



# The Jungle Times

Independent newsletter of:



Est. 2008

Issue: 54

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# Arrivals



**Barbara Marti** completed her degree in Biology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She will be volunteering at DGFC for 5 months helping with various research projects.

**Yeoh Boon Nie and Chee Hong Zhang** are newly graduated veterinarian students from Universiti Putra Malaysia. They are both staying at DGFC for an internship, Boon for one month and Hong for two weeks.



**Fikri Rosli** is a student at Universiti Malaya studying environmental science. He will be volunteering here for 5 days to get a taste of the research programmes at DGFC.



# New PTY students

DGFC recently welcomed the arrival of four new PTY students from Cardiff University. Hannah, Anya, Sarah and Kieran will spend one year at the centre. They will design and carry out their own research project as well as helping with the other on going projects here at DGFC.

This will be an excellent opportunity for them to gain valuable experience in field work before they return to Cardiff to complete their final year of biological and zoological study.





# Bornean Banteng Project

This month two PTY students Steph and Naomi from Cardiff University joined the Bornean Banteng Programme. This is a unique placement assisting Cardiff PhD student Penny Gardner with her research into the ecology, range and population genetics of banteng, which is funded by Yayasan Sime Darby.



Banteng (*Bos javanicus lowii*) are members of the cattle family and resemble domestic cattle, but with distinctive white stockings and a white rump. They live wild in the forests in isolated parts of Sabah but are threatened by habitat fragmentation, hunting and hybridisation amongst others. Banteng are listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List for endangered species and their protection is hindered by a lack of knowledge about their population dynamics and distribution.



Banteng are very elusive so much of the work is done using camera traps and looking at faeces and footprints. The cameras are motion and heat sensitive and are placed on trees along banteng paths and in large grid formations.



# Banteng Project Continued...

Here is what Steph and Naomi have been up to:



The terrain varies from steep slopes to deep bogs and waist high rivers, luckily with no crocodiles! After expeditions we have to sort the photos from the SD cards, identify all the species and prepare cameras for new locations as well as compiling all the data.



“As part of our placement we are travelling between many forest reserves where populations of banteng have been reported and setting camera traps. Every month we go on 2-3 expeditions to collect the SD cards and change the batteries in the camera traps. In the grids there are 72 cameras and each camera holds 12 batteries, so it’s heavy work!



We also collect dung samples which are sent back to Cardiff University to analyse the population genetics of the banteng. We are also helping the Sabah Wildlife Department, Sabah Forestry Department and Yayasan Sabah by recording any signs of illegal hunting activity within the forest reserves”.



# Goodbye Mike

On the 20<sup>th</sup> August DGFC said goodbye to the final 2012-2013 PTY student Michael Reynolds. Mike spent one year at DGFC studying parasite diversity and density in freshwater fish in the Kinabatangan river. He compared parasite fauna between fish caught in the river, oxbows and tributaries. The project also looked at how changing surrounding land use impacts parasite communities.



## **Mike's thoughts:**

“What a privilege it has been to work alongside an incredible bunch of people in such a magical place. A HUGE thank you to the DGFC family for an unforgettable year. It has been filled with awesome experiences throughout of which I will remember for many years to come”.

Thanks for all your hard work this year. DGFC won't be the same without you and your crazy faces!



# More farewells

This month we also said goodbye to four more friends as they headed back to France to continue their studies.

**Maëlle Fusillier** and **Charlotte Aggouni** are veterinary students from Toulouse National Veterinary School and worked with us for 10 weeks. Maëlle studied ectoparasites of small mammals whilst Charlotte studied haemoparasites in monitor lizards.



**François Ciavatti** and **Priscillia Miard** are students from Grenoble University. Priscillia spent 5 months studying home ranges of nocturnal primates and François spent 6 months studying the population biology and home ranges of monitor lizards.



# St Bart's field course

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 18 sixth form students from St. Bartholomew's College in Newbury Berkshire arrived for a one week field course at DGFC. Led by expedition leader Jade Bielski the course had previously been in Sepilok as well as taking part in a coral cleaning project on Gaya Island.

During their week here the students joined in with a number of projects such as:

- Nocturnal primate tracking
- Studying fish parasites
- Small mammal trapping
- Monitor lizard tracking
- Crocodile tagging



They also partook in a river clean up over the week and managed to collect over 270 kgs of rubbish in two Kinabatangan tributaries and the main river.





# Quotes from St Bart's:

**Luc Edwards** - "Thank you so much to everyone for sharing your expertise with us. Everything was so captivating and interesting and I will never forget any of these amazing experiences. Good luck with all of your research and thank you".



**Laura Randle** - "The past 6 days will definitely be ones I will remember forever. My highlights have been cast fishing, seeing the elephants and the trip down the river to see crocodiles".

**Luke Scarrett** - "Thank you for the best week of my life. Everyone here has been really friendly and made us feel welcome. I have seen so many exciting things".



**Jade Bielski (expedition leader)** - "The bar was set very high when we saw an elephant herd on our way here. But the excitement has not stopped – wild orangutans, monitor lizards, crocs, amazing night walks. A huge thank you to the research team for your hard work and sharing your knowledge".



# St Bart's Photo Gallery....





# New Collars Arrive

This month new satellite collars arrived for two projects at DGFC! Seven collars from e-obs, funded by Sime Darby Foundation, will be used by PhD student Meg Harris to track the movements of civets. Her project focuses on spatial ecology and ecotoxicology of the Bornean small carnivore guild and is set to commence this autumn.



Six sun bear collars from African Wildlife Tracking and funded by DGFC also arrived which will be used by Master student Roshan Guharajan.





# Sun Bear Training

In preparation for Roshan's sun bear project he held a meeting to show all the researchers at DGFC the procedure if a sun bear was caught in a trap. He explained how to approach the animal, the anaesthesia procedure and how to take the necessary measurements. A team of six will be needed to carry out the collaring process so it is important that everyone is trained in the proper methods.



Once a bear is caught and collared, Roshan will track the GPS points to look at the home range sizes. He will also be looking at habitat and resource use as well as plantation usage.

We are all very excited for the trapping to begin so fingers crossed!



# MonkeyBar Family

One of the principle investigators of the MonkeyBar project, Chris Drakeley, his wife Tanya and their children came to stay at DGFC for three days whilst on a family holiday in Borneo. Chris is also a professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. We interviewed Chris to find out more about the project:



## **Tell us about the MonkeyBar project and its main aims:**

The MonkeyBar project is an interdisciplinary project to look at the increase in a type of malaria called *Plasmodium knowlesi* which is primarily found in long- and pig-tailed macaques. In macaques the infection is asymptomatic with no major deleterious effects on their health, however in humans it can be life threatening. The main aim is to know why *P. knowlesi* is on the increase in Sabah. The hypothesis is that changing land use patterns are bringing macaques and humans in to closer contact so that mosquito vectors have a greater chance to mediate the transmission.



# Interview continued...

## **Main role as leader of the project?**

The project is split into two main parts. The first is a case control study for which we recruit cases of malaria in Kudat hospital. In the areas of the cases we carry out mosquito catches to find out the difference in relative exposure as well using social science. There is also a primatology component for which we are involved with SWD and by extension DGFC who will be monitoring movements of macaques. My role is managerial trying to get all the parts operating at the same time in the same place.

## **What have been the main findings so far?**

The biggest concern is that there will be human to human transmission. We have no evidence of that yet but we do have evidence of family clustered infection. This could be due to one mosquito biting all the individuals in one house. This suggests that all the factors are there for human to human transmission.

## **What are the future plans for the project?**

We plan for the activities to run for three years then we will move from an individual to a population based investigation. We will carry out large surveys of villages and assess the evidence of infection and exposure. We will also run PCR on blood to look at parasites and do antibody assays to see if they have ever been exposed.

## **What have been your highlights during your stay at DGFC?**

I have enjoyed every minute. The best part is the fact that we can go around with researchers. I can speak research. It is great not being shown animals from a touristic point of view. I liked the frogs the best.



# Elephants in DGFC

Over the last month we have had the privilege of sharing the forest with the elephants. We have been lucky enough to see them crossing the river and they have even come to investigate the centre.



There are currently nine elephants collared in the Kinabatangan area. PhD student Farina Othman is monitoring their behaviour and movements through the forest.

DGFC is working hard to protect elephants in Sabah, with the support of a number of foundations and zoos such as Elephant family, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Asian Elephant Foundation, Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Houston Zoo and Columbus Zoo".



# Selamat Hari Raya



The 9<sup>th</sup> of August was the start of Hari Raya, the month long celebration to mark the end of Ramadan. On the 19<sup>th</sup> DGFC held its own open house in the staff quarters where we all wore traditional dress and feasted on Malaysian food including delicious cookies and cakes.

A further cause for celebration was the fourth birthday of Ikin, one of the children at DGFC. A huge thank you to all the DGFC staff for opening up your home to us all.





# The Bornean Wild Cat Vet Project

The Bornean Wild Cat Vet project is a collaboration between Sabah Wildlife Department, Universidad Complutense Madrid, WildCRU and DGFC. The project aims to identify disease threats for felids such as the Sunda clouded leopard, flat headed cat and the leopard cat in the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary. Samples will be taken from individuals in order to identify potential diseases that may threaten such felids.



PhD student Fernando will use the data as part of the database of chemical immobilizations of Bornean felids.



This adult male leopard cat was 2.2 kg, he was healthy and had no ectoparasites.



# Other news...

Danau Girang Field Centre has an article in the new issue of Breeze magazine. It also features Dr Sen Nathan, Senior Wildlife Veterinarian and Assistant Director of Sabah Wildlife Department. This is great publicity for all the hard work going on at DGFC!



DGFC had an article published in the August edition of Turtle Survival. The article described the first records of the Asian giant softshell turtle, *Pelochelys cantorii* in Kinabatangan river.

On 17 and 18 August, PhD student Luke Evans and the DGFC team caught two crocodiles between DGFC and Batu Puteh. One female of 1.95 m and one male of 2.70 m. This project is funded by Chester Zoo and DGFC.





# Conservation Corner: Malayan Giant Turtle

**Common name: Malayan Giant  
Turtle**

**Scientific name: *Orlitia borneensis***

**ICUN status: Endangered**



## **Ecology:**

The Malayan giant turtle is the largest fresh water turtle on Borneo, growing to 800mm carapace length. It lives in large rivers and estuaries. The turtle nests on river banks and river islands with females laying 12 to 15 eggs at a time.

## **Threats:**

- Habitat loss
- Hunting for meat



## **Conservation:**

- It is listed on CITES Appendix II
- Protected in Sarawak on the island of Borneo under the Fauna Conservation Ordinance of 1963.
- International trade of the Malayan giant turtle is carefully monitored however illegal trafficking still occurs.



# Match the Malay

Can you match these animals to their Malay names?

Monitor lizard

Crocodile

Tarsier



Buaya

Kera hantu

Biawak

Babi hutan

Bangkatan

## Jungle Fact of the Month

Mosquitos are attracted to the colour blue twice as much as to any other colour.



# Photos of the Month!



Photos left to right: Pig-tailed macaque (photo by François Ciavatti); elephants in the Kinabatangan; Kinabatangan sunset (photos by Budin); students celebrating Hari Raya; bridge building; release of a crocodile (photos by Meg Harris).



## Danau Girang Field Centre

*Danau Girang Field Centre was opened in July 2008.  
It is located in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary,  
Sabah, Malaysia.*

*Danau Girang is owned by the Sabah Wildlife Department  
and supported by Cardiff University. Its purpose is to further  
scientific research with the aim of contributing to long-term  
conservation projects in the area, and develop a better  
understanding of our environment and the living things we  
share it with.*

### **Danau Girang Field Centre**

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