

Code RED

an e-newsletter from your friends
in West Kalimantan

June 2024

Issue 138

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program YAYASAN PALUNG

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Greetings from Indonesia! I arrived in Jakarta on June 26th for my annual visit. It has been a busy and exciting time so far. I am thrilled to be traveling with Jay Cogan, a recent graduate of BU who will be serving as a volunteer Research Assistant at camp for the next year. Also joining us is BU Biology master's student Ritika Sibal who is conducting a research project this summer that investigates locomotor and positional behavior of orangutans using a thermal drone and computer vision analysis.

Shortly after our arrival, we gave a workshop on Passive Monitoring and other technological applications at the National University (UNAS) in Jakarta. It was wonderful to meet so many brilliant and engaged young researchers that had great questions about the methods and implications of this kind of research. UNAS and the faculty there have been longtime friends and collaborators, and students have the chance to conduct their own research projects at Cabang Panti.

In this month's issue of Code RED, we hear from Widiya, our Environmental Education and Conservation Awareness Program Manager, about the recent award ceremony in Pontianak recognizing our 2024 recipients of the West Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarship that we administer with funding from the Orang Utan Republik Foundation. These promising young conservationists are from communities in our local area in West Kalimantan and are pursuing their bachelor's degrees

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in Pontianak. Congratulations to this year's outstanding students!

We also hear from Ishma, our Assistant Research Manager, about a special visit from the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA). We were thrilled to welcome this group to learn more about our conservation programs and research. They had an action-packed visit and we look forward to connecting again.

I recently arrived in Ketapang and am catching up with staff and am excited for all that is in store this summer. I look forward to sending more updates from the field!

Wishing you all a wonderful month of July.



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

The Future is Bright: The 2024 West Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarships

By Widiya Octa Selfiany, S. Hut. M. Hut, Environmental Education Program Manager

Empowering the next generation of local conservation leaders is integral to our mission. Each year, Yayasan Palung works with Orang Utan Republik Foundation (OURF) to recognize six outstanding young people from West Kalimantan with the West Bornean Orangutan Caring Scholarship (WBOCS). This scholarship program enables high achieving students with a passion for conservation to pursue a university degree when circumstances might otherwise prevent them from being able to move forward with their education. This year, a total of 6 students are embarking on their journey in the Faculty of Forestry at Tanjungpura University in Pontianak. Each of these students passed the National Selection Based on Achievement (SNBP) and hail from Ketapang or North Kayong Regency.

On Thursday, June 20, 2024, the ceremonial presentation of these scholarship awards took place at Tanjungpura University. In attendance, were the Dean and professors of the Faculty of Forestry; the President of Orang Utan Republik Foundation, Gary Shapiro; the Orangutan Caring Scholarships Project Manager, Mayi Achmad; Piya Shah, a London University Student working with OURF; Field Director of Yayasan Palung, Edi Rahman; Environmental Education Manager, Widiya Selfiany; Environmental Education Field Officer, Riduwan; students who received scholarships in the previous year; and of course the six current awardees and their parents.



Edi Rahman opens the ceremony with a few words about the importance of this scholarship program.

Edi Rahman, Field Director of Yayasan Palung, opened the ceremony with a speech expressing his gratitude to Gary Shapiro, the President of OURF, for supporting the scholarships and thanking the Faculty of Forestry at UNTAN for helping to facilitate these scholarships and events so that they run smoothly. Edi also expressed his hope that this scholarship program will be able to continue each year so that we can continue to help future generations of young people develop the skills and knowledge to conserve orangutans and their habitat.

Showing support for the sentiments that Edi shared, Mrs. Dr. Ir. Farah Diba, S.Hut, M.Si, IPU as the Dean of the Faculty of Forestry at Tanjungpura University, said that the Faculty of Forestry is ready to support this scholarship program and hopes that this scholarship will always be given to the next generation, as a form of care and concern for the preservation of orangutans and their forests. She also expressed that this scholarship is a great example of Indonesia's Three Dharma of Higher Education – education, research, and community service.



Gary Shapiro providing his signature alongside the Dean and our leadership staff, marking this special occasion for the deserving students.

Widiya Octa Selfiany, the Manager of Environmental Education and Conservation Awareness of Yayasan Palung, was the next to speak, reiterating the purpose of this program. She said that the West Kalimantan Orangutan Caring Scholarship Program is a collaborative scholarship program between YP and OURF which aims to build a generation of intellectuals who have a high commitment and concern for the protection and rescue of orangutans and their habitats in West Kalimantan. This program is intended to give moral and material support to the younger generation to continue their education at the university level and develop the ability to conserve natural resources in West Kalimantan. Since 2022, WBOCS has been part of Tanjungpura University's official scholarship program, through an MOU with Yayasan Palung. The awardees receive Single Tuition (UKT) for 8 semesters, book money for 8 semesters, research money and thesis writing money.



YP Staff, the UNTAN Dean, and the 2024 recipients of the WBOC Scholarship.

WBOCS has existed since 2012, and now the total number of WBOCS recipients is 67 people who have completed 33 bachelor's degrees. WBOCS students are in various faculties and programs of study at Tanjungpura University, namely the Faculty of Forestry (47 recipients), the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Biology Program (8 recipients), the Faculty of Law (4 recipients), the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences International Relations Program (4 recipients) and Sociology (1 recipient), the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in the Sociology Education Program (1 recipient) and Elementary School Teacher Education (1 recipient).

The event was closed with the signing of the scholarship contract and the awarding of the certificate to scholarship recipients, which was presented by the Field Director of Yayasan Palung, President of OURF, and the Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, while being witnessed by the parents of the young scholars. Congratulations to this outstanding group of students! We wish them the very best in their new journey, that they are successful in all their academic endeavors, and become future leaders in the conservation of orangutans, their habitats, and biodiversity in Indonesia.



A group photo celebrating the close of the awards ceremony and the fantastic 2024 recipients!

Climate, Conservation, and Collaboration: CLUA Visits Cabang Panti Research Station

By Ishma Fatiha, Assistant Research Manager

To achieve conservation goals and confront global challenges, a great deal of cooperation and collaboration is required. For this reason, we are always eager to build relationships with like-minded individuals and organizations who share a passion for conserving forests, protecting biodiversity, and coping with climate change. On June 18-21, 2024, we welcomed seven people from the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) at the Cabang Panti Research Station (SRCP). Such visits are rare, and we were thrilled to share this incredible place with Andrea Johnson (GPOCP's board member and Treasurer, and an orangutan project alum!), Katie O'Gara, Matthew Dagget, Simon Siantidis, Dhita Rachmadini, Mardiyah Chamim and Ismail Nasrah. The group was accompanied by two of our conservation staff members - Erik Sulidra (our Animal and Habitat Protection Manager) and Robi Kasianus (Village Forest Field officer), as well as staff from the Gunung Palung National Park Office. I was excited to join the group and provide insight into the research we do at camp.



The CLUA group and our staff along with National Park staff making their way across a log bridge (top) and smiling at the Rangkong camp at the halfway point of the hiking journey to Cabang Panti Research Station (bottom).

Our journey started from the meeting point in the village of Tanjung Gunung. We began our hike at 9 am with quite friendly and cooperative weather. There was a great deal of excitement among members of the group. Along the way we encountered various types of birds and interesting forest scenery. Around noon we arrived at the satellite research camp on the Rangkong river where we rested and enjoyed some lunch. We also had a discussion about the research activities carried out at the Rangkong camp, and how it complements the work being done at the main camp. After resting enough and refuelling, we continued our journey to Cabang Panti.

Once we arrived and cleaned ourselves up, we gathered together in the evening at the Litho camp so that everyone could get acquainted – our guests, BTN staff, YP staff and field and research assistants from the orangutan project. We enjoyed getting to know one another and made plans for the next day.



An introductory meeting after arrival at camp.

The second day began by looking for orangutans using thermal drones. Everyone was very interested in seeing the search process using this technology. The drones have to fly early in the morning, before the forest canopy is warmed by the sun, but people's enthusiasm made them ready for the early wake-up. We were able to see several types of birds and squirrels that were captured with the drone's thermal camera, but unfortunately, we did not find orangutans with this method that morning.



Erik demonstrates how to set up the drone for flight.

We continued the day with breakfast and then ventured into the forest to look for orangutans. BTN staff explained the process of conducting SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) patrols to our guests. Not long after that we got a radio call from field assistants, Dika and Yogi, that they found orangutan mother, Bibi, and her juvenile son, Bayas, on the DA trail. So the guests, BTN staff, Erik, and Robi went to see the orangutans. Everyone was very excited to observe the animals in their natural habitat. And as always, Bayas did an interesting thing - he defecated and urinated and almost hit one of our guests! This is one reminder to stay alert in the forest.



Members of the CLUA group take on the standard orangutan observation stance to watch Bibi and Bayas.

After getting some good observation time with Bibi and Bayas, the group returned to camp. Soon after, we heard the sound of an orangutan eating. When we checked, it was Alfred, a well-known flanged male, who was eating Salacca shoots just behind camp! Everyone was thrilled that they were able to see a mother, juvenile, and flanged male orangutan on the same day. Alfred ate at the back of the camp long enough that everyone could get a good view and take some videos and photos! You can see a video of the encounter on our [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) page.

We continued the day's activities after lunch, giving an introduction to the buildings at camp and a tour of the microhydro (which generates our electricity) by BTN staff. During the tour, we were also able to observe the diversity of plants and birds around the camp.



The group visits the microhydro which provides electricity to the research camp by harnessing the power of the river.

On the third day we started with an introduction to the laboratory and all its research activities, including fruit identification and processing, genetics lab work, parasite sample processing and microscopy, and urine sample processing. We also discussed the methods for collecting data on orangutan behavior using iPads and our custom database. Then we had a discussion with BTN about the management of Cabang Panti Research Station and national parks in general. Cabang Panti is considered Indonesia's Model Research Station.

We also paid another visit to Bibi and Bayas who were being followed by the field assistants, and the research assistants explained a little about the data collection. In the afternoon we went to a special spot on the river to swim with everyone and enjoy the last day of our stay at the research camp. We took a lot of photos and everyone was very happy.



Ishma, Assistant Research Manager, and Tia, a volunteer Research Assistant, explain the botany and lab work that takes place at Cabang Panti.

After dinner, we once again gathered to discuss all that had taken place over the last few days. Everyone talked about the impressions and experiences that were most interesting to them during their stay at camp. After that we played games and sang until it was time to turn in.

On the last day, we all had breakfast and took more photos together. Then we said goodbye.

Thank you to CLUA for visiting us at Cabang Panti Research Station and bringing such a positive spirit, despite a long journey to get there. It was great to forge these new friendships and hope to see you again soon!





Taking a welcome swim break in the river (top). A final group photo before the hike back out of the forest.

Management of Cabang Panti Research Station is conducted by the Gunung Palung National Park Office (BTN-GP) in collaboration with GPOCP/YP. Scientific research is carried out in conjunction with the Universitas Nasional (UNAS) and Boston University.

“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security, and women’s empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.”

– Ban Ki-moon



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