

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program

June 2021
Issue 101

Code RED

an e-newsletter from your friends in West Kalimantan

Dear Friends and Supporters,

I hope you are all well as we wrap up another great month here at GPOCP. Our team held an intensive two-day workshop on the governance and equity of the Padu Banjar Customary Forest (more on that in the first article). On the 22nd we celebrated [World Rainforest Day](#), participating in webinars, creating videos, and spreading the word about the importance of forests. We're also excited to be partnering with the [Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards](#), who host an annual competition. This year, they've chosen to sponsor GPOCP and highlight our conservation programs, which means we've been able to reach an even larger worldwide audience of supporters. If you're new to our newsletter, welcome!

Our first article this month comes from Muhammad Isa, who served as the Lead Facilitator for the [Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity](#) (SAGE). With training and support from researchers at the International Institute for Environment and Development ([IIED](#)), the assessment was successfully carried out from June 14th-15th. Isa, who works as a consultant, facilitator and trainer on topics related to democracy, political ecology, public advocacy and community development throughout West Kalimantan, writes about his experience conducting SAGE alongside GPOCP and IIED.

In our second article, you'll find a summer reading list that Program Coordinator, Natalie Robinson, and I have curated. We share our top 10 picks for some popular science books to dig into.

I wish you all a happy July!

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director

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

Assessment of the Governance and Equity of the "Banjar Lestari" Customary Forest, Padu Banjar Village

By Muhammad Isa

Earlier this year we were contacted by researchers at IIED who are developing the SAGE methodology for use in protected and conserved areas around the world. The SAGE initiative aims to enable stakeholders to assess the status of governance and equity, plan actions to improve, and monitor progress. The first version of the SAGE methodology was developed in 2019, followed by the first round of piloting in 8 different countries. In August 2020, SAGE version 2 was developed for a second round of field testing. The greater Gunung Palung conservation landscape is part of this piloting, and we conducted the assessment this past month. To learn more, click [here](#). Below, SAGE Lead Facilitator Muhammad Isa shares his experience running the assessment among stakeholders of the Banjar Lestari Customary Forest, where GPOCP has worked since 2015.



SAGE participants gather for a group photo at the end of the two-day assessment.

Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) is a tool designed to improve conservation governance and equity for nature and society. SAGE is an assessment that is directly carried out by the “actors” involved in the conservation landscape. The main objective is to improve governance and conservation equity in an effort to achieve better outcomes for nature and society, especially for the poor in local communities and for indigenous peoples. This past month, SAGE was carried out by members of the Padu Banjar community, on eight different aspects of governance and equity. Actors are grouped according to common interests and guided by a team of trained facilitators. Each question has four potential answers (scored 0, 1, 2 or 3) that represent a range from best practice (3) to practices that have deficiencies/room for improvement (0). The SAGE assessment concludes with participants developing and sharing ideas for actions that can improve conservation governance and equity at the site level. A report of the assessment is generated and then shared with all participants and associated organizations so that they better understand the situation and can support relevant ideas for action. Afterwards, the “Action Phase” prioritizes actions to plan, implement and monitor the proposed actions chosen by the actors.

Governance refers to how decisions are made and how people with different interests and rights, or key “actors”, influence decisions, and how actors with important responsibilities are held accountable. The principles for the assessment of protected area governance in SAGE are based on principles adapted by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). Good governance in conservation is about governance that is fair and effective in achieving its objectives. *Equity* is about all aspects of fair and good governance in achieving conservation area goals. Equity has 3 dimensions, namely recognition (respect for actors and their rights), procedure (participation, transparency and accountability, access to justice/dispute resolution, and fair law enforcement), and distribution (reduction of negative impacts and equitable benefit sharing).

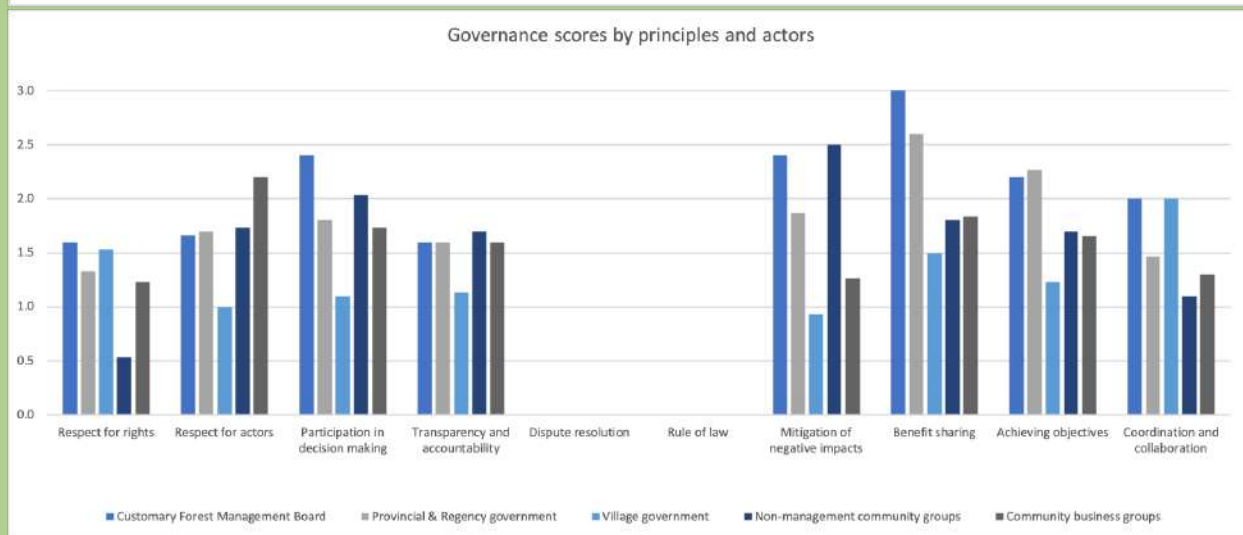
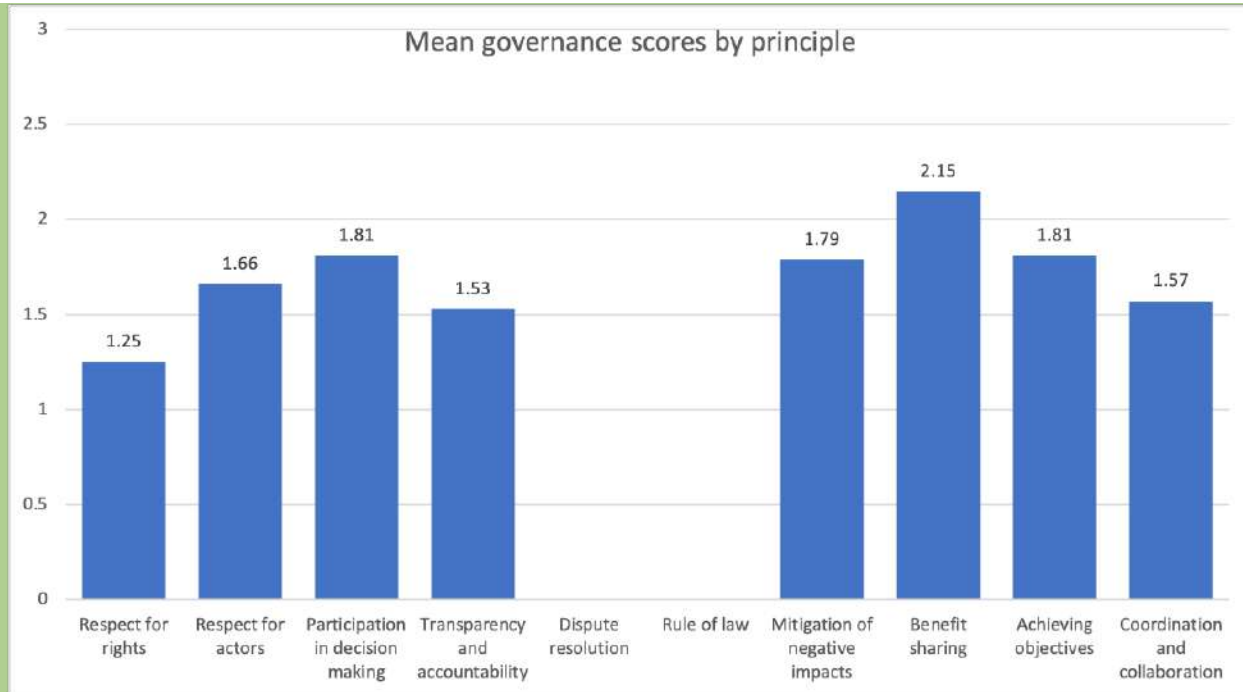
In West Kalimantan, where SAGE was conducted, we assessed the Governance and Equity for the “Banjar Lestari” Customary Forest which is part of the Paduan River Peat Protected Forest Area in Padu Banjar Village, Kayong Utara Regency, West Kalimantan. The Customary Forest “Banjar Lestari” in Padu Banjar Village was officially recognized on [February 27, 2017](#) by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia with a 35-year management permit for an area spanning 2,883 hectares.



A group of actors, led by GPOCP's Hendri Gunawan, discuss their answers to the assessment questions on day 1 of the workshop.

We began the planning stages of the SAGE assessment in May and the workshop was held in June 2021. The SAGE assessment was carried out by 5 key actor groups consisting of the Customary Forest Management Board (LPHD), Provincial and Regency government officials, village government, non-management community groups, and community business groups. Workshop activities were held from June 14th to 15th in Sukadana, Kayong Utara Regency. The workshop process was facilitated by a trained team of facilitators to guide the participants of each group through a series of questions about the governance principles pertaining to the local area.

Our facilitating team chose 8 different governance principles (out of the 10 total options) for the assessment, as summarized in the figure below. For each principle, the actors were presented with a series of 5 questions. Each group had to come up with a consensus score for each prompt. The graph below shows the average score per principle among the five groups of actors. The results of the group assessment show that respect for rights received the lowest score of 1.25, out of a maximum of 3. Almost all other aspects were identified as having room for improvement with a score of less than 2, namely aspects of transparency and accountability with a score of 1.53, coordination and collaboration with a score of 1.57, respect for actors with a score of 1.66, mitigation of negative impacts at 1.79, as well as participation in decisions and the achievement of conservation goals with the same value of 1.81. The principle of benefit sharing/distribution averaged a value of more than 2, at 2.15. However, as shown in the second figure, there tended to be a lot of variation in scores between the groups, so the means do not always reflect the opinions of each group or each actor.



During the second day of the workshop, each group presented the results of their discussions and the other groups responded. Groups also compared scores and discussed the reasons for the differences in the ratings decided by each group. This allowed participants to better understand different challenges and viewpoints, and identify potential actions that could be taken to improve the situation. Furthermore, the different groups of actors can identify priority actions to improve governance and equity in the management of the “Banjar Lestari” Customary Forest.



On the second day of the assessment the actors joined together to share their results. Author Muhammad Isa (standing, far right) addresses the group between group presentations.

I am now working to finish up the analysis of all the data and creating a report, which will be shared with all participants as well as the team at IIED. This will allow for follow-up in the future, now that the actors have identified where there is room for improvement. Hopefully the SAGE assessment can also be carried out in the other GPOCP Customary Forests in the future.

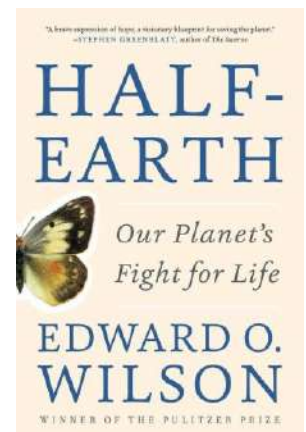
Popular Science Books for Your Summer Reading List

By Cheryl D Knott, PhD and Natalie Robinson

Maybe you're stuck at home this summer, or maybe you're finally getting that beach vacation you've dreamed about since March 2020. If you're looking for some good summer reading, we've curated a list of popular science books on conservation, human biology, evolution, and more. Many of these are written by our friends and colleagues and we're excited to tell you about them!

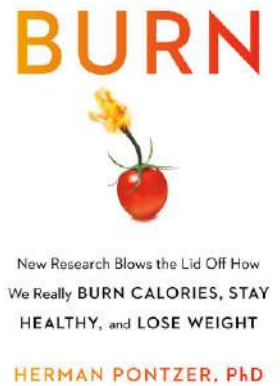
Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life by Edward O. Wilson (2016)

In *Half-Earth*, biologist E.O. Wilson makes the case for designating half of the Earth's surface as a human-free natural reserve in order to preserve the world's biodiversity. Wilson details actual regions of the world that can still be reclaimed such as the California redwood forest, the Amazon River basin and grasslands of the Serengeti. I assigned this book for the course I taught on *Wildlife Conservation* last semester at Boston University to inspire students to become invested in caring for our planet. Check out the [Half-Earth website](#) to learn more.



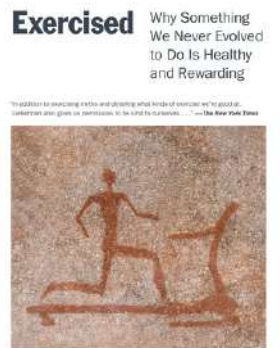
Burn: New Research Blows the Lid Off How We Really Burn Calories, Stay Healthy, and Lose Weight by Herman Pontzer, PhD (2021)

Each summer our lab group aims to read a book together and come together (this year via Zoom) to discuss a chapter or two each week. This summer, we've started *Burn* by Herman Pontzer, which explores human and primate metabolism and some surprising new research about food and exercise, and its relationship with the human body. Pontzer references research, both new and old, on the Hadza, a hunter-gatherer group, as well as humans in industrialized societies, captive and wild primates, and other mammals to compare and contrast our inner-workings. Orangutans stand out as the primate with the slowest metabolism!



Exercised: Why Something We Never Evolved to Do Is Healthy and Rewarding by Daniel E. Lieberman (2021)

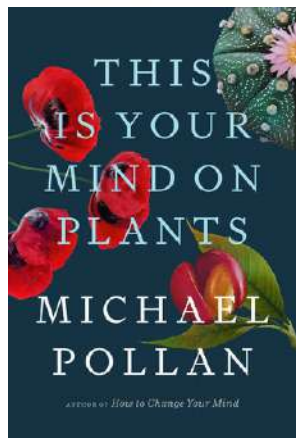
Daniel Lieberman's newest book, *Exercised*, challenges readers to reconsider the way we think about (voluntary) physical activity for our health, busting many myths along the way. Lieberman draws from his academic background in evolutionary biology and anthropology to provide a compelling argument for the relationship between exercise and selection for longevity in humans. As Lieberman argues, "many of the mechanisms that slow aging and extend life are turned on by physical activity, especially as we get older." This book is sure to inspire you to stay active!



Daniel E. Lieberman

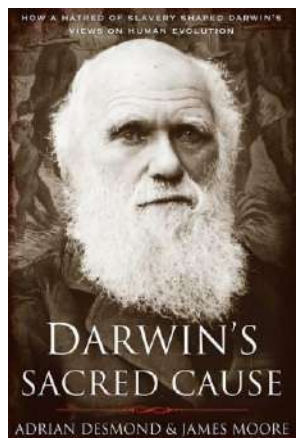
This is Your Mind on Plants by Michael Pollan (2021)

Michael Pollan, who's written many bestsellers including *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, *In Defense of Food*, and *Cooked* has a new book entitled *This is Your Mind on Plants*, which comes out on July 6th! Many of Pollan's previous books have focused on food and the way we decide what to eat. Shifting focus, his new book explores the impact of mind-altering plants, the most intense of which he argues is caffeine, and the culture that surrounds these botanical drugs.



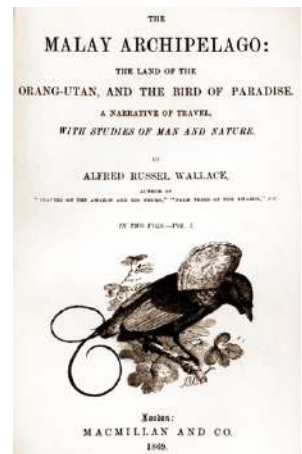
Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution by Adrian Desmond and James Moore (2009)

Darwin's Sacred Cause was our lab group's summer 2020 read. Desmond and Moore tie together history, science and social justice issues to explain how Charles Darwin came to his now-famous understanding of evolution through natural selection. Darwin's "Sacred Cause", the authors argue, was his core belief in human racial unity and the existence of one common ancestor, and his commitment to the abolition of slavery.



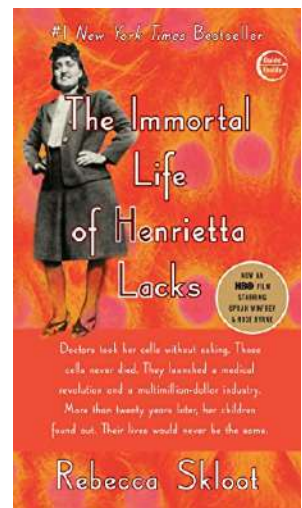
The Malay Archipelago: The land of the orang-utan, and the bird of paradise. A narrative of travel, with studies of man and nature by Alfred Russel Wallace (1869)

For a deep dive into historical field biology in Borneo, check out Alfred Russel Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago*. This 1869 book chronicles naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace's scientific exploration from 1854-1862 across the Malay Archipelago, including Malaysia, Singapore and the islands of Indonesia. Wallace recounts his island visits, describing the geography, animals and plants throughout the region. In total, he travelled over 14,000 miles and collected 125,660 specimens of insects, mollusks, birds, mammals and reptiles. The book is available online for free under public domain [here](#).



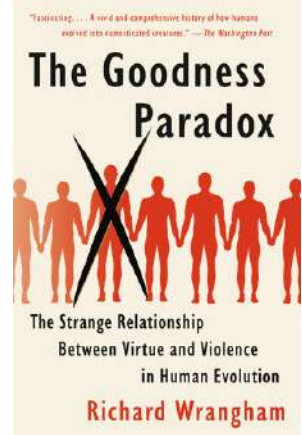
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot (2010)

In *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, author Rebecca Skloot tells the story of a then 31-year-old woman named Henrietta Lacks and the immortal cell line (HeLa) that was first stolen from her body during a treatment for cervical cancer in 1951. These cells were the first immortal human cells to grow in culture, and were essential to developing the polio vaccine and understanding countless other diseases. Cells even went up in the first space mission to experiment what would happen in zero gravity. Most recently, HeLa cells have been used to uncover crucial information about COVID-19. Skloot highlights the ethical issues of race and class in medical research, as well as lessons that can be learned about patients' rights and informed consent.



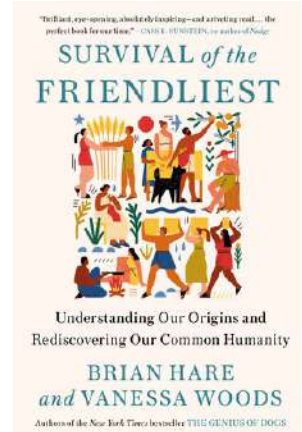
The Goodness Paradox: The Strange Relationship Between Virtue and Violence in Human Evolution by Richard Wrangham (2019)

Biological Anthropologist and co-director of the Kibale Chimpanzee Project, Richard Wrangham, argues that humans have gone through a process of self-domestication in his book *The Goodness Paradox*. Wrangham explores what may have happened during human evolution to cause this paradox – that humans can be both the nicest of species and also the nastiest. He explains the evolutionary history of, and differences between, reactive aggression and proactive aggression.



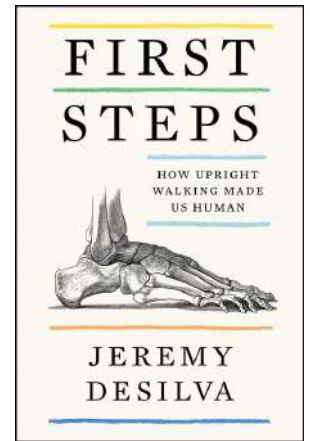
Survival of the Friendliest: Understanding Our Origins and Rediscovering Our Common Humanity by Brian Hare and Vanessa Woods (2020)

In a similar vein, Brian Hare and Vanessa Woods expand on what they call this “self-domestication theory” writing about human’s unique friendliness within the animal kingdom. For most of the time that we *Homo sapiens* have existed, we’ve lived alongside at least four other types of humans (in the genus *Homo*). Yet, since about 50,000 years ago, we’ve been the only ones to persist. Hare and Wood argue this is thanks to our friendliness and ability to coordinate and communicate with others.



First Steps: How Upright Walking Made Us Human by Jeremy DeSilva (2021)

In this new book, Paleoanthropologist Jeremy DeSilva delves into the enigma of the human gait – we are the only mammals to walk on two, rather than four, legs. Logically, this makes us slower, but DeSilva explains that in reality, humans have experienced a tremendous gain by evolving to walk upright over the last 7 million years. He also explores how our upright posture may have helped to characterize our species, developing traits such as compassion, empathy and altruism. I look forward to reading this as I prepare to teach Introduction to Biological Anthropology in the fall!



Happy reading! Let us know if you get the chance to enjoy any of these books (or already have read some in the past!) and be sure to share your recommendations with us.

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

- Dr. Seuss



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