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The animal welfare implications of civet coffee tourism in Bali

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Abstract

There is a growing demand for civet coffee (also known as ‘Kopi Luwak’ in Indonesia), a luxury coffee produced from coffee cherries that have been eaten and partially digested by civets. Traditionally made using scat collected from the wild, the trend for ‘caged’ civet coffee, where live civets are taken from the wild and housed in captive conditions, is increasing. There is a rapidly expanding civet coffee tourist industry that has emerged within the last five years in Indonesia. The present paper is based on observations of the housing conditions of 48 wild-caught common palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) at 16 of these tourist-orientated coffee plantations in Bali. A score between 0–4 indicating welfare concerns was given for eight husbandry factors at each plantation, including: mobility, hygiene, surfaces, shelter, noise, food, water, and social interactions. In addition, interviews were conducted with senior tour guides at each of the plantations to gather information regarding tourist activities and the civet coffee production taking place therein. The data allowed for a welfare assessment to be made, which highlights the inadequate conditions and negative impact on common palm civets associated with the caged commercial production of this luxury product, which are not associated with traditional collection of scat from wild-living civets. We hope that our findings will inform tourists and tour operators about the ethical implications of visiting these attractions.

Keywords: animal welfare, common palm civet, Kopi Luwak, *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, welfare assessment, wildlife tourism