



*Orangutan
Appeal UK*

Orangutan Appeal UK

News

Issue 44 - February 2023

Introduction



It's been a busy 6 months for us as a charity and an exciting time for new projects and partnerships.

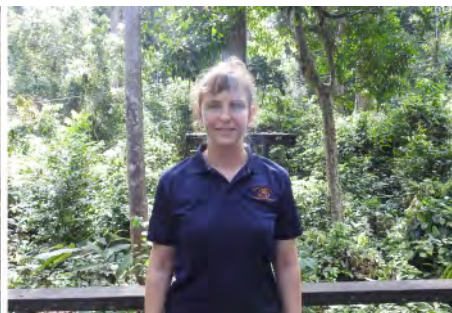
The retirement of our founder and chairperson, Sue, a year ago created an opportunity to reassess our structure, processes and vision for the future. As the Charity Manager my role has become more involved in the communications between Orangutan Appeal UK and our contacts in Sabah, as have the charity's trustees. Gradually small changes are coming into fruition which I believe will help us strengthen our commitment to conserving the critically endangered Bornean orangutan.

Thanks to the easing of Malaysia's COVID-19 restrictions, myself and our new chairperson, Jacha, were able to visit Sepilok last year with a view to

sustaining our current relationships and building new ones on the ground in Borneo. The trip was a great success and we were pleased to come home with new projects and ideas aplenty. Some of these have already become a reality, like the employment of a new Manager at Sepilok to oversee our local projects and hiring a wildlife veterinarian as part of the team there. Support of other organisations such as Borneo Nature Foundation and the Wildlife Rescue Unit have continued, and additional funding has been provided to Regrow Borneo with a view to initiating new educational opportunities to further conservation research in Sabah. Smaller changes within the UK office include the introduction of a more sustainable toy on the adoption scheme (see page 7 for more details) and the use of recycled paper and vegetable-based inks where possible. New Gifts for the Orangutans mean that our supporters can now donate towards reforestation and other important measures to secure the future of orangutan habitat, as well as their immediate care at Sepilok. Updates to our online presence are also underway and I am excited to reveal these over the next few months.

As a team and a charity we continue to strive towards a better future for the critically endangered Bornean orangutan, but this wouldn't be possible without your support. Thank you.

Adrienne



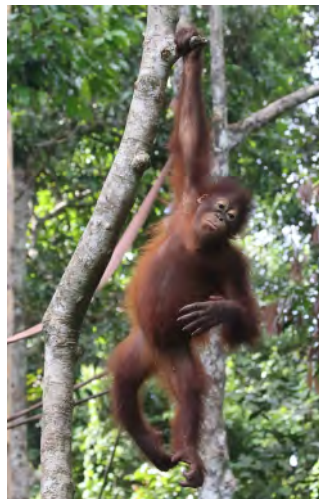
Trustees – Jacha Potgieter, Saph Gordon and Hugh Holman

New for Adoption

Towards the end of 2022 not 1, but 2 orangutans were added to the adoption scheme.



Agop



Hujan

It is always a bittersweet time for us and the team at Sepilok who assist with the heart-breaking rescues of tiny orphaned orangutans. We are pleased to be able to offer them a second chance at an independent life and sharing their rehabilitation with our supporters is a joy.

Agop was found alone and scared in farmland outside of Lahad Datu. She was so small when they found her that she barely weighed more than a bag of sugar. Following a mandatory 3-month quarantine period at Sepilok she was introduced to the other babies at indoor nursery and has been settling in well.

Hujan was born to a semi-wild orangutan who couldn't produce enough milk to support her baby. To avoid a fatal outcome the team intervened and managed to save both mother and baby. Both are doing well as a result and Hujan is thriving at the indoor nursery where she is popular with the other orangutans.

We hope that you will join us in supporting them both through the next steps of their journey at Sepilok.

Sepilok News

Towards the end of last year, we were pleased to welcome four new members of staff to our growing team at Sepilok, which will allow us to continue and improve the care of the orangutans there.

Dr Yohind, Wildlife Veterinarian, joins us from the Wildlife Rescue Unit where he gained a wealth of invaluable experience. He has worked with a variety of species native to Borneo including elephants, pangolins and, of course, orangutans. Although based at Sepilok, Dr Yohind also assists at the Borneo Elephant Sanctuary and on rescues so can often be found in the rainforest helping animals in need. We are thrilled to have him as part of the team and hope that his skills and knowledge in the field will help to continue the highest standard of care for the orangutans.



Dr Yohind

Mark, Manager (Sepilok), will be replacing and building upon the position of Liaison Officer at Sepilok. Where we used to send out a new volunteer every three



Mark Rampangajouw

months to liaise with visitors, Mark will now be representing Orangutan Appeal UK. We are pleased to be able to offer this role to a local person with first-hand knowledge and experience of the culture and native wildlife of

Sabah. His duties include meeting and greeting visitors to the centre, as well as selling adoptions, building relationships, developing partnerships, expanding our education and outreach programme and daily management of our team at Sepilok.

We have also increased the number of staff who care for the orangutans at the outdoor nursery and surrounding reserve. This gives the older orangutans additional

support to venture deeper into the reserve and, ultimately, gain their independence.



Jergen & Reclin

Joss & Tombilina

4-year old Tombilina (featured on the front cover) and 5-year old Joss have made the transition from the indoor nursery to the outdoor nursery where they will complete the final stage of their rehabilitation. Here, they will be encouraged to venture further into the forest and spend less time with their human carers at the centre. This stage normally takes 2-3 years, over which time they will perfect their survival skills in preparation for their independence.

Joss has been spending a lot of his time with Beryl, whom he has developed a lovely relationship with. It is quite common for younger orangutans to look up to older individuals who sometimes act as a surrogate mother. Joss is friendly and playful and gets along with all the orangutans. He is even brave enough to approach dominant male Malim, who tends to be quite solitary and selective in the company he keeps. The team have now also observed Joss foraging for his own food of which he seems to enjoy a wide variety.

Tombilina is a very curious and observant orangutan, spending much of her time in the trees watching the world below. This is the result of the staff encouraging her during her time at indoor nursery to master her climbing skills, which initially she was very reluctant to do. She is quite a timid orangutan and enjoys her own company. Weighing just 17kg she is one of the smallest orangutan at outdoor nursery, so tends to keep her distance from some of the larger, more boisterous orangutans.



Joss



Tombilina

Sepilok News – Continued

Tombi, Betty & Canyon

In September we were thrilled to announce the completion of Tombi's 5 year rehabilitation journey and confirm that he is now living independently in the Kabili reserve. We are pleased to report that all the skills he learnt and developed during his time at Sepilok are serving him well. From a tiny baby found all alone on the banks of the Kinabatangan River in 2017, to a strong, confident, adult orangutan.



Tombi in 2017

Tombi means 'Spirit of the Forest' in Malay and he was named so because of his confidence and courage. These characteristics have remained with Tombi and will continue to serve him well as he begins to explore

further afield in the Kabili Reserve surrounding Sepilok.

At the beginning of December, we were doubly excited to report the graduation of Betty and Canyon from the adoption scheme and can confirm that they have adapted beautifully to their new lives in the Kabili Reserve.



Betty in 2018

Betty, also known as Begia, meaning 'Blissfully Happy' in Malay, was found alone and vulnerable at the age of two in 2018. It was clear that her mother had gone and she was in need of rescuing. Although timid on

arrival, Betty soon settled in and made new friends at the Indoor Nursery in no time. Now Betty has taken just 4 years to master the skills she will need for a successful life in the reserve that surrounds the centre.



Canyon in 2017

Originally kept as a pet, Canyon was reported to the team at Sepilok and relocated to the centre in 2017. Being a 2 year old orphan, she had much to learn from the team that she would otherwise have

learnt from her mother. Canyon's fuzzy hair has always been her most distinctive feature but her caring nature towards other orangutans has also shone through. She truly has become a role model for the current cohort of orangutans on the adoption scheme and we're hopeful that one day this trait will help to successfully raise her own young in the wild.



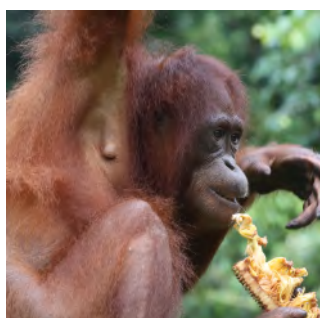
Canyon & Betty now



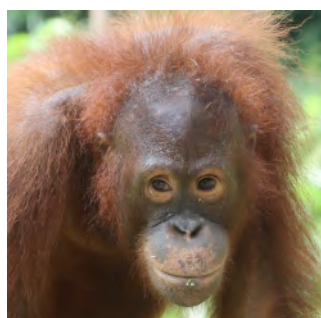
Tombi now

Thanks to the team at Sepilok and their rehabilitation program, orphaned orangutans are given a second chance at life in the wild which we couldn't do without your support.

Here are some of the other rehabilitated and semi-wild orangutans who live in the Kabili rainforest reserve surrounding Sepilok.



Beryl, female, 12 years old



Koko, female, 9 years old



Sepilok, male, 9 years old



Ospie, female, 9 years old



Bakut, male, 8 years old

Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU)

We are pleased to continue our support of the Wildlife Rescue Unit in Sabah, who play a vital role in protecting the native wildlife.



Sunda pangolin

Sunda pangolins are critically endangered and their numbers have declined by 80% over the last 25 years. Due to deforestation, pangolins can sometimes encroach on agricultural or residential land, which can pose a threat to them. The WRU recently rescued one from a village in Sapulut. Following a full medical exam and welfare checks it was relocated into protected forest in the hope that it will be safe from displacement in the future.

The WRU were called to Inanam because salt water crocodile sightings had been reported by many of the villagers. In small communities like this one, the waterways can be an essential lifeline, so this kind of threat is taken very seriously. Following a period of observation the team left a humane trap. Once caught, the crocodile can be relocated far from the villages and their inhabitants.



Crocodile trap

Sepilok received a new resident recently in the form of an abandoned elephant calf. He was found alone and wandering around a village in search for his herd that was no where to be seen. The WRU team made several attempts to reunite the baby elephant with his family but sadly this was not possible. To be sure not to cause any unnecessary stress, they got him to Sepilok where he could be examined and cared for further.



Elephant calf

Back in November the team were called about an injured leopard cat which had been rescued by a family in Telupid. They reported that it had been hit by a car so



Leopard cat

took it home and called the WRU straight away. The cat was then taken to Sepilok for further medical assistance where it stayed and received treatment until it was stronger and ready to be released.

Borneo Nature Foundation (BNF)

The past six months have seen exciting progress towards our goal of planting 1 million trees by 2025. We have established four new community seedling nurseries which take the total number supported by BNF to 14 and will increase seedling production capacity by 40,000 per year whilst providing sustainable livelihood opportunities for an additional 30 people.

Over the course of just two months 100,814 trees from nearby community nurseries were checked, transported and planted in a collaborative effort between BNF, Sebangau National Park staff and local community members with the aim of planting nearly 200,000 seedling across three sites before the end of 2022.

We constructed a new permanent seedling storage facility on BNF land which will allow us to store the seedlings purchased from community nurseries until they are ready to be transported to one of our main planting



New seedling facility

areas. Peatland drainage from past illegal logging has left the Sebangau National Park forest vulnerable to fires, particularly during the dry season. It will take years to fully restore this rainforest. BNF supports a network of

community firefighting teams who patrol fire-prone areas of forest, rapidly mobilising to extinguish outbreaks as they occur. This period we welcomed two new community firefighting teams to the network bringing the total supported by BNF to eight.

This year's dry season has been mercifully mild and water levels have remained high in the peat forest. Despite the current reduced risk of fire, several small outbreaks have arisen near to our Sebangau work area which were successfully extinguished without any fire loss.



Bukit Tunggal firefighters

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Orangutan Appeal UK for your continued partnership and support including the most recent award of £5,000 towards these tree planting and firefighting initiative. This will help to facilitate our ongoing conservation activities in Indonesian Borneo, protecting critical orangutan habitat for generations.

Samantha Salt

Partnerships Development Officer at BNF

Regrow Borneo

In 2022 Jacha and Adrienne were invited to visit Danau Girang Field Centre to meet the team involved in Regrow Borneo and visit one of the reforestation sites. The Centre is located in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (LKWS), which lies along the Kinabatangan River - one of the world's richest ecosystems.

We've been supporting their reforestation and carbon mitigation project since December 2020. Regrow Borneo is the first UK-university based project of its kind, led by researchers from Cardiff University's Sustainable Places Research Institute, the Danau Girang Field Centre and KOPEL Bhd in Borneo.



Replanting site with Norsalleh & Syaz

Following a 1 ½ hour journey by road from Sepilok we were met by project leader Amaziasizamoria Jumail (Maz) and research assistant Jusma Latombong (Jus), who took us the rest of the way by boat. It appeared we were in the heart of the rainforest, surrounded by lush forest but that was an illusion, as not far beyond lay oil palm plantations and small-scale agriculture. This is one of the reasons the project is so important. The plots chosen for replanting are strategically located to create wildlife corridors. These corridors are critically important to reconnect fragmented areas of forest allowing safe passage and habitat for wildlife. They also support seed and pollen dispersal, which improves biodiversity and strengthens ecosystem resilience. Maz explained the corridors not only benefit wildlife but also agriculture, including crop pollination and



Elephant footprints



The Seven Year Forest



Two trees planted

prevention of soil erosion, providing significant advantages to plantations and farming.

Fundamental to the project is sustaining local livelihoods and culture by partnering with local community organisations. Tree planting is planned with and carried out by KOPEL Community Ecotourism Co-operative of the Batu Puteh Community. We set off a few kilometres down river to meet with their conservation manager, Syaz and tree planting leader, Norsalleh, who took us to one of the sites that has recently been cleared and where planting is underway. Clearing just a small area of land is highly intensive, manual work. Without trees to provide a canopy and highly degraded soil, grasses and vines quickly colonise the area preventing any kind of natural rejuvenation of the forest. Guided by Norsalleh, we were given the privilege of planting two trees in an area of cleared land, a small contribution but an incredible value one. The trees' exact details and location are electronically logged, which allows the team to carry out analysis and reporting.

Syaz was proud to show us an area known then as the 7 year forest, named because it had been planted by KOPEL 7 years previously. It was incredible how tall the trees had grown and to see the invaluable habitat it is now providing to various species of plants and animals. It's not quite ready for orangutans to nest in yet but it's well on its way. Elephants are known to pass through the site and we saw evidence of this in their footprints. Maz told us that even though they regularly pass through they very rarely step on the newly planted trees.

Every person we met showed such dedication and commitment to conservation, some have grown up in the local area, others have chosen to relocate from towns and cities to live and work at the research centre. We are delighted to be able to support such a valuable project turning degraded areas into forest once again.

For more information about Regrow Borneo's work visit regrowborneo.org.

Project Updates



Dagat Village community

Education and Outreach Programme

Education and community outreach programmes are an essential part of conservation, they increase awareness and understanding of the importance of orangutans and their habitat, help to develop positive attitudes, empower communities to contribute towards conservation efforts, and help inspire the next generation.

We are expanding our programme and working alongside other local wildlife conservation organisations such as the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC), Seratu Atai, Sabah Parks, HUTAN, Danau Girang Field Centre and Sabah Wildlife Department. Being part of this wider network allows us to pool resources, deliver a consistent conservation message and reach larger audiences, which so far have included 12 primary and secondary schools, two local community engagement events and a careers fair.



SK Nunnuyan Laut School

Orangutan Caring Week

Orangutan Caring Week was held in November. It is a worldwide event to raise awareness of the plight of the orangutan and to create positive change through activities and initiatives. Sepilok hosted a programme of interactive and fun events aimed to increase community awareness and instil a willingness to protect orangutans. Our team made hammocks for the orangutans with the



Orangutan Caring Week

help of visitors, local students and junior volunteer wildlife rangers. These hammocks are made out of fire hose and help to replicate a nest for the orangutans at indoor nursery that haven't quite mastered nest-building skills themselves yet.

Dr Yohind and Mark held presentations for tour agencies and guides informing them of the importance of orangutan conservation, wildlife education and updating them on our work. This will enable the guides to pass on this important information to tourists visiting Borneo.

Adoptions

One of our longest running and most important means of fundraising is our adoption programme. We take great pride in being able to offer this to supporters and visitors to Sepilok and as a result want to ensure that it is as appealing and enjoyable as possible. We have been working hard behind the scenes to improve our current

packs by making them more environmentally friendly and are pleased to be offering a more sustainable toy with new adoptions. Made from 100% recycled plastic bottles and with sewn eyes instead of plastic beads we feel it represents our vision as a charity well. To top it off he has the softest fur and is perfect for orangutan lovers of any age.



New adoption toy

Whole- or Half-Earth Conservation

New research suggests that the population of Bornean orangutans will decrease by 27% by 2032 if efforts to conserve them continue as they are. The aim of the study was to see if the theoretical implementation of alternative conservational measures would result in a population increase rather than decline.

The theory they tested is known as the half-earth, whole-earth concept. In a half-earth scenario, areas high in biodiversity and conservational importance would be halved into land for animal and plant species and land for humans. The hope is that this would mitigate human-animal conflict resulting in threatened populations recovery. If this concept was taken forward on the island of Borneo, the researchers suggest that a decrease in orangutan numbers would be less than if we continue with conservation efforts currently in place.

The second theory, a whole-earth approach, would take longer to implement and rely on the deregulation of government-led area protection and existing

conservation structures with a view to replacing it with community managed land and would offer incentives to locals for protecting the wildlife. The researchers found that this method would actually result in a higher loss of Bornean orangutans due to the lengthy nature of the project.

An increase in protected forested areas would provide the 75% of orangutans currently outside of these 'safe' zones with better opportunities to survive. It would also connect meta-populations which in turn could widen the gene pool. Contributing towards rainforest regeneration and community outreach programs in Borneo will also positively impact conservation of the Bornean orangutan.

We are pleased to provide support to projects that help towards a half-earth approach, which the research has shown is the best solution for the future of the Bornean orangutan.

If you'd like to access the full article visit the News section of our website.

Thank you!

Thanks to everyone who has adopted, donated, fundraised and inspired others to support orangutan conservation.



Jo Cresswell & Mandy Gisbourne

Jo Cresswell and Mandy Gisbourne represented us in the 2022 Great North Run back in September. **Teo Cummins** smashed his fundraising target of £250 by running the Run Bournemouth Junior 2k in October. To celebrate International Orangutan Day **Pymatek** hosted an awareness raising event.

Maskrosen Pre-school in Sweden had another successful plant sale - their teaching methods are designed to encourage their students to appreciate and understand orangutan conservation. The plants they sell are nurtured from seed by the students themselves.

Kerry McIvor raised an impressive £2,330 in October by trekking from Kota Kinabalu to Sepilok in 10 days – what an amazing achievement and a fantastic donation.



Plant Sale



Teo Cummins

We also extend our thanks to our business donors **SYTO International, N'eat, Centaur Foods, SCDX Ltd, and Strip Distribution** for their continued and generous support.

Alpine Coffee Shop, Platform Galeri and Hangin' Pizzeria in Betws y Coed, Wales are passionate about conservation and creating public awareness. They have been supporting Orangutan Appeal UK since 2014. Throughout 2022 they raised an incredible £35,000, which has been shared between us and Ape Action Africa.

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 orangutans in Borneo.

Get in Touch

We'd love to hear from you with any feedback, or maybe you have visited Sepilok and would like to share an interesting story or some photos with us? It could be that you are planning a fundraising event or perhaps you would just like some more information? Whatever the reason please get in touch.

info@orangutan-appeal.org.uk

01590 623443

Orangutan Appeal UK, New Forest Estate Offices,
Lyndhurst Road, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, SO42 7RL
www.orangutan-appeal.org.uk

Facebook @orangutanappealuk | Twitter @orangutanappeal | Instagram @orangapealuk



Pymatek team