The binturong

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Arctictis binturong

CLASS: Mammalia
ORDER: Carnivora
FAMILY: Viverridae

The binturong has a grey to black coat, with long, shaggy hair. Its ears are small and tufted.

The binturong is an arboreal species and has a prehensile tail that allows it to cling on to branches and move around in trees with ease.

The binturong is part of Carnivores because of its well developed, sharp premolars and canines. However, around 80% of its diet is comprised of fruit.

Its long and powerful claws allow it to climb trees easily

From 9 to 20kg

Between 140cm and 160cm, tail included (usually 70 to 80cm long)

Just as all Viverridae, the binturong has perineal glands below its tail, which allow it to mark its territory. Binturong musk smells like POPCORN !

The binturong is an endemic species of Southeast Asia.

The binturong lives in primary forests only. It rests in the trees, at heights between 10 and 20 meters, and finds its food in the canopy.

ECOLOGICAL ROLE

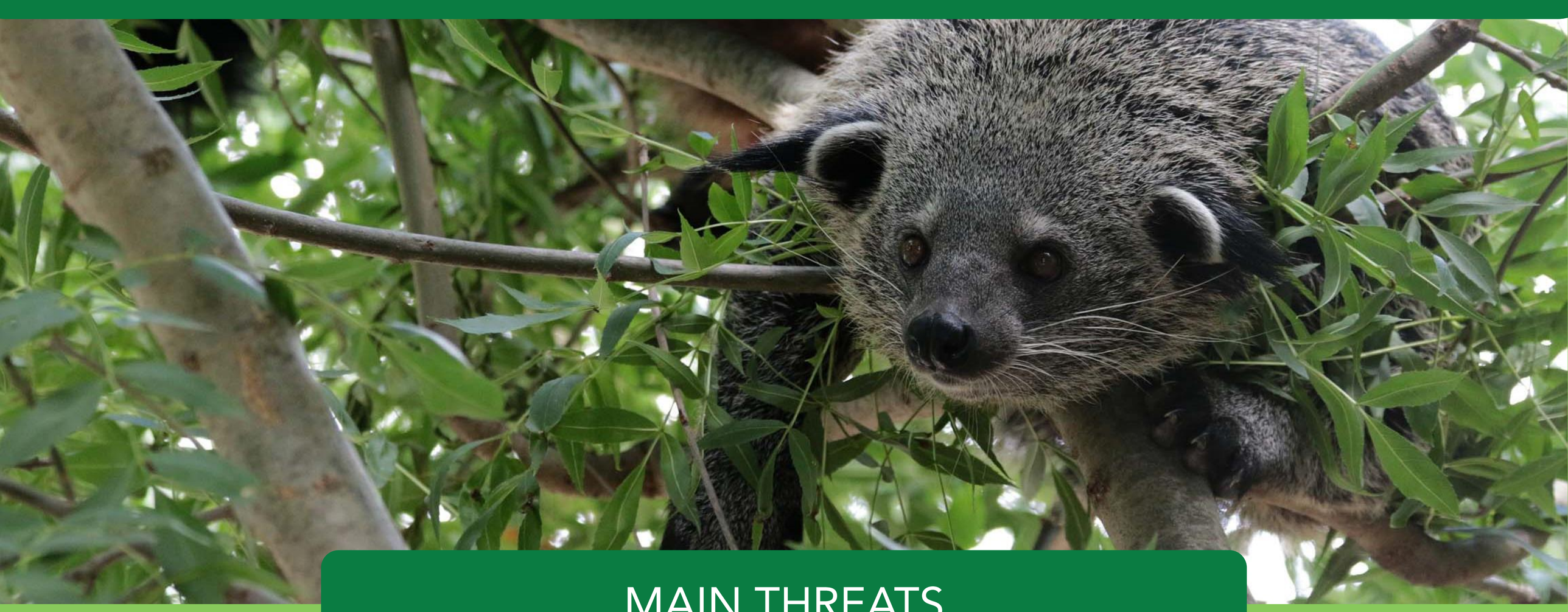
The binturong's diet is mostly comprised of fruit: it ingests the whole fruit and swallows the seeds, which travel through its digestive tract.

The seeds are then dropped undamaged in the animal's feces which act as a natural fertilizer, as they contain all the required nutrients for the seeds to germinate and grow into trees.

The binturong can be considered as a gardner: by dispersing seeds that will grow into trees, it maintains forests and thus contributes to the protection of other animals sharing its habitat. Humans also benefit from its role, as the trees provide us the oxygen we need.

The binturong, a threatened species

The binturong population is estimated to have declined by 30 % in 18 years. Despite the very few studies on this species, it has been listed as « Vulnerable » on the IUCN Red List of threatened species. Although it is protected in some countries, much remains to be done to prevent its extinction.



MAIN THREATS

DEFORESTATION: Destruction of its natural habitat

Southeast Asia is a rapidly developing area, stimulated by a strong economic growth, sometimes at the expense of the natural environment. The expansion of palm oil tree, rubber tree and teak plantations is leading to rapid deforestation, driving wild animal species closer to humans. This cohabitation is generally a source of conflict, and is often detrimental to the animals. Moreover, logging modifies the structure of forests and creates road networks, which promotes poaching.

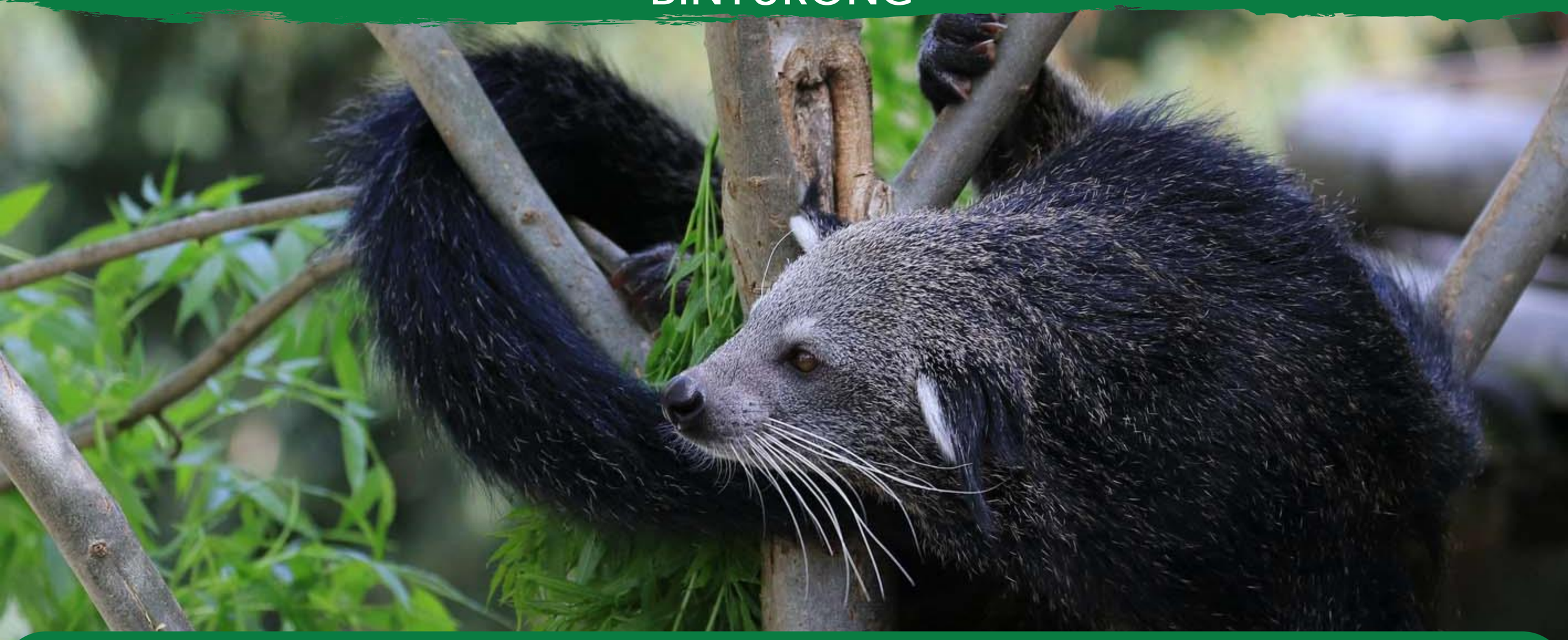
ILLEGAL TRADE AND POACHING

For several years now, binturongs have been traded illegally, and even legally in some countries, as pets. These animals are then unable to fulfill their ecological role. Little by little, binturongs are disappearing from fores caught by humans, to become pets trapped in a cage or someone's home. But what is the role of a binturong if it is captive? Binturongs are wi animals, and living as companion animals is detrimental to their health and welfare. Their role is to maintain and protect the forest, not to live with people. In some countries, they are also sold for their meat.

ABConservation

Arctictis Binturong Conservation

NGO CREATED ON 8 JULY 2014
OBJECTIVE: STUDY, RAISE AWARENESS AND PROTECT THE BINTURONG



BEARCAT STUDY PROGRAM

Launched in February 2017
On Palawan Island – Barangay Langogan

This program aims to collect data on binturong biology and ecology for a better understanding of the species, in order to protect it more efficiently.

METHOD 1: CAMERA TRAPPING AND TREE CLIMBING

Setting up camera traps between 10 and 20 meters high in trees allows us to confirm if binturongs are present in the area, to conduct biodiversity surveys, and survey the binturong population.

METHOD 2: RADIO TRACKING

This method consists in fitting a wild binturong with a GPS and VHF radiocollar, which allows to follow it and collect data on its biology and ecology. This includes understanding the species' diet, activity, reproduction and rearing of cubs, etc.