

September - October Newsletter from Tanjung Puting National Park by *Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF)*

NUSA PENIDA BIRD SANCTUARY



On 26th October, 364 people gathered at Nusa Penida, one of Bali's sacred islands, to discuss the creation of an island-wide sanctuary for threatened and endemic Indonesian birds.

The Governor of Bali, the Regent of Kelungkung, the Head of the Majelis Utama Adat, Bali's Supreme Council for Traditional and Customary law, all came together to pledge support for a bird protection clause in the traditional laws "awig awig", that would lay strong social sanctions against anyone capturing, removing, killing and or

illegally trading in protected birdlife. These strengthened traditional laws would work in concert with Indonesian conservation laws to create a stronger framework for the protection of threatened bird species.

The idea for Nusa Penida arose when FNPF noticed that birds rescued from the illegal wildlife trade were building up in Animal Rescue Centres (ARCs) throughout Indonesia. As more birds are rescued, they put increasing strain on the resources of the ARCs to treat, feed and house them appropriately. Unfortunately such rescued birds are frequently tame and are unable to survive in the wild, many having been captive bred and or reared by humans for many years. Such birds need appropriate facilities where they can (re)learn and practice natural behaviours such as foraging, group / pair formation and even flying. Especially for birds with a high black market value, they also need a protected environment where they will not run the risk of being instantly recaptured upon release.



Working together with the Gibbon Foundation, the KSDA (Natural Resource Conservation Centre) and the ARCs, FNPF is setting up a Bird Sanctuary at Nusa Penida, which will house all parrot species throughout Indonesia. Birds will be prepared for release here; where they cannot relearn wild behaviour they will remain as a tourist attraction for the island. We will draw strongly upon the extensive experience

of our director, Drh Bayu Wirayudha, who is a leading authority on Bali Starling, to shape our bird handling and reintroduction procedures.

In keeping with FNPF's holistic mission, the project will include a significant community development component and take a pragmatic and cooperative approach. A bird registry will be set up to allow owners to keep existing pet songbirds; a forum will be established to determine crop damage and compensation, and islanders will be assisted to shape the program to their needs.



ORANGUTAN NEWS

Young Dian shot, dies

Late on 31st October, Annette Bechtler brought us Dian (“Dee-ahn”), a young orangutan



suffering from greivous injuries. Dian had been shot; he had an upper arm shattered just below the shoulder, a blind right eye and a putrid open wound 12 cm in diameter extending from the waist to below the left armpit. He was suffering from malnutrition and dehydration. He weighted 4 kilos.

Dian after his wounds had been cleansed

Drh Yenny decided to operate immediately, knowing Dian might not survive anaesthesia. We removed over 40 maggots from the wound, set the bone, and put him on a drip. Dian survived surgery but although he appeared more comfortable, he was still distressingly weak. His blood test revealed advanced malaria and his haemoglobin count revealed that he needed a blood transfusion urgently. We approached Wanariset, one of Kalimantan’s most experienced orangutan centres, but they had no experience with orangutan blood transfusion, there was no orangutan blood bank we could locate and we could not risk using human blood.



At 1.30 pm on 7th November, Dian had breathing difficulties. Our vets did all they could, but Dian died at 1.59 pm. The autopsy revealed severe internal injuries and internal bleeding suggesting a fall from height. Despite his size, his teeth indicated Dian was over 4 years old.

Dian’s case raises the question, what should we do when confronted with a captive orangutan, especially one in grave distress? Dian’s ‘owner’ demanded Rp 1 million (2-3 months wages) from Annette, to hand over an orangutan that had obviously been poached, with a wound that stank so badly no one wished to come near him.

Annette bargained, cried and pleaded, but eventually paid 3/4ths of the asking price, as she was too far to seek help from any authorities. But she, like all of us, know the risk is real that the ‘owner’, encouraged by easy money, will go out and capture another young orangutan, in the process killing the mother.

We ask our readers to consider not buying orangutans or other endangered wildlife, and to please contact the authorities where possible if offered wildlife for sale. We know every feeling must revolt at leaving an orangutan as wounded as Dian, but by buying, we feed the illegal wildlife trade. Ultimately, for each of us, this must come down to an individual decision taking into account the situation at the time.

Annette, thank you for your kindness. Vale, Dian.



Semi-wild Robert injured, treated



the wound, removed several maggots and stitched him up. We've named his Robert.

Mid-September, a semi-wild orangutan approached our camp for refuge. He was a young adult male, beginning to develop cheekpads, very thin, obviously ill and with an open wound above the right scapula. Given his weak condition and the possibility of life-threatening secondary infection, we decided to treat. Staff duly tranquillised him with a blowpipe; we took him to the clinic and our new vet, Drh Made Marthady, cleaned



material to keep off the rain! We intend to release him further afield when he is fully recovered.

Currently, Robert is recovering from his operation; we have his samples and measurements and are fattening him up while awaiting his blood test results. He is still very thin, but has started to eat more heartily. Pleasingly, Robert continues to show semi-wild signs, making lip-squeaks to scare away the nasty humans, enjoying the wild forest fruit we add to his diet, and despite there being a roof to his cage, using the leaves we provide for nesting

Jodi, Daniel and Butet have TBC, Hepatitis C



This period, we have very sad news. The young orangutan we recently received, Jodi, has tested positive for Tuberculosis (TBC). Her x-rays initially showed signs of TB, and this was confirmed through blood tests done at the Tropical Disease Centre, Surabaya. Jodi has yet to emerge from quarantine since being handed to us in August; these results mean that she will remain in quarantine for many more months, while undergoing treatment.

We also took the opportunity to test blood samples of our other orangutans for TB, although strictly speaking there was no need as there have been no clinical or radiographic signs of any disease previously. To our dismay, Daniel and Butet tested positive for TB; they also tested positive for Hepatitis C.

It is possible that Daniel and Butet contracted the disease from wild orangutans they mixed with in Tanjung Harapan. It is also possible the X-ray tests were inaccurate. For Daniel and Butet, it is a huge blow – they have been used to living and sleeping in the forest; now, they must be confined. Luckily, we recently completed construction of an outdoor quarantine area, where the orangutans will have more space, fresh air, and sunshine; even so, they will lose their freedom if only for some time.





APPEAL

For Jodi, Daniel and Butet, the minimal period for treatment is 6 months, and this can be much longer depending on how they respond to treatment. We will give them the best of care; however the fact remains that our cages and facilities are limited. Our cages are designed to provide the bare minimum, to encourage orangutans to sleep in the wild. We need more large cages that will allow more movement; more toys, tyres, chains for swinging on. We can no longer just provide a bland diet of bananas and let the orangutans find their own food in the forest; we have to replace their

natural diet with a balanced captive diet that will help them combat disease. The orangutans need regular bimonthly tests, better medical equipment and supplies. Please, if you wish to help, we ask for any donations you can give. All donations will be acknowledged. If you have any queries, if you wish to donate or if you want to find out more about the orangutans, please feel free to write direct to our vet, Drh Yenny Fildayani, on yeniorut@fnpf.org

Study Tour and Thank You to Wanariset

We wish to thank BOS-Wanariset Orangutan Conservation Project for hosting our vet, Drh Yenny Fildayani, from 13th to 16th October. In particular, we wish to thank Dr Willie Smits, Dr Aldrianto, Dr Citra and Mr. Ghazali for their kind hospitality and their generous knowledge.

FOREST UNDER THREAT

Illegal Logging Arrested; Palm Oil Encroachment?



This period has seen a resurgence in logging activity especially along the Eastern and Northern borders of the park. Late in September, our staff together with local villagers helped forest police locate illegal loggers in Sungai Tinggiran. Forty logs were seized; one of the suspects was a boy not yet fifteen, who had recently attended the Forest Police's conservation education talks.

Barely a week later, 4 people from East Jawa were arrested near the Seruyan border. 700 logs of Meranti were seized, together with 2 chainsaws, 2 machetes and a boat. That week, trucks carrying illegal logs suspected to be from the park were also stopped near Palangkaraya.



This upsurge in logging activity is seen by some to be a test of the new political climate. Both the Governor of Central Kalimantan and the new Regent of Seruyan have recently given in-principle agreement to four palm oil plantations (PT KUCC, PT BEST, PT GIAT, PT WSSLGE) to work land apparently set aside for production forest. This land makes up part of the buffer zone of the Park and cannot be used for any other purpose including estate expansion.

Interestingly, the Governor claims there has been no violation, as he is using a Regional Government map which differs from that published by the Ministry of Forestry, which map indicates that the land in question actually lies outside the Park borders. We await developments.



Drought Enters 5th month



Meanwhile the dry season continues unabated, with no rain to speak of since May. Fire is everywhere; crops are dying. Thanks to the new pump and water tower we installed, we have limited the damage but despite daily watering our reforestation work has been badly hit. The dry weather has also drawn pigs and deer in search of food to our reforestation sites, and these animals have wreaked havoc on young plants.



On the positive side, the pioneer growth is showing signs of overtopping the illalang after one and a half years, and we can now begin to plant some seedlings under these pioneers, which will act to provide shade and leaf litter, cooling and enriching the soil.



Despite these trials or perhaps because of them, we have learned many important lessons about risk mitigation and appropriate nursery and site preparation practices in illalang-infested sites. We are currently documenting these lessons; hopefully they can in turn benefit others. We wish to thank the US Fish and Wildlife Services Agency for supporting this work.

Forest Police, Village and FNPF co-operation



As part of our Gibbon Foundation-funded program, FNPF continues to provide funds for the Forest Police. This period, we purchased a new body for their speedboat, as well as a motorised wooden boat ('Alkon') for use in the forest post near Sg Buluh. The alkon will enable Forest Police to patrol small rivers inaccessible via speedboat; it will also allow them to travel to nearby villages to give talks, fire awareness training, and to build ties with locals.



In October, FNPF staff joined Forest Technicians and Forest Police to do an inventory of damaged forest near Sungai Cabang village. The results were terrifying; we had to walk 5.8 kms over burnt denuded land, all ex-logging concession, before we reached anything resembling forest. That night, we did a 'time map' with villagers, where they described how the land had changed



from lush forest to the current situation where lack of trees is causing salt water intrusion and water and soil problems, affecting their lives.

FNPF together with Pak Saut Manalu, SH., Section Head of Park Territory III will continue to meet with village authorities at Sungai Cabang, to discuss ways in which all parties can work to support the village and the forest. We hope to have concrete proposals for community forestry and joint wildlife and fire patrols early next year.



VILLAGE SUPPORT PROGRAM

Well attended Health Seminar at Illegal Gold Mine



On 2nd October, we brought a team of two doctors, a midwife, a vet and a lawyer to Danau Rasau, a mining village on the outskirts of the Park. We wanted to gather data, to educate miners on health risks, and to open dialogue on how villagers can mine legally. Although the village is in the buffer zone, their activities impact the Park – illegal mining causes massive deforestation; a three-man team will create a crater 30 mtrs wide, 20 mtrs deep in a few months. Just as worrying, mercury is used for extraction; this is then dumped into the soil or

into disused mining pools. At Aspai, another mining village further upstream, mercury is dumped directly into the rivers that feed the Park.



We were extremely well received with over 70 people attending the talks and receiving free health checks, gloves and masks. Dr Ivo and Dr Untung spoke on preventive measures such as proper waste disposal, using water plants to absorb mercury and reduce the risk of stagnant pools becoming mosquito breeding grounds, using boiled water and gloves and not bathing in disused mining pools to reduce diarrhoea and skin disease. Jhon Manik (BLaws) discussed the rights and responsibilities of miners and the benefits of legalising their activities.



Following up from this visit, Dr Ivo, who is also head of the Local Health Service at Kumai, promised to send a midwife to run a Posyandu (health check for children and babies) at the village, with the costs for vaccines and food supplements being borne by the authorities. FNPF will send a vet with the midwife, to provide livestock health checks. The mining head also approached Pak Jhon to discuss seeking legal status, and they agreed to take the issue further to the Camat (Sub-District Head).

FNPF will continue to work with this and other villages on health and water issues. We wish to thank the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) Australia for funding this program.

EcoTourism, Culture and Park Promotion



Thanks to DEH Australia, we commenced a program this month to provide part-support for teachers in traditional carving, dance and martial art at Sg Sekonyer village. These subjects will be incorporated into the school syllabus, as part of ExtraCurricular activities; they will also be available for older villagers. The aim is cultural revival & maintenance; these activities also have eco-tourism potential as a drawcard for visitors.



During the recent District Trade Fair in October, FNPf arranged for a troupe of schoolgirl dancers to perform in front of the Regent. Other artisans from the village also participated in the Fair, showing off their skills with batik, batimung and carving, and receiving encouragement and praise.



The Trade Fair was held over 10 days, during which time several hundred people came through the Park stall. In a first for the Park, several NGOs including FNPf, Yayorin and WE came together to organise a joint stall with Park Authorities, hopefully a sign of greater cooperation to come. FNPf also sponsored day-trips for members of the public to the Park, in a move to boost local tourism.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAM

New Primary School Program

Our conservation education work continues, with FNPf hosting 10 secondary students from SMK Harapan PangkalanBun this period. Also, on 22nd September, we trialled a new format for in-situ conservation education aimed at primary school children.



The new format includes games and puppet shows, and the children are encouraged to draw the wildlife they encountered, to collect plant samples, and to participate actively in question and answer sessions.

Although we were initially worried, the format was a huge success – the schoolmaster wanted to repeat the program to include more children from other classes, and the children were very keen on further activities. We intend to refine this format for use in more primary schools.

We would like to offer a personal ‘thank you’ to Mr. Fred Bagley, without whose encouragement we would not have attempted to design a program for young children.



Primary students drawing birds and wildlife



Secondary students from SMK Harapan

***Revamped Information Room –
Introducing Jon Wild, volunteer extraordinaire!***



This period, we welcome Jon Wild from England, who joins us for 2 months to revamp the Information Room at Tanjung Harapan post.

Jon is an experienced Project Manager and Designer, having worked in the Computer Games industry for over 10 years. We are extremely fortunate to have someone with his technical and managerial skills to help us. Jon’s resemblance to Lou Ferrigno and his sense of humour has already won him fans among the women & children!

Although Jon has been with us barely a month, he is already starting to weave his magic on the barn-like space that formerly did duty as an Information Room.

Jon’s theme of a forest setting, incorporating an indoor walkway, old tree trunks, a forest floor and natural materials such as rattan and purun give us hope that we will indeed have an Information Room worthy of the beauty of Tanjung Puting.

Jon, thank you so much!



***Such is our newsletter for the period. Thank You Everyone!
Respectfully, FNPF staff and volunteers***