated in Article 5 paragraph (1) of PP. 7/1999.

Funnily enough, the seven previously mentioned birds (*Erythropitta caeruleitorques*, *Loriculus catamene*, *Aethopyga duyvenbodei*, *Otus collari*, *Ceyx sangirensis*, *Zosterops nehrkorni*, *Eutrichomyias rowleyi*) are included in the list of protected animals by the state. Referring to Law no. 5/1990 which became the first reference in the ministerial regulation, in Chapter XII Article 40, the activities mentioned in Chapter V Article 21 can be punished with imprisonment for a maximum of 5 (five) years and a fine of a maximum of Rp. 100,000,000.00 (one hundred million rupiah).

Activities that will be carried out by PT. TMS in carrying out mining activities has the potential to cut down, damage protected plants; catch, injure, kill animals; and destroying, destroying eggs and/or nests of protected animals. This activity is of course contrary to what has been stated in Law no. 5/1990. It is appropriate for them to be prohibited from carrying out activities in the area so that biodiversity is maintained. With the help of investigators as regulated in Chapter XI Article 39, the presence of PT. TMS in the Sangihe Islands can be removed so that the balance of nature in the Sangihe Islands can be maintained and help the community to maintain the enforcement of existing laws.

Indonesia is a country that has a high level of biodiversity. Unfortunately, the growth of native Indonesian plants cannot be separated from invasive foreign threats that are spreading in various parts of Indonesia. One example is the presence of *Spathodea campanulata* in Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park, South Sulawesi. *Spathodea campanulata* or commonly known as the African Tuliptree, is one of the plants introduced to Indonesia. Specifically, in Bantimurung Bulusaraung National Park, Area Manager of the Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) of South Sulawesi I planted kecrut/kiacret—the local name for African tuliptree in South Sulawesi—for reforestation of the area boundary in 1975. The reason for planting kiacret was to serve as a boundary for the park area. National because the flowers are considered beautiful and attractive. The striking color makes it easier for officers to see the boundaries of the area from a distance.

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