

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in West Borneo

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As June comes to a close, I'm gearing up to head out to Indonesia for July and August. I can't wait to visit our projects and staff in the field and experience the rainforest again first-hand. I'm especially excited to see all of the new orangutan babies that have been born this past year! Also, I can hardly wait to meet up with former colleagues at our conference celebrating 30 years of research and conservation in Gunung Palung.

Earlier this month, three of our conservation staff got to participate in a field course at the Cabang Panti Research Station, as related in this month's first article by our Conservation Awareness Media Officer,

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Petrus Kanisius. I want to give a big 'thank you' to Dr. Andrew Marshall, Dr. Campbell Webb and the BTN office and staff, including Pak Endro Setiawan, for making this possible.

Our second article, by Research Director, Wahyu Susanto, highlights how we collaborate with the Indonesian government, and other orangutan conservation organizations, to pool our resources and knowledge together to better protect orangutans across Borneo.

Finally, please check out our 2014 Annual Report and read about all that we accomplished this past year! We're so grateful to all of you for making this work possible.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, Executive Director

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

A Taste of Life at Cabang Panti Research Station

By Petrus Kanisius, GPOCP Conservation Awareness Media Officer

"Unimaginable," maybe that's the right word for this experience. Truthfully, I couldn't have imagined I'd have the opportunity to see the array of biodiversity and the beautiful charm of the rainforest in Gunung Palung National Park, but I was able to spend June 2nd-June 10th there earlier this month. At the very least, it was an unforgettable and rare experience to study the spectacular plants and animals. But I should rewind: before it began, my friends and I had to make the long journey into the National Park. Twelve people were invited to attend. With the last of our energy, we finally arrived at about 3:00 pm on June 2nd, after the 8 hour hike into the rainforest. Fatigued and a bit weak, we were happy to now be deep in the National Park, or more accurately, at the Cabang Panti Research Station. We were there to attend a field course, hosted by the National Park office and Dr. Andrew Marshall, of the University of Michigan and the Director of the Red Leaf Monkey and Gibbon research project at Cabang Panti.

Our 2014 Annual Report

GPOCP's 2014 Annual Report is live, with a brand new look, but the same great content. Read the report [here](#) to learn about all that we accomplished through our conservation and research programs last year, and to see some beautiful photographs from Gunung Palung!

Coming in August:
GP30+

Registration for our GP30+ Conference, to be held in Sukadana, West Kalimantan, in August, is now live! If you've ever done research in Cabang Panti or worked with us in the Gunung Palung landscape, this is a great chance to reunite with old friends and make new connections. More



A small pitcher plant, known locally as "kantong semar." These carnivorous plants are one of Gunung Palung's many treasures.

"Lucky," maybe that's the perfect word to describe it. We were lucky to be here, because not everyone gets an opportunity like this one. We were in the core zone of Gunung Palung National Park, which can only be accessed with special permission from the Park authorities. And we felt lucky, because an experience like this only comes along once in a while. The Cabang Panti Research Station, which was built in 1984, stands on 2,100 hectares of primary rainforest that includes many of the seven ecosystem types found in the Park. These include peat swamp forest, freshwater swamp forest, alluvial forest, and montane forest. The array of ecosystems here provide a good opportunity for researchers to compare the behavior, characteristics, and species of animals and plants found in the various types of forest. And because these ecosystems are all in such close proximity to each other, there is little to no variation in rainfall, seasonality, and latitude.

Over the nine days of the field course, we participated in activities such as animal observation and plant identification. We learned how to distinguish between different types of leaves based on their shape and other features, which was pretty complicated because we had to remember the Latin names of all the species! For example, in the family Dipterocarpaceae (the Dipterocarps), the seeds of the trees have wings that enable them to float easily to the ground. We learned to identify many other plant families, including Fabaceae, Myrtales, and Sapindelis, and the best technique to highlight leaf characteristics when taking digital photos, so we could identify unknown species later if necessary.

information, as well as the link to the registration page, is available [here](#).

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Forward to a Friend

"Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man."

-Stewart Udall -



Field course participants, led by Dr. Cam Webb (green shirt), learn how to identify rainforest trees and plants.

We also learned how to survey animals in the rainforest, to find animal trails as well as to carry out more formal surveys where we searched along a transect and recorded animal behavior. We saw gibbons, red leaf monkeys, and many birds, but unfortunately we didn't meet any orangutans in Cabang Panti. Maybe this is because we're at a low point in the fruit season, so orangutans need to conserve energy and are less likely to travel very far. Aside from the surveys, we learned from both presentations and practical (hands-on) field activities about rainforest ecology, the ecology of various forest vertebrates (birds, reptiles, fish), and the rainforest soundscape. Finally, we also hiked all the way to the top of Gunung Paung. With a height of 900 meters above sea level, this was not an easy journey!



This tree tag, which reads "GP90," marks the top of Mt. Palung. The hike from base camp to here is about 4.5 kilometers, and much of the path is very steep. Reaching this point is a true accomplishment!

During the last two days of the field course (June 8-9), we did our own research pilot projects. There were 12 of us in the field course, and we were split into four groups. My group compared the abundance of trees with stilt roots in ecosystems close to and further away from the river. Another group researched forest fungi and found more mushrooms at higher altitudes than in the lowlands. The other two groups studied various species of Dipterocarp trees to understand their relationship to the ecosystem. Then, we had to analyze and present our data to the other groups. We learned lots of interesting things and got great advice from Dr. Marshall and Dr. Cam Webb. Endro Setiawan, a botanist and the research manager from the National Park office, also assisted with the field course. In total, 12 of us from five different organizations attended the course. Aside from being an excellent learning experience, the course also helped us network with new colleagues working for conservation in the Gunung Palung landscape. The last day came all too quickly, and I hope that someday soon I have a chance to go back to Cabang Panti.

GPOCP Participates in West Kalimantan's Orangutan Regional Meeting

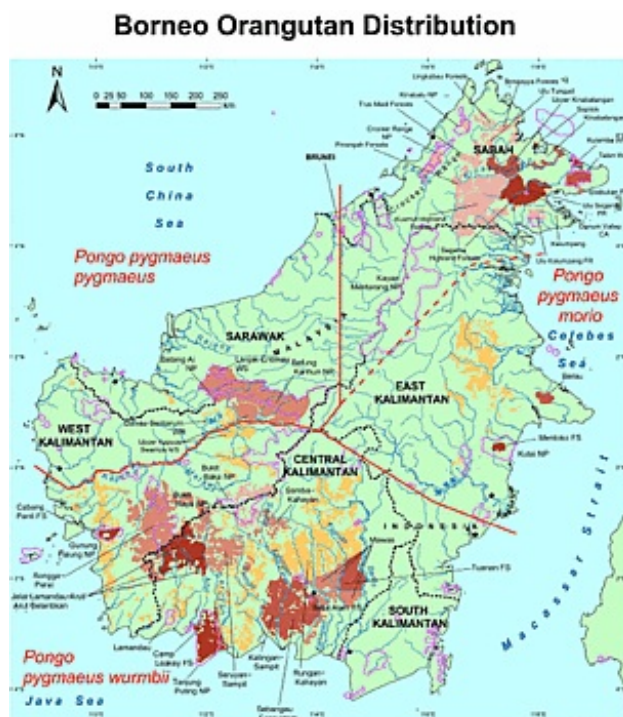
By Wahyu Susanto, Research Director

As one of the longest-running orangutan conservation organizations in West Kalimantan, GPOCP is often invited to government and private-

led meetings and workshops intended to help strengthen conservation action. This month our Research Director, Wahyu Susanto, attended the Orangutan Regional Meeting in the provincial capital of Pontianak. This is a routine part of Indonesia's 10-year Orangutan Action Plan, which was initiated in 2007.

In preparation for the Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) meeting later this year, the West Kalimantan Department of Natural Resources Conservation (BKSDA), in collaboration with FORINA (the Indonesian Orangutan Forum) and WWF-Indonesia, held the province's Orangutan Regional Meeting on the 15th-16th of this month. There were representatives from a variety of conservation groups in attendance, including the relevant local government agencies, NGOs, and private companies (i.e. oil palm and pulpwood plantations) that own large swaths of land in West Kalimantan.

The purpose of this meeting was to compile and examine the data on population estimates, habitat distribution, threats, and habitat and population viability of both orangutan subspecies in West Kalimantan (*Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus* and *Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*). Aside from that, we also evaluated the implementation of conservation strategies and action plans for orangutan conservation in West Kalimantan. All of the relevant stakeholders from across West Kalimantan were in attendance, which is a rare occasion. We also took advantage of this opportunity to synergize our work plans, to maximize our collective impact on orangutan conservation.



Distribution of the three subspecies of orangutans across Borneo. West Kalimantan is home to two subspecies, Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii and P. p. pygmaeus. Map from Ancrenaz & Lackman-Ancrenaz (2004), and Meijaard & Dennis (2003).

On the first day, the participants were divided into two groups based on the subspecies present in their region. The orangutans in the Gunung Palung landscape are of the Southern/Central subspecies, *Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*. West Kalimantan also has a population of the Northwest Bornean orangutan, *Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus*, which can mainly be found in the region bordering Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo). At the plenary session, the two groups were asked to provide current information on orangutan conservation in their working area, such as the population size, critical habitats, threats to orangutans and their habitat, and to highlight good strategies for orangutan and rainforest conservation in their project areas.

The second day focused on a number of presentations about efforts to safe-guard orangutans in protected areas, districts, and regions across West Kalimantan by the NGOs and private companies that are involved in conservation work. From the ten or so NGOs in attendance, only GPOCP and WWF were asked to give a presentation. The meeting's participants were quite excited about GPOCP's activities because our approach, which includes research, conservation awareness campaigns, community development, alternative livelihoods, environmental education and the Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarship is unique among the orangutan conservation NGOs in West Kalimantan. We received very positive feedback from the other organizations in attendance.



GPOCP Research Director, Wahyu Susanto, gives a presentation on our research and conservation efforts in the Gunung Palung landscape at West Kalimantan's Orangutan Regional Meeting.

The Orangutan Regional Meeting represents an important effort to know the status of orangutans in West Kalimantan. The results of this meeting, including updated information on the distribution, population

size, threats, and conservation efforts, both in-situ and ex-situ, will be submitted to the Government of Indonesia. These data, in addition to the information gathered at the other regional meetings across Kalimantan and Sumatra, will become the baseline data that will be used by the government to renew Indonesia's National Strategy and Action Plan for the conservation of orangutans, which is up for renewal in 2017. GPOCP's work in Ketapang and Kayong Utara regencies, along with the efforts of the dozens of other organizations across Indonesia working to protect orangutans, is integral to ensuring a future for these amazing great apes, and we are happy to collaborate with the Indonesian government to promote their conservation.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (GPOCP)

<http://saveGPorangutans.org>

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