

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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An e-newsletter from your friends in Borneo

Dear Supporters,

Happy Holidays from all of us at GPOCP! The end of the year is a time of warmth, thanks and reflection. We would like to take this opportunity to send our deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported us



throughout not only this year, but all our previous years as well. Without your generous support we could not have accomplished all we have in 2012! It's partners and friends like you who make our work in protecting the magnificent orangutan and its incredible habitat possible. We are excited for the New Year and our many new initiatives, as well as continuing our long-standing efforts in building communities' capacity to conserve their natural resources and developing strong local leadership in conservation throughout the Gunung Palung landscape. We hope you enjoy this year-end issue of our newsletter, which highlights some of GPOCP's contributions to combating the illegal wildlife trade and our involvement with a new national effort in Indonesia to reduce human-orangutan conflict.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday, and all the best

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There's Still Time to Give!

As the year comes to a close, don't miss your chance to still contribute to the protection of the orangutans of Gunung Palung! All of our work is entirely made possible by our wonderful partners and supporters! If you have been planning on donating to a cause all year, please consider GPOCP. Your support will help us to have a strong start to 2013, allowing us to not

for the New Year!

Cheryl Knott, Executive Director

As always, thank you for your support!

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First National Step to Mitigating Human-Orangutan Conflict

On November 29th-30th, 2012, GPOCP's Field Director, Tito Indrawan, and Research Field Director, Dr. Gail Campbell-Smith, participated in a human-orangutan conflict (HOC) mitigation workshop held in Bogor on the island of Java. With the large number of orangutan rescue and translocation efforts that have occurred in the past, and continue to occur with high frequency today, many organizations throughout Indonesia saw the need for a proper monitoring, analysis and evaluation procedure to be established. The main focus of this meeting was to create an Indonesian Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the rescue of orangutans in conflict areas, such as on plantations, in mining concessions, and in communities near forested areas.

Currently, there is no standard technical guidance for rescue of such orangutans. One of the clauses within the Indonesian Orangutan Conservation Action Plan and Strategy 2007 - 2017 (P.53/Menhut-IV/2007) stated that improving the implementation of in situ conservation is the main action that needs to be undertaken in saving the orangutan in its original habitat. The document goes on to further explain that habitat protection within or outside conservation areas should happen through the establishment of a SOP for handling and securing orangutans and their habitat (including rescue, conflict mitigation and community involvement).

This workshop was a great collaborative effort among many different organizations from numerous sectors, which allowed for the expertise of the various entities to be incorporated, resulting in the production of a comprehensive SOP. All conservation organizations in Indonesia working with, or related to, wild animal handling (especially orangutans) participated in this workshop, as well as many government departments and officials, and multiple international conservation organizations. The result of the meeting was a draft of an SOP for orangutan rescue in Indonesia. In the coming months this draft will be further refined before being



Pelasan's rescue after being trapped in a snare for 10 days

only continue our repertoire of successful programs, but will also help us launch new initiatives like our Human-Orangutan Conflict Response Unit!

[**Make A Donation**](#)

Welcome to Our Two Newest Volunteers

Steve Patriarco

Steve Patriarco, a Fulbright scholar, just completed four months of field research with the communities surrounding Gunung Palung National Park. Based out of GPOCP's Environmental Education Center in Sukadana, Steve collected data on the extraction and use of natural resources from Gunung Palung National Park by local people and the impact of GPOCP's alternative livelihoods program on these practices. This timely project will provide GPOCP with vital information on which we will base the development and expansion of our community-based work. Thank you, Steve, for your hard work and important contribution!

Keira McKee

GPOCP would like to say a warm welcome to Keira McKee who will be kindly volunteering her time to assist with GPOCP's website development over the coming months.

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submitted to the Ministry of Forestry, who will then approve it to serve as guidance for all conservation agencies' efforts in orangutan rescue throughout Indonesia.



Juvenile orangutan found by GPOCP's investigation team

GPOCP is proud to have contributed to the development of these first rescue guidelines, and is grateful for the increased amount of attention being given to this important issue. As we are currently in the process of developing a new program on Human-Orangutan Conflict mitigation, this workshop could not have come at a better time. Newly launched in 2012, our Human-Orangutan Conflict (HOC) Response Unit, run in conjunction with our program partner YIARI is still in the early stages. We hope to have the Response Unit fully up and running in 2013, as soon as we have secured all the necessary funds for this initiative. The Response Unit will work to survey and identify HOC hotspots and run community education trainings to teach appropriate methods to avoid and mitigate cases of HOC. The goal of this program is to reduce the number of cases of HOC and subsequent orangutan injury, killing and the need for outside intervention such as translocation. The orangutan rescue SOP, once finalized, will help guide our efforts with this program, and provide us with the opportunity to further support the implementation of these national standards.

Prosecuting Traders of Illegal Wildlife

Helmeted Hornbill Smuggling Cases of 2012

During two separate smuggling attempts in 2012, officers from the West Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Department (BKSDA) took possession of a total of 285 beaks from Helmeted Hornbills (*Buceros/Rhinoplax vigil*) at the Pontianak Supadio Airport in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Authorities found these beaks packed in cardboard boxes on cargo airlines, in route to Jakarta



where they would then leave the country for China. A full investigation is being conducted with close examination of expedition and travel companies, who often assist traders in receiving and transporting wildlife, making up one link in a long line of syndicates involved internationally in the illegal sale and trade of wildlife.

Some of these hornbills came from Gunung Palung National Park and others from the Melawi District. GPOCP played a crucial role in this process by passing information to authorities (BKSDA and SPOCS) in Pontianak on the hornbills that were poached from Gunung Palung National Park. Our work to investigate the illegal killing and sale of orangutans often uncovers information on the illegal trading of other species of endangered wildlife. This information helped lead to the seizure of these hornbill parts, and the arrest of two Chinese citizens who will be prosecuted for illegally buying and selling hornbill beaks. Additionally, GPOCP provided financial support for the prosecution costs.

Although Helmeted Hornbills are protected under Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), they continue to face numerous threats, such as habitat loss and hunting for their meat, feathers and casque (an enlargement on the upper mandible of their bill), which are carved into ornaments. Both the local public and conservation organizations alike revere hornbills, taking great pride in this stunning mascot of our region. Many in West Kalimantan are concerned they may not only lose their mascot, but much of their forests' magnificent diversity if solutions are not found for bringing an end to wildlife trafficking.

Under Indonesian law, hornbills are protected; violators can be charged with up to five years of imprisonment and a fine of 100 million rupiah (about \$10,000). However, demand is quite high for hornbill beaks, and punishment has become more lax in recent years. In the past, hornbill smugglers were arrested and punished as a result of their actions, which served as a strong deterrent for people to not hunt them. As punishments have become less severe and arrests have decreased for such violations, hornbill smuggling has become a common practice for large associations throughout the world, making it difficult to mitigate effectively. In many cases traffickers openly discuss their dealings because they feel safe in knowing that they will not be prosecuted for their offences. It is promising that in this instance the violators were arrested and prosecuted immediately. Hopefully this will set a precedent for a renewed effort in enforcement of these wildlife protection laws, showing violators that their actions will not be tolerated, and action will be taken in order to help safe guard the endemic fauna of West Kalimantan from extinction.



Helmeted Hornbill

In addition to the better enforcement of wildlife protection laws, better habitat monitoring and protection is needed in order to prevent wildlife from being poached in the first place. Before wildlife even reaches an airport there is a series of sales and transfers that take place beforehand, from the village level all the way up to the buyer. A tightening of supervision in the field is also imperative for the protection of wildlife in this region. The head of the West Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Department has promised to help prevent the Pontianak Supadio Airport from being used in the future as a port of transfer for wildlife by increasing personnel, improving supervision and better coordination with Indonesian ports of entry and exit.

GPOCP will also continue working with our network of informants that provide us with information about the illegal animal trade, habitat destruction and related threats to orangutans and other protected wildlife and habitat. We continually use this network, sending our investigators into the field to verify information and collect, report and present information to the relevant local authorities such as the Natural Resource Conservation Department and the Police.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program
(GPOCP)

Orangutan and Helmeted Hornbill photographs © [Tim Laman](#)
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