

THE PRESENT OF RED JUNGLEFOWL (*GALLUS GALLUS*) IN OIL PALM PLANTATION

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Abstract

The morphological investigation was carried out to ascertain the existence of pure Red Junglefowl populations in oil palm plantations. This study took place in several oil palm plantations in the states of Johor, Selangor, and Pahang from February to August in 2009 and 2010 using scoop netting method. Twenty seven of Red Junglefowl which comprised of seven adult males, six adult females, four juvenile males, three juvenile females, four male chicks and three female chicks were successfully captured throughout this study. The morphological characteristics showed that the wild caught Red Junglefowls closely resembled the pure birds with reference to previous studies based on the body weight, body, wing, tail, tarsi and spur length parameters. The earlobes observed showed red, white or combination of both colours in all captured birds. The combs were single serrated with a pair of wattles found in both male and female birds though the males tend to have large prominent red coloured combs. The adult males have very distinguished feather colourations during breeding season. The under part or background colour is black and rump is dark reddish orange in colour. The white fluffy feathers were observed at the base of the metallic greenish black coloured arched tail. In contrast, the female Red Junglefowls appeared dark brown in colour, including their under part and tail feathers. Head feathers were dark brown to yellowish in colour. The eclipse plumage or also known as non breeding plumage is one of the characteristic that occurs in pure Red Junglefowl which is generally found in adult male and was observed to have more black feathers rather than colourful feathers. The size of the comb and wattles were smaller from breeding adult male and resembled the juvenile male, however, adult male was recognized by the evidence of spur on both feet. The legs of wild caught Red Junglefowl are relatively slim with smooth texture and are generally dark slate blue in colour.

Keywords: Red Junglefowl, Morphology, Characteristic