



*Orangutan  
Appeal UK*

# Orangutan Appeal UK

## News

Issue 42 - February 2022



## Message from Sue



Keeping in touch with the happenings across the other side of the world is not easy at the best of times but during the pandemic it has been really difficult! If it had not been for Lineker, our Team Supervisor at Sepilok, and his excellent staff, we would not have been able to continue to oversee and assist the work being carried

out at the Centre during this time, so we are very grateful and owe them all a huge THANK YOU!!

It was also with Dr Sen of Sabah Wildlife Department's help that we were able to ensure our staff received vaccinations against covid and also assisted with the testing of the orangutans at Sepilok to ensure they had not contracted this ghastly disease, which we are pleased to say they all passed with clean bills of health.

Our help and funding for projects in Sabah is more important now than it has ever been so please keep supporting us and helping us save our "BEAUTIFUL COUSINS" – the orangutans!

Thank you to EVERYONE.

*Sue Sheward MBE*

## Message from our Patron – Paul O'Grady



*Paul with Archie*

Another challenging year has passed since I last wrote to you all, but there have been many things to be thankful for, including you, our wonderful supporters of Orangutan Appeal UK. I can't stress how much you all help to make a difference to the critically endangered orangutans and their forest friends. As patron of this amazing charity I give my personal thanks to you all.

With Sepilok having to close its doors due to the pandemic it's been a tough couple of years. The staff at the centre have worked so hard to provide the greatest care in very difficult circumstances. They have my deepest gratitude.

One thing the pandemic has taught us is that by helping each other we can achieve great things. The same is true of conservation, if we all contribute in whatever small way we are able, we can help to protect our planet and its precious inhabitants for future generations. I've been desperate to get back to Sepilok again and perhaps film a catch up but unfortunately travel restrictions due to this pandemic have made that impossible. Hopefully things will change and I'll be able to get over and see how my Archie is getting on very soon.

Thank you all for your fantastic support which allows OAKU to continue their vital work.

*Paul O'Grady MBE*

### PAUL O'GRADY'S LATEST RENDERING

A couple of years ago Paul exclusively revealed to our supporters that he was writing a children's book which was "inspired by his visit to Sepilok". Paul was there to meet our Founder Sue Sheward and film a television series called *Animal Orphans*. As soon as Sue introduced Paul to baby Archie it was love at first sight, not for just Paul but for Archie as well! The young orangutan was besotted with Paul's amazing white hair and every time he saw Paul he would reach out to him and start to whimper, so Paul was allowed to take care of Archie during his climbing lessons. Paul has been supporting Archie ever since that visit in 2015 including becoming HIS ADOPTIVE PARENT.

Paul's book – **Eddie Albert and the Amazing Animal Gang** – tells the story of 10-year-old Eddie who can speak to animals. It's packed full of humour, excitement and crazy adventures.

**Available in hardback, ebook and audio from all good retailers.**



## Something to Make You Smile



Orangutans and humans share 96.4% of the same DNA, making them one of our closest living relatives.

It's not surprising that we can see similarities in behavioural traits such as emotion and intelligence as well as many physical characteristics, including sociability, opposable thumbs and forward-facing eyes.

These clever apes are capable of constructing and using tools and have been witnessed by researchers bathing themselves, cleaning their teeth and using damp rags to cool themselves down. This learned behaviour indicates

orangutans are capable of self-awareness, planning and imitation.

Orangutans are very intelligent, and they express emotions just like we do including joy, fear and anger. Two of the most human-like behaviours orangutans exhibit are crying and laughing. When an orangutan laughs the pitch is much lower than that of human laughter. However, the facial expressions, movements and sounds are exceptionally similar.

This YouTube video of a young orangutan observing a magic trick clearly cannot fail to make you smile:

**[www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNWPqfCJDnc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNWPqfCJDnc)**

# Sir David Attenborough – Climate Change Conference



World revered environmentalist and broadcaster, Sir David Attenborough was named as the People's Advocate of the UN climate change summit in November 2021 to highlight climate change being the greatest threat facing humanity.

Sir David said:

*"If we don't act now, it'll be too late."*

*"Every day that goes by in which we don't do something about it is a day wasted."*

*"Particularly if it's going to cost money in the short term, the temptation is to deny the problem and pretend it's not there."*

You can watch Sir David's full speech on our website as well as a shorter summarised clip here:

[www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/about-us/news/article/sir-david-attenborough-addresses-world-leaders-at-cop26](http://www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/about-us/news/article/sir-david-attenborough-addresses-world-leaders-at-cop26)

## What is Deforestation?



Deforestation is the international act of clearing large areas of forested land by humans. This land is then converted to non-forest use, such as agriculture, timber, human infrastructures or mining.

According to the United Nations, agriculture is the cause of approximately 80% of deforestation. 40% of this is due to commercial agriculture including space to grow food stuffs such as soybeans, rice, sugar cane, palm oil, and crop-based biofuels. Raising livestock and growing animal feed contributes to around 14% of global deforestation. Slash-and-burn agriculture is a big contributor to deforestation in the tropics.

Deforestation has many serious consequences for the planet:

**Biodiversity** – 80% of the world's terrestrial animals and plants live in forests; their destruction not only threatens the lives of the inhabitants but puts entire ecosystems in danger.

**Indigenous People** – forests support the livelihoods of 1.6 billion people who depend on them for their survival. Corporations often buy large areas to develop, leaving the local people homeless.

**Soil Erosion** – deforestation weakens the soil leaving the area vulnerable to natural disasters such as landslides and floods.

**Climate Change** – trees absorb vast amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which is one of the key greenhouse gases contributing to global warming. When a tree is cut down it releases the gas it was storing back into the atmosphere. Fewer trees mean reducing the world's ability to capture and store CO<sub>2</sub>. Ending deforestation is seen as a vital way to tackle climate change.

OAUK is proud to be supporting the Regrow Borneo Project, which is a reforestation project, and aim to do more to help combat global warming.

*Photo courtesy of Esemelwe.*

## Alpine Coffee Shop & Gallery

The Alpine Coffee Shop is one of the most popular cafes in North Wales, located on Betws-y-Coed railway station, it is owned and run by artist and environmental conservationist Jacha Potgieter and his wife Gwyn, who have been supporting Orangutan Appeal UK since 2014. Jacha was appointed as a Director of OAUK in August 2020.

Jacha and his amazing staff are dedicated advocates for wildlife conservation and are passionate about educating the public on global conservation issues; taking time to talk to customers and inspire them with ways they can help. Their commitment and hard work during these challenging times has been unwavering and has generated further support for Orangutan Appeal UK and the other charity they collaborate with, Ape Action Africa.

For many years Jacha has committed much of his time to great ape conservation. He takes part in fundraising events such as climbing Kilimanjaro, conducts educational talks to schools, as well as raising funds through his businesses, including donating a percentage of sales from his stunning artwork.

**In 2021, Jacha and his team raised an incredible £10,000 for Orangutan Appeal UK.**

We give our heartfelt thanks to Jacha, Gwyn and their staff, and of course their wonderful customers for helping us to make a difference to these beautiful endangered apes.



*Jacha and his team*



# Sepilok News

## Orangutans at Sepilok tested for COVID-19

With the number of Covid-19 infections increasing in Sabah in late 2021, Orangutan Appeal UK's priority was to ensure everything possible was being done to protect the orangutans at Sepilok. The orangutan is one of our closest living relatives, this means they are susceptible to catching human diseases. We do not know how Covid-19 could affect them but it has the potential to be devastating.

Following discussions between Orangutan Appeal UK and Sabah Wildlife Department, the veterinary team were tasked with testing all of the orangutans at the centre, which was funded by OAUk. This was the first time a Covid test had been used on an orangutan in the whole of Malaysia.

Testing in humans has been vital in helping us through this pandemic so it is only right to utilise the same practice for orangutans. With all results coming back negative, this is testament to the stringent care being carried out by our staff.

The Director of Sabah Wildlife Department assured us that the orangutans continue to be closely monitored for any signs and symptoms of infection and testing will be repeated on a scheduled basis.



*Orangutan tested for COVID*

## Bidu Bidu – Male - 9 years old

Bidu has started to visit the indoor nursery a lot more. This is because he is trying to avoid one of the large adult males called Malim, who can be often found at the outdoor nursery. Bidu likes to steal fruit from the food store and then hand it out to the other orangutans such

as Matamis, Cinta and Boogie Boy. When the babies are out having their daily lessons, Bidu loves to join in and play with them, his favourites are Zorro, Joss, Nami and Luffy.



*Bidu Bidu*

## Bakut – Male - 6 years old

Bakut is a very social orangutan and spends a lot of time following older female Alagu. He is very good at climbing and already knows how to make a nest. He enjoys playing with Matamis' and Mimi's babies. Orangutan mums are very protective over their babies but as Bakut

has a very gentle nature they seem to trust him a lot more than some of the other orangutans. The future looks good for this youngster and we will follow him carefully.



*Bakut*

## Beryl – Female - 10 years old

Beryl completed her rehabilitation and was released to live freely in the reserve nearly 2 years ago. However, she still spends some of her time in the outdoor nursery. If she sees some of the mother orangutans are already there, she will automatically avoid them and head for the other nursery. The older mothers can often bully the younger orangutans and this is why Beryl feels

threatened and does not wait around to see what is going to happen. Sometimes she likes to follow Malim as she can feel safe when he is around. Beryl is doing very well and has a beautiful long dark red coat.



*Beryl*

## Oyo – Female - 2 years old

Oyo is a happy and curious youngster who enjoys her lessons at the indoor nursery and playing with her friends. She does get tired quite easily, which is most likely due to her young age. When her carers put her to bed for the night she can get very frustrated and will

often throw a tantrum! Oyo's favourite foods are rambutan, papaya and water spinach.

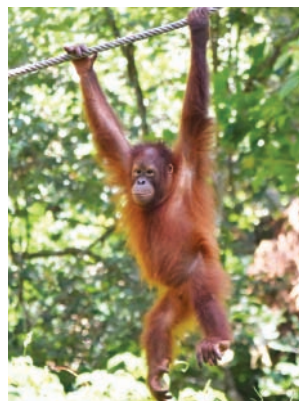


*Oyo*

# Sepilok News continued

## Joss – Male - 4 years old

Two years ago Joss was allegedly found wondering alone near a small village. The person who found him wanted to keep him as a pet and tried to apply for a permit to do so. As it is illegal to keep an orangutan as a pet, this was obviously refused. Joss was then rescued and brought to Sepilok.



Joss

Joss has progressed well and is very good at climbing. He can be easily frightened, and this means he relies a lot on the older orangutans for help. He has a close friendship with Salamat and Matamis, who are helping to build his confidence.

## New Ropes

Our team recently replaced 250m of rope at the Outdoor Nursery, which is used a lot and becomes weakened over time. These rope networks provide access from the training area into the forest and encourage the orangutans to increase the time they spend away from the centre, whilst allowing them to refine their skills in traversing through the trees.



New ropes

## Borneo Nature Foundation Update

Despite ongoing disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic, Borneo Nature Foundation (BNF) remain determined to continue our conservation activities as productively as possible. Regardless of what else is happening around the world, the orangutan's forest home still needs protecting and degraded forest still needs restoring. As yet, our orangutan tracking remains suspended to avoid close contact and minimise any unnecessary risk to wild primates.



Boat patrol

However, we are still carrying out vital conservation work in the Sebangau National Park, including monthly patrols to monitor and prevent threats to orangutans and other wildlife, such as logging, hunting and especially fire. These threats are being mitigated through actions like peat rewetting, reforestation, and community outreach, education and development initiatives.

Peat fires are an ever-present risk, but the community firefighting teams that OAUUK has so generously supported over the years remain on hand should an outbreak occur. During this year's dry season, we ramped up patrols to an average of 31 per month and we are delighted to report that there have been no fires in our work area in the Sebangau National Park area this year for the second year in a row. While aided by relatively wet conditions through

this year's dry season, this is also testament to the tireless efforts of these local community fire teams, who are also being trained in the use of SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) platforms to more effectively monitor conservation areas and prevent forest fires.

In Sebangau National Park, reforestation activities have picked up pace. So far, BNF has planted over 96,000 native seedlings towards our 1 Million Trees campaign, smashing this year's original target of 75,000. Ten Community Nurseries support our campaign, providing seedlings to be replanted in fire-degraded areas, whilst also generating sustainable alternative livelihoods for local families. The capacity of these Community Nurseries to contribute towards successful forest restoration is being enhanced through socialisation, training and frequent monitoring so that activity plans can be drawn up.



Fio, a young orangutan

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Orangutan Appeal UK and its supporters for your ongoing partnership and the most recent grant of £5000, which enables us to keep marching on in our mission to prevent fires, plant trees and save orangutans!

Dr Mark Harrison

Borneo Nature Foundation



# Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) Update

The Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) play a crucial role in protecting the wildlife of Sabah. They work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and undertake wildlife rescue operations, assist in research programmes, perform conservation activities and carry out wildlife enforcement and monitoring.

OAKU have been supporting and sponsoring the work of WRU for several years now and are very proud to be of assistance in their vital work.

Here are a few of the activities they have carried out over the last 6 months:

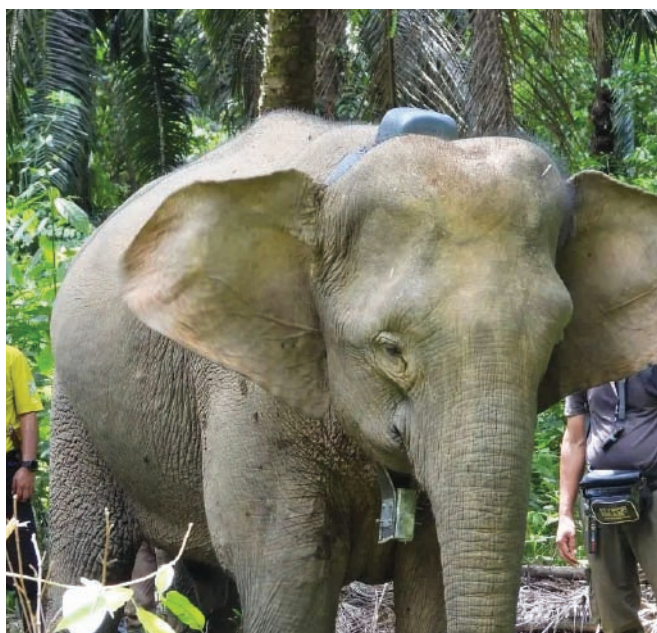
## Elephant Satellite Collars

Working in collaboration with a local NGO called "Seratu Aatai" the WRU team spent 3 days tracking two adult elephants and fitting them with satellite collars. The first female elephant, named Sahana, was found foraging in the forest near to the Kinabatangan river along with her calf and a juvenile. At nearly 5 feet tall, she weighed approximately 1.5 tonnes.

The second elephant was much larger at almost 7 feet tall and around 3.5 tonnes in weight. He was a male named Sandi and was located in a forest near the village of Sukau.

Satellite collaring aims to mitigate human-elephant conflict which happens when humans and elephants come into contact with each other due to a change in land usage and the shrinking of the elephants' habitat. The most common form of conflict is crop-raiding.

The satellite collars will allow the team from Seratu Aatai to follow the elephants' movements through the forests and plantations in order to understand the underlying reasons for their movements. They can then submit proposals to Sabah Wildlife Department suggesting the most appropriate actions which would help protect elephants.



Satellite collaring

## Crocodiles

The WRU has received an increasing number of calls from local people reporting crocodile sightings in the state capital, Kota Kinabalu. It is believed that heavy rain and flooding has encouraged crocodiles away from their natural habitat deep in the forest and led them to urban waterways, including storm drains and rivers. It is not believed these crocodiles pose a risk to human life, but extreme caution must be taken. For the safety of the crocodiles and the residents of the city, the team use humane steel traps to capture the crocodiles and relocate them.

## Pangolins



Pangolins are small mammals whose bodies are covered in scales, which they use to protect themselves from predators. Pangolin scales are in high demand in certain countries and their meat is considered a delicacy. Because of this, pangolins are one of the most trafficked mammals in the world and they are being poached to extinction. So when the WRU receive calls about pangolins straying into areas populated by humans, it is important they act quickly to find them. In one month alone, the WRU rescued and relocated 12 pangolins found near houses and on agricultural land.

One pangolin was seen wandering near a shop in Penampang before it was rescued by the shop owner, who then handed it over to the WRU. It was found to have several wounds which were cleaned and treated by the vet before being released into the forest.

Most recently a pangolin was handed over by a member of the public to the WRU team based at Sepilok. Then just a few days later, two more pangolins were surrendered. A full veterinary check-up was conducted, and samples taken from them for research purposes. All the animals were fortunately found to be in good condition and were acting aggressively. They were all then translocated to a forest reserve nearby and hurried away into the undergrowth as soon as they were released.



# Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) Update continued

## Horsfield's Tarsier

The team also treated another unusual animal, called a Horsfield's Tarsier. These tiny creatures are actually primates and are classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as vulnerable to extinction. Weighing no more than 134g they spend nearly all their time in the treetops and are one of the only nocturnal primates.

The WRU were called to a family-owned rubber plantation after their pet dog alerted them to the presence of the tarsier. For the tarsier's wellbeing, it was captured and taken for a full medical check-up prior to release.

Other animals saved by the WRU included several macaques, snakes, slow loris, clouded leopard, and wild boars, many of which are endangered.



*Horsfield's Tarsier*

## Regrow Borneo Project

Regrow Borneo is a reforestation program restoring forests in a way that supports wildlife and conservation, as well as reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, while improving livelihoods for local communities.

The project plants trees in the Lower Kinabatangan valley in Sabah and is a collaboration between Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC) and Cardiff University. We have been supporting their work since December 2020.

Here is the Project's director, Professor Benoit Goossens' latest report: -

Orangutan Appeal UK's generous support has been used to employ 24 local staff - 14 women and 10 men - who have cleared highly degraded forest and replanted over 5,000 native saplings in the Pin Supu Forest Reserve.

The saplings were grown at the local village nursery and specific species chosen for their tolerance to areas prone to flooding and their capacity to provide an important food source for a wide range of animals when mature.

Regular site maintenance and continual assessment of the sapling's development, using established planting



*A sapling flourishing*

protocols, confirmed that 70% of the saplings are growing well. We are also experimenting with occasional pole planting, especially in areas which are more prone to seasonal flooding. A pole is a young tree stem, approximately one-three metres long, which roots and sprouts when planted in the ground. The theory behind planting a pole instead of a sapling is that its height provides it with a 'head start' so it is less likely to be damaged by browsing animals and not significantly affected by weed competition.

The good news is that camera trapping continues to record the presence of larger mammals, including orangutans, pangolins, civets and deer. This is evidence that wildlife is using newly opened forest areas for hunting and foraging, and utilising the newly created connections to the surrounding forest.



*Orangutan caught on camera trap*

# Banana Tree Restaurants

This award-winning chain of restaurants serving delicious pan-Asian cuisine is owned by William and Anne Chow, who have been supporting the work of Orangutan Appeal UK since 2012. Like most restaurants during the pandemic they faced very hard times. Despite this, they continued to raise funds and awareness. One of the most successful initiatives has been the donation of 25p from every order from one of their top selling dishes. They also held a competition on social media helping to raise awareness of the threats faced by orangutans.

Banana Tree are also committed to help protect orangutans' natural habitat in the rainforest and have pledged that they would only be using ingredients with no or only sustainably sourced palm oil guaranteed with zero deforestation.

To date they have donated an incredible £73,756!

Thank you so much to everyone at Banana Tree and all their customers.



*William and Anne with Sue and John from OAUK*

## Thank you to all our supporters!

**Our sincere thanks to everyone who has adopted, donated, fundraised and given grants to us over the last 6 months. It's been a challenging time for us all and your support is very much appreciated and allows us to continue our vital work.**

We would like to express our gratitude to the wonderful businesses who continue to support us including **SYTO International, Extincts CIC, N'eat Healthy, Centaur Foods, ABN Consultancy, and Strip Distribution.**

Special thanks to Carol Malpus, Doreen Martin, Emma Wells, Joachim Gurt, Stephen Zimmermann, SCDX Ltd, Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Richard Franklin Charitable Trust and Ludlow Trust for their generous contributions.

We would also like to remember and give thanks to those who kindly left us a legacy in their wills. Their gifts will help to make a lasting impact on the survival of the orangutan.

### Fundraisers

Thank you to everyone who has kindly fundraised for us. From running a marathon to holding a cake sale we appreciate all your fantastic efforts. Our Great North Run team – Mandy Gisbourne, Sophie Wild and Lyndsey Gilbey raised an amazing £1,248, and our Royal Parks Half runners including Ben Jones and Daria Danilina raised over £1,000! Special mentions to Teo Cummins



*Teo Cummins*

for raising £429 in the Run Bournemouth Junior and to Mathilda Gibbs for representing us in the Junior Great North Run. Thanks also to Slyzard Pog for hosting a 24-hour live video game stream and raising £250.

To all of you who kindly donated and fundraised through Facebook and Amazon Smile, in 2021 you raised a combined total of over £4,500!

### Art Competition

We had an incredible response to our Artistic Ape Art Competition. Our judges were so impressed by all the entries. Thank you to everyone who entered, we loved seeing all your artwork. After much deliberation our judges selected Julia Sabulis as the winner in the adult category and 8 year old Eilidh Hambly as the winner of the child group. Julia and Eilidh won an adoption each and their artwork can also be viewed on our website and social media.



*By Julia Sabulis*



*By Eilidh Hambly*

### Orangutan Print by Angela Hale

Angela and her husband Ray are long-term supporters and experienced naturalists. Pre-covid they spent much of their time in Borneo conducting lectures and leading nature trips (please see their website for further information [www.thenaturallywildcompany.co.uk](http://www.thenaturallywildcompany.co.uk)). With



*Angela Hale's Orangutan*

more time on her hands, Angela has spent much of lockdown focussing on her art. She has kindly painted and donated a beautiful portrait of a baby orangutan to us.

Available to buy as a limited-edition print on our website. Visit [www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/shop](http://www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk/shop).