

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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An e-newsletter from your friends in West Kalimantan

Dear Friends and Supporters,

With spring upon us (not that "spring" really applies to the tropical rainforests of Indonesia) we have been able to spend quite a bit of time in the field. Our first article is about a field trip to the Lubuk Baji forest camp, hosted by GPOCP and the National Park. We were able to bring together GPOCP and National Park staff with government officials from multiple agencies to enjoy the forest together while strategizing about park protection.

Our second story is about members of our conservation staff visiting Cabang Panti Research Station. Our fellow research partners, Dr. Andrew Marshall and the National Park, hosted a field course for participants to learn about the flora and fauna of Gunung Palung National Park. While we have been quite busy this month, everyone was happy to experience the great outdoors!

Don't forget to check out the sidebar. We are excited to announce that we received a new grant that will help us fight climate change! Also, March 6th was International Women's Day. Our projects would not be successful without the strength and dedication of the females on our

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team and I would like to recognize them for all of their hard work.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director

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

Out of Office: Field Trip to Lubuk Baji

By Petrus Kanisius, GPOCP Communications Officer

In late March, GPOCP and the Gunung Palung National Park staff (BTN) hosted a field trip to Lubuk Baji, a rainforest camp in Gunung Palung National Park, originally built by GPOCP. But this was not an ordinary field trip, there were no students joining us. The purpose of this field trip was to develop synergy between the organizations working to conserve GPNP by actually going to the area we are working to conserve. For three days, members from GPOCP, BTN, the local police, the spatial planning office (BAPPEDA) and the Natural Resources Conservation (BKSDA) team hiked, camped and enjoyed the beauty of the outdoors together.

The activity started with the group having a rendezvous at a friend's house in the village of Sedahan, where we all ate lunch together. Soon after, we began the hike to the camp site. The look on everyone's faces showed the struggle to hike this mountain, as it is literally straight up for two hours. As some participants noted, you can tell who works in an office and who spends a lot of time in the forest. Hehehe....

GPOCP to Fight Climate Change

The Indonesia Climate Change Trust Fund (ICCTF) recently awarded GPOCP with a grant from USAID funds to combat climate change here in West Kalimantan. We will work in our *Hutan Desa* villages and collaborate with communities to develop sustainable practices and conserve valuable peat land.



*Gunung Palung orangutan.
Photo © Tim Laman*

International Women's Day

On March 6th the world celebrated International Women's Day. Here at GPOCP we want to recognize the strong and independent women who make our project such a success. Each of these women has a passion for conservation and raising awareness about the importance of orangutans and rainforests and we want to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Dr. Cheryl Knott,
Executive Director

Terri Breden,



Environmental Education Manager, Mariamah Achmad, making the climb to the camp at Lubuk Baji.

Once everyone arrived at camp, the tiredness was washed away by the sheer beauty of the forest. A group of hornbills greeted us upon arrival, and not long after a few gibbons began communicating with calls through the forest. Not far from the campsite is the Lubuk Baji waterfall. Many participants stopped for a quick swim and to collect some fresh cool water to quench their thirst as a treat for completing the hike.

The following morning we awoke to the sounds of the forest and had a wonderful breakfast of rice, vegetables and fish. Soon after eating, we were prepared for the days' activities. We started with a presentation from Pak Bambang of BTN about the history of GPNP, their principles for area management: protection, preservation and utilization, and their plans for Lubuk Baji as an ecotourism destination. Next up was Terri Breeden, the Program Director for GPOCP. She discussed each of the programs implemented by GPOCP, how each has had a positive impact on the local communities and our plans to continue our activities throughout the next few years. Following Terri, Mas Wahyu Susanto, the Research Director for GPOCP at Cabang Panti gave a presentation. He described the eight habitats found throughout GPNP and the research going on at Cabang Panti involving not only orangutans but the biodiversity of trees, plants and other wildlife as well.

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"The greatest

*danger to our future
is apathy"*

-Jane Goodall-



Field trip participants stopping at the Lubuk Baji waterfall for a refreshing dip before reaching camp.

The protection of this environment is a shared responsibility between the government agencies, the private sector and NGOs working in the area. In order to have maximum efficiency it is imperative that all organizations work together to complement and support each other. It was agreed to create a more synergistic relationship between all parties in attendance, nothing like a few days camping together to make that work! The afternoon was spent discussing joint activities that we can work on together. A member of our advisory board, Pak Yohanes Terang was also able to join. He is a well-known community leader, activist and author. While listening to our discussions, he was inspired to write a beautiful and motivational poem that he shared with the group.



Research Director, Wahyu Susanto, giving a presentation about the research activities happening at Cabang Panti

On the last day, we began with an early hike up to Batu Bulan (or moon rock). I will say it was hard to motivate over 15 people to be up and ready at 5 AM... so we did not quite make the early sunrise, but we still had a magnificent view when we finally did arrive.

This field trip, along with the presentations and discussions in the forest, gave all parties who work to protect GPNP the opportunity to actually spend some quality time together and enjoy the beauty that GPNP has to offer. Many of our days are spent working in the office and with local village communities, so it was a real treat to bring the office to the forest this time!



The group together in front of the Lubuk Baji camp before the hike down.

Staff Visit Cabang Panti for Field Course

By Hajeral, GPOCP Environmental Education Assistant Field Officer

This month, three members of the GPOCP team were able to participate in a field course hosted by Dr. Andrew Marshall, from the University of Michigan, and the National Park staff at the Cabang Panti Research Station, in the heart of Gunung Palung National Park (GPNP). This course was offered to local organizations including National Park staff (BTN), the Natural Resources Conservation Center, known locally as BKSDA, and GPOCP. There were a total of 14 participants who spent 10 days learning about the flora and fauna of the area. GPOCP staff included Mariah Achmad,

Environmental Education Manager, Sy. Abdul Samad, Sustainable Livelihoods Field Officer and Hajaeral, Environmental Education Assistant Field Officer.

Mas Endro Setiawan, the head of research at Cabang Panti from BTN, led the course with the aim to build synergy and expand the capacity of conservationists in GPNP. It is the role of the National Park staff to maintain and preserve the GPNP region, but it is relevant for all stakeholders to understand the existing biodiversity the region has to offer.



Mas Endro Setiawan giving a presentation about the plethora of flora and fauna the participants will encounter while at Cabang Panti.

As you may recall from previous articles, Gunung Palung National Park encompasses 108,000 hectares in the districts of Ketapang and Kayong Utara, West Kalimantan. This beautiful area encompasses eight distinct types of habitat, which includes one of the last stands of primary lowland forest in the Indonesia! GPNP and the surrounding area are home to one of the largest remaining populations of wild orangutans, a critically endangered species. This area also safeguards many other endangered animals including eight species of hornbill, the Malayan sunbear and the pangolin.

During the course, participants were introduced to the tropical rainforest, biodiversity of GPNP, plant and animal ecology, photography, animal footprint identification and the camera trap project, among other topics. They also gained field practice in plant identification, animal surveys, camera trap mounting and vertebrate censusing.



Participants in the field course learn how to properly set up camera traps.

The camera trap project, run by Dr. Andrew Marshall, was a real highlight for the field course participants to learn about. These cameras allow the team to document animals of the rainforest that would otherwise go unseen, as they are difficult to detect by humans walking census routes. These cameras provide a rare glimpse into the private lives of these secretive animals. Currently, this project has 28 cameras deployed at 14 locations spread throughout the eight different habitats. These cameras have captured the activities of orangutans, red leaf monkeys, gibbons, squirrels, hornbills and many others. The aim is to better document the diversity of Cabang Panti and look at whether primates are using the ground. Research manager, Beth Barrow, stated that the participants were really lucky. In the short period that they were there, the team was able to capture a bearded pig, common palm civet and a long tailed porcupine!



The participants heading out for an animal census on one of the transects near Cabang Panti.

Another highlight of the field course was the animal census survey. For three days, the participants

divided up into several groups and walked the transect areas and documented their findings. The knowledge gained from animal footprint identification section of the course helped the groups as they were more aware of what to look for. Overall, the course was a great success. All parties learned valuable information and field data collection techniques.



All of the field course participants together before they made the long hike back to town.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (GPOCP)

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