



The Jungle Times

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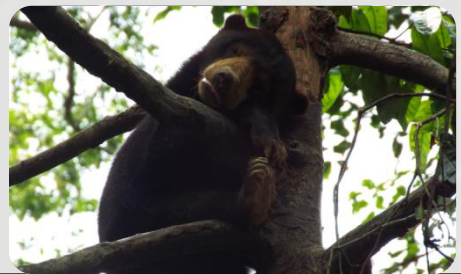
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Visitors

Alex Horton, the PhD student who stayed and studied at DG for 3 months last year looking at river flow and bank erosion rates, has a supervisor based in Cardiff University. His supervisor visited us this month. Tristram C. Hales is a lecturer for Cardiff School of Earth Sciences and came to see if there was room for more projects. He was also here to take extra samples and was extremely excited when he was taken to Batangan (our limestone ridge) because the soil was very interesting.

It will be amazing if we can gain some students from the earth science department as zoology is the main component of the team. We cannot answer questions about the environment that our study species live in so it would be beneficial for our team to have someone who can.



Arrivals

This month saw the arrival of a new PhD student, this is great for DG as the first PhD students are finishing or nearly finishing so it is wonderful to have fresh meat, so to speak.

Valentine (Valou) was based at DG a couple of years ago to complete her masters degree. She is working on proboscis monkeys, just as she did before. This time she is looking at proboscis monkey diet. This means that she has to study faeces.

Proboscis monkeys are herbivorous and when they eat, not all of the food is digested so some plant DNA makes its way into the faeces. Valou will sequence the faecal DNA and compare it to the plant DNA database that she will also create. This will enable her to identify what species of plants they eat the most.



Arrivals cont.

The plant DNA database is created by collecting sample leaves of tree species where she has seen feeding behaviour during sleeping site observation.

She also aims to quantify diet variation by studying the seed to leaf ratio in the faeces. Is there a difference between season, are they eating more fruit at a particular time or in a particular habitat or even vice versa?

Valou will not be staying with us for the full PhD but will instead visit us for field missions, this is her first and it will last 3 months. After this one is complete she will come back for 3 more missions.



Goodbyes

After being with us for two months, Daan Kinsbergen has returned to The Netherlands. He had an intense project here and had to process 10 botanical plots so as to ascertain which tree characteristics are preferred by orangutans when building sleeping nests. This takes a lot of patience and luckily he had a devout helper, Dean. Together they picked up the pace and completed the plots in the space of a month. Sometimes out for six hours at a time. The project is for Daan's bachelor thesis and now that the work is complete we wish him the best of luck for it.



Our month-long bubbly volunteer from Bristol, Christy, also left this month after helping out on every project available, even braving it for a 12 hour orangutan shift and a 6 hour nocturnal primate shift. We will miss your epic stories.



Goodbyes cont.

Lisa Fijn was one of our orangutan girls, it was her time to leave this month after being with us for four months. During her time here she worked with Sara Bunel, together they completed 12-hour shifts following our resident orangutans. They had to record behaviour every two minutes and a GPS location every 30minutes. They have observed many interesting things such as a mother orangutan building a pillow out of leaves to rest her head on during sleep. This job is tough and both girls have done an amazing one, Sara will continue the work with the help of a volunteer now that Lisa has finished.



New Manager

As DG grows more successful, as does the requirements on the staff. Budin, our ex-manager, was doing a fantastic job and to help him further we now have a new manager that will be permanently based at DG enabling Budin to be an efficient logistics officer.

The new manager is called Peter and he used to manage a Secret Recipe, a chain restaurant here in Malaysia, and also managed a lodge in Sukau. He is more than fit for the role and has already got DG into ship shape. DG is looking its finest just in time for field course season. Welcome to the team, Peter!



DG's Photographer

As well as carrying out his PhD, Rudi Delvaux is also our personal photographer, catching some amazing shots of some incredible wildlife. Here are just some of our favourites!



Naomi's Nightmares

DG was fortunate to host the BBC from the 11th to the 17th May, they were here to film nightmarish animals for the CBBC show Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. These scary animals included the monitor lizard, the proboscis monkey and the slow loris.

Naomi aims to enlighten children about nature and also whether animals are as scary as they seem, or whether they wholly deserve their reputation. With the toxic bite of a monitor lizard and the venom secreting brachial glands of the loris, the two earned the gold medal in nightmares.

As a result of the filming some people from DG will end up on TV when the show is aired sometime in autumn. Danica can be seen with the proboscis monkeys, Sergio with the monitor lizards and Kirsty and Roxy with the slow loris. We look forward to seeing the soon to be DG celebrities in action.



Banteng

In preparation for the departure of our current Banteng PTY students next month, and in extension of last month's Banteng Jungle Times update, we will give a run down of the projects and questions of this year's Banteng team.



In order to evaluate the extent of habitat loss and the present-day distribution of banteng across Sabah, the BBP field team leader Lim Hong Ye (Hugo) is using the presence/absence data collected during the state-wide surveys to perform distribution modelling for his Masters research project. Late last year (2014) Hugo passed his oral defence of his MSc proposal and he has since been researching the range of suitable modelling techniques with assistance from Dr. Nicola Abram.



As part of their year-long placement with the Bornean Banteng Programme, Molly and Katie have to undertake a small research project on the Bornean banteng ecology. Katie Journeaux (BSc (Hons) in Biology) has chosen to study the herd demography and sexual segregation of banteng using recognition and recapture histories of individuals. To date, she had identified at least 38 different individuals in Kuamut, with a maximum herd size of 21 including five new calves, indicating optimal environmental condition for breeding which may contribute to population expansion.

Molly Ellis (BSc (Hons) in Zoology) has chosen to investigate the nature and distribution of illegal activity and the effect on the behaviour of the banteng. Molly has been developing her datasets on banteng activity patterns and also working with Lucy Peter (DGFC Conservation Planning Officer) to map the extent of illegal activities within the forests surveyed by BBP. Last month this information was included in a presentation by Benoit at a conference on the illegal wildlife trade and poaching.

Loris Shenanigans

Nycticebus menagensis is our slow loris inhabitant, it is severely understudied in science. There is still a lot to learn about this species, especially concerning similarities to other species of slow loris. For instance, other lorises have been known to sleep in trios or larger groups. However, for this species only solitary sleeping has been recorded, mothers and infants excluded. This month on a shift, the nocturnal primate girls witnessed Cowo (resident male) sleeping with Boss (well known female around DG). This observation confirms the necessity to collar these animals, without the collars, or without just one collar in our pair, this piece of information may have been missed.

The fact that this behaviour was observed may explain another unusual behaviour attributed to Cowo on an earlier shift. He got into a fight with another male, that was in Boss' territory. Another male who was advancing in her range just after she lost her baby. She must have been giving off signs that she was again receptive to mating because the fight ensued (possible fight for dominance) and then Cowo and Boss seemed to undergo courtship. The result was sleeping together twice and spending all of the night participating in social behaviour.



Sun Bear Release!

This month, DGFC was proud to announce its help with the release of a sun bear, named Natalie. Natalie who was rescued after poachers killed her mother, became the first to be released into the wild after she returned to the reserve forest of Lahad Datu last week.



Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) founder Wong Siew Te said Natalie, who arrived at the centre in December 2010 aged three months, has come of age in the four and a half years under their care and that the rare sun bear is now ready to fend for herself. The BSBCC and Sabah Wildlife Department have been monitoring Natalie's movements and progress at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve through a satellite collar fitted on her, after she was airlifted by a helicopter from Layang-Layang Aerospace Sdn Bhd into the protected area, away from settlements and oil palm plantations.



“The release of Natalie is a sign of BSBCC's success and I believe more bears will be released into the wild in the near future,” said SWD director William Baya. Here at DG, we wish Natalie the best of luck in the big World and hope she won't be the last to be successfully released!

Match the frog...

1



2



3



A

Rough-sided Frog

B

White-lipped Tree Frog

C

File-eared Tree Frog

Fact of the month:

Binturong are the only known dispersers of strangler fig seeds, and they smell like popcorn!

Photos of the Month!



Photo's taken by: Kirsty Franklin and Timmy Garvey

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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