



Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in Borneo

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are thrilled to bring you another installation of news from GPOCP. The past month has been an exciting one, and members of our staff have accomplished some amazing things. Thus, in this issue we focus on four of our long-term employees who have contributed many years of their lives to making GPOCP the success it is today, and continue to make significant contributions to the orangutan conservation and research communities.

In our conservation office, Wendy is an irreplaceable asset. He has been the guiding voice for many of our community-led conservation projects, such as our Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods Program and our youth group councils. On the other side of the coin, Rusda, Hardi and Hassan, the most seasoned members of our Indonesian research staff, have recently completed a trip to our sister field site at Sabangau, where they participated in the work of another orangutan research and conservation team learning from and sharing best practices across our two sites.

As always, we are heartened by our dedicated and talented staff here at GPOCP, and we are proud to bring you their stories. The connection between what we do in the field and our supporters continues to be the backbone of our organization, and we appreciate what all of you do to make our conservation and research efforts possible.

Thank you so very much to everyone for your continued support of our

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**Help us Protect
Orangutans!**

Rainforest Live

On June 2nd, 2014 conservationists are coming together to share 24 hours of wildlife sightings from rainforest sites across Southeast Asia.

Rainforest: Live will use the twitters and facebook pages of eleven organizations to share live photos, videos and wildlife sightings from their respective field sites in the rainforests of Malaysia and

work. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Knott, Executive Director
[Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program \(GPOCP\)](#)

Spotlight: Wendy Tamariska

By Samuel Hamy, Program and Development Director

GPOCP is pleased to introduce our Sustainable Livelihoods Coordinator, Frederik Wendy Tamariska, known as Wendy. In 1981, Wendy was born to a Dayak family and raised in West Kalimantan, near Gunung Palung National Park. Knowing that local communities often struggle with poverty, Wendy understood that many people had no economic alternatives to the unsustainable exploitation of the natural resources surrounding the Park and has devoted himself to finding strategic ways to protect the forests near his home.

In 2006, Wendy graduated from the University of Arts and Education in East Kalimantan Province where he had the opportunity to develop his leadership skills when he became the Vice-President of the Student Association. After graduating, he became the program manager of a community-based organization in East Kalimantan for 3 years. His desire to protect the forests, a natural heritage from his ancestors, led him to GPOCP in 2010. Wendy is a natural-born community-based organization builder. Over time, he has developed an amazing network of relationships, has an excellent command of English and local languages, and loves working with people and in the field. All of these skills make him an essential asset within GPOCP's strategic team.



Indonesia, all using the hashtag #rainforestlive. GPOCP will be among the participants, so be sure to use the link below to follow us on Facebook!

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

~Edmund Burke~

Wendy Tamariska presenting a new conservation strategy to his community-based team

And so, Wendy rapidly evolved within GPOCP. After joining as a Field Officer (2010-2012), he was appointed as the Environmental Education and Learning Center Coordinator (2012-2013) before he was promoted in 2013 as our Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods Coordinator. In four villages around the National Park, he coordinates the establishment and training of our Non-Timber Forest Product Groups, which have grown to be composed of 93 community members. These villagers now have an alternative source of income to their former environmentally destructive practices such as slash-and-burn agriculture and illegal logging.

As the Environmental Education and Learning Center Coordinator, Wendy also established a group of around 50 young volunteers, now self-organized after 2 years of mentoring. His training gave them skills in event and organizational management, work plan development, group discussion leading, and role-playing. These young people now play a key role in our regularly programmed activities, such as school field trips, mobile cinema presentations with communities surrounding GPNP and elementary school visits.

At the Center, Wendy is also actively involved in spreading organic farming methods to local communities. The soils around Gunung Palung, that formerly hosted tropical rainforest, are nutrient-poor, causing local people to continually encroach further into the National Park, using slash and burn agricultural techniques, to seek new lands to plant their crops. By showing communities how they can enrich the soil in their own yards using non-chemical fertilizers, we not only prevent the need for such further rain forest destruction but also provide a potential new source of income.



the installation of the hydroelectric power prototype

In 2013, Wendy persuaded Poltak, an illegal logger he knew, to engage in a never-before-explored concept in the region: a recycled parts hydroelectric power machine meant to provide cheap electricity to the surrounding local communities. The first prototype is now functional, and for Poltak, illegal logging is a thing of the past.

Now, in 2014, Wendy, has been recognized by the local authorities for his achievements with GPOCP and has been appointed an honorary member of the "Strategic Environmental Assessment" team of the district of Kayong Utara. We are thrilled to have such a capable, creative, and enthusiastic person working with us, and we look forward to our future with Wendy.

I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane

By Jennifer Brousseau, Field Manager

In the month of April, three of our research staff, field assistants, Hardianto (Hardi) and Harissan (Hassan), and Botanical Research Assistant and Assistant Field Research Manager, Muhammad Rusda Yakin (Rusda), had the opportunity to visit LAHG (Laboratorium Alam Hutan Gambut), in Sabangau, Central Kalimantan. The initial idea behind this trip, known as "Studi Banding" in Indonesia, was to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the two research sites through the exchange of assistants. And so, our assistants traveled to Sabangau to learn about the on-going research there, on both orangutans and the other wildlife throughout the area. Through this trip, our assistants gained a better understanding of how the research they conduct each and every day at Cabang Panti contributes to the greater picture of orangutan research and conservation world-wide.



Hardianto (left), Muhammed Rusda Yakin (middle), and Harissan (right)

From April 15th - 19th, Rusda, Hardi and Hassan entered the peat swamps of Sabangau every day with a new objective. Hassan and Hardi had never before left the area surrounding their homes nearby Ketapang, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, so even getting on a plane for the first time was an adventure. Once they arrived, they realized quickly that things would be very different in the peat swamp quagmire of Sabangau.

"I won't forget the moment when we were looking for orangutan nests in a really wet part of the forest. I had to focus my attention on the

branches where the orangutan nest was at the same time as trying to maneuver my way around a trail of muddy pools of deep water and 100 meters of wooden boards in front of me. It was definitely a different type of area than I am used to being in, but it was an unforgettable experience" recounted Rusda.

Some of the work performed at Sabangau is notably similar to what gets done at Cabang Panti. On a regular basis with a rotating schedule, the field assistants at LAHG conduct orangutan follows, search for orangutans, perform phenology surveys on certain areas of the forest, and conduct nest surveys on other areas of the forest. Rusda was especially interested in the nest surveys, because he had previously performed nest survey research at Cabang Panti for his undergraduate thesis.

Some work, however, is quite different. One of the most enriching and interesting opportunities for the assistants was to assist in the monitoring of the camera traps set up throughout the peat swamp. On a regular basis, the field assistants at LAHG change the batteries of the camera traps, make sure they are working appropriately, remove the video footage from the traps, and then review what footage the camera traps captured during that time period. No night follows/nocturnal research is currently being conducted at Cabang Panti, so it was very enlightening for the assistants to understand how the forest comes alive at night and all the additional wildlife that goes unseen each day and night. Perhaps there is potential for this kind of research to be conducted at Cabang Panti in the future.

In addition to learning about specific research projects at LAHG compared to Cabang Panti, the assistants gained a better appreciation of their role in the international effort to both conserve and study wild orangutans. As explained by Rusda, Hassan and Hardi, "All the activities we participated in at LAHG are important for improving our



Rusda and Harissan (right) learning to set up camera traps with the assistants of Sebangau

knowledge about wildlife conservation, specifically orangutan research. It is necessary for us to understand the practice of orangutan research in a wider scope to build upon our own research experiences. This experience definitely tightened the feeling of togetherness, that we are a big family working together towards the conservation of orangutans. We may do it from different places across Indonesia, but we all have the same goal in mind."

Our project is particularly grateful to the staff at LAHG for their gracious hosting of this first exchange. Recalls Rusda, "I really enjoyed the hospitality in camp, the comfort of the buildings, the well-run management structure of the camp and the people there were incredibly friendly." In a few months time we expect some of the field assistants from LAHG to Cabang Panti and hopefully share in equally enlightening experiences with the staff here. The intention is that they

too can develop an understanding of the greater picture of orangutan research and conservation such as what Rusda, Hassan and Hardi were able to gain from their own experience.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program
(GPOCP)



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