



The Jungle Times

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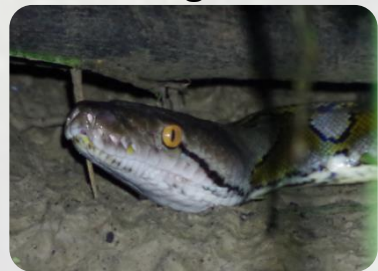
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UWCSEA Field course



Two groups of year 10 students from UWCSEA school in Singapore visited for a week each between the 8th – 22nd of this month. At the start of each week, the group of students were split into three teams with two PTY students/volunteers leading each team. Each week was packed with activities for the students; including setting camera traps, conducting bird and primate surveys, measuring botanic plots, catching butterflies and lizards, searching for spiders and lots more! A competitive edge was added to the week as the students performance in each activity was scored by their leaders and at the end of the week a winning team was announced and awarded a special DG prize!



Win or lose however, all would agree the students from both groups performed spectacularly throughout the week, fully engaging with the researchers, staff and

activities throughout their stay. They also conducted their own research into a chosen conservation topic which they presented to the DGFC team on their last day. Lastly, the field courses' hard work during the river clean up activities deserves a special mention, as a combined total of almost 300kg of litter was removed from the Kinabatangan river across the two weeks!



Video Launch

In collaboration with Sabah Wildlife Department and Scubazoo, DGFC has launched a series of moving three-minute video clips online highlighting the major threats currently faced by Sabah's rarer wildlife species. Each video focuses on one of three conservation crises: illegal exotic pet trade, illegal wildlife hunting, and illegal wildlife products; with real footage displaying the cruelty of these activities whilst also depicting the devastating extent to which illegal wildlife trades can decimate wild populations of Sabah's rarest and most iconic wildlife species. Through the continued sharing of media through widely used social networks such as Facebook, we hope to raise conservation awareness towards the most pressing threats facing Sabah's wildlife – particularly amongst communities of people who may unknowingly be contributing to cruel wildlife trades – and encourage positive action to be taken toward preventing illegal wildlife trades to continue. So if you haven't done so already, we urge you to spare three minutes of your day and head to the DGFC Facebook page and watch our videos!

PhD Update – Pythons

Since returning from Meg and Luke's wedding to DGFC at the start of this month, PhD student Richard Burger has been hard at work finding and catching reticulated pythons in the forests surrounding DG, as well as on the riverbank along the Kinabatangan. With four new reticulated pythons successfully caught and sampled this month (bringing him up to a total of 20 captured individuals + two recaptures), his efforts have been incredibly worthwhile! By taking morphological measurements alongside blood, faecal, tissue and parasite samples from each snake, Rich hopes to gain an insight into the diet and health of the world's longest python; which – despite being a popular pet and zoo species – has very little known about them in the wild!



PhD Update continued...

Furthermore, this October marks a significant step forward for Rich's PhD insofar that he has managed to collar his first snake! A 3.6m female reticulated python was named 'Pilat' after the Dusun word for scar, due to a scar present on its head, likely due to a tussle with its lunch! She was taken to Sepilok, where Wildlife Rescue Unit's veterinarian Dr Laura Benedict attached a GPS collar to the tail of the snake. This is the first time a reticulated python has ever been tagged with a GPS unit, offering Rich the exciting opportunity of being the first person to conduct an in-depth analysis of the spatial ecology of wild reticulated pythons! Pilat has since been released back into the forest where she was originally captured so that Rich can routinely track her movements. Good luck Rich!



My Fin My Life

On the 24th of this Month, Dr Benoit Goossens attended the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) Malaysia and Sabah Shark Protection Association (SSPA) business dialogue, 'My Fin My Life' – a campaign working to raise awareness amongst Malaysians that the demand for shark fin is threatening the survival of shark populations in Sabah. Shark hunting is still legal in Sabah, with the Federal government claiming it is a small industry with insignificant effect. However, research suggests that shark populations in Sabah may have declined by up to 80% due to shark hunting! Furthermore, shark hunting is an excessively cruel and wasteful industry, with harmful knock on effects toward Sabah's marine ecosystems. Key points discussed at the conference involved the economical importance of wild shark populations in Sabah as a tourist attraction. The diving industry grosses between RM350 to RM380 million each year, and also has one of the highest percentage of local employment in Malaysia. Additionally, it is estimated that 80% of visiting divers want to see sharks in the wild, something Sabah will no longer be able to offer should their shark populations continue to be hunted! Fortunately, work is underway for the protection of sharks, as plans to convert all marine parks into shark sanctuaries have been passed by the State Assembly. Nevertheless, shark hunting and finning is an ongoing and pressing concern, and as consumers it is our responsibility to ensure never to buy shark products!

Published paper: Nest density of the Black-and-Red Broadbill

A study carried out during the Leiden field course at DGFC earlier this year was published this month in the Journal of Tropical Biology and Conservation (No. 13/2016). The study aimed to understand the population density of black and red broadbills (*Cymbirhynchus macrohyncos*) along the Kinabatangan River by surveying 55.6 km over a three day period.

The authors investigated whether there was a correlation between the abundance of nests and their surrounding habitat type, and whether black-and-red broadbills require riparian zones at the riverbank for nesting sites.



The study concluded that the abundance of nests was significantly higher in areas with a higher proportion of forest habitat type compared to disturbed habitat. The use of artificial nests above water nests along the river edge may increase the population density of black and red broadbills.

Published paper: Sleeping sites of Proboscis Monkeys

DGFC members Valentine Thiry, Danica Stark and Benoit Goossens have a new publication this month in *Folia Primatologica* on the factors that influence the selection of sleeping sites by proboscis monkeys. There were 81 sleeping sites identified over a three-month period and the survey indicated that proboscis monkeys prefer to choose tall sleeping trees with a high first branch as a means of defence from predation. It was also noted that females and juveniles tended to sleep higher in the tree than adult males, this may be due to their increased vulnerability to predation.



A visit from the Vice Chancellor of Cardiff University

On the 29th we were pleased to host the Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff University, Professor Colin Riordan and his colleagues Simon Wright and Richard Cotton, Head of Academic Registrar and Director of the International office respectively.

The visit was scheduled within a series of other meetings to try to form potential collaborations with other universities/corporations. Before coming to DG, they visited representatives from Xiamen University in China, the only university in China to have a campus outside of the country which happens to be in Kuala Lumpur. There is potential to form a collaboration between DGFC and the KL campus that could use the DGFC research to educate their KL campus students on the effects traditional Chinese medicine is having on the wildlife of Borneo. During their visit they were particularly impressed at the diversity of projects that are carried out at DG,

VC's visit continued...

saying that the centre “stands for everything that the university is about” in terms of research-led education. They also felt inspired by the sense of community that we have at DG and were impressed by our ability to sustain the field centre, which will be a whole lot easier now as the Vice Chancellor committing that the University will financially support the installation of solar panels, which we are very grateful for! Finally after being astonished by the vast areas of land degraded for the production of palm oil, the Vice chancellor suggested that Cardiff University might be able to implement the sale of sustainable palm oil products only, acting as an example to other Universities to do the same.



CONSERVATION

ORNER



BINTURONG

Arctictis binturong

Description: The largest Viverrid, the binturong can weigh up to 20kg and is covered in shaggy black fur. Belonging to its own unique genus, it's no surprise the binturong has some bizarre traits: including a prehensile tail with a rough patch for improved grip and a scent that smells like buttered popcorn! An arboreal animal, binturongs are only seen on the ground as they move between trees. They are omnivorous opportunists and important seed dispersers, and due to their fierceness have no natural predators. They are believed to mate in the trees (although never observed) and are one of the few mammals capable of delayed implantation!

Threats: Habitat loss to palm oil as well as being hunted for bush meat, traditional medicine and the pet trade.

Conservation: Vulnerable on the IUCN red list since 2008. Large captive bred populations across zoos.

Animalagrams!

The common names of four species of animal found in Sabah's rainforests have been jumbled up. Can you solve them all? (Answers at bottom of page)

1: CHATTERY UNPILOTED

2: QUIT CLAIMED AGAPE

3: LOUCOG

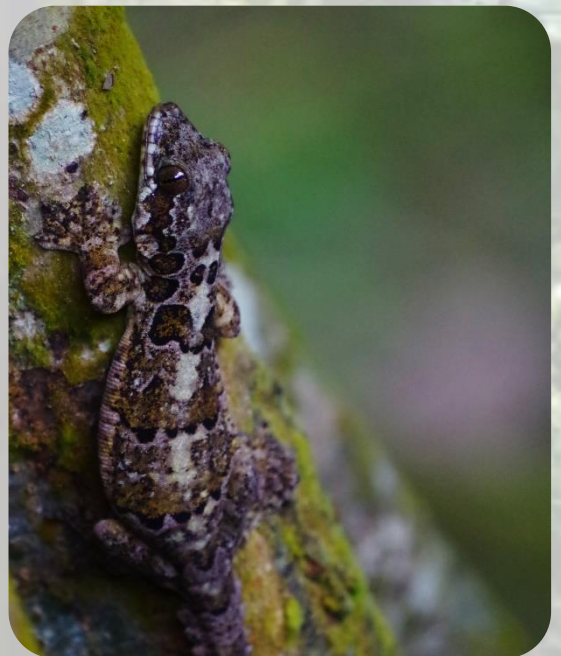
4: WHIFFY SOB FUL



Fact of the month!

Despite being only 10cm in length and weighing only 100g an adult tarsier can jump up to 3m in pursuit of its prey.

Photos of the month!



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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The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Cardiff University.

