

Research Article

Changes in Vegetation on Mount Agung Volcano Bali Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Volcanic activity is a major natural disturbance that can catastrophically change an ecosystem over a short time scale. The eruption of Mt. Agung strato-volcano in 1963-1964 was considered among the most important volcanic event of the 20th century due to its effect on global climate. Studies on vegetation and landscape of Mt. Agung post-1970-1980 has been scarce. The current eruption of Mount Agung in June-July 2018, brought awareness of the importance urge to document the past and current landscape along with vegetation on Mt. Agung. Our study aimed to utilize remote sensing technique to explore the pattern of current (2017) land cover and vegetation density on Mt. Agung and estimate of vegetated areas and whether it has changed from the past. LANDSAT 8 images (www.earthexplorer.usgs.gov/) were used in this study. Supervised classification in ENVI was employed to obtain land use or land cover of the Mt. Agung area. Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) was also calculated using the feature in the ARC GIS. Online web-based application, REMAP was used to obtain information on past and present condition of the crater of Mt. Agung to see whether there have been changes in vegetated areas around the crater using REMAP (www.remap-app.org). Results showed there are basically five main landcover that can be recognized namely forest (20758.23 ha), settlement (4058.37 ha), water area (41606.64 ha), open area (15335.64 ha) and farming (34554.78 ha). Our NDVI analysis also resulted in areas with have high density (78836.04 ha), medium density (15490.26 ha) and also no vegetation (31008.24 ha). Using web-based GIS application REMAP, we found that there has been an increase (approximately 1 km²) in vegetation cover from the 1980s to 2016. The changes in vegetation near the crater of Mt. Agung is relatively slow when compared to another volcano such as Mt. Merapi. Remote sensing application has enabled us to obtain information on vegetation change relatively easily compared to conduct an extensive on-ground survey where more time and funding is needed.

INTRODUCTION

Volcanic activity is a major natural disturbance that can catastrophically change an ecosystem over a short time scale (2001). More than half of the active terrestrial volcanoes encircle the Pacific Ocean and are known as the 'ring of fire'. Indonesia is located on this chain of active volcanoes that stretched from west to east of the Archipelago (Sutomo 2013). With 130 active volcanoes lies in its region, Indonesia has become the most volcanic country on Earth (Weill 2004). One of the volcano in Indonesia which

recently being on the center of attention is the Agung volcano in the Island of Bali. In September 29th, 2017 the volcano status was on the highest alert level due to its numerous volcanic activities. There has been debate and opinion that the volcano is surely set to erupt, then in 25th November 2017 Mt. Agung erupted.

The first ever recorded in history eruption of Mt. Agung was in 1843 (Dilmy 1965) and there is no complete report has been written following the eruption. The next catastrophic eruption was in 1963

-1964. The eruption of this strato-volcano in 1963-1964 is considered among the most important volcanic event of the 20th century due to its effect on global climate (Self and Rampino 2012). One year after 1963 of Mt. Agung eruption, almost 90% of the affected areas were still barren almost as if it had been cemented (Whitten *et al.* 1996). Few plant species that survive the eruption such as *Sambucus javanica*, *Eleusine indica*, and *Ageratum conyzoides* were found to be alive after a few months of the eruption (Dilmy 1965).

Change in land use and land cover has been a significant aspect of environmental management and conservation planning for many decades (Murray *et al.* 2017a). The role of remote sensing (RS) and geographical information systems (GIS) in ecology, especially in fire and vegetation management, has been recognized (Arno *et al.* 1977; Chuvieco and Congalton 1989; Keane *et al.* 2001; van Wilgen *et al.* 2000; Verlinden and Laamanen 2006). Van Etten (1998) used a GIS for predictive vegetation mapping using models that linked vegetation units to mapped environmental variables across the extensive remote areas of Hammersley Ranges in Australia.

Land cover maps permit the portrayal of the distribution of ecosystems and land cover types, assessments of biodiversity and identification of areas undergoing loss, fragmentation, and degradation (Haddad *et al.* 2015; Murray *et al.* 2017a). Studies on vegetation and landscape of Mt. Agung post 1970-1980 has been scarce. With the current eruption on Mount Agung in June-July 2018, it is of importance to document the past and current landscape along with its vegetation on Mt. Agung. Our study aimed to utilize remote sensing technique to explore the pattern of current (2017) land cover and vegetation density on Mt. Agung and estimate of vegetated areas and whether it has changed from the past.

Method

To obtain the current land cover and vegetation density on Mt. Agung and its surrounding, a satellite image for Mt. Agung (year 2017) was downloaded from LANDSAT 8 (www.earthexplorer.usgs.gov/). When selecting images to be download, we looked for images which were not covered by clouds or try to minimize the cloud cover percentage as much as possible with image quality level 9 (no errors detected, perfect scene). We then chose band 6, 5, and 3 and composite them into one image. After layer stacking, then cropping was done so that only Mt. Agung area was shown. This result then was load as RGB and used as the basis for classification. The classification was done using supervised classification, maximum likelihood approach with

ENVI 4.5. Once classification finished, each class were converted to individual layer in a shapefile to be analyzed in ARCGIS 10.1.

We also use REMAP to obtain information on past and present condition of the crater of Mt. Agung to see whether there have been changes in vegetated areas around the crater. We use REMAP because it is difficult to find good past images from LANDSAT on Mt. Agung. Remap (<https://remap-app.org>) is an online mapping platform. Remap was developed to enable users to quickly map and report the status of ecosystems, contributing to a global effort to assess all ecosystems on Earth under the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (Murray *et al.* 2017a). Remap uses the power of the Google Earth Engine, allowing users to directly access vast satellite data archives and state-of-the-art remote sensing methods. Remap handles the technical details of remote sensing so that users can focus on training, classifying and improving their maps (Murray *et al.* 2017b).

To obtain information on vegetation density, we used NDVI technique. NDVI is an index describing vegetation by showing the difference between near infrared (which is strongly reflected by vegetation) and red light (which is absorbed by vegetation). NDVI is correlated to vegetation biomass, vigour, and photosynthetic activity. This index exploits the reflectance patterns of ground elements in the red (R) and near-infrared (NIR) bands of the electromagnetic spectrum to distinguish green vegetation from its background soil brightness and is calculated as $(NIR - R) / (NIR + R)$. NDVI values range from -1 to 1, with positive values representing vegetated areas and negative values representing non-vegetated regions (Sankaran 2001). The NDVI ratio approach usually adopted for land cover change estimation in preference to the more commonly employed post-classification pixel-by-pixel comparison method (Lillesand *et al.* 2008) since it also permits the identification of areas where changes in the vegetative cover have been significant, but insufficient to cause change in class membership (Sankaran 2001). In our study, NDVI was generated using NDVI feature in ARC-MAP (ARC GIS 10.1) image analysis toolbar. Band 2, 3, 4, and 5 were chosen for Landsat 8 (OLI) image as input images in ARC-MAP which represent the blue, green, red and near-infrared (NIR) bands. By choosing image analysis tab, all the bands layers were composite into one and then the RGB channels were adjusted to just using only the NIR, red and green bands. Scientific output box was chosen on the NDVI tab in ARC-MAP so that instead of displaying the wavelength, it will give the value of +1 to -1 in the NDVI result. Once NDVI images

generated, colour scheme was applied for easier interpretation.

In addition, to obtain information regarding plant species that were occurred on Mt. Agung and its surrounding from past to present, we conducted a literature study into the database belongs to plant registration division of Bali Botanical Garden. The database holds the information on the past flora exploration (1970's) up to 2000 (Arinasa 2017).

Results and Discussion

Our result on landcover classification using Landsat 8 image and processed with ENVI is presented in figure 1. There are basically five main landcover that can be recognized namely forest (20758.23 ha), settlement (4058.37 ha), water area (41606.64 ha), open area (15335.64 ha) and farming (34554.78 ha). Our NDVI analysis also resulted in areas with have high density (78836.04 ha), medium density (15490.26 ha) and also no vegetation (31008.24 ha) (Figure 2). Most of the unvegetated areas located on the northern part of the mountain. This could indicate the direction of the eruption.

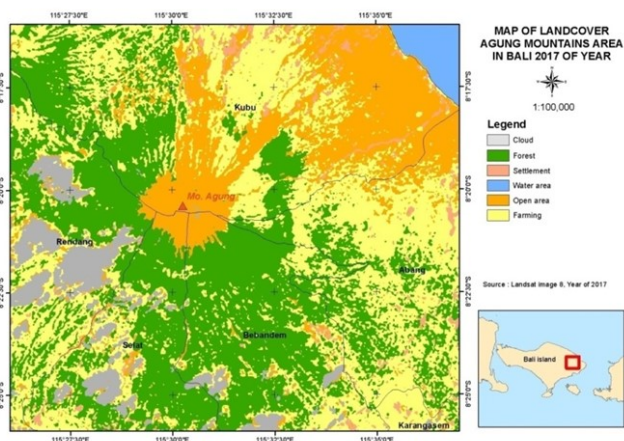


Figure 1. Landuse map of Mount Agung in Bali, using Landsat image 8 (2017).

Unlike eruption on Mt. Merapi, where the direction of pyroclastic flows mostly moved from the crater to the south flank of the mountain (Sutomo 2010), Mount Agung flows of eruption materials tends to move to the north. On 4th June 2006, the “Geger boyo” flank in Kaliadem (Sleman District, Yogyakarta Province) collapsed and *nuees ardentes* occurred until 14th June. The flows moved down the slope through Gendol River (Kaliadem area) and destroyed all vegetation and buildings in its path (Sutomo 2010). Offcourse the Agung Mountain has a different type of eruption with Merapi. Merapi type eruption is unique where it usually in a form of a pyroclastic flows or *nuees ardentes* that originated from a collapsed lava dome at the summit (Bardintzeff 1984), whereas Agung is more of an

explosive volcanic type of eruption. The February 1963 to January 1964 eruption of Gunung Agung, Indonesia’s largest and most devastating eruption of the twentieth century, was a multi-phase explosive and effusive event that produced both basaltic andesite tephra and andesite lava (Self and Rampino 2012). Perhaps due to this direction of eruption and lava deposit, we can see from the produced map (Figure 2), the northern part of the mountain are mostly seen as no vegetation or medium density vegetation. However, these results could also mean that on the northern part of the Island are probably populated by human which dwell up until along the north coastline.

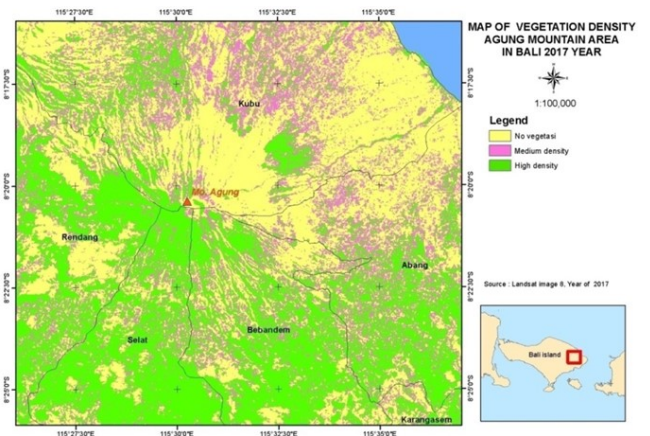


Figure 2. Vegetation density on Mount Agung and surrounding, using Landsat image 8 (2017).

Another approach to see the changes in vegetation cover following the eruption is to focus on the area surrounding the crater of Mt. Agung. Therefore, using web-based GIS application REMAP, we found that there has been an increase (approximately 1 km²) in vegetation cover from the 1980s to 2016 (Figure 3). Remote sensing has also been applied to study vegetation succession on Mount Merapi. Yuniasih (2017) used NDVI approach to compare vegetation density in two locations of affected by 2010 eruption of Mt. Merapi and one that was not affected by the eruption. The study found that the location that was affected by pyroclastic flows of Merapi eruption have almost similar NDVI with location which was not affected, indicating the existence of the successional process.

It can be inferred from the results (Figure 3) that the rate of vegetation succession on Mt. Agung is slow compared with Mt. Merapi. In the first decade of primary succession, plant re-colonization on Mt. Merapi *nuees ardentes* deposits was rapid, with fifty-six species belonging to 26 families recorded. The highest number of species belonged to the Asteraceae, then Poaceae, followed by Fabaceae and Rubiaceae. The number of species presents varied as

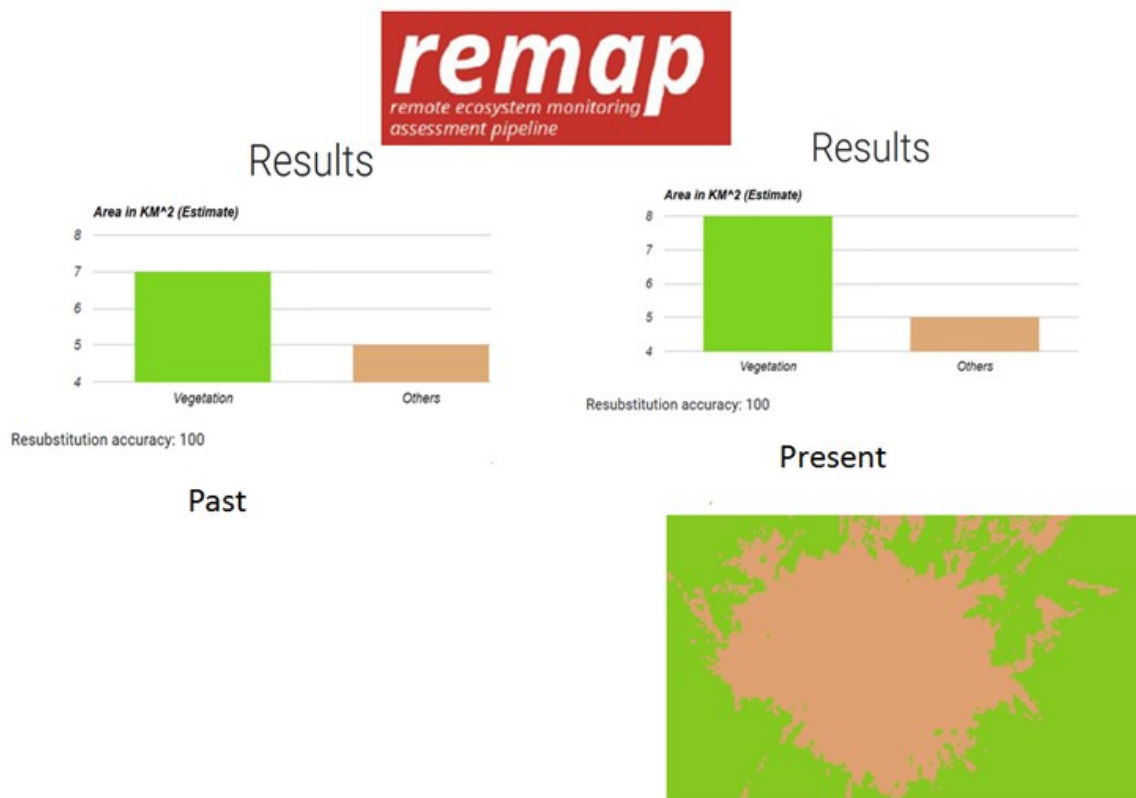


Figure 3. Vegetated areas changes on the surrounding summit (near the crater) of Mount Agung Bali using remap. Past refers to 1980's and present refers to 2016.

the deposit aged, with a rising trend of species richness and diversity over time (Sutomo *et al.* 2011). Unfortunately, studies on vegetation of Mt. Agung post 1970-1980 has been scarce. However, Dilmy (1965), reported that a few months after the 1963 eruption three species of plants were found in the Besakih vicinity on the slope of Mt. Agung namely *Sambucus javanica*, *Eleusine indica*, and *Ageratum conyzoides*, while all other plants were dead. Antos and Zobel (2005) report that the majority of types of herbs can penetrate to deposits of 4.5 cm or less, but at a depth of more than 15 cm most layers of herbs will die and cannot penetrate. One year later in 1964, Dilmy reported that there were 83 species consists of grasses, herbs, shrubs, and trees were found growing at the elevation of 900 to 1250 m above sea level. Pioneer tree species that Dilmy (1965) found one-year fater the eruption among others were *Albizzia procera*, *Albizzia montana*, *Engelbardia spicata*, *Ficus benjamina*, *Ficusseptica*, *Ficus ampelas*, and *Melia azedarach*.

According to Dilmy (1965), these plants were found along dikes and water courses in moist places. This highlight the importance of microsites or safe sites which facilitate pioneer plants to grow. There has been abundance research on safe sites and their importance for seedling recruitment and establishment on a disturbed areas (Eriksson and Ehrlén 1992; Jumpponen *et al.* 1999; Moral and Wood 1993; Tsuyuzaki *et al.* 1997). Sutomo and

Hasanbahri (2008) studied pine species (*Pinus merkusii*) recovery in Kaliadem forest of Mt. Merapi which was affected by the 2006 eruption. Needles and stem branches of the pine that fall on the surface of the sediment serves as mulch and helps provide it nutrients needed for pine seedlings to grow. In addition, the morphology of the rocky deposits protects pine seedlings from herbivory by animals. Thus recovery of *Pinus* in Kaliadem forests already have a good source of seedlings 'capital'.

Another approach that we can use to obtain a description of what plant species constitute on the Mt. Agung areas is by studying expedition records from a nearby botanical garden. "Eka Karya" Bali Botanical Garden-Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) as a plant conservation unit has conducted series of plant expedition from the 1970s up to 2000s to explore plants species including general taxa and also specific such as an orchid. A summary of the results is displayed in table 1. Among these results, there are seven species that similar to the species that were reported by Dilmy one year after the 1963 eruption namely *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Musa* sp., *Clerodendron serratum*, *Homalomena* sp., *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, *Vernoneaarborea*, and *Litsea* sp.

The duration of a succession process will depend on many things but among them is how severe the damage is and how much area is affected, whether there is a biological legacy (such as the source of seeds/location in the location and

Table 1. List of plant species collected from exploration (1970 – 2000) by Bali Botanical Garden on Mount Agung and its surrounding

Collection year	Species name	Family	Location	
1970s	<i>Eria multiflora</i>	Orchidaceae	Bebandem village	
	<i>Phalaenopsis sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Tihingan, bebandem, karangasem	
	<i>Dendrobium sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Abang village	
	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Rutaceae	Tista village, Abang	
	<i>Acriopsis sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Batugunung	
	<i>Piper sp.</i>	Piperaceae	Batugunung	
	<i>Arachnis sp.</i>	Leguminosae	Batugunung	
	<i>Vanilla sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Batugunung	
	<i>Musaenda sp.</i>	Rubiaceae	Batugunung	
	<i>Opuntia sp.</i>	Cactaceae	Kubu, Karangsem	
	<i>Euphorbia sp.</i>	Euph.	Kubu, Karangsem	
	<i>Bulbophyllumbiflorum</i>	Orchidaceae	Karangasem	
	<i>Dendrobium plicatile</i>	Orchidaceae	Lempuyang Hill	
	<i>Appendicula angustifolia</i>	Orchidaceae	Lempuyang Hill	
	<i>Dendrobium sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Lempuyang Hill	
	<i>Corimborchis sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Lempuyang Hill	
	<i>Phaius sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Lempuyang Hill	
	<i>Thevetia peruviana</i>	Apoc.	Lempuyang Hill	
	1980s	<i>Santalum album</i>	Santalaceae	BatuGiling, Kubu, Karangasem
		<i>Kalanchoe sp.</i>	Crass.	BatuDewaKubu, Karangasem
<i>Lygodium sp.</i>		Lygodiaceae	BatuDewa, Kubu, Karangasem	
<i>Clerodendron sp.</i>		Verb.	BatuDewa, Kubu, Karangasem	
<i>Acacia cincinnata.</i>		Leguminosae	abang	
<i>Acacia polystachyaBenth.</i>		Leguminosae	abang	
<i>Caladium sp.</i>		Araceae	abang	
<i>Enchrestaborsfieldii</i>		Leguminosae	abang	
<i>Garcinia dulcis</i>		Clusiaceae	abang	
<i>Begonia sp.</i>		Begoniaceae	abang	
1990s	<i>Raphodopora sp.</i>	Araceae	abang	
	<i>Ardisia humilis</i>	Primulaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Syzygium racemosum</i>	Myrtaceae	Gunung Agung Fores	
	<i>Phaius tankervilleae</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Calanthe veratrifolia</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Goodyera sp.</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Pandanus tectorius</i>	Pandanaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Coelogyne flexouosa</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Dodonaea sp.</i>	Sapindaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Pteridium sp.</i>	Pteridaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Musa sp.</i>	Musaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Platea sp.</i>	Icac.	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Dianella sp.</i>	Xanthorrhoeaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Orthosiphon aristatus</i>	Lamiaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Clematis sp.</i>	Ranunculaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
<i>Nephrolepis duffii</i>	Nephrolepidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest		
<i>Clerodendron serratum.</i>	Verbenaceae	Gunung Agung Forest		
<i>Asplenium caudatum</i>	Aspleniaceae	Gunung Agung Forest		

Table 1. Cont'd.

Collection year	Species name	Family	Location	
1990s	<i>Weinmannia blumei</i>	Cunoniaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Vanda tricolor</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Dendrobium sagittatum</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Hippeastrum sp.</i>	Amarylidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Dendrobium linearifolium</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Homalomena sp.</i>	Araceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Anaphalis sp.</i>	Compositae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Phreatia secunda</i>	Orchidaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Magnolia champaca</i>	Magnoliaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Laplacea amboinensis</i> Miq.	Theaceae	Gunung Agung Forest	
	<i>Platea sp.</i>	Icac.	Gunung Agung Forest	
	2000s	<i>Mesuaifera</i>	Clusiaceae	Dsn. Brahma
		<i>Hibiscus sp.</i>	Malvaceae	Dsn. Brahma
<i>Cajanus cajan</i>		Leguminosae	Dsn. Brahma	
<i>Delichos lablab</i>		Leguminosae	Dsn. Brahma	
<i>Zingiber pupureum</i>		Zingiberaceae	Dsn. Brahma	
<i>Coleus amboinensis</i>		Lamiaceae	Dsn. Brahma	
<i>Michelia sp.</i>		Magnoliaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Arenga sp.</i>		Arecaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Curcuma sp.</i>		Zingiberaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Garcinia mangostana</i>		Clusiaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Musa sp.</i>		Musaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Parmentiera sp.</i>		Bignoniaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Alpinagalanga .</i>		Zingiberaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Curcuma sp.</i>		Zingiberaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Zingiberofficinale</i>		Zingiberaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>		Musaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Mangifera caesia</i>		Anac.	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Cocos nucifera</i>		Arecaceae	Dsn. Dukuh	
<i>Gmelina arborea</i>		Verb.	Pempatan village, Karangasem	
<i>Gmelina arborea</i>		Verb.	Pempatan village, Karangasem	
<i>Litsea sp.</i>		Laur.	Lebah village, Rendang, Karangasem	
<i>Meliosma sp.</i>		Sab.	Munduk village, Karangasem	
<i>Homalomena sp.</i>		Araceae	Munduk village Karangasem	
<i>Calanthe veratrifolia</i>		Orchid.	Munduk village Karangasem	
<i>Saurania sp.</i>		Saurauiac.	Munduk village Karangasem	
<i>Ligustrum glomeratum</i>		Anac.	Munduk village, Karangasem	
<i>Trevesia sundaica</i>		Anac.	Munduk village, Karangasem	
<i>Vernonia arborea</i>	Aster.	Munduk village, Karangasem		
<i>Begonia longifolia</i>	Beg.	Munduk village, Karangasem		

Source: Plant registration division, Bali Botanical Garden-Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI)

surrounding location) and the presence or absence of ecological intervention. Ecological intervention is human intervention to accelerate the natural succession process. This is called ecosystem restoration. In addition to ecosystem restoration efforts, it is also necessary to monitor or monitor ecosystem dynamics, especially the dynamics of plant vegetation in the volcanic region. Remote sensing technology can be used to monitor

vegetation in the volcano area. Satellite image data in different years can be collected and processed for analysis and comparison on whether there is a change in the area of vegetation, whether there is a change in vegetation density or is there a change in the greenness index of vegetation or there may be changes in land use from the vegetation area to the area for other purposes. Given the level of damage and change of land in lowland forests mainly on Java

and Bali, it is now undeniable that mountainous/upland forest areas (including volcanoes) play a very important role and become a place where high biodiversity can still be we find.

Although from the results there has been an improvement in terms of vegetated areas and also increase in species richness over time, however, as the threat of habitat and ecosystem destruction due to the consequences of climate change and anthropogenic disturbance increases, these volcanic-forests highlight the continuing need and importance of research on plant community succession and restoration on a volcanic terrain in Indonesia.

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