

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



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Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in West Kalimantan

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to another edition of *Code RED*. As I get ready to head to Indonesia, our conservation and research staff have been hard at work before the Idul Fitri holiday. This month we bring you an update on the Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarship program. As of this year, we have given out 25 scholarships to deserving students from Ketapang and Kayong Utara! The BOCS program is funded by our partners at Orang Utan Republik Foundation. If you are interested in donating to this extremely worthy cause, we urge you to contact Dr. Gary Shapiro through the [OURF Facebook page](#).

Our second article is about the #RainforestLive event held on June 8th. This event brought the happenings of the forest right to your phone, laptop or other device. We had lots of interesting animals make an appearance for the event and thought we would share some of the stories behind the photos and videos. Be sure to check out our video of all our encounters for the day!

On our sidebar you will find information about how we celebrated the month of Ramadan here in Indonesia and how shopping from home can

In This Issue:

2017 Bornean Orangutan
Caring Scholarship
Recipients

-

#RainforestLive
at Cabang Panti

-

Happy Idul Fitri

-

Amazon Smile

help our conservation goals.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director

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

2017 Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarship Recipients

By Terri Breeden, GPOCP Program Director

This year, with the support of the Orang Utan Republik Foundation, GPOCP was able to provide six new scholarships through our Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarship (BOCS) program. This scholarship program aims to develop a generation of local, university-trained young adults that are highly committed to the protection of orangutans and their rainforest habitat in West Kalimantan. These deserving students are receiving an opportunity to attend college who may otherwise not be able to attend due to financial reasons. This program also serves to provide additional conservation and capacity building workshops, as well as moral support, to help these students succeed at the university level and to become conservation leaders.

In May, Dr. Gary Shapiro, the president of the Orang Utan Republik Foundation, made a visit to Ketapang, West Kalimantan. Dr. Shapiro has been running this scholarship program for many years and in 2012 he brought the program to GPOCP. This trip he was able to meet the new BOCS student recipients and follow-up with some of our recent graduates. Since its inception in West Kalimantan, together we have helped support a total of 25 BOCS students to attend university at Tanjungpura University in Pontianak, the capital of West Kalimantan.

Happy Idul Fitri

We would like to wish all of our supporters in Indonesia and abroad who will celebrate the upcoming Islamic holiday a wonderful Idul Fitri. Because Islam, and religion in general, is such an important part of life in Indonesia, this month we broke fast with many of our partners and discussed the theme of religion and conservation. This was an informative and rewarding way to mark the holy month of Ramadan, and we thank all of our local partners who participated.



Amazon Smile

Do you shop on Amazon? How would you like to help GPOCP and our conservation efforts while shopping from home? Sign up for [Amazon Smile](#) and pick Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program and a portion of every purchase you make will go towards our conservation activities.



Dr. Gary Shapiro (center) and Terri Breeden (left) with the 2017 BOCS recipients.

Three of our students have recently graduated. From our first class, we have Risa Aprillia. She aspires to become a teacher and is currently working as a teaching assistant in an elementary school teacher education program. Risa is an advocate for orangutans and conservation and has created an Orangutan Monopoly game to teach youth about conservation. Our second graduate is Rinta Islami. Rinta studied Forestry and is currently conducting an internship at Cabang Panti Research Station in Gunung Palung National Park as a botany assistant. Our third graduate, from the 2013 recipients, is Hendri Gunawan. He studied law and how it relates to orangutans and conservation efforts throughout Indonesia. Hendri recently signed a contract with GPOCP and will begin working with our Environmental Education team in July. Welcome to the team Hendri!

Congratulations to each of our newest BOCS recipients: Ratiah, Rafikah, Siti Nurbaiti, Mita Anggraini, Hanna Adelia Runtu and Ilham Pratama.

Ratiah is from Penjajaan, Kayong Utara (one of our Customary Forest villages that borders the National Park). She is the eldest of four siblings and plans to study forestry. Ratiah loves to write and learn about science. Because she grew up with GPNP practically in her backyard, she understands its importance and is motivated to protect this region. She also aspires to create urban forests in more populated areas.



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"The environment is everything that isn't me"

-Albert Einstein-



Ratihah (left) and Rafika (right) during their presentations applying for the BOCS program.

Rafikah, or Indah, is from Rantau Panjang, Kayong Utara and is the youngest of seven siblings and is the first in her family to attend university. Her father also passed away when she was a child. Rafikah loves photography and spending time outside exploring nature. She plans to study education at UNTAN with the goal of becoming a school principal and assisting the community through nature conservation.

Siti Nurbaiti, or Bayti as her friends call her, is from Riam Bunut, Ketapang. She is the fifth of seven children whose mother recently passed away. Bayti will study biology in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. She wants to tackle environmental issues, especially in regards to recycling and waste management. With the support from the BOCS program, she aims to realize her dreams and become an environmental entrepreneur.



Siti (left) and Mita (right) during their presentations applying for the BOCS program.

Mita Anggraini is from Ketapang and her birthday coincides with World Environmental Day on June 5th. Mita comes from a family of three brothers and plans to study International Relations. Mita has been recognized on a local and national level for her academic achievements.

Hanna Adelia Runtu is also from Ketapang and is the eldest of four siblings. She is an active member of International Animal Rescue's Youth Volunteer group and will be studying forestry with the hopes to create a young generation that cares about the environment and who will help spread a positive energy and lifestyle that coincides with nature. Hanna also has a life motto, "By working hard now, you can enjoy life's successes when you are older."



Hanna (left) and Ilham (right) during their presentations

Our last recipient is Ilham Pratama. He is the middle child and will be studying Forestry. Ilham is an active member of our youth group, TAJAM, and his school's environmental youth group, SISPALA Care. He aspires to become a teacher and tackle some of the larger environmental issues including deforestation, global warming and plastic waste. Ilham also has a life motto, "big dreams start from small steps."

GPOCP would like to give warm congratulations to our new BOCS recipients. We look forward to working together to help guide the youth of today towards a career in conservation. We would also like to thank our supporters of this program, the Orang Utan Republik Foundation. Together we are changing the lives of youth throughout West Kalimantan in the name of orangutans!

#RainforestLive at Cabang Panti

By Brodie Philp, GPOCP Research Manager

On June 8th, the Gunung Palung Orangutan Project participated in the 2017 #RainforestLive. This gave us an opportunity to share some of our daily encounters at the Cabang Panti Research Station in Gunung Palung National Park in real time. We posted on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and provided participants not only with an insight into the beauty of the forest but a further understanding of the dynamics of the rainforest and its inhabitants and how these might change over a short period of time.

Whilst a photo is said to be worth a thousand words, sometimes a little bit of extra explanation is required to truly understand and appreciate the beauty of these experiences we shared.

We were out following Walimah, one of our most studied adult females. She woke up early as she normally does but then, out of character, she made another nest and went back to sleep mid-morning. The assistants and I sat quietly at the base of her tree. This is often a good time to spot wildlife as we spend potentially hours waiting with minimal movement or noise. Before long there was movement in the leaf litter nearby. I peered in closer, trying to distinguish the shape and

movement style of the animal amongst the leaves. Noticing my intense concentration, one of our field assistants, Dang, said "there's a tortoise there, it's been there awhile". The green mossy shell blended in with the surrounding vegetation and leaf litter perfectly. After a few photos we returned to our original sitting positions. The tortoise later emerged from the shelter of its shell and continued clambering through the forest, passing right by my feet as I sat completely still, enjoying the encounter.



This shy tortoise made an appearance during #RainforestLive. Photo by Brodie Philp.

If we are not currently following an orangutan, then our field assistants go out searching for them. This involves walking our trail system in search of orangutans or any signs that might indicate their presence. On this particular afternoon, whilst searching, we came across a number of broken logs that had recently been torn apart. They were a shredded mess, so our thoughts were that this was either a sun bear or an orangutan. Given how fresh this was, we were hoping for further signs in the area which could lead us to the culprit. Further down the trail we stopped to listen for any noises coming from the surrounding forest. Before long we heard the crash of a tree off to the side of the trail. We knew there was something close by and it was big. We crept towards the sound slowly. As we got closer, a field assistant saw that it was Alfred, our resident dominant male. Alfred was searching for termites among logs in the swamp. When he was successful at finding a termite ridden log he would haul it up into a tree with him. When he

started, the log was around 5 meters long. He lifted it up and then placed it resting horizontally on a side branch to support its weight as he methodically bit and pulled it apart, piece by piece. Termites scrambled for their lives as they sprinkled to the ground like light rain. Alfred's orange beard was littered with termites as he stuck his lips into the log to suck them out from their burrows and chambers. Once all the termites had either been eaten or evacuated from the log, he simply let go and it crashed to the ground. The loud thud echoed throughout the forest.



Alfred snacking on termites. Photo by Brodie Philp.

While back at camp, I was sitting on the front deck after some heavy rain and I saw some movement high up in the trees. With a heavy shake of the leaves, and a few macaque squeals from above, I heard a splat on the floor. A bright green object landed on the ground below. The trees above continued to shake as the macaques were quite unsettled by what had just occurred. I tried to focus on the ground from a distance, as I was sure the noise of the landing was too heavy to be a leaf. I crept closer to find that my suspicions were right; it was a small viper that had startled the macaques. It sat curled on the ground completely still. This gave us all a chance to grab our cameras. The snake's coloration would make it well camouflaged in leaves, so it left us wondering if he caught the macaques completely by surprise. The snake's green skin was beautifully exaggerated against the dull dirt background. The snake sat still the whole time until we used a broom to move him off of our path and into the safety of some nearby

bushes.



A small viper fell to the ground after a little tussle with a troop of macaques. Photo by Brodie Philp.

Each afternoon, as the day starts to wind down and the heat from the scorching sun starts to subside, the life around the river starts to liven up. Crashing sounds in the tree tops are frequent as a troop of macaques move in from the surrounding forest. Once settled by the river, some will use this time for extra foraging, but most engage in social activities. It is not an uncommon sight to see two or three macaques perched on the outer most branches of a tree, engaged in a grooming session. On this particular day, the whole troop sat perched on a creeper vine that draped over a tree. The highest point in the center of the creeper was worn down as this was the most illustrious spot to be. For over an hour smaller macaques would tussle with bigger opponents just to get a split second on the top spot. As challengers were thrown off, they would roll down the sides with their arms outstretched, attempting to grab on to anything they could as they fell. They would immediately climb back up and start all over again. Some were sneakier, going inside the creeper and pouncing from hidden angles, pushing, pulling and biting to remove the other from this forest throne. Check out the macaques playing and other animal encounters in this short video we put together.



Macaques playing and other encounters during
#RainforestLive 2017.

On my first hike out the forest, after more than a month at camp, the first thing I noticed when I got to the forest edge was the sky. Deep in the rainforest, a thick canopy normally fills the skyline as every tree fights for sunlight. In addition, most nights there are rain clouds or mist to contend with. It is a very rare event to get a clear open view of the sky. Down by the river that winds past camp there are small gaps in the overhanging trees that allow for a slither of sky to be seen. On a clear night I set up my camera on the sand bank next to the river's edge and focused on a lone large tree that sits high above the others and always draws my attention during the day. A tip for long exposure rainforest photography is to check yourself for leeches before you start the photo sequence, otherwise there is a lot of uncomfortable fumbling around in the dark. I had the pleasure of learning this the hard way, so this picture will always remind me of life in the rainforest!



Stars at night from Cabang Panti Research Station. Photo credit Brodie Philp.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (GPOCP)

<http://saveGPorangutans.org>

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