

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program



April 2019

Issue: 76

Code RED

An e-newsletter from your friends in West Kalimantan

Dear Friends and Supporters,

April has been a month of action with Earth Day events, donors visiting our project sites, guest researchers and even our field assistants going on a trip!

In this issue of *Code Red*, Petrus Kanisius reports on one of our Earth Day events, organized by our volunteers, that was focused on everyone's personal responsibility to care for our Earth. Then, Sabta Perlari, Gunung Palung Orangutan Project Field Assistant, tell us about the trip he took to visit the Tuanan Orangutan Research Station in Central Kalimantan, along with field assistants Sahril and Toto and Field Manager Dr. Alys Granados. It was a fabulous opportunity to see orangutans at another research site

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Guest Botanist from

in Indonesia and to exchange knowledge about different methods of data collection and field techniques.

Our first sidebar article tells of an environmental education outreach activity featuring field assistants from Cabang Panti as well as Tori Bakley (our volunteer Research Assistant from Florida). Also in the sidebar we tell you about our guest researcher, a botanist from Danum Valley Research Station, who came to Cabang Panti for a week to teach the field assistants about more in depth plant identification techniques. Finally, check out our video link for the trailer for the BBC's new nature documentary, *One Planet: Seven Worlds*, featuring none other than Bibi and Bayas two, now famous, Gunung Palung orangutans.

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter. Be sure to check out our social media and website to interact with our upcoming campaigns and projects!

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director
[Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program \(GPOCP\)](#)

Responsible Waste Management Awareness Event for Earth Day

By Petrus Kanisius, GPOCP Communications and Media Officer

There are many simple ways to care for the Earth. Cleaning up the litter in Ketapang City Park and the surrounding area, carrying environmental campaign messages, and giving environmental speeches was the least that GPOCP and volunteers could do to commemorate Earth Day 2019.

From the Field to the Classroom

We've recently expanded our outreach program to include members of our research team introducing the concept of field work to local students. They stress the importance of research, revealing a career track that the students may not have known was an option for them. Participating in this event in Sukadana were Sabta and Sahril, two of our field assistants, as well as research assistant Tori Bakely, who shares her observations with us.



Tori Bakely talking about GPOCP

"It was an incredible experience to share my knowledge of the forest and our program with these students who were not much younger than myself. I also enjoyed hearing my co-workers talk about their work because they spoke with excitement and



Earth Day 2019 in Ketapang City Park.

GPOCP and the Nature Conservation Volunteers (TAJAM) held a small local event where we invited the public to be more caring and willing to adapt an eco-friendly lifestyle. While giving speeches, the volunteers carried banners that read: "Stop Filling the Earth with Trash", "Forests Can Remain Without Humans, But Humans Cannot Remain Without Forests", "We Care for One Earth", and "Orangutans Have Homes and Families, just like Humans. Be kind to your Neighbors. " These messages remind all of us to care about the fate of the Earth and were inspired by the theme for Earth Day 2019: "If you can't repair it, don't damage it."



GPOCP volunteers, accompanied by PhD student Andrea Blackburn (white hat), march with inspirational signs between clean-up sites.

Through a series of litter clean-ups, various parties were enthusiastic to take part in celebrating Earth Day. All joined in picking up garbage and giving speeches about the environment and our responsibility for its well-being. "I am very proud of the volunteers who are so passionate about helping and taking care of the fate of the Earth," said Terri Breeden from GPOCP. In this series of activities, there were no less than 65 enthusiastic participants from multiple local environmental volunteer groups, schools classes and their teachers, NGOs, and even Andrea Blackburn - our

passion and revealed a side of themselves that is not seen in the field. Allowing researchers to speak directly to students not only inspires them to pursue science, but also highlights an important part of conservation that is sometimes overlooked. I look forward to visiting more schools in the future to show highschoolers the work that goes on in the forest and the opportunities that are within their reach."



Sabta Perlari teaching students about GPOCP research

Bibi and Bayas - BBC stars!

In 2017 we had a fantastic team from the BBC come to Cabang Panti to film our extraordinary orangutans. We are thrilled to see, Bibi and baby Bayas, from Gunung Palung National Park, in the trailer for the BBC's new series *One Planet: Seven Worlds!*



Haning Pertiwi and volunteers cleaning out trash from the canals at the local city park.

Vhe Sartono Tjong, one of the first members of the volunteer group Tajam, said that he was very happy to team up with fellow volunteers to commemorate Earth Day through tangible actions, like cleaning up rubbish. Several groups of school children and volunteers did not hesitate to band together and collect trash throughout the community. According to Haning Pertiwi, the mentor of Tajam volunteers: "All participants were very enthusiastic about participating in the special activities. They marched all day and chanted conservation statements made specifically for Earth Day as they travelled through the city."

Victoria Gehrke, incoming Program Director of GPOCP, also commented on this year's Earth Day activities: "It is a sad state in Indonesia, in regards to responsible waste management, when it is more strange to see a foreigner than to see trash on the ground. As I joined the fantastic volunteer group during their effort to clean the city park, there were many observers who were more surprised to see us cleaning up trash rather than the amount of trash itself. 'Why are you cleaning up trash in Indonesia?' some asked. 'Because we are all part of one planet!' we answered.



Mayi Achmad (GPOCP Environmental Education



One Planet: Seven Worlds Trailer

The clip in the trailer is of Bibi and Bayas tree surfing - where they use their weight to bend a tree and then grab the next one and swing themselves across.

We hope you are as excited for the series as we are!

Guest Botanist from Danum Valley Conservation Area

This week, Indonesian botanist Mike Bernadus Bala Ola visited Cabang Panti to teach Field and Laboratory Assistants about plants frequently encountered and eaten by orangutans.



Mike (middle, in white) in the field teaching plant identification skills at Cabang Panti.

Native to Flores, Mike works in Sabah, Malaysia and is an

Manager) giving a speak about responsible waste management.

Thank you to all who participated in the event and helped turn our idea into a reality. Our program values the conservation and preservation of all the Earth's wonderful environments and its creatures, so if we don't care for it, then who will? Love the Earth in simple ways so that the earth can last forever. The fate of the Earth depends on mutual care from everyone, no exception.



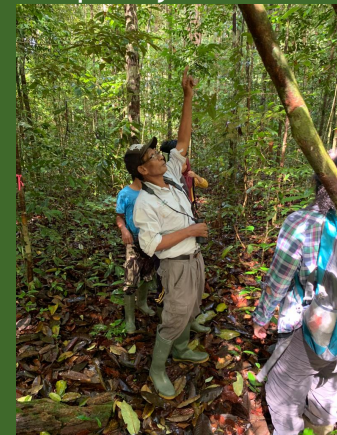
2019 Earth Day logo (and sticker) designed by the volunteers and Haning Pertiwi - GPOCP Environmental Education Field Assistant

Visiting Tuanan Research Station - Field Research Knowledge Exchange

By Sabta Perlari, GPOCP Research Field Assistant

My name is Sabta and I have worked as a research assistant at Cabang Panti for over 3 years. My job is to find orangutans and record their behavior so we can better understand how they live. This month I had the exciting opportunity (along with my co-workers Toto and Sahril, and Field Manager Dr. Alys Granados) to visit Tuanan Research Station in Central Kalimantan. The purpose of our visit was to see how other research stations in Indonesia collect data on orangutan behavior. To get there, we had to take a plane from Pontianak in West Kalimantan to Palangkaraya in Central Kalimantan.

expert on Bornean plants. After making the journey up to camp, he spent a day with Lab Assistants Rinta and Syai updating our Botanical Database and providing new species names to plants in Gunung Palung. The following three days we split up into smaller groups to do forest walks along transects in various habitats around camp. Assistants asked questions about common plants and Mike provided helpful tips for distinguishing plant genera that are frequently confused.



Mike sharing field identification techniques

We are very thankful Pak Mike was able to share this important information with us and hope he can come back to visit in the future!



Donate



Field assistants (from left) Toto, Sahril, and Sabta with Dr. Alys Granados - outside of Bornean Orangutan Survival Foundation research station in Tuanan.

Once we got to Palangkaraya, we were greeted by the Manager from Tuanan, Ipeh, who we already knew from her time as a Lab Assistant at Cabang Panti. Our journey was just getting started - the next day we had a 2 hour long car ride, followed by a 2 hour trip in a long boat to get to a village about 20 minutes from Tuanan. Once we got to the village, we walked the rest of the way on a well marked trail. It was a long day and we were all very tired and even a little nauseous from the travel, but we were happy to finally reach our destination.

As soon as we arrived at Tuanan camp, we noticed just how different Tuanan is from Cabang Panti. The main difference is that Cabang Panti has 8 different forest habitats in our trail system, whereas Tuanan only has peat swamp. Another major difference from CP is that the assistants go home each night as they live in the village 20 minutes from camp. At CP we are at least four hour walk to the nearest village, so we stay at camp for 20 days at a time before taking our rest days at home.



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

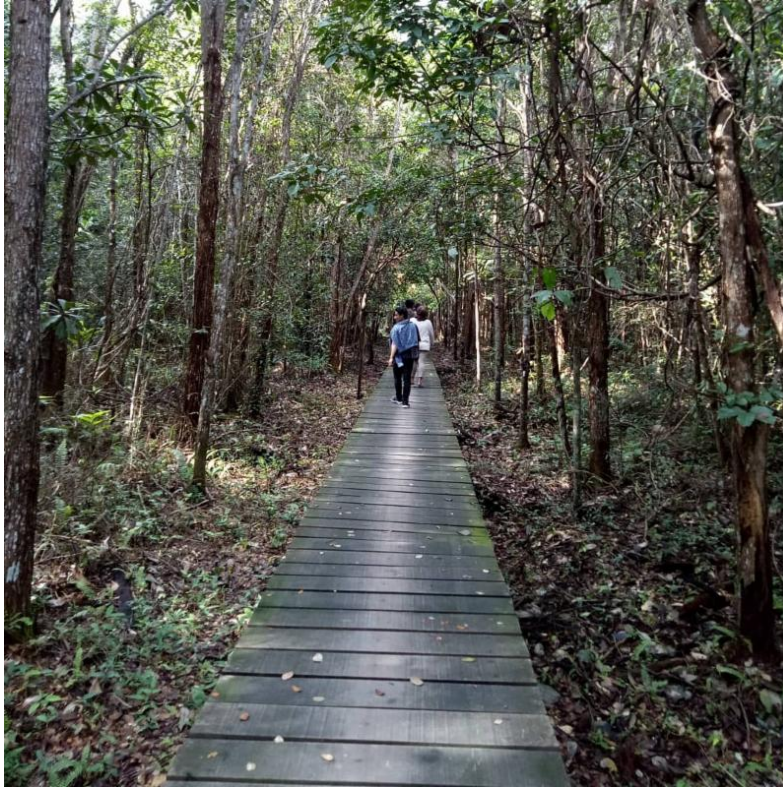


"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

Jane Goodall

Patches for a Purpose!

Help us acquire Fire fighting kits for our Customary Forests by ordering a beautiful Slothgrip patch!



On the boardwalk walking towards Tuanan Research Station.

To learn about how wild orangutans are studied at different research sites we joined the Tuanan assistants and volunteers on an orangutan follow the next day. The orangutan I followed was a mother-infant pair named Milo (the mom) and Merkur (the baby). We left camp at 4:30 am that day and then made our way through the swamp to get to the nest. We waited there until the orangutans woke up around 5am to start eating in a nearby tree. Here, I noticed another difference in how we study orangutans at CP - the assistants at Tuanan take data every 2 minutes, while we record what the orangutan is doing every 5 minutes. We also record the start and stop times of every activity. Also, when they record the type of fruit eaten by orangutans, they use the local name, whereas we use Latin names to identify fruit samples.

Since Tuanan is all peat swamp, the types of trees found in that forest also differ from CP. One of the fruits more frequently eaten is locally known as "kamundak", which is in the same plant family as beans (Fabaceae). This fruit provides a stable source of food for wildlife as its trees regularly make fruit. Apparently, orangutans at Tuanan sleep a lot if they eat too much of it. People can also feel sick after eating it which we know because a western researcher brought some back to camp to fry and ended up with a headache and a stomachache. I tried some *kamundak* too but only a little bit as I wanted to avoid the same fate!



You can find the patches, more information about Slothgrip and the fundraising campaign [HERE](#). Please order one and help us get fire fighting equipment for our forests!





On the boat towards Tuanan which consists of only one habitat type: peat swamp.

For our next day, we joined the assistants in following a flanged male named Dado. He spent most of the day eating a fruit which is common in the area and known locally as "tutup kembali." During our time at Tuanan we also had the chance to meet with the local people in the nearby village, and at night we walked there with the researchers and assistants to play volleyball and games with the children.



The assistants following a large male orangutan named Dodo. The trail system is a series of boardwalks as Tuanan is all peat swamp.

After 4 days at Tuanan, it was already time to leave! We were all sad to go because everyone at Tuanan had been welcoming and very friendly. Although we were not there for a long time, we became close with the assistants and it was fun to exchange stories with them about working in the field. We learned a lot from them and we hope that some day soon they can come visit us at Cabang Panti!

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