

# Orangutan TIMES

## Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program

August 2010



### In This Issue

- Page 1 -Inspiring Tomorrow's Conservationists
- Page 2 -Bamboo Training Helps Conserve the Forest  
-TAJAM!
- Page 3 -Saving an Orangutan
- Page 4 -Working with Pampang Harapan Village Leaders
- Page 5 -GPOCP Staff News

### Inspiring Tomorrow's Conservationists

For more than a decade, the Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (GPOCP) has been helping local students understand and appreciate the treasure trove of extraordinary biodiversity found in and around the Gunung Palung National Park in southwestern Borneo, with an eye towards creating an enduring forest conservation ethic among the region's population. Through its environmental education programming—in the classroom and in the field—GPOCP is building long-term, grassroots support for the protection of the endangered orangutan and its threatened forest habitat.

Reaching out to students to connect them to their environment is an effective conservation strategy that will pay critical conservation dividends. Armed with knowledge and passion, students are able to both influence their parents today and lead their communities to a more sustainable future tomorrow.

*Continued on page 4*



### Teaching the Teachers

◀ Exploring the foliage of Gunung Palung National Park in Borneo.



## Sustainable Livelihoods

### Bamboo Training Program Creates New Economic Opportunities for Local Residents – Helping to Conserve the Forest

While GPOCP's conservation awareness and environmental education work is helping communities understand and appreciate the forest and orangutans, major obstacles to effective, long-term conservation still exist. These include illegal logging and the ever-growing influence of big palm oil companies with their ever-expanding plans to convert major areas of biologically rich forest habitat to monoculture plantations.

Protecting forests from logging and oil palm agriculture takes away a potential

source of income for villagers, so creating income-generating alternatives has become an essential conservation strategy in GPOCP's multi-pronged approach to protecting the endangered orangutan.

To date, GPOCP has established a fisherman and farmer's cooperative, is helping create a non-wood forest product artisan community, and maintains a series of displays and workshops at its new Environmental Education Center in Sukadana that promote environmentally-friendly

livelihoods as viable alternatives to the traditional economic activities that cause massive deforestation.

In May, representatives from three area villages spent a week learning how to build furniture and other products from bamboo. A follow-up meeting in June resulted in the participants forming an association of bamboo artisans, which plans to work together between the three villages to promote their products in local markets. ∞

## TAJAM! Student Conservationist Club

Following a successful Earth Day celebration, GPOCP's Ketapang-area student conservationist organization "TAJAM" organized a field trip in Pampang Harapan in June. Staying at the Environmental Education Center, students spent three days exploring the nearby areas of the Gunung Palung National Park.

Although the forest in this section of the park has been significantly degraded, encounters with gibbons, bearded pigs, and hornbills are still common, and contrasts between degraded areas and the remaining healthy forest serve as a powerful example of the need for forest conservation.



# Saving an Orangutan

GPOCP's Animal and Habitat Protection team serves as the wildlife conservation "eyes and ears" of the Ketapang and Kayong Utara regencies.

For the past eight years, GPOCP has been working closely with the West Kalimantan Conservation Department and local NGOs to develop stronger enforcement of wildlife protections in the region, particularly related to the capture or killing of wild orangutans. GPOCP successfully persuaded the Conservation Department to begin confiscating illegally held orangutans, and has continued to exert pressure on the government to take the next important step—holding people legally responsible for violating wildlife protection laws.

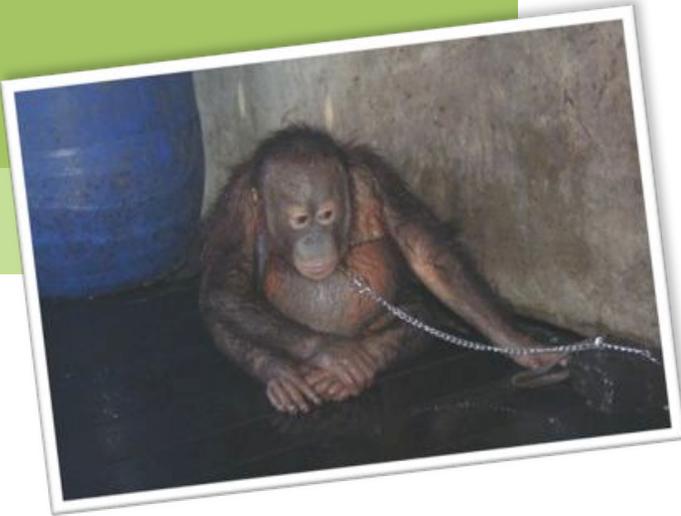
In June, together with a coalition of West Kalimantan and international NGOs, GPOCP convinced the Ministry of Forestry's Rapid Response Unit (SPORC) to act on behalf of an illegally held orangutan. GPOCP staff participated in the successful action, which stopped the sale of an orangutan from the Kapuas Hulu region.

GPOCP will continue to follow this case, which may be the first time someone is successfully charged

with selling of an orangutan in West Kalimantan. This case reflects the success of GPOCP's long-term strategy to work together with other organizations to build and enduring commitment in local government institutions to protect the endangered orangutan and its forest habitat. ~

Orangutans are vulnerable to capture by individuals, who kill the mothers in order to capture and sell baby orangutans. Through field investigations and an extensive network, GPOCP gathers information and evidence on keepers and traders of orangutans and other endangered wildlife, and assists local authorities in confiscating these animals. This work has helped dozens of orangutans, gibbons, monkeys, birds, and other wildlife find their way back to the forest or to better environments such as rehabilitation centers.

GPOCP also supports national park authorities in the monitoring of illegal logging, sponsoring trainings (e.g., GIS technology to track illegal logging within the park), and other capacity-building activities. ~



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To ensure our environmental education programming reaches all corners of the vast bioregion in which we work (which includes more than 400 schools), GPOCP has implemented a hands-on *teach the teachers program*, which builds professional capacity directly within schools. This allows teachers to integrate environmental education into *their curriculum every day and across a wide variety of educational activities*.

In December of 2009, GPOCP held a special two-day teacher training for middle school educators from the western and southern buffer zones of Gunung Palung National Park. It was the first training we coordinated directly with the new education department of Kayong Utara, and the very first formal training held at our new Environmental Education Center.

Participating teachers shared the challenges they face in educating their students in rural areas: large

classes, limited access to technology, and uncertainty about the availability of even the most basic of supplies, such as electricity. GPOCP staff helped them discover, however, a world of science and wonder right at their doorstep—an exceptional rainforest with incredible biodiversity that offers endless educational opportunities. A unique outdoor classroom, indeed!

GPOCP's staff guided teachers into the National Park for a day of hands-on instruction using the forest habitat as their medium. They explored how, with basic supplies, they could teach students about biodiversity and the relationship between the natural habitat and local populations. Plants and animals, soil and water emerged as simple tools for helping students understand the region's complex ecosystem and their personal role in protecting it. Teachers completed their training with a renewed commitment to integrate



environmental education into their daily lessons. And from their collective enthusiasm sprang exciting new ideas for their students and colleagues, and for staff of the department of education.

Through its environmental education programming, GPOCP aspires to make conservation an *up close and personal experience* for as many people as possible in order to ensure a permanent home for the orangutans of southwest Borneo. Because, in the end, we know people will conserve only what they love, will love only what they understand, and will understand only what they are taught. ~

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## Working with Pampang Harapan Village Leaders

Pampang Harapan is known as one of the more problematic villages bordering the National Park. Long before the construction of its Environmental Education Center, GPOCP had been working to develop a stronger sense of conservation awareness among the village leadership, and find common ground between the village and the National Park in order to build a more sustainable future. This work is paying off. In May,

the village leadership asked GPOCP to help develop local regulations to protect their natural resources. Realizing that the forest in the National Park provides Pampang Harapan with a valuable source of clean water, the village government is now trying to make sure that the water is properly protected and managed in a way that benefits the community as a whole—good news for people and wildlife.





**Mission:**

The Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program's mission is to develop a human community that is aware and motivated to conserve and protect the orangutans, its habitat, and biodiversity within the forest.



Many thanks to our kind & generous supporters!

Visit our website at [www.SaveGPorangutans.org](http://www.SaveGPorangutans.org) to learn more about ways you can help protect the endangered orangutan.

Newsletter prepared by:  
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Please forward this newsletter to your friends. To subscribe, send an email to [hollisgpcp@gmail.com](mailto:hollisgpcp@gmail.com)

## GPOCP Staff News

Our Animal and Habitat Protection Manager, **Tito Indrawan**, participated in the national planning meeting of the Indonesian Orangutan Forum (Forina), formed to implement the National Orangutan Action Plan. GPOCP continues to be active in building a provincial forum to implement the plan in West Kalimantan; staff attended an international orangutan congress in Bali in July.



As part of our efforts to increase our influence in local government institutions, **Edi Rahman**, who has worked with GPOCP for more than five years, spent two weeks with the Wildlife Conservation Society in Bogor to learn about tactics to build conservation commitment in local governments. While there, he also met with several other conservation NGOs and exchanged information on wildlife crimes investigations and efforts to enforce wildlife protections across Indonesia.



**Ranti Nauri** first became involved with GPOCP as a high school student in Ketapang, where she was born and raised. Upon graduating, she joined our environmental education team, where she has been a dynamic conservation mentor to younger children. Ranti spent the month of May with the esteemed NGO SATUNAMA in Yogyakarta, learning about their work with community radio, organic agriculture, mobile libraries, and other grassroots education work. She also attended trainings in program management and leadership skills, in preparation for her promotion to GPOCP Field Officer in May.

Our office keeper and night watchman **Samad** grew up in poverty in Kayong Utara. His first experiences in the forest were hunting wild game with his father, and he briefly worked for a palm oil company before coming to GPOCP. Although his duties are mainly logistical, Samad has shown a keen interest in the environment, jumping at the chance to help with field trips and go birdwatching, and often uses his musical skills to provide accompaniment for our puppet shows. Because Samad never had a chance to finish his high school education, GPOCP decided in 2008 to sponsor his studies to complete his GED. Over the past two years, staff have volunteered their time to periodically take over some of Samad's duties so he was able to attend classes and exams. In June, Samad took his final exams, and we congratulate him on all of his hard work!

**Interested in supporting our work with a tax deductible gift?**

***Donate by Check:***

Checks should be made payable to Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program and mailed to: PO Box 2250, Brattleboro, VT 05303. Please include your name and mailing address so we can properly acknowledge your gift.

***Donate by Credit Card:***

Visit our website at [www.SaveGPorangutans.org](http://www.SaveGPorangutans.org), which will take you to a secure PayPal page.

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