



BOS CANADA

NEWS 2008

FOR THE PROTECTION OF WILD AND REHABILITANT ORANGUTANS & THEIR NATIVE HABITAT

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ABOUT BOS CANADA

BOS Canada is an independent, registered Canadian charity founded to support orangutan conservation and to raise awareness of the serious threats to orangutan survival. We are dedicated to protecting wild and rehabilitant orangutans and their native habitat. Activities in Canada focus on education and fundraising. Donations and other funds raised support orangutan protection in the field, in Indonesia and Malaysia, e.g., rescuing displaced wild orangutans, rehabilitating ex-captives to forest life, and surveying existing orangutan populations and habitat. We operate entirely by dedicated volunteers, minimizing administrative costs and ensuring that the funds we raise reach the field projects we support.

ORANGUTAN UPDATE: HOW MANY REMAIN?

A recent review (Wich et al., 2008) estimates that the number of orangutans remaining in the wild is approximately **55,100**, with roughly:

- 6,500 orangutans in Sumatra
- 48,600 orangutans in Borneo

Due to rapid forest lost, these numbers continue to diminish at an alarming rate. The authors conclude that "unless extraordinary efforts are made soon, [orangutans] could become the first great ape species to go extinct."

Wich, S. A. et al. (2008). Distribution and conservation status of the orang-utan (*Pongo* spp.) on Borneo and Sumatra: how many remain? *Oryx*, 42(3), 329-339.

THE THINGS THEY DO

WE ARE STARTING A SECTION OF INTERESTING THINGS THAT ORANGUTANS DO. WE KNOW OF NO PUBLICATIONS THAT OFFER THIS SORT OF INFORMATION, ALTHOUGH IT IS ALWAYS INTERESTING AND CAN, IN THE LONG RUN, CONTRIBUTE TO A POOL OF INFORMATION ON RARE EVENTS.

Treating Kikan's Wounded Foot

By Agnes Ferisa,
Orangutan Social Learning and Cultures Project

Orangutan: Female, ca 2.5 - 3 yrs old, ex-captive in rehabilitation, rescued Kalimantan Timur

Location: Forest School, BOS Samboja Lestari, Kalimantan Timur

Around noon on March 18, 2008, Kikan came and sat near me while I was collecting observational data on another orangutan (Merin). Once she sat down, she started doing something to the sole of her right foot that involved mouthing, biting, and scratching it. I was concerned, so I went over to see what she was doing. When I looked closely, I saw that a little, sharp stone had pierced and lodged in the sole of her foot. She was trying to get it out but wasn't succeeding. I helped pick the stone out using the point of a pencil and then dripped latex from the stem of a fig leaf (*Ficus obscura*) on the wound; the wound had a small puncture, and this latex helps dry wounds. Kikan allowed and watched the whole foot treatment very calmly and attentively. All done, she went back to playing.

Over the next week, I saw Kikan several times. Each time she approached in a very friendly way, hugged my leg, and then sat nearby. Then she held up her wounded foot and mouthed the sole, while looking towards me as if she wanted to tell me something. (I noticed this because Kikan normally didn't like me: before I



treated her foot, she always hit or tried to bite me if she passed by.) But I didn't pay much attention because I was always busy observing other orangutans.

On Mar 26, while I was observing Muhadi, Kikan approached me again and held up her wounded foot, the same way she had for the last week. I still didn't pay much attention. Finally she picked a leaf (nothing special), pulled my hand until I looked down at her, and then acted out the leaf 'treatment' I had given to her foot. While I watched, I saw that her foot wound was already closed and healed. From what happened, my interpretation was that Kikan remembered that I had fixed her hurt foot and how I did it, and was showing me that it was healed.

On June 2, 2008, I was in the forest school near Anne Russon, who was observing Kikan. We both saw Kikan approach me, sit nearby, then hold up and check the sole of her right foot. So even months later, Kikan still remembered me as an important part of her wounded foot event.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2008 has been a very productive year for BOS Canada. We held two public lectures in Toronto. The first was my own, *Close Encounters with the Red Ape*, on my 20-plus years' work with orangutans in Borneo. The second was by Dr. Serge Wich, who has worked on orangutan research and conservation in Sumatra and Borneo since 1995. His talk, *Orangutans Compared*, reported important discoveries on differences between orangutans in Borneo and Sumatra, and even within Borneo, that should influence conservation. We arranged for Dr. Wich to lecture at the Toronto Zoo and York University, both to full audiences. These lectures attracted large audiences and significant funds for orangutan conservation. See them on [youtube](#).

We launched a new small grants program for conservation research that supported three projects in the field: Purwo Kuncoro's study of how orangutans' harvesting of palm hearts (yes, orangutans like them too) modifies palms so that it is easier for other orangutans to learn the technique, Joshua Smith's study on orangutan agendas in human-orangutan conflict, and the Sumatran Orangutan Society's conservation camp to help local children learn about their own forests and orangutans. We are very pleased with the results (see reports from all three in this newsletter) and plan to expand this program in 2009 (see our announcement).

BOS Canada also undertook two important projects that should contribute to establishing high standards for orangutan rehabilitation. We agreed to translate the IUCN's new (2007) guidelines for the reintroduction of great apes into Indonesian and distribute them, and obtained grants for this work via the IUCN and Great Ape Trust of Iowa. These guidelines represent the international conservation community's recognition that captive and displaced great apes represent a very serious problem, that helping them return to forest life can make an important contribution to conservation, and that the process involved is lengthy and complex. Translation work, by Purwo Kuncoro, is virtually complete and we expect to distribute copies early in 2009. We also undertook to develop standards for the design and operation of orangutan forest schools, a training phase in the rehabilitation of young ex-captives that helps them acquire the skills needed to survive in the forest. Standards are needed because forest schools face special requirements, constraints, opportunities, and pitfalls, they are increasingly common in orangutan rehabilitation programs, and their effectiveness is critical to successful return to

forest life. Via connections with York University, we obtained a collaborative Knowledge Mobilization Grant to support this work. Our BOS Canada team has been working on this project all fall, should have guidelines drafted by early next year, and hopes to see them used in 2009.

The road ahead in 2009 is no easier, but there are some bright spots. Threats to orangutan survival have not been stopped or even much reduced. The major threat to orangutans for the last several years has been oil palm plantations, but coal mine expansion in lowland areas is now adding greatly to the damage. On the positive side, national park authorities in East Kalimantan and nearby concession holders are seeking help from orangutan experts to manage orangutan-human conflict. This collaboration has created an important opportunity to establish a new wild orangutan research site within the national park and to work with local concession holders to develop methods of handling orangutan conflicts that best protect orangutans from harm. As for rehabilitation, both BOS Foundation projects are now actively searching for forest school and permanent release sites. The Indonesian government has been very supportive of these efforts, and has been working actively with Indonesian and world experts on orangutans to update its own regulations for rehabilitation. Thus chances are good that within the next few months, these rehabilitants can soon move forward in their transition to free forest life. The updated reintroduction and forest school guidelines should help make transition programs smoother and more effective than they have been in the past.

For BOS Canada, plans for 2009 include completing the projects we undertook this year and helping to put them into practice, sponsoring more lectures by field experts doing with important work to protect orangutans and other great apes, funding more conservation-oriented work in orangutan habitat, and undertaking conservation work in the field ourselves. We sincerely thank all our members, volunteers, contributors, and donors who have enabled our work to date, and very much hope that we can count on continued support this coming year.

These days, orangutans need all the help they can get.

- Anne Russon

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Many thanks the volunteers, sponsors, and donors who helped BOS Canada in 2008

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Laura Adams	Dave Quinn
Lisa Casagrande	Joshua Smith
Hoshino	Devin Whalen
Jackie Craig	(webmaster)
Seema Duggal	Kaaren Dickson
Diane Kalil	Elaine Belore
Purwo Kuncoro	Joy Friesen
Kim Meehan	Jenn Lukas
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RESEARCH UPDATE

LAURA ADAMS IS A PHD STUDENT AT YORK UNIVERSITY WHO DOES OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH WITH ORANGUTANS

I have been working on a study with the orangutans at the Toronto Zoo with graduate student Heidi Marsh, MA, and her supervisor Dr. Suzanne MacDonald. I put slide shows of photographs on two laptops that played simultaneously for the orangutans to watch. This was to examine their visual preferences. Did they look more at photos of food or photos of objects? Did they prefer photos of baby orangutans or photos of adult orangutans? Although I have not analyzed the data yet, I can report that they paid close attention to the photos even though participation was voluntary (they were free to leave and go to another part of their enclosure). Most of the time they watched the photos very intently and even made pleased or agitated vocalizations. Stay tuned for the results.

I am now submitting a research proposal to go back to Samboja Lestari Reintroduction Project in Indonesia, to collect data for dissertation research on Social Learning and Play in Rehabilitant Orangutans.

I am studying play because it often includes very elaborate sequences, which makes it perfect for studying behaviour. Young orangutans also coordinate their play with others, offering a great opportunity to examine the social transmission of knowledge. This research will benefit the orangutans by providing us with information on how they learn, which is vital to the design of rehabilitation projects. I will observe orangutans in the forest schools, and I will observe object play in the orangutans in the socialization and quarantine cages. For these individuals I will provide play objects, such as fresh branches, logs, and hard to open fruits. This will give them opportunities to practice skills and learn about objects, as well as benefiting them as enrichment to improve psychological well being. Furthermore, I hope to help fund raise and support any projects that will expand the forest school program so that young orangutans can learn forest skills.



BOS CANADA 2009 CONSERVATION GRANTS

BOS Canada holds a small grants program to support projects that contribute to orangutan conservation. For 2009 we have a fund of \$5,000 CAD, aimed for awards in the \$ 500 to \$1,000 CAD range. We encourage applications from colleagues and students, especially those from orangutan habitat countries for whom a small grant can provide valuable assistance to their conservation efforts.

deadline for applications: Mar 31, 2009
for details, see www.orangutan.ca/conservation_grants

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Avoid products using non-sustainable
rainforest resources
(e.g., protected tropical woods, palm oil)

Avoid activities that exploit or mistreat
orangutans
(pets, entertainment, intrusive research)

Recycle, especially cell phones
(www.eco-cell.org)

Support orangutans through **BOS Canada**
or other orangutan support organizations

Volunteer with BOS Canada

Donate to BOS Canada



Image by Purwo Kuncoro

ORANGUTANS COMPARED: DR. SERGE WICH

On October 28, BOS Canada hosted a lecture by Dr. Serge Wich on differences between orangutans that researchers have now identified across Borneo and Sumatra. Dr. Wich, now a research scientist with Great Ape Trust of Iowa, received his MSc and PhD from Utrecht University. He has studied Sumatran orangutans since 1995 and Borneans since 2003, and is now studying the southernmost population of Sumatran orangutans. His talk aimed to provide an overview of geographic differences in



orangutans, a framework in which to understand them, and some implications for conservation.

First, recent genetic and anatomical work suggests that orangutans are not one species but two: *Pongo abelii* on Sumatra and *Pongo pygmaeus* on Borneo. Further, the Bornean species itself comprises three subspecies, *pygmaeus*, *wurmbii*, and *morio*.

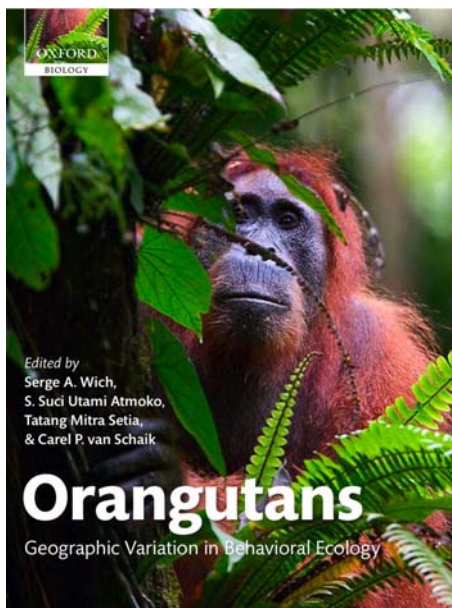
Genetic data indicates that the two species diverged over more than 1,000,000 years ago, and even the three Bornean subspecies diverged more than 860,000 years ago.

Several physical and behavioral differences are now recognized between the two species and perhaps the subspecies. They include density, home ranges, anatomy, diet, interbirth intervals, and feeding strategies. Because orangutans are primarily fruit eaters, these differences may owe to differences in fruit availability on the two islands. Sumatran forests are more productive than those on Borneo: Most importantly, Sumatran orangutans seem always to have fruit available but Borneans experience prolonged

“fruit droughts”. For orangutans, living conditions are best on Sumatra, progressively deteriorate across Borneo, and are at their worst in E. Borneo.

This may explain why Sumatrans have better diets, live at higher densities than Borneans (roughly 4-6 vs. 1-3 per km²), and are generally more sociable. Even when fruits are in short supply, Sumatrans can still find them whereas Borneans shift to low-quality “fallback foods”, especially tough barks. Correspondingly, Borneans have smaller and less overlapping home ranges and travel shorter distances daily when food is scarce; physically, they have more robust jaws, smaller brains, and faster life histories (development, intervals between births). These differences may also underlie differences in their responses to habitat disturbance: Sumatran but not Bornean densities drop drastically immediately after logging, perhaps because Borneans can make do on the lower quality foods that still remain—at least, when logging is relatively light.

These differences have important conservation implications. Because habitat disturbance appears to affect Sumatrans more severely than Borneans, for instance, it is essential to protect primary forests in Sumatra. Borneans’ resilience means that protecting lightly logged areas may help protect their surviving wild communities. Further,



these differences mean that orangutans are in greater danger of extinction than their total numbers suggest. In total, some 50,000-55,000 orangutans may survive in the wild. These findings indicate that they should be protected as distinct species and subspecies, however, not as a homogenous whole. In that light, several populations are in much worse condition: only about 6,500 *P. abelii* remain, and as few as 3,000 *P. p. pygmaeus*.

The work that identified these geographical differences in orang-utan required the collaboration of at least 15-20 orangutan field researchers. Undertaking this collaboration was as innovative and important as it was enormous. BOS Canada is very pleased to have been able to support the presentation of these new findings, and to promote the upcoming book that reports them in detail, scientifically. Book information is provided below:

ORANGUTANS Geographic Variation in Behavioral Ecology

Edited by Serge A. Wich, S. Suci Utami Atmoko, Tatang Mitra Setia and Carel P. van Schaik

Product Details

Oxford University Press, 2009
464 pages; 83 line illus. & 30 b/w halftone illus.; 7 1/2 x 9 3/4;
ISBN13: 978-0-19-921327-6

GREAT APE TRUST OF IOWA: ENDING ORANGUTANS IN ENTERTAINMENT



Rocky has recently moved to Great Ape Trust of Iowa

"For the orangutans, use of all these Great Ape Trust facilities and activities is voluntary, so coercion and command performances are, thankfully, things of the past"

BOS Canada is pleased to report a step towards ending the misuse of orangutans. Over the last year, Great Ape Trust of Iowa, mainly through the efforts of Dr. Rob Shumaker, negotiated the "retirement" of all remaining entertainment orangutans in the USA.

The poster boy for this story is Rocky who, although only 3 years old, has been one of the most visible orangutans in entertainment. Among his more famous appearances is being featured in a photo spread with recording artist Fergie, of The Black Eyed Peas, in *Elle* magazine's July 2007 music issue.

Rocky and his mother, Katy, moved from the Los Angeles area to Great Ape Trust on July 12; others will follow by early 2009. Great Ape Trust is a privately funded nonprofit institute in Des Moines that

conducts non-invasive scientific research into ape intelligence and behavior. At Great Ape Trust, these orangutans will enjoy living conditions designed to top standards: a three-story multi-chambered building designed to simulate features of orangutans' wild environments, an adjacent outdoor area, and a newly opened 3-acre forest with dozens of climbable (and edible) trees.

The entertainment orangutans will be introduced to Great Ape Trust's current resident orangutans—Azy, Knobi, and Allie—to allow opportunities for socializing. Rocky and Katy have already been introduced. Rocky quickly took a shine to Knobi (and vice versa) and the two soon 'adopted' each other. Great Ape Trust will also provide Rocky and his companions with novel mental opportunities, such as using computers, learning symbols

and participating in ongoing scientific research. For the orangutans, use of all these Great Ape Trust facilities and activities is voluntary, so coercion and command performances are, thankfully, things of the past.

We consider this to be a landmark achievement in ending the inappropriate treatment of orangutans. Dr. Shumaker has spoken in Toronto on several occasions and several BOS Canada members have visited Great Ape Trust over the last several years. We are therefore especially pleased to report this initiative and offer our congratulations and support.

Great Ape Trust of Iowa
 200 SE 44th Avenue
 Des Moines, IA , 50320
 (515) 243-3580
<http://www.greatapetrust.org>

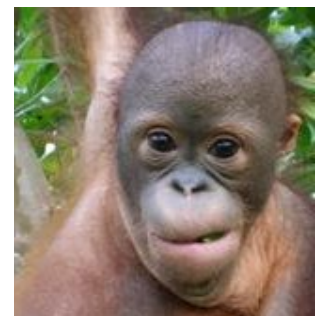
MY CONSERVATION PROJECT AT SEPILOK ORANGUTAN REHABILITATION CENTRE, BORNEO BY CHARMAINE QUINN

I recently returned from my second journey to Sepilok and will be returning yearly to help at the Centre. During the two months that I am at Sepilok, I am taking care of orangutans in both the nursery and juvenile groups. Sepilok Rehabilitation Centre has been operating since 1964 and currently has 54 orangutans in the programme and around 150 orangutans in the Kabili reserve which surrounds Sepilok. The Centre provides medical care for orphaned and confiscated orangutans as well as other wildlife species such as sun bears, gibbons, slow lorises, birds, etc. There is a Post Release Monitoring Project and Tracking Teams for the older

orangutans. There are currently 7 babies in the nursery group. Ceria, one of the most recent arrivals is a baby boy who arrived at the Centre in February 2007 in terrible condition after being kept as a pet. Ceria's mother had been killed by wild dogs on an oil palm plantation while she was desperately looking for food. At the time of his arrival, he was very dehydrated, malnourished and anaemic. He was so small that at first sight he was thought to be only a few months old, but Ceria already had teeth and his age was estimated to be around 11 months. Ceria had difficulty breathing, was put on I.V. and oxygen and was fighting for his

life. He is now a happy, healthy baby and he loves to swing and play on the ropes with his friends. The rope system helps to guide and encourage the youngsters to climb. He loves his food and he is progressing well. He will spend many years trying to develop skills that he will need for forest life. Unfortunately, only one out of every five babies will survive and many babies will die from shock during translocation to the rehabilitation centre. Seventy percent of the forest has been destroyed on both islands of Borneo and Sumatra for the production of palm oil, tropical hardwood and mining. The orangutan population is plummeting and it is estimated that

within the next ten years orangutans will disappear from the wild and will only be able to survive in protected reserves if forest destruction does not stop.



Ceria, August 2008

STUDY ON BORNEAN ENDEMIC PALM TREE UTILIZATION BY FREE-RANGING REHABILITANT ORANGUTANS: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ORANGUTAN SOCIAL LEARNING AND CONSERVATION

PURWO KUNCORO IS AN MA STUDENT AT YORK UNIVERSITY WHO DOES OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH WITH ORANGUTANS

Maya is one of the rehabilitant orangutans I have studied since 2002. She ranges around the Wanariset Orangutan Reintroduction Project (ORP) camp in the Beratus Protected Forest of East Kalimantan. Maya, like other orangutans, shares complex cognitive capabilities and personality with chimpanzees and humans, demonstrated in the complex foraging skills and attitudes seen in her everyday forest life. If Maya is in an aggressive mood, she will chase orangutans and humans she does not like and won't stop until she gets them. In a calm mood, she will let other orangutans and humans travel with her through the forest and show to them what kinds of food she prefers, where to find it, how to get it, and much more. It is interesting to know how she and other orangutans learned, remember, and share information about their environment, especially since their environment changes continually with the seasonality their climate causes. Culture could be involved, i.e., systems for sharing knowledge and skills within a community by social learning. Cultures are now recognized as important contributors to orangutans' forest knowledge and skills.

An indirect way of sharing practices is by modifying the physical environment. Termed niche construction, such modifications can assist learning if they leave physical traces that make tasks easier to solve. Chimpanzee stone hammer-and-anvil nut-cracking in west Africa is an example: some hammers and anvils left at nut-cracking sites have pits in their surface caused by repeated use. Pits may help novices learn to crack nuts by making it easier to position nuts so hammering will crack them. Something similar may happen in Beratus when rehabilitant orangutans eat the "heart" of a local tree palm called *bandang* (*Borassodendron borneensis*). The curious thing is that they eat heart often from some *bandang* trees but ignore others that are close nearby. We think they may favor *bandang* modified by others who ate there in the past, because eating *bandang* damages a palm's leaves in ways that leave visible traces and probably make eating from that palm easier for orangutans that come along later. Orangutans pull out the newest leaf when it is a shoot and eat heart tissue from its base, so when the leaf matures its tip is damaged and looks as if it had been

neatly trimmed with scissors. To make it easier to get at the shoot, orangutans also bend older leaves away from the center of the palm's crown, so palms that orangutans have eaten from have crowns that are more "open" than they are naturally. Both modifications are highly visible, for years, and probably make it easier for later arriving orangutans to eat there.

Between May and August 2008, I conducted a study in Beratus to assess whether this *bandang* niche construction contributes to orangutans' social learning. BOS Canada granted me \$1000 for this study. My main goal was to explore the practical value of *bandang* niche construction for orangutan conservation, e.g., assessing the presence and distribution of wild orangutans and improving rehabilitation programs. Beratus is a six-hour drive from ORP headquarters and home to more than 300 rehabilitant orangutans. To run this study, I recruited and trained five ORP technicians, so this work should also contribute to capacity building of ORP personnel.

My team assessed orangutan damage to almost 700 *bandang* palms and recorded *bandang* heart feeding by four rehabilitant orangutans who range in the area. We assessed *bandang* damage in four *bandang*-rich areas, two inside the protected forest and two in an

adjacent logging concession. We tagged every *bandang* in these areas and recorded whether their leaves were orangutan-damaged. Our findings show that orangutans ate from some *bandang* palms regularly but ignored others nearby. Observations on the four orangutans we followed, one adult and one adolescent female and two adolescent males, also indicate that orangutans prefer some *bandang* palms over others. For example, once when we followed Maya and her infant male, Momo, she traveled beyond her regular area to feed on one particular *bandang* palm and ignored the others that she passed along the way. The *bandang* Maya ate from already had the damaged leaves; but the *bandang* that she ignored had a new shoot she could have eaten but no damaged leaves. This suggests orangutans may use this damage to choose *bandang* palms, either because it provides social information that some particular *bandang* trees are preferred or because damaged palms are more easily accessible.

I hope these findings will show the conservation community the importance of social learning and local cultures when developing programs for orangutan protection. I am deeply grateful to BOS Canada for funding my project and BOS Foundation for welcoming and sponsoring this research.



A SNAPSHOT LOOK AT ORANGUTAN-HUMAN INTERACTION IN REHABILITATION

JOSH SMITH IS AN MA STUDENT AT YORK UNIVERSITY WHO DOES OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH WITH ORANGUTANS

East Kalimantan is one of the last refuges of the orangutan. Orangutans face a number of human threats, particularly human encroachment and habitat loss. Decreased habitat and closer proximity to humans create the potential for conflict between orangutans and humans. Land-use management, commercial development, and wildlife conservation are interconnected by this conflict. In July 2008 I set off for East Kalimantan to examine this conflict from the orangutan perspective. Orangutans have their own agendas. They are known to approach and initiate interactions with humans. To date no project has assessed orangutan agendas and initiatives in orangutan-human conflict. Improved understanding of the factors contributing to orangutan-human conflicts should help in developing ways to address, reduce, and prevent them.

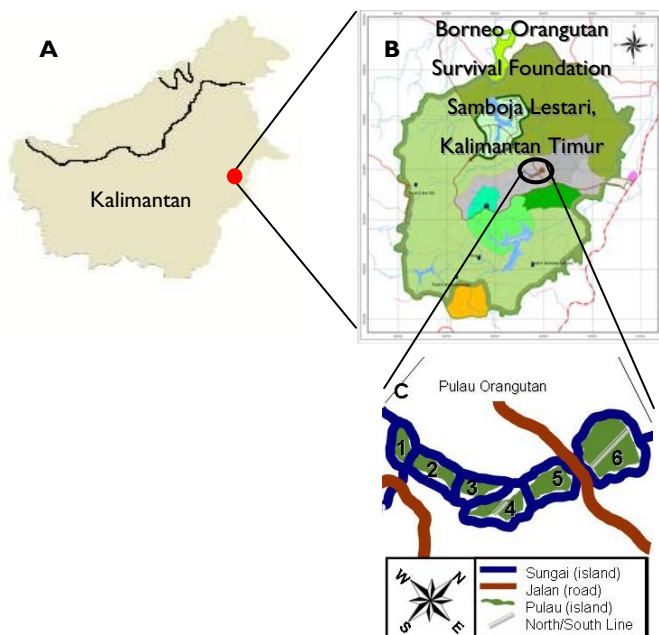
With the support of BOS Canada, I travelled to the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation's (BOSF) Orangutan Reintroduction Project (ORP) at Samboja Lestari to conduct research on orangutan contributions to orangutan-human conflicts in the rehabilitation setting (see A and B in the figure below). I set out to investigate whether developmental factors may predispose ex-captive orangutans to approach and initiate interaction with humans. To do this, I systematically observed ex-captives at two of Samboja Lestari's six artificial islands, where they live in small groups under semi-naturalistic settings (see C below). From July 6 to Sept. 22, 2008, I observed nine orangutans aged 5-14 years, five females (island 6) and 4 males (island 4). Each of them has their own developmental history, background story, personalities, and behavioral quirks. Getting to know them took some work, but was more than worth the effort.

At this point, I can report several preliminary findings from my study. I found at least two sex-related differences in orangutans' behaviors to humans. Males spent more time on the ground than females, especially during provisioning. This brought males closer



than females to ORP technicians when food was being delivered. Males also appeared to direct aggression towards humans more often females did, e.g. throwing objects or splashing water at them. They typically aimed their aggression at male technicians and veterinary staff. They also appeared to target specific staff members, suggesting that their interactions depend on the particular relationships they have with individual humans. In addition to sex differences, my observations of the male orangutans suggest that individuals with more intensive human contact during rehabilitation were more strongly oriented to humans.

Findings should aid in managing orangutan rehabilitation and reintroduction by better understanding of how orangutans engage in and handle conflict situations. For instance, male orangutans should be encouraged to spend more time off the ground and away from humans (technicians). One possibility is changing the provisioning methods to increase the distance between technicians and orangutans and place provisions in more arboreal locations. Additionally, rehabilitation procedures might be revised to capitalize on individual human-orangutan relationships. For example, aggressive interactions and potential conflicts between technicians/staff and rehabilitants might be reduced or avoided by adjusting job assignments. Finally, that greater contact with humans increases interest in humans is important because human orientation has been suggested to retard rehabilitation, delay or prevent species-appropriate orangutan socialization, and increase the potential for interaction and conflict with humans post-release. By identifying developmental factors and/or behavioural patterns that produce human-oriented orangutans, we may be able to identify potential "problem" individuals. This should help rehabilitation and reintroduction projects to prevent or counter problem behaviors during rehabilitation and human-orangutan conflict post-release. Findings may also be useful in managing orangutan-human conflicts outside of the reintroduction context, such as orangutan crop-raiding and orangutan-tourist encounters.



A Note of Thanks

I would like to thank BOS Canada for generously assisting with the funding of this project and for logistical support. I would also like to thank the BOS Foundation for sponsoring my research at Samboja Lestari. BOSF staff and technicians provided invaluable assistance during my visit. Of course none of this would be possible without the orangutans themselves. I am grateful for this opportunity to be a part of BOS Canada's continuing mission to save our orangutan relatives and look forward to working with both BOS Canada and the BOS Foundation in the future.

ORANGUTAN INFORMATION CENTRE CONSERVATION CAMP: SUMATRAN ORANGUTAN SOCIETY



The Sumatran Orangutan Society – Orangutan Information Centre (SOS-OIC) hosted a three day conservation camp in Tangkahan, Langkat regency, North Sumatra, in commemoration of the nationally held World Environment Day. The camp disseminated a wide range of theoretical and practical information on the environment, with a focus on the orangutan and its rainforest ecosystem, to a wide range of Indonesian community members.

A new approach is needed to reach communities with conservation messages. It is important to work in an interactive manner which young Indonesians, upon whom much of the orangutan's fate depends, can embrace. The conservation camp model was developed to serve this role, through hosting environmentally themed quizzes and competitions, workshops, discussion groups, and practical activities such as tree replanting. It is an extension of SOS-OIC's long-running school conservation program, in which our education division travels to schools and villages throughout Sumatra, but it brings students to the forest for a more hands- (and minds!-) on experience. The camp setting also allows students from neighboring areas to meet and discuss conservation issues together all in a natural, forested area – thus creating a holistic experience that will hopefully inspire communities to care more for their environment. The main objective is to increase environmental knowledge and awareness in communities adjacent to orangutan habitat and to share information about nature conservation and sustainability. The main outcome expected is motivating local people to become more creative and innovative in embracing their own everyday

conservation measures, as well as long-term planning to live in a more sustainable manner.

The camp was held in Tangkahan, from June 23 – 25, in collaboration with a series of facilitators: another local NGO, the Indonesian Conservation Cadre (FK3LI), the Langkat Education Ministry, the Tangkahan Ecotourism Network (LPT), and Fauna and Flora International (FFI) as represented through the Elephant Conservation Response Unit (six ex-captive elephants are used for ecotourism and patrolling the Gunung Leuser National Park against encroachment). This camp's theme was "A change in our behaviour will result in a better, healthier environment". A total of 258 people from 15 different schools in the Langkat regency attended the camp, including 171 students, 40 of their teachers, and 47 members of the SOS-OIC sponsored Orangutan Friends Club consisting of primary-university level students.

In addition to informative lessons and discussions, competitions, and quizzes, we held a tree planting session in the Tangkahan area, which borders the Gunung Leuser National Park, to further 'green' the area and to inspire participants to care more for their

environment; held discussions on the importance of forests and the ecological services they provide every day, without our always realizing it!; and screened films, including *Leuser Sumber Kehidupan* (Leuser, Source of Life), which details the degraded condition of the 2.7 million hectare Leuser Ecosystem, *Home Sweet Home*, about the condition of the planet because of climate change, and *Dear Mr. President*, a documentation of Indonesian children and teachers delivering their messages about nature issues to the President of Indonesia.

We evaluated camp participants' knowledge of environmental conservation issues to assess the effectiveness of the conservation camp. We found an overall knowledge increase of 5.7%, from 65% pre-program to 71% post-program. That pre-program levels were relatively high probably owes to the SOS-OIC's previous efforts and visits with these students (but – every extra little bit helps embed the messages and information a bit deeper!).

Conservation camps are among our best-loved programs because they offer students training that is not provided at their schools or universities. The BOS Canada



Students displaying the posters they created about conservation issues in Indonesia



Students displaying the trees they were about to plant in Tangkahan.

supported camp was no exception. Participants reported high levels of enjoyment of the activities and engagement with the issues presented. The camp also offered teachers training in communicating environmental messages so that the next generation will see the value in protecting their environment. All these influences will be further reinforced through follow-up school and community visits, which are a cornerstone of our ongoing efforts to help save the Sumatran orangutan. Through such education and awareness programs, as well as our reforestation initiatives throughout Sumatra, it is our hope that the orangutan and its fragile, beautiful forest home have a chance to survive and flourish. (The latest of our reforestation projects is restoring land within Gunung Leuser National Park that was illegally cleared and planted with oil palms!) It is only with local AND international help that our work can continue. Thus we are very thankful to all the conservation camp participants and to BOS Canada for supporting our work!

NOTABLE READING

Technical documents.

- Guidelines for the Better Management Practices on Avoidance, Mitigation and Management of Human-Orangutan Conflict in and around Oil Palm Plantations.* Yuwono et al. 2007. WWF Indonesia. as-sets.panda.org/downloads/ou_bmt_report.pdf
- IUCN Redlist of Threatened Species, 2007.* www.iucnredlist.org
- Losing Ground: The human rights impacts of oil palm plantation expansion in Indonesia.* 2008. Friends of the Earth. www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/losingground.pdf
- Strategi dan Rencana Aksi Konservasi Orangutan Indonesia 2007-2017.* Dirjen PHKA, Departemen Kehutanan Repub Indonesia, 2007.
- Orangutan Population and Habitat Viability Assessment: Final Report.* Singleton, I. et al. 2004. IUCN/SSC, Aug. 2004. www.cbsg.org
- The Last Stand of the Orangutan—State of Emergency: Illegal logging, fire and palm oil in Indonesia's national parks.* Nelleman, C. et al. (ed.), 2007. UN Environment Program. www.grida.no
- Hanging in the Balance: An assessment of trade in orang-utans and gibbons on Kalimantan, Indonesia.* Nijman, V 2005. TRAFFIC SE Asia. www.wwf.or.jp/activity/wildlife/lib/KalimantanOrangUtan.pdf

- Guidelines for Great Ape Re-introduction.* Beck et al. 2007. IUCN/SSC Occasional Paper No. 35, Gland Switz. www.primatesg.org
- The Oil for Ape Scandal: How palm oil is threatening the orang-utan.* Buckland, H. 2005. Friends of the Earth. www.foe.co.uk
- Ape Tourism and Human Diseases: How close should we get?* Homsy, J 1999. International Gorilla Conservation Programme. www.igcp.org/pdf/homsy_rev.pdf

Recent books featuring orangutans.

- Caldecott, J et al. 2005. *World Atlas of Great Apes and their Conservation.* Berkeley: Univ. California Press/ UNEP MCMC.
- Forth, G (2009). *Images of the Wildman in Southeast Asia: An Anthropological Perspective.* Routledge: New York.
- Payne, J & Prudente, C 2008. *Orangutans: Behavior, Ecology, and Conservation.* MIT Press, Cambridge MA.
- Shumaker, R 2007. *Orangutans.* Voyageur Press, St. Paul MN.
- Wich, SA et al (ed.) 2009. *Orangutans: Geographic variation in behavioral ecology and Conservation.* Oxford Univ. Press.
- Laman T & Knott C 2009. *Face to Face with Orangutans.* National Geographic Society.

WEBSITES WORTH CHECKING OUT

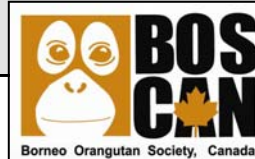
- Orangutan Network: www.aim.unizh.ch/orangutannetwork.html
- South East Asian Primatological Association: www.aseanprimates.org
- Grasp (UNEP Great Ape Survival Project): www.unep.org/GRASP/
- International Primate Protection League: www.ippl.org
- International Primatology Society: www.internationalprimatologicalsociety.org
- European Primate Network: www.euprim-net.eu
- PrimateLit Database: <http://primatelit.library.wisc.edu>
- Primate Info Net: <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu>
- International Directory of Primatology: <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/idp>
- World Directory of Primatologists: <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/wdp>
- Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme: www.sumatranorangutan.org



Photo by P. Kuncoro



Photo by P. Kuncoro

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