

# Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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## Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in Borneo

Habitat loss and poaching are two of the leading causes of orangutan population decline and are the main threats we work to reduce in and around Gunung Palung National Park. In this current climate of resource exploitation, many traditionally harvested

forest products are growing scarce, while human conflicts with wildlife-including an increase in the illegal killing and trade of orangutans-are on the rise.



In this issue we share with you the results of some of our monitoring and patrolling efforts in 2012. These investigations reveal that land clearing for oil palm plantations and mining has led to an increase in the number of Human Orangutan Conflict cases in the area. While threats to orangutans and their habitat persist, many positive efforts are happening in the area to combat these problems. Our Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Artisan Groups are producing handicrafts made from sustainably sourced materials, which they are selling for a profit. These livelihood sources offer a sustainable alternative to environmentally destructive activities such as national park encroachment and slash-and-burn agriculture, thereby helping to

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### **Funder Visit!**

Earlier this year one of our committed funders, USAID-IFACS, visited our Environmental Education Center in Bentangor. As part of our mid-term evaluation we were excited to have the opportunity to show them our work in action! GPOCP Field Director, Tito Indrawan, hosted their visit, sharing more about some of our many programs they help to fund, and discussed our progress to date, as well as

protect orangutan habitat, while also securing access for these communities to the vital forest resources they need.

We thank you for your continued support of our work!

Cheryl Knott, Executive Director

[Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program \(GPOCP\)](#)

## Orangutans are Protected but Not Protected

By Petrus Kanisius "Pit", Yayasan Palung (GPOCP)

Despite their protected status, orangutans continue to be captured and held illegally. Monitoring patrols conducted by GPOCP from January-November 2012, especially in coastal areas, identified 10 such cases of orangutans being illegally held in captivity. Our program partner, International Animal Rescue Indonesia (YIARI), also identified and rescued additional orangutans from various districts throughout West Kalimantan during the same time period (January-November 2012). As of November, there were 57 orangutans at the YIARI center, consisting of 34 juveniles and 23 adults. Many of these cases of captive orangutans come from communities that are situated adjacent to palm oil plantations, and some of the captive individuals come directly from the plantations themselves.



*Baby orangutan being held in village shed*

Human Orangutan Conflict (HOC) is becoming a more common occurrence, largely arising from the activities conducted by resource extraction industries such as oil palm and mining companies. Conflicts lead to orangutan death, injury or rescue. Even in the cases of rescue, many orangutans have already suffered injury. Oil palm plantation companies are supposed to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to identify the presence of orangutans in concession areas. These assessments should lead to mitigation measures that reduce conflict within the area. However, there is often little or no monitoring of the implementation of the EIA itself.

our implementation strategy for the coming term. We are always delighted when we have the opportunity to host representatives from our many wonderful funding agencies, and share with them directly the work they so generously help to support!

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*"Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing because he could only do a little."*

~Edmund Burke~



*Illegal logging inside Gunung Palung National Park*

Some companies, under the pretext of "rescuing" orangutans, hand over individuals they find within their concessions to conservation organizations. However, if wild animals and plants are within the concession area it is the responsibility of the concession managers to protect the species if necessary, rather than eject them from the area.

Additionally, weak law enforcement further undermines the protections that have been put in place. To date, not a single case of the orangutans rescued in 2012 have been taken forward legally. This lack of legal action means there is little deterrent for people breaking wildlife laws. Seeing as threats to orangutans continue, it is imperative that these issues continue to be brought to the attention of the various stakeholders involved in their protection, including the government, NGOs, the private sector and the local communities. In order to ensure a place for orangutans in their natural habitat the protections that have been developed thus far must be implemented consistently and properly.

## **NTFPs - Generating Local Income and Protecting Forests**

By Petrus Kanisius "Pit", Yayasan Palung (GPOCP)

Protecting forests from logging and oil palm agriculture takes away sources of income for villagers, so creating viable income-generating alternatives has become one of our essential conservation strategies. The production of non timber forest product (NTFP) handicrafts is one such livelihood activity that utilizes traditional skills and contributes to forest conservation through decreasing the reliance on environmentally destructive activities, such as slash-and-burn agriculture and palm oil production. Forest plants such as rattan, palm and bamboo can be processed into a wide range of woven mats, hats and even chairs and tables. NTFP handicrafts can be produced by both women and men, making it a lucrative livelihood across all sectors of a community. In Kayong Utara, West Kalimantan, GPOCP has assisted a number of communities to form NTFP artisan groups as a livelihood strategy, generating income for



their communities through sustainable practices.



*Woven baskets and mats produced by NTFP Artisan Group*

Many of the communities in Kayong Utara are immediately adjacent to the forest and are still largely dependent on rainforest resources. Natural products support many aspects of peoples' daily lives here. For example, forest products, such as rattan, bamboo and some types of ferns, are often used in various every day capacities. These forest products can be used to make farming and fishing tools, as well as traditional household items.

GPOCP has assisted in establishing and developing NTFP artisan groups in four villages in Kayong Utara. Groups currently exist in the villages of Batu Barat, Pangkalan Buton, Harapan Mulia and Sejahtera. Artisans weave tikars (floor mats) in the village of Batu Barat. Usually they are able to produce 7-10 large mats (approx 1.5 x 2.5, meters) in a week, but can produce a larger number of smaller mats in the same amount of time. Catering to customers' wishes, patterns are woven into the bamboo strands. The mats are woven from non-wood materials such as pandan leaves or a similar material harvested from the sea. The artisans also use palm fronds to make lekar (placemats or pot stands) and wall hangings.



*Woven mats for sale*

Local Government and other stakeholders have a responsibility to promote NTFPs and explore further market potential for such items. If NTFPs can become established as a viable and sustainable large scale livelihood activity, local people will no longer need to damage the forest to meet basic economic needs, and they will secure long-term access to the many natural resources vital to their lives.

This article can also be read in Indonesian at:  
<http://nationalgeographic.co.id/forum/topic-2522.html>

### Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (GPOCP)



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