

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in Borneo

Dear Supporters,

Our quest to protect orangutans and their rainforest home in Gunung Palung National Park continues! Join us for a special issue on how our Field Research Team is involved with conservation efforts in the local



community. We are proud that we were able to help our partner, YIARI, find and identify suitable fruit trees for orangutan survival at their new rehabilitation site. And meet Hardi (above), one of our amazing and dedicated research assistants. In his own words, Hardi tells you of his past life as an illegal logger and the transformation he's gone through by working in the forest. In June, Hardi was able to spend 3 days helping our education team lead a trip for middle and high school students to the Lubuk Baji Education Camp that we built in the park several years ago. Teachers, students and staff were amazed at Hardi's breadth of rainforest knowledge and were inspired by his personal story of achievement and dedication to conservation. This linkage between our conservation and research programs is a key component of our project. Through applying the knowledge gained from years of studying orangutans and their habitat, we can more



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A True Forest Life

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Meet Hardianto

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GPOCP Now On Indiegogo

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Calling All Interns

GPOCP Now On Indiegogo

We have an exciting new campaign on the crowdfunding site, Indiegogo.com - check it out and help us spread the word! **We have a goal to raise \$10,000 before February 28, 2013** for our environmental education program. We are looking

effectively implement our conservation strategies.

Cheryl Knott, Executive Director

Thank you for your support!

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

First Stepping Stones To A True Forest Life

Gail Campbell-Smith, Field Research Director

At the end of 2010, our partner, the International Animal Rescue, Indonesia (YIARI) Purchased 24 hectares (60 acres) of forested land on the island of Borneo, in Ketapang, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. This land will be the home to a much



needed orangutan rehabilitation facility that will house up to 100 orangutans at any given time. Within this facility are nestled 22 hectares (55 acres) of forest which will act as the first stepping stone to freedom for many captive orangutans, most of which had been kept in someone's backyard, in appalling conditions, for several months or even years - until rescued by YIARI.

These captive orangutans need to learn their forest skills at an early age if they have any hope of surviving in a natural forest. YIARI's new forest haven will give the orangutans plenty of opportunities to develop natural arboreal behavior - learning to climb, travel through, and sleep in the canopy. For many, this will be the first time in their lives they are able to climb a tree. In order to ensure that this tract of land had the necessary trees for orangutan survival, it was extremely important to know which species were present in this forested land. IAR turned to the Gunung Palung Orangutan Project's Research Program (GPOP) for help. Our field assistants are vastly knowledgeable in tree species identification, and were only too happy to aid our colleagues in carrying out a three-day tree census on their new section of rainforest.

Eagerly, on day one, the YIARI staff and GPOP assistants pulled on their wellington boots and headed to the forest to begin measuring and plotting out their transect lines. A total of six lines, varying in length from 300 - 600 meters were walked. All tree species present within a 5 meter range off the central transect line were recorded, along with the trees' heights and diameters to both the right and left sides of the lines. This took the entire day. Days two and three focused on the transect survey. Bright and early, GPOP assistants, supported by YIARI staff and a local veterinarian, headed to the rehabilitation forest. Once more, they spent many grueling hours walking these long transect lines identifying and recording all tree species present. The GPOP assistants also tagged all identified

to expand on our 14 years of work with the communities surrounding Gunung Palung National Park to help save orangutans and their ancient rainforest habitat. Please share this exciting news and link with those you think might also be interested in supporting our work. Some fantastic **thank you perks** are being given away to those who help us reach our goal! Visit our [campaign site](#) for full details. In order for our campaign to stay active we need to receive donations in our first two days, so **please help orangutans today!**

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### Calling All Interns!

We are looking for an enthusiastic person to assist our Development Director and other senior managers with administrative and other general tasks in our Ketapang Office, West Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo). This position would suit a recent graduate looking to gain experience within a field-based conservation organization. A confident level of Bahasa Indonesia is highly desired. This position is likely to be available on an on-going basis in the future. For complete job description visit our [website](#).

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trees with their Latin names to ensure that future identification by YIARI staff is attainable and straightforward.



GPOP assistants measuring the tree diameters

Based on this great collaborative survey, over 200 trees, representing 16 genera, were recorded and tagged - with the most dominant of the trees being *Dillenia*, *Syzygium*, and *Garcinia*. This is truly fantastic news, as wild orangutans love to utilize these trees. Based on the species present within YIARI's land, the future of these orangutans is bright, and they should make a quick transition to a new life in the forest. Well done to all involved in this important survey!

Meet Hardianto

Spotlight on the Research Assistants of the Gunung Palung Orangutan Project's Research Program

Hardianto was once an illegal logger, cutting trees in the forests of West Kalimantan, Indonesia on the island of Borneo, where he grew up. Hardianto recalls those days and how he became a GPOP research assistant...

"Before I became a research assistant with GPOP in 2008, I worked as an illegal logger for 14 years in many forests throughout West Kalimantan. I don't know how many trees I cut down...countless numbers, and I knew in my heart that what I was doing was wrong. My economic situation was precarious and I found it difficult to find suitable jobs in my home area. Thus, I was left with no choice but to cut down the trees I struggle to protect now.



Hardianto collecting orangutan data in the field

During one of my trips home, after being away in the forest for many weeks, I was informed by my village head that there were job vacancies for local villagers as an 'Orangutan Research Assistant' in the forest of Gunung Palung. I was very excited about the prospect of working there. I could finally stop doing the job I loathed so much. So I applied immediately, along with three other members from my community. The following day, I was interviewed by the manager of GPOP and was hired. I immediately ran home to tell my wife the good news.

Four years later, I am still enjoying my work at GPOP. I have gained new skills, and have learned, and continue to learn, many things I never thought possible for a local person from my village. I am now more knowledgeable of the linkage between the rainforest and our daily lives. I have a deeper understanding that they are not just trees and timber but the lungs of the earth, and our future depends on having intact forests. I have worked with many of Dr. Knott's research students, and through my campaigning efforts for the forests, have realized just how powerful education and information can be, not just for myself and my family, but for my community and other communities as a whole. Therefore, I mustered the courage to return to high school, and will receive my high school diploma in early 2013.

My hopes for the future are: that my wife and children are healthy and happy, that we have the luxury to refuse to work as illegal loggers, and to continue to have the capacity to provide information to local communities about the benefit of our forests and wildlife that reside there, especially the orangutan. I understand that as I become older my health may not permit me to be a researcher forever. Therefore, I hope to continue working with Dr. Knott and GPOCP's orangutan conservation efforts in other capacities in the future, and finding new ways to use the wealth of knowledge I've gained while working at Cabang Panti Research Station.

I am aware of how lucky I am to have had this opportunity to work and learn from Dr. Knott, and for that I thank you Ibu Cheryl."

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program
(GPOCP)

Orangutan photographs © [Tim Laman](#)
Tree survey photograph © YIARI
All other photographs GPOCP staff



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