

ISSUE 155

JULY - AUGUST 2024

THE JUNGLE TIMES

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSLETTER OF THE DANAU GIRANG FIELD CENTRE

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A Party of Polish Prize Winners

Daria, Joanna, Mariusz and Paulina, four PhD prize winners from Poland, chose Danau Girang Field Centre to spend 11 days as part of their university's celebratory scholarship programme. Despite them all being chemists, we were totally impressed by their enthusiasm to take part in every activity on offer and were even willing to volunteer to wake up at 3:30am and spend over eight hours in the forest to go bird mist netting as part of the centre's Regrow Borneo project. Along with our visitors from the United States Fisheries and Wildlife Department, they also gave presentations about their fascinating PhD research projects. To cap it all, they even caught sight of a herd of Bornean elephants from the boat, grazing near the riverbank.



Photo credit: Amaziasizamoria Jumail

Forensic visit from USA

During July we welcomed six visitors from the United States Fisheries and Wildlife Department



and the United States National Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, who visited us following presenting at the Society of Wildlife Forensic Science conference in Kuala Lumpur.

Erin, Eileen, Hope, Maria, Nikita and Pamela first visited our forensics laboratory in Kota Kinabalu, before taking a flight to Sandakan where they were collected from the airport. After the two-hour road journey to Batu Puteh and the 40-minute boat ride, along the Kinabatangan River, they arrived safely at the Field Centre. During

their stay, they took part in many of our research activities including animal tracking and jungle walks and we were also treated to presentations about their varied forensic work that they undertake in support of US Customs and other wildlife protection agencies.

Veterinarian Internship



Madita, from Munich (Germany) and a veterinarian undergraduate at Universität München, came to stay with us for two months as part of her internship. Passionate about becoming a wildlife veterinarian one day, Madita immersed herself in the day-to-day research activities in the field and, whenever possible, accompanied our very own resident veterinarian, Dr Reza, during his daily duties.

Miami University, Ohio Field Trip



Photo credit: Sabah Redman

It was good to meet our friends again and new students from across the United States, as part of the Project Dragonfly programme. This annual field course is organised through the Miami University, a public research university from Oxford, Ohio and the 10th-oldest public university in the United States. The students took boat trips, sighting many of the diverse species which rest from the heat of the forest to sleep in the trees along the Kinabatangan River at the end of the day. They also took part in various field activities and undertook their own research projects as part of their coursework.

Whenever this group visits, they never shy away from the opportunity to let their hair down after dinner and participate in local dancing and a singsong.

Academics drop by!

Adam, Alan, Craig and Dave, a group of academics from Australia, visited us while on their way to attend the World Congress of Herpetology in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia while Arik, Bella, Lameace, Madison and Gabe, a group of academics from the United States, visited us on their way home after attending the same conference.

They went crocodile spotting, from the safety of one of our boats, and attended night frog surveys as part of the biodiversity monitoring programme under the Regrow Borneo project. They also went on frequent night walks in the forest to spot the various species of snakes and lizards.

An update from the Regrow Borneo Project



*A picture of the captured Muller's rat (*Sundamys muelleri*) before release.*

Throughout August, Maz (Cardiff University, PhD student) carried out small mammal trapping and tree measuring as part of her planned botanical plot and planting site biodiversity data collection. Six days of trapping were conducted at Kabei Lake, having to check the traps twice a day, at 8 am and 4 pm. Over the six days, very few animals were captured and released, including one Muller's rat. This lack of captures is surprising given that this fully restored site is approximately 21 years old which is an interesting observation but may be due to the periodic flooding of the area. In fact, during the survey the water level rose significantly, increasing by almost two meters overnight and this is our dry season! Once the water subsided, the team began the cyclic collection of dung beetles and habitat assessments. During the temporary flooding, the team used the time to measure tree growth at the Ladang site, an area on higher ground and, therefore, less partial to flooding and managed to complete the assessment of 399 trees!!

Royal Holloway Field Course

It was a pleasure to receive Royal Holloway, University of London again this year with a large group of their undergraduate students. They enjoyed regular primate boat trips along the Kinabatangan River and were also lucky enough to see a number of orangutans during their stay who continue to pay the field centre a passing visit.



Photo credit: Amaziasizamoria Jumail

The group also spent an afternoon planting trees in one of our Regrow Borneo plots and were treated to a session of bird mist netting, led by DGFC's Research Assistant and bird expert, Ray. As well as enjoying the work undertaken at the centre, the students also undertook their own research projects as part of their studies.

Danau Girang Field Centre would also like to thank Dr Steve Portugal (back row 4th from the left) for his support, good humour and enthusiasm for the centre during his time as the leader of this field course over the past few years. We sincerely hope he returns one day, and we all wish him well in his latest adventure as he leaves Royal Holloway to join the Department of Biological Sciences at Oxford University.

Project Features – Sabah and Harry

Sabah Redman

Hi! I'm Sabah, a Research Assistant, just finishing off my Professional Training Year at Danau Girang Field Centre, undertaking my studies as part of the Field Centre's Regrow Borneo project.



Sabah and Field Assistant Otto setting a small mammal trap.

My project this year was researching mesocarnivores, mainly the leopard cats and Malay civets, and assessing the rodent population within their home ranges. I did this using camera traps and small mammal trapping in the plantations, the area of High Conservation Value within the plantation and Regrow Borneo's restored forest and assessed the diversity and density. I loved small mammal trapping, however there were a lot of challenges! Mainly with flooding and one the civets eating the bait within the traps before the rodents could get to them! I really enjoyed this project and gained so many more skills!

Harry Cholerton



Harry (right) bird spotting in a plantation

Hi, I'm Harry and I've almost finished with my Professional Training Year, as a Research Assistant (Regrow Borneo). My project title was 'Evaluating acoustic indices and BirdNET as proxies for avian richness in a fragmented tropical landscape'. I assessed two methods of analysing bird species richness just from acoustic measures to see if there was any correlation. I did this in multiple different locations along the Kinabatangan River including Regrow Borneo's restored forests and surrounding plantations. I am very passionate about the bird species here and their conservation, so I have loved this project. I have also developed the skills to use the audiomoths and learnt a lot about how to assess using audio data! I've loved it!

Welcome to a new recruit



In July, Lee Yang joined us from Hong Kong University (HKU) to work for our partners team who are investigating the origins and transmission mechanisms of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19. Yang was appointed by HKU to replace our long-term colleague Jerry, who has left us in August to start his PhD at HKU, he will come back next year to carry out his fieldwork.

Cardiff University MSc student

The team at Danau Girang Field Centre said a sad farewell to Lizzie in August, as she completed her two-month stay with us. As well as attending the Cardiff University Field Course in June, Lizzie stayed in DGFC to primarily focus on activities associated with her masters dissertation on proboscis monkeys. Actively supporting the collection and analysis of our camera trap data she also joined the Regrow Borneo team during their monitoring programmes.



*From L-R: Lizzie, Dr Reza (DGFC Veterinarian) and Joanna and Paulina from Poland out on camera trap duties.
Photo credit: Amaziasizamoria Jumail*

Global Opportunities, Cardiff University



Annie and Everton on the Kinabatangan River

Through the UK's Global Opportunities programme, Cardiff University offers its undergraduate students links to over 300 institutions and organisations, worldwide and Danau Girang Field Centre is one such facility. This year Annie Dunn and Everton Machado Simoes, from Cardiff University, were awarded Global Opportunities scholarships and chose to spend a month at the centre to actively take part in our ongoing research projects and experience first-hand what it's like to undertake research in a tropical rainforest.

PICTURE GALLERY

Just some of the birds captured during mist netting as part of the Regrow Borneo Project.
(Photo credits: Amaziasizamoria Jumail).



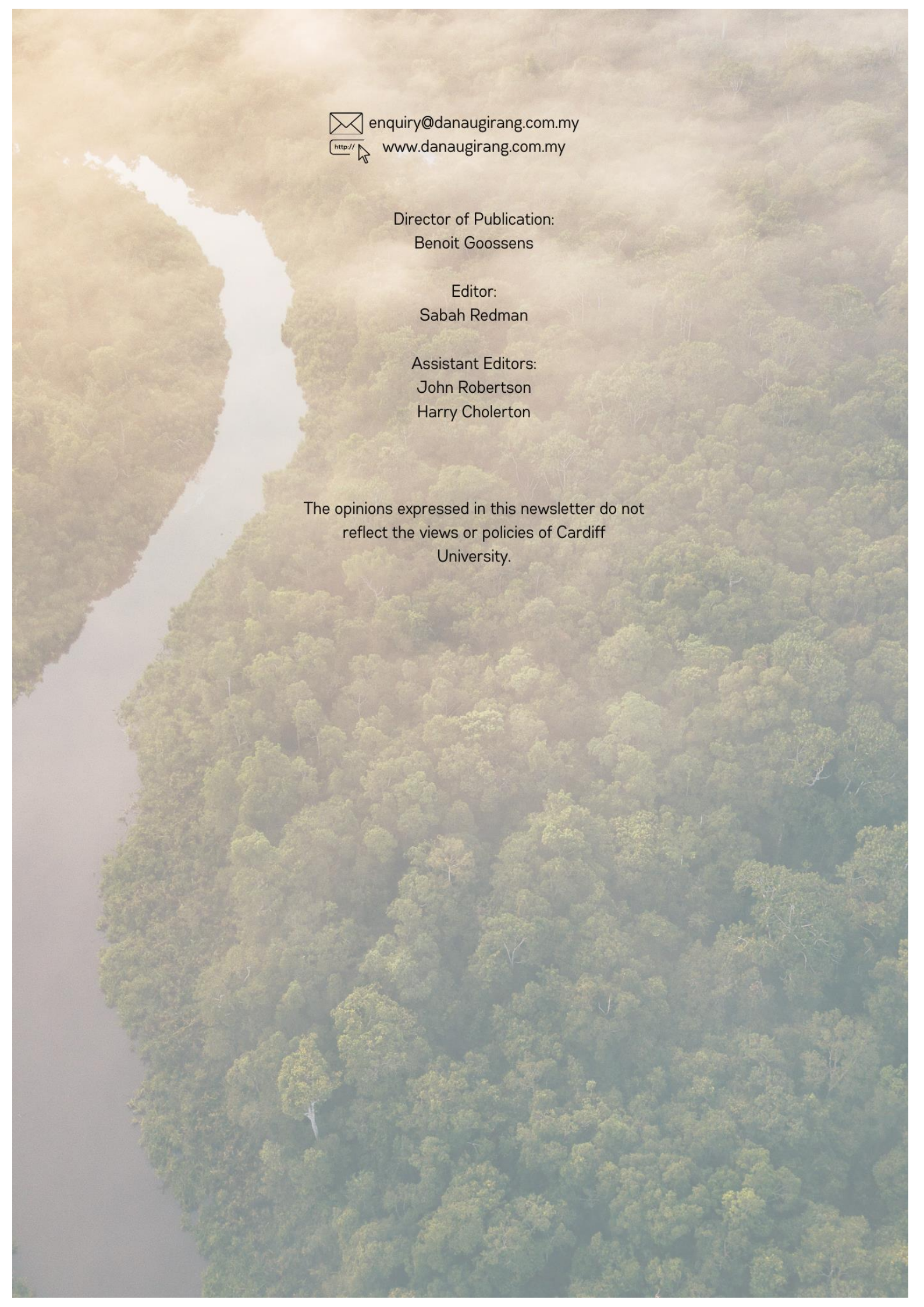
Rufous-backed dwarf kingfisher
(*Ceyx rufidorsa*)





Crested goshawk
(*Accipiter trivirgatus*)



Little spiderhunter
(*Arachnothera longirostra*)



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