

Risk of Komodo Extinction Overshadowing Komodo Island

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The popularity of Komodo Island as the habitat of Komodo dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*) has seemed to cause people to forget the small population of the Komodo dragon on smaller islands in the area of Flores.

One expert in komodo, Andi Ariefiandy, M.Phil, said the animal population on the Komodo Island is safer than those on smaller islands as they have been fragmented by human beings in those smaller islands.

Andi Ariefiandy said in a general lecture entitled "Komodo Dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*) & *In-Situ* Conservation" in Faculty of Biology UGM.

Andi explained the Komodo dragon population on the bigger island is safer as opposed to the smaller islands which offer much less feed in addition to the influence of habitat fragmentation. The Komodo dragon on the smaller islands have a much smaller body, too. He asserted that the animal vary from island to island genetically, which makes them isolated. The inbreeding coefficient or mating level in one population on the small island is very high.

"We fear that this will lead to the low genetic diversity, hence very high extinction risks. If the population on the smaller island will extinct, this will endanger the population on the bigger ones," said the alumnus of Faculty of Biology UGM.

Conservation is underway that includes monitoring station infrastructure, dissemination, annual population monitoring, identification of spread area, identification of disturbance and area protection. Much information on the Komodo dragon, however, has been unexplored.

The Komodo dragon is the biggest monitor lizard in the world with a very narrow spread.



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