



Project description

Forest use and vertical stratification in fruit-feeding butterflies of Siberut, Indonesia

The vertical structure of tropical rain forests can be described as different distinct vegetation layers. The analysis of vertical distribution patterns and niche breadths of animals along such vertical gradients could provide one of the keys to the understanding of processes underlying species composition in animal communities of multi-layered forest habitats.

In south-east Asia, one of the most biologically diverse areas of the world, all fruit-feeding butterflies belong to the nymphalid subfamilies Satyrinae, Morphinae, Nymphalinae and Charaxinae. The Mentawai archipelago off Sumatras west coast is characterized by an exceptional high level of endemism, but to date there are very few studies describing the insect community of this hotspot of biodiversity.

The aims of this study are to:

- i) describe the general patterns of vertical stratification in frugivorous butterflies (nymphalidae) on Siberut, Mentawai islands,
- ii) using frugivorous butterflies as indicator, to analysis the impact of human disturbance to the forest, by comparing the vertical distributions, abundance and diversity between natural and disturbed forests and
- iii) provide general information about frugivorous butterfly species on Siberut.