

Orangutan **TIMES**

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program

Fall 2011



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Sustainable Livelihoods: The Road to Self-Sufficiency

Combating deforestation through sustainable enterprise

Many communities in Borneo understand the environmental dangers of deforestation. They experience first-hand the flooding, increased temperatures, and other disruptions to their traditional lives as the forests they depend on are converted by oil palm, illegal logging, mining and related activities. However, at the same time they face the same financial pressures as anyone else, and are often at a loss as to how to support their families without opting for the short-term but quick profit models based around deforestation. For many years, GPOCP has been working with these communities to develop alternative economic activities, which can provide for local needs in a sustainable manner. One of our more successful projects has been the Nur Baharin Fisher and Farmer Cooperative in Riam Berasap Jaya. Since 2007, the cooperative provides capital for its members to engage in sustainable enterprise, and has steadily grown independent of outside financial assistance. While GPOCP has provided technical expertise, the cooperative is now largely self-sufficient and received an award as the best-run local financial institution by the Kayong Utara government in 2010.

Over the next year we will keep working with villagers to create more independent economic associations, not only building local capacity for livelihoods with minimal environmental impact, but also empowering our local partners to have more influence in creating conservation-friendly development processes.



Economies and Eco Tourism

Talking With Conservationist Pak Yudo Sudarto

“The only tourism that makes sense here is eco-tourism, which makes conservation so important...”



Pak Yudo Sudarto is the head of the Ketapang government’s Department of Tourism, Information, Culture and Sports and in his spare time leads the Ketapang Birdwatchers Club. As one of Ketapang’s most prominent conservationists, he has worked closely with GPOCP since the early days of our organization and we are proud to have him on our Indonesia Governing Board.

Born and raised in Ketapang, Pak began his career in the civil service in the Department of Agriculture in 1977. Early on he began to recognize the importance of protecting the environment, with local forests playing a key role in water management for local agriculture. During the so-called Green Revolution, which aimed to increase agriculture productivity in the Third World, other officials were unconcerned with environmental impacts. Pak Yudo, however, was already voicing concern that pesticide-heavy approaches were creating environmental problems and countering their advantages. Later, when Pak Yudo was put in charge of promoting tourism forest

conservation became his top concern. According to Pak Yudo, Ketapang, like the rest of Borneo, is known for its forests. “The only tourism that makes sense here is eco-tourism, which makes conservation so important. Tourism here won’t become as big as Bali anytime soon – it took them 100 years to develop a tourism industry. However, eco-tourism at least will provide a long-term source of income.”

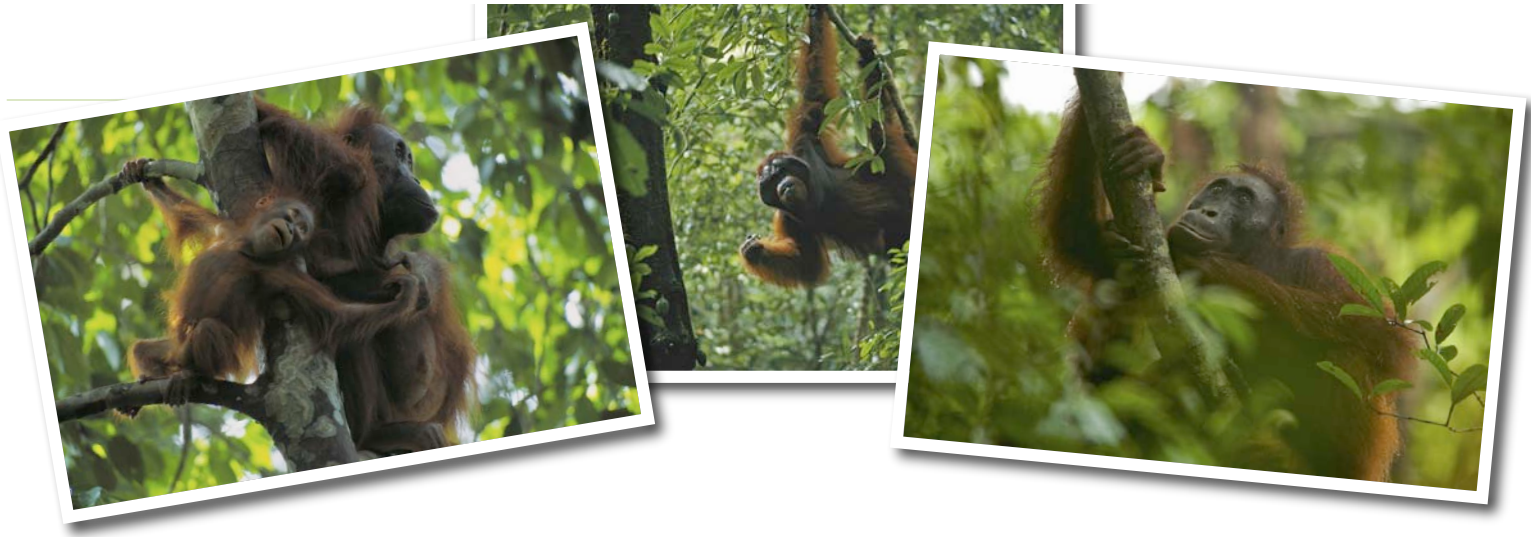
Products like timber or oil are limited, so once depleted the industry is dead. If done right, eco-tourism can provide industry that can last with relatively small investments needed. We just need to keep identifying areas that have eco-tourism potential, and make sure they are protected.

Pak Yudo has also been looking at ways to promote forest conservation via the promotion of non-timber forest products. Growing up, most of his toys came from the forest – children would use local seeds as marbles and make kites from tall grasses. He has been working to promote local handicrafts as potential souvenirs for tourists, but also sees the importance of a local market for products such as handicrafts and snacks. These have traditionally been made with forest products, making it important for local communities to feel the benefits of forest conservation.

“Some forest products seem only accessible to the wealthy – things like

carbon credit or expensive bottled water with fancy marketing. But most of the products are things that the people of Ketapang have always enjoyed; products that were much more common years ago. The goal is to keep these products available for future generations.” Pak Yudo attributes his work ethic to having five children – “maybe if I only had two children I would be more inclined to take it easy” he jokes. His open manner is not just because his official portfolio includes communication, but because “everyone has their own special knowledge, and everyone has something to teach me – communication is all about improving ourselves by sharing our knowledge with each other.” Although the challenges facing Ketapang’s forests are big, Pak Yudo is not intimidated. “I’m optimistic about our future and our ability to save the forest. It’s just my mindset. I’m a civil servant after all; we have to be positive about the future for the sake of our people.”





Working with Local Authorities

Making Local Conservation a Top Priority

As the only organization based in West Kalimantan that is solely dedicated to orangutan conservation, GPOCP/Yayasan Palung plays an important role in coordinating species conservation efforts with stakeholders across Indonesia and abroad. In September we took the lead in organizing an orangutan conservation planning meeting with the conservation department (BKSDA). Bringing together government officials, NGOs, academics and the private sector, over two days we discussed the progress and difficulties in implementing the national 2007-2017

Orangutan Action Plan in West Kalimantan, and identified priority tasks for collaboration over the coming year. We are nearing the end of a five year Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate on orangutan species protections with the West Kalimantan Conservation Department, Ketapang government and other local stakeholders which has resulted in Ketapang leading the province in animal confiscations and laid the groundwork for the first successful prosecution of a wild orangutan trader in Indonesia last year. We are currently in discussions with the conservation department to

create a new agreement with our partners at International Animal Rescue, to develop an orangutan rescue team which will improve law enforcement efforts while dealing with animals being displaced by palm oil or taken in the illegal pet trade. We are also leading an effort of Ketapang NGOs to create a conservation secretariat in the regency government, bringing together key departments and civil society to review relevant government programs for their impact on orangutan habitat and other local conservation priorities.

In Memoriam Pak Yan

GPOCP would like to express condolences to the family and friends of GPOCP Board Member, Pak Yan. Pak was a man dedicated to his culture and the environment. His contributions to GPOCP will never be forgotten.



Sustainable Farming



Pampang Harapan is a challenging community to work in – with few trees remaining inside the village itself, residents often feel obliged to encroach upon the national park for farming and timber needs. Political divisions within the community itself, and a distrust of outside programs after what is perceived as a period of neglect by local development programs, make our work there even more challenging.

People in the area traditionally practice slash-and-burn agriculture, and in Pampang Harapan this usually takes the form of a family going into the national park, clearing a small patch of land and burning the brush to fertilize the soil before planting basic vegetables. Due to the distance

Environmental Education Working with Villagers and Farming the Land

between their houses and these plots, the crops will be neglected for most of the ensuing months, with at the most an occasional check-up before harvest time. The harvests are relatively small, as there is not a regular human presence to guard against animals, disease and poor weather. The soil inside the village of Pampang Harapan is not particularly fertile, and has become worse as flooding increases with deforestation. However, we have been using the GPOCP Environmental Education Center as a living learning center for the villagers, exploring together with them what methods can be used to successfully grow basic foodstuffs on their own land. While not all crops have been successful, we have been able to grow chili peppers, yams, bitter melon, eggplant and several varieties of green leafy vegetables using all organic methods.



At a recent evaluation with Pampang villagers, we were pleased to see how this work has motivated 15% of our initial target community to farm on their own land rather than inside the national park, and found that the new methods we developed produced larger-sized vegetables.

We are continuing to work with them on how to grow other basic crops, such as shallots and garlic, which are not well suited to local conditions.



Many Thanks to Our Recent Funders & Donors

Recent Funders: Arcus Foundation • AZA • Leakey Foundation (Research) • Tides Foundation • Woodland Park Zoo



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 orangutan, its habitat, and biodiversity within the forest.



Visit our website at www.SaveGPorangutans.org to learn more about ways you can help protect the endangered orangutan

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Please forward this newsletter to your friends. To subscribe, send an email to Jen Zolkos usgpocp@gmail.com



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Support our Mission!

Year-End Giving to Create Change

Another year has come and gone. We hope that you will commit your support to the Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program working to help save Orangutans of Borneo while promoting conservation and sustainable practices for future generations.

There is so much talk about change in the world. People realize that some of the changes we have seen have been detrimental to our environment. Some have created a movement of awareness and action to prevent future devastation. GPOCP has created local changes that have a global impact. We will continue to work with local villagers and governments to promote sustainable living practices, which will in turn create conservation awareness and ultimately protection for the Orangutans of Borneo.



ORANGUTANS NEED YOU!

Interested in supporting our work with a tax-deductible year-end gift?

Donate by Check:

Checks should be made payable to Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program and mailed to: PO Box 15680, Boston, MA 02215. Include your name and mailing address so we can acknowledge your gift.

Donate by Credit Card:

Visit our website at www.SaveGPorangutans.org, which will take you to a secure PayPal page.

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U.S. Federal Tax ID Number:
26-1380932