

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



July 2017

Issue: 55

Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in West Kalimantan

Dear Friends and Supporters,

With summer fully upon us, I am happy to report that I have safely arrived in Indonesia for my annual visit. It has already been quite a busy month as I spent a few days in Jakarta to meet with the GPOCP Board of Directors, gave a presentation to Tanjungpura University in Pontianak and arrived in Ketapang to meet with the conservation staff. I am now at Cabang Panti Research Station and plan to spend the next few weeks working with the research team and following orangutans!

We thought we would give an update on our education team conservation activities! Our first article is about how GPOCP is working to combat waste management throughout the area.

Our second article is about the new families throughout Gunung Palung. We are always excited to see healthy orangutan babies and rejoice at the thought of a new addition. Rebecca Curtis writes about the mother-infant pairs found throughout Cabang Panti. Be sure to check out the video of Walimah too.

In This Issue:

GPOCP Works to Curb
Waste Problems

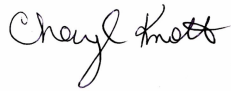
-
Growing Families of
Gunung Palung

-
Conservation Throughout
Indonesia

-
Dr. Knott Visits West
Kalimantan

On our sidebar you will find information about a conservation workshop attended by GPOCP Directors and about my time in Ketapang. Also, be sure to tune in next month for World Orangutan Day on August 19th!

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director

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

GPOCP Works to Curb Waste Problems

By Terri Breeden, GPOCP Program Director

Here at GPOCP we believe in starting environmental education at an early age. This provides youngsters with the basic foundation to understand the impacts of their everyday decisions, which in turn helps foster a life-long commitment towards environmental stewardship. We also work with older students and adults to answer their questions about the environment and the impacts of land clearing and how it affects health and quality of life, for both humans and animals, including orangutans that live in nearby forests.

Unfortunately, waste management is a big problem here in Ketapang and throughout Indonesia. In cities there is somewhat organized trash pick-up, but you can see from the photo below, it is less than ideal with a lot of trash ending up in the streets and local waterways. In more remote villages, there is no trash pick-up, which leads locals to burn their trash. During the dry season, which is quickly approaching, these fires have the potential to escalate out of control and cause catastrophic damage. This month our Education team worked with two junior high schools in Ketapang, educating nearly 250 students about waste management and ways they can help combat the issue.

Conservation Throughout Indonesia

Early July, Program and Research Directors, Terri Breeden and Wahyu Susanto attended a conservation workshop in Jakarta titled Engaging Conservation Across Difference: Communities, Science and Customary Rights in Indonesia. This was a great opportunity to share ideas, stories and outcomes of conservation efforts throughout Indonesia.



Dr. Knott visits West Kalimantan

Dr. Cheryl Knott recently arrived in West Kalimantan. During her visit she has given a presentation to UNTAN university in Pontianak and visited the GPOCP conservation team in Ketapang. She will spend the next month at Cabang Panti Research Station in Gunung Palung National Park. Stay tuned next month for an update about her trip!



The photo on the left shows the state of some of the dumpsters in Ketapang and because of their condition much of the trash ends up in local waterways, as shown on the right.

We start the delivery and interaction with students with a song, the National Anthem, to bring about a sense of pride and national spirit. This also enlivens the students and prepares them for an interactive session with our Education team. We then continue with a game to educate the students about the different types of primates and animals found here in Borneo, which then leads into a lecture and discussion with the students. Ranti Naruri led the presentation and invited students to ask questions about their knowledge of waste management. She explained how waste can have many negative impacts on health, quality of life, and emphasized ways the students can reduce their use of plastic bags and litter.



GPOCP Education Team member, Ranti Naruri, giving a lecture to students.

Towards the end of our visit at the schools, the students were invited to offer their own solutions to waste management. We were excited to hear them come up with concepts such as using reusable



Dr. Knott addressing conservation staff in Ketapang.



[Donate](#)



[Join Our Mailing List](#)

amazon smile

Choose GPOCP as your Amazon Smile recipient and 0.05% of your sales will go directly to us.

[Forward to a Friend](#)

"Chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans have been living for hundreds of thousands of years in their forest, living fantastic lives, never overpopulating, never destroying the forest. I would say that they have been

water bottles and shopping bags, separating waste into organic and inorganic, and something as simple as throwing garbage in the appropriate place. The students even thought about using organic waste for farming and using non-organic waste to create handicrafts and the simple act of inviting their friends to participate in picking up after themselves and not littering.

Throughout each of the activities, we received a great response from students, teachers and school officials. GPOCP hopes to continue working with these students and making a positive impact in regards to environmental education in their lives and throughout Indonesia.



Junior high school teacher (second from right) with members of the GPOCP Education Team (left to right) Petrus Kanisus, Hendri Gunawan, Mariamah Achmad, and Ranti Naruri.

in a way more successful than us as far as being in harmony with the environment"

-Jane Goodall-

Growing Families of Gunung Palung

By Rebecca Curtis, GPOCP Assistant Research Manager

Research focused on critically endangered animals always means that new additions to the population are certainly something to celebrate! With that in mind, we would like to take a moment to cheer for our hard working orangutan mothers and their growing clans within our beloved forest! During recent months we have been lucky enough to get to know some young new families... as well as the return of some old faces!

Young orangutan mother, Rossa, was first met by research assistant, Akau, in the dense peat swamps of Gunung Palung National Park. With her young

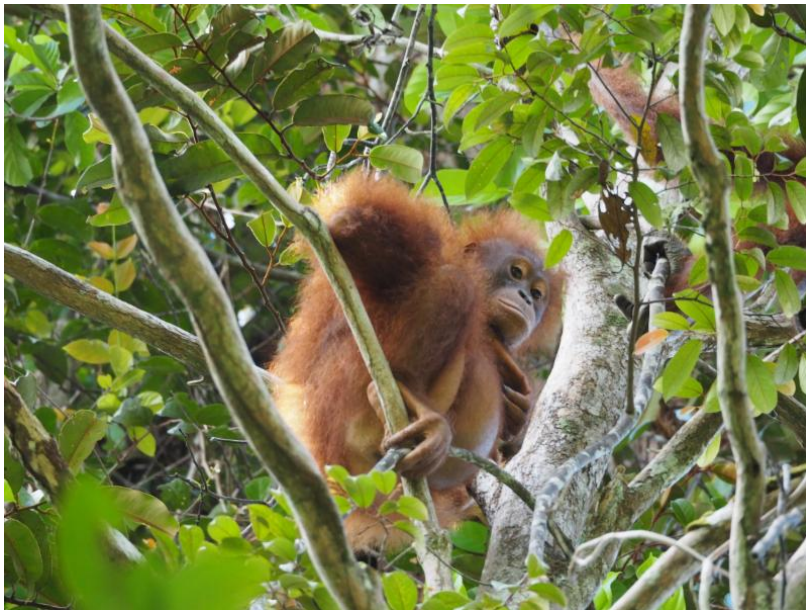
juvenile, Ronnie, not far from her side, she wasn't used to being followed by our assistants, but the researchers have become accustomed to a busy day scrambling through the forest when following this lively pair. Rossa often encircles our group to closely inspect her mysterious followers, finding a branch where she can clearly observe us while also keeping a close eye on her baby. This pair seems to have won the genetic lottery in terms of attractiveness for orangutans. Both have thick, fluffy red hair covering their bodies and healthy, symmetrical faces. It is ironic that in field research we rejoice in the less-than-perfect individuals; usually the ones with scars, bite marks, deformities or unusual traits are the easiest to identify. When recognizing these wild orangutans, individuality and uniqueness is most definitely celebrated!



Rossa resting comfortably in the canopy where she can keep an eye on Ronnie and the research assistants. Photo credit Rebecca Curtis.

Another older mother - infant pair we have not seen for some time is, Janda Tua and her almost adult daughter, Januari. We hadn't seen the two since Januari was a tot back in 2011. Meeting them now, nearly six years later, we noticed that Janda Tua has developed a large growth on her right hip. We are not sure what type of growth this is or how harmful it is to her health, but she is an older lady who tends to travel slowly through the treetops and regularly takes a siesta in a day nest. On the other hand, her daughter, Januari, couldn't be more different. At one point this month, while both Janda Tua and Januari were being followed, the research

assistants felt the need for some healthy competition of rock, paper, scissors to see who gets to plod slowly after Janda Tua, or race frantically after the boisterous Januari. Research Manager, Brodie, and I drew the short straws that day and raced after Januari. I was also initiated into taking Ipad data during a follow. I finally understand the challenges of taking behavioral data mid-follow. You haven't known multitasking until you are untangling yourself from thorny vines and leaping over logs while trying to keep your eyes on the swaying and rustling branches above, frantically punching codes into an Ipad screen, recording how far right, left, up, down, north or south the orangutan is travelling and with what arms and legs first. Not only this, but Januari is a pretty sneaky character. At one moment during our follow, we stood watching her munching in a fruit tree for some time before she descended from her height, only to disappear.



Januari hiding in the tree tops. Photo credit Brodie Philp.

"Can you see her?" Brodie called from the other side of the tree. I was about to reply a confused "no," before suddenly spotting her beady eyes glistening through the gaps in the leaves in some shrubby trees to my left. Her eyes stayed fixed on us as I saw her place her hands and feet across the branches as gently and delicately as possible. Making no sound whatsoever, the clever little orangutan was trying to give us the slip. The moment she realized her ploy was unsuccessful and we began stepping towards her, she was darting through the trees again, often swinging from branch

to branch like a mischievous gibbon. Although almost fully independent, Januari, still regularly meets up with her mother, either to nest in the same tree at the end of the day or for a relaxed afternoon of grooming one another in the late afternoon sun.

We had the pleasure of seeing another family that the research project hadn't seen for a few years. Research assistant, Toto, found mother, Salju, and her juvenile, Saldo, one morning up in the mountainous regions of Cabang Panti. The pair is easy to identify with their distinctive facial features, very long faces and slanted eyes.



Saldo snacking on some twigs in the mountainous region of Gunung Palung National Park. Photo credit Rebecca Curtis.

We have also had a recent return of some of our project regulars. One of the first orangutans I followed in Gunung Palung National Park in 2016 was mother, Bibi, and infant son, Bayas. Little Bayas is steadily growing and he is endlessly playful and investigating all leaves, twigs and bark with his mouth, and copying his mother's feeding habits. Although gaining in strength and confidence by climbing on his own, Bayas won't hesitate to cry at Bibi should she cut a session of breast-feeding a little shorter than he would like. Bibi also has an older, now independent daughter called Berani who, like Januari, rocks up regularly to hang out with her mother. Berani does, however, have to watch out for her mother's temper. Bibi is defensive of her food sources and we have seen her give Berani warning kiss-squeaks to stay away. After eight years of intense parental care, I suppose a bit of tough love is necessary from orangutan mothers!

With all these mother-infant pairs floating around the place, we do hope to have the cries of new little orangutans soon. Brodie and the research assistants have recently seen some hanky panky between our celebrity orangutan, Walimah, and resident flanged male, Alfred. Since the tragic loss of her young baby last year, Walimah has not become pregnant again, so the idea of a new baby for her is a heart-warming one. So, from now on you can expect us to be running around below Walimah with pregnancy tests and let's hope that we will have news of another addition to the orangutan families of Gunung Palung!



Walimah Eating Fruit. Video credit Brodie Philp.

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program (GPOCP)

<http://saveGPorangutans.org>

savegporangutans@gmail.com



Orangutan Photographs © Tim Laman

All other photographs © GPOCP staff