

Long-tailed macaque
Macaca fascicularis



JUNGLE TIMES

VISITORS HIGHLIGHT



St Joseph's Institution
International School



Kota Kinabalu
International School



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Introduction to our new PTY Shaveena



Shaveena – University of Plymouth

Hey! I'm Shaveena, a third-year Conservation Biology student from the University of Plymouth, and I'll be calling DGFC home for the next eight months. I come from Selangor and decided to venture to Sabah because I wanted the real field experience. The mud, mosquitoes, power cuts, giant insects, crocodiles, you name it and the jungle has definitely delivered.

My first month here has been a rollercoaster in the best way. Adjusting to the jungle lifestyle and being the last placement student to arrive meant a lot of quiet time and a lot of emotions. But the people here changed everything. Everyone has been so warm, welcoming, and genuinely so wholesome that I felt like part of the family almost instantly. Their kindness is honestly one of the things that keeps me going every day.

For my PTY project, I'm aiming to work on an observational project focusing on crocodile behaviour, looking at how they use their environment, especially oxbow lakes and how their activity patterns shift between day and night. It's still early, but these ancient and majestic reptiles have already won me over (even when they give me a mini heart attack). I also will be helping out with field work in conjunction with the Regrow Borneo Project led by Maz.

There's also something incredibly grounding and meaningful about experiencing Malaysia's wildlife so closely. Seeing hornbills, proboscis monkeys, insects you could only imagine of, and untouched rainforest in Sabah feels like reconnecting with the natural heritage of home. It hits in a way nothing else does.

So far, DGFC has been challenging, fun, rewarding, and very, very real. Exactly what I signed up for! I'm excited to see how much I grow, what I learn, and how many more crocodiles decide to surprise me along the Kinabatangan.

Here's to the craziest adventures in the heart of the jungle!



White-crowned hornbill, *Berenicornis comatus*



Moonrise over the Kinabatangan River

Introduction to our intern Chiel



Photo credit: Hannah Y

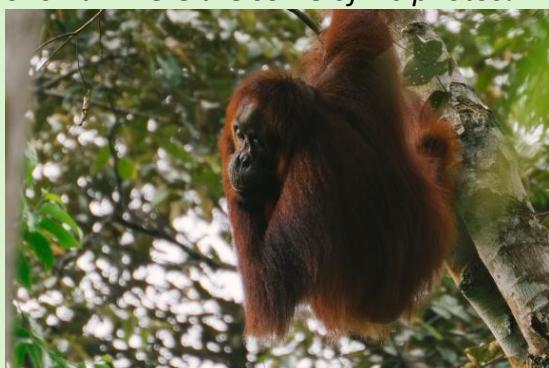
My name is Chiel Bastiaansen. I am a fourth-year Tropical Forestry student from the Netherlands. Currently, I am doing my 20-week internship at DGFC, which I started at the end of August. During my internship, I will also be helping with Regrow Borneo, focusing on the GIS and Remote Sensing component. The project aims to compare the drone-based tree height measuring and the conventional ground-based tree height measuring.

Besides my interest in GIS and Remote Sensing, I have an interest in anything from the big mammals to the smallest spiders hidden between the grasses. I am always on the lookout for any type of animal, from the boat rides to the “night” walk back to the studio. Besides this I am always working on my photography skills, whether it is taking photos of the animals, landscapes or one of the many

hardworking people here. When growing up, tropical forests and somehow especially Borneo, have always been a faraway place to me. To actually be here now, assisting with the research being carried out, is something I could have only dreamed of when watching David Attenborough and Freek Vonk as a child.

So far, I have really been enjoying my time at the centre, from assisting in the wide variety of fieldwork for the Regrow Borneo project to tracking pangolins, civets, and leopard cats. Besides the fieldwork itself, I have also been enjoying the field courses. But my absolute highlights so far have been assisting with the recapture of one of the pangolins to install a new VHF transmitter, and the opportunity to join a volleyball tournament at Kopl.

Chiel is also our main photographer here at DG. Capturing all the moments, however big or small. Here are some of his photos!



Borneo Bird Festival 2025

We were welcomed back to the Borneo Bird Festival at the Rainforest Discovery Centre (RDC) in Sepilok in late October.

The RDC is known as the gateway to getting to know the uniqueness and importance of Borneo's rainforests, and being able to participate in one of our aims of education was a moving experience.

Research Officer Maz and Research Assistant Ray and our PTYs delved headfirst into educating younger generations about the wild birds of the Kinabatangan and what DGFC stands for. Our stall was jam packed with educational books, colouring sheets, merchandise, tracking equipment and home-made games made by the PTYs themselves. Some games included bird trivia on the spinning wheel, pin the beak on the bird and stick the bird in the correct habitat. Safe to say they were all a big hit, enticing many fascinating minds of all ages (yes even adults!).

Our PTYs had the opportunity to explore the Discovery Centre grounds, visiting a range of companies at different stalls and learning more about their work and initiatives. They also experienced the 620-m skywalk, the longest in Sabah and were able to climb one of the trees. The experience was incredible for everyone, and we're already excited at the prospect of being invited back next year!

Recapture of Kim our pangolin

Kim is one of the two tagged Sunda pangolins currently monitored here at DGFC. Recently, Clarissa, one of our research assistants, carried out the re-tagging and release of Kim with support from our field team. On the 18th of last month, Kim was safely secured and transported back to DG for the re-tagging procedure. Clarissa was assisted by field assistant Lee, who helped fit a new VHF tracker and a GPS unit. During the assessment, the team noted that Kim's previous VHF tag had detached, likely due to the scale holding the attachment breaking off during his movements through the forest. Hair samples, ticks and a rectal swab were also collected. Kim remained remarkably calm throughout, allowing the procedure to run smoothly. At approximately 3pm the same day, Kim was returned to his original capture site and released, walking away steadily to resume his travels.



St Joseph's International School



For our penultimate field course of 2025, from the 1st-6th of November, we had the pleasure of hosting students from St Joseph's International School (Singapore). During their stay, the students took part in various activities, learning first hand from our researchers and volunteers at the centre.

Activities included setting up bird mist nets, VHF tracking, multiple day and night trails walks, fishing and much more. We also shared a wholesome moment planting trees together around the jetty (picture). Seeing everyone work as a team was a lovely way to end their adventure. Additionally, some students were able to spot a wild orangutan and her baby, an unforgettable experience.

We hope the students had as much fun as we did hosting them, and that their time here helped inspire the next generation of conservationists.

Kinabalu International School

From the 14th-17th of November we hosted our final field course of 2025. During the course, students took part in a range of hands-on activities and gained practical experience in field research.

They carried out butterfly surveys, where our PTYs Hannah and Megan taught them how to ethically catch, handle and release butterflies, as well as how to identify the species. Ollie led a fungi survey around the neighbouring plantations and took the group to visit the tree nursery in Kopel.

Maz, our research officer and PhD student, introduced the students to small mammal trapping, explaining the key do's and don'ts and the importance of animal welfare throughout the process. Throughout the course, short presentations were led by our PTY Ollie and intern Chiel, giving students a better idea of the kind of projects and research that take place here.

Overall, the field course provided a valuable and hopefully memorable learning experience and a deeper appreciation of field-based research and conservation work.

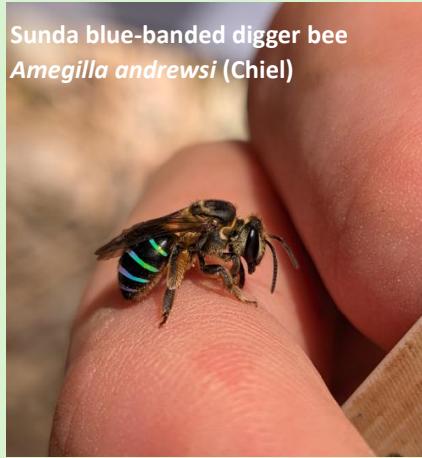


PTY Point of View

See the Jungle through our lenses



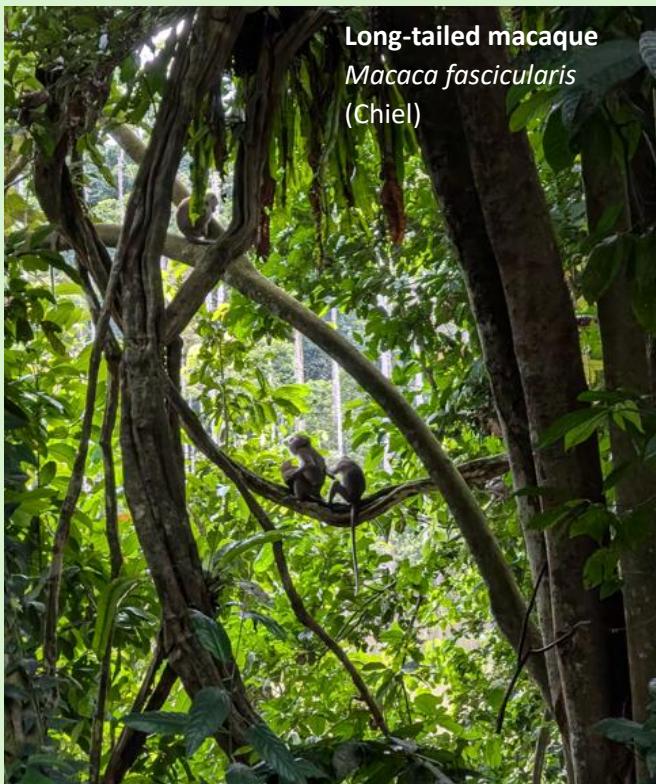
Bornean orangutan
Pongo pygmaeus
(Ollie)



Sunda blue-banded digger bee
Amegilla andrewsi (Chiel)



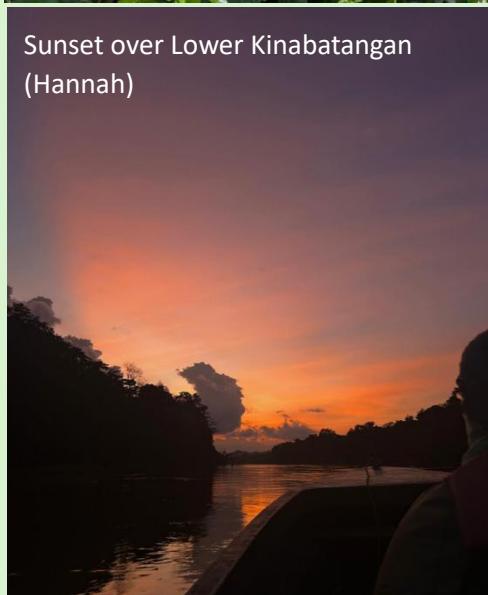
PTY Shaveena in pangolin tracking (Chiel)



Long-tailed macaque
Macaca fascicularis
(Chiel)



Dark-eared tree frog
Polypedates macrotis
(Chiel)

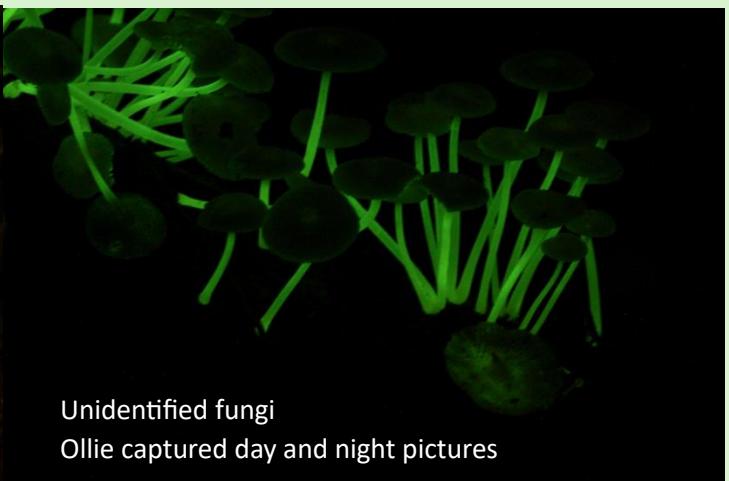


Sunset over Lower Kinabatangan
(Hannah)

Creature Feature

Tokay Gecko - Gekko gecko. These reptiles are 350 times more sensitive to light than human eyes. (Chiel)





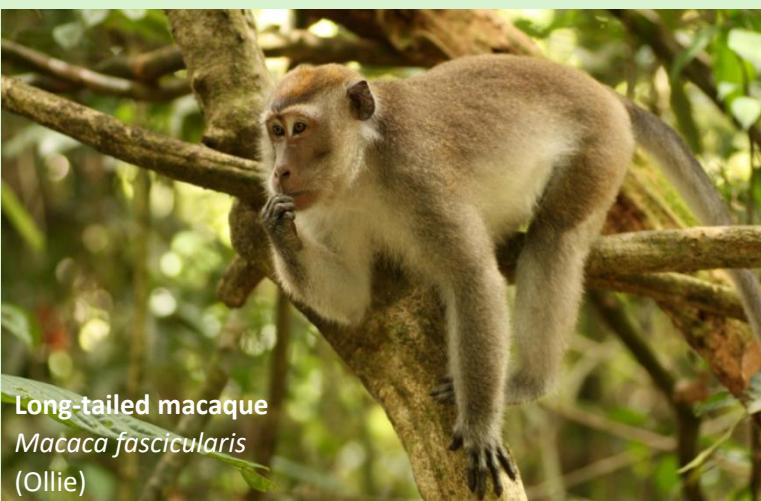
Unidentified fungi
Ollie captured day and night pictures



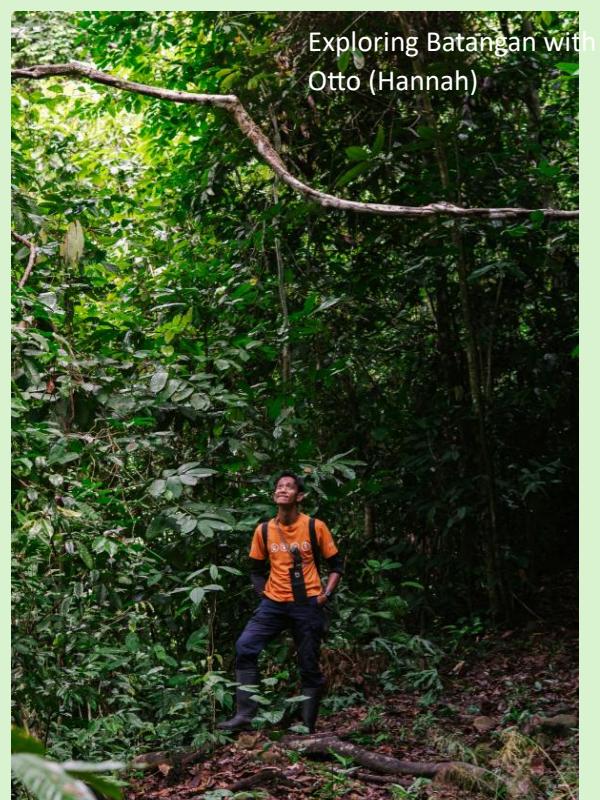
Batangan Ridge (Ollie)



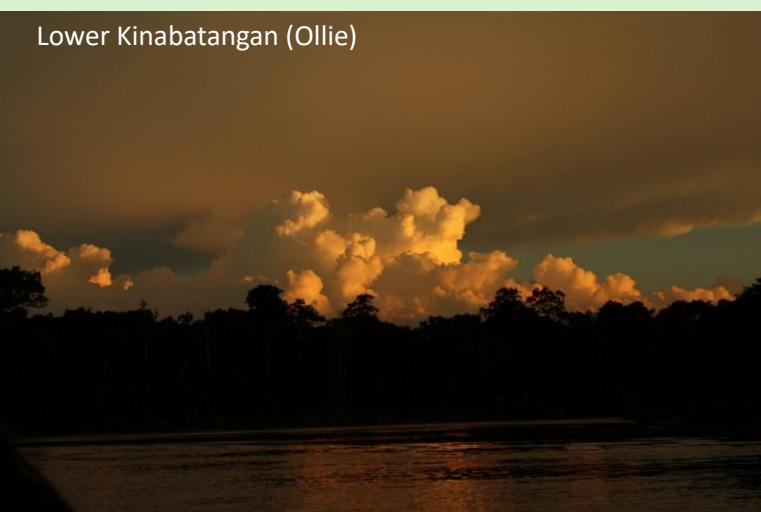
Sabah lowland bent-toed gecko
Cyrtodactylus yoshii
(Chiel)



Long-tailed macaque
Macaca fascicularis
(Ollie)



Exploring Batangan with
Otto (Hannah)



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