



The Jungle Times

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Arrivals

Kelvin Petol

Kelvin joined us for one month as a volunteer student from Sandakan. He quickly settled in and became a valued member of the team, assisting with all the projects currently running at the centre.

Aubéry Lebas

Aubéry arrived with us on the 30th August as a volunteer from France and will be at DG for the next five months as part of an internship from Agrocampus Ouest. She has already settled in as part of the team and is looking forward to getting involved in every part of jungle life.



Leona Wai

Leona also joined us for a month as a volunteer, becoming particularly involved in helping Meaghan Harris with her Phd work into civet ecology and home range. We look forward to her returning to us early next year to begin her Masters project into otters!



Arrival of New PTYs!

Charlie Cooper, Abbie Fletcher & Katey Hedger

Charlie, Abbie and Katey have joined Joe as the four PTY students that will be based at DGFC for the next year. They are currently being trained up in all things DG and are looking forward to being immersed into jungle life! Charlie has a keen interest in herpetology and is interested in conducting research into reptile diversity, while Abbie and Katey are joining the Nocturnal Primate Project, looking into the behavioural ecology of slow loris and tarsier species.



Glesni Phillips & Adam Jameson

Glesni and Adam have joined the Banteng team where they will be based for the next year. They will be involved in camera trapping of this elusive species as well as conducting their own research throughout the year.



Visitors

Karen Povey & Karen Wolfe

Karen and Karen visited us from Point Defiance Zoo in Washington State, and showed a huge interest in all of the wildlife here at DG! Visiting to see the progress of our clouded leopard project, they really got involved and made the most of their time here.

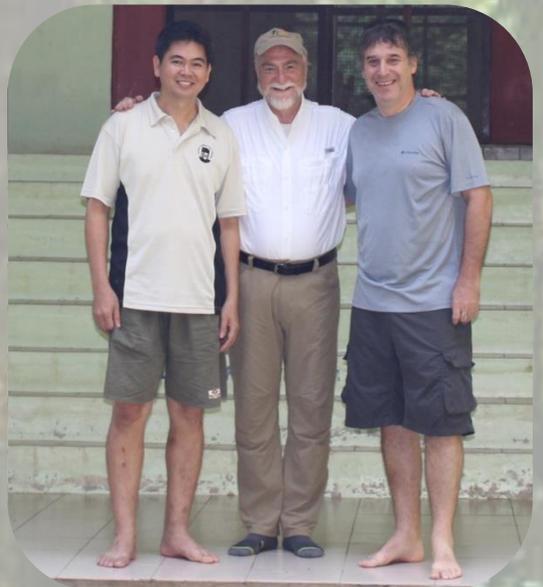


Aaron Sandhu & Miriam Kunde

Aaron and Miriam have a keen interest in sun bear awareness and conservation. Aaron is a junior researcher for the BBC and took full advantage of the wildlife photo opportunities here at the centre! Miriam is currently conducting her PhD on the reintroduction and release methods of sun bears and was interested to find out more about sun bear populations here in Sabah.

Rick Zenn

Rick was visiting us from the World Forestry Center in Portland, Oregon and was interested to find out more about the research being carried out here at DGFC. Although only here for a short time, he immersed himself into all that jungle life has to offer and even managed to conquer his fear of heights by going up the canopy platform!



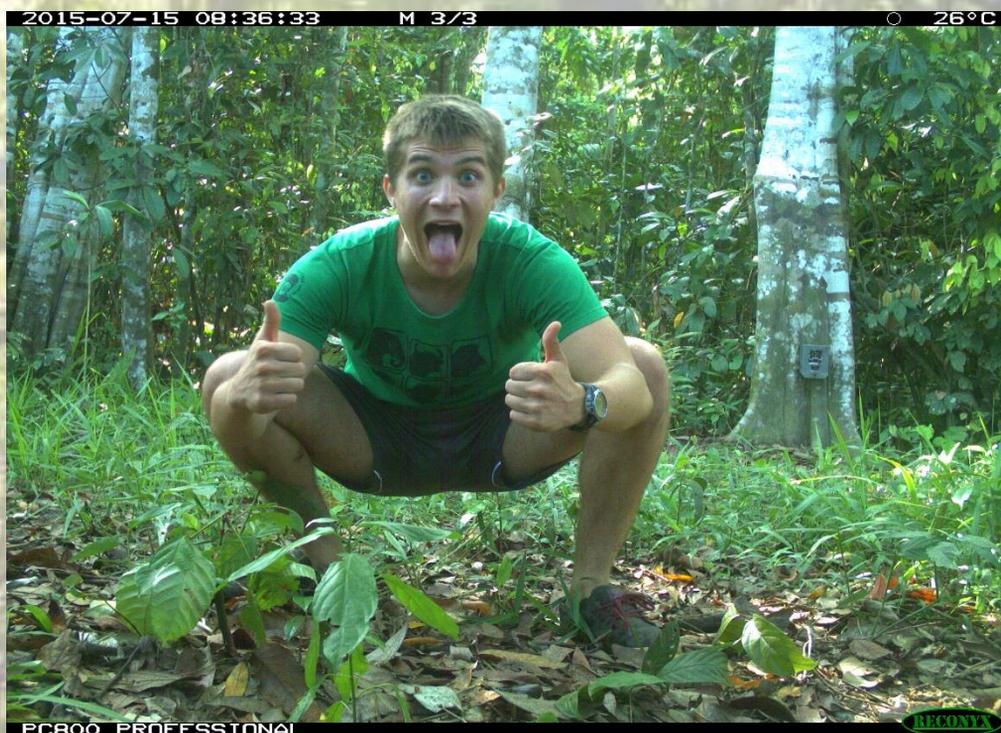
Goodbyes

Stephen Edwards

This month we bid farewell to the last of the 2014-2015 PTYs, Stephen Edwards. Stephen spent his time at DGFC assessing the activity patterns of mammalian carnivores and how activity overlapped between species. For this Stephen used the DGFC camera trapping program and analysed one photo at a time for what species was present and the time of image. This meant going through the five year backlog of camera trapping images and saw him look through an incredible 450,000 photos!

Stephen also assisted PhD student Meaghan Harris as part of the Kinabatangan small carnivore project team in the live-trapping, sampling and collaring of civets.

He will be greatly missed, but we wish him all the best with final year and what the future brings.



Goodbyes

Valentine Thiry

Valou arrived with us in May as a Phd student studying dietary preferences of proboscis monkeys. She has returned to Belgium for five months to continue the analysis of her samples. She will be missed but we look forward to her return early next year when she will continue her research!



Thea Rogers

Thea arrived with us during the Cardiff University Field Course in June and has stayed on for an extra six weeks as a volunteer, assisting with the everyday DG tasks and all the projects currently running. She took great interest in the ongoing Nocturnal Primate Project being run and had the responsibility of finding the sleeping sites of our collared slow lorises and tarsier during her time here. She is spending a final week with her parents around Kota Kinabalu, hoping to explore the wildlife sanctuaries and conservation projects in a different part of Sabah.



Primate Field Course

On the 26th July, DG welcomed a group of 10 primate enthusiasts from Canada, the UK and Malaysia, all with a strong interest in the psychology and behavioural ecology of primates. The field course was run by DGFC PhD student Danica Stark, who leads the primate research here at the centre. During the first week, the group spent time learning about the methods involved in primate behaviour and ecology field research, conducting primate surveys on the river, observing behaviour and recording data on species such as long-tailed macaques and proboscis monkeys.

During the second week, they each designed their own research projects concerning these species and finished the course by presenting their findings, conclusions and any implications for future research. This research continues to help the field centre in understanding as much as possible about the primate species we often see around the centre.



Crocodile tagging

On 4th August, DGFC collared a new male crocodile. This individual was collared as part of a trial of a new piece of equipment provided by SIRTRACK to test the effectiveness of the tag in the field. The male was named Kurus because of his long but skinny body and measured 3.27m in length.

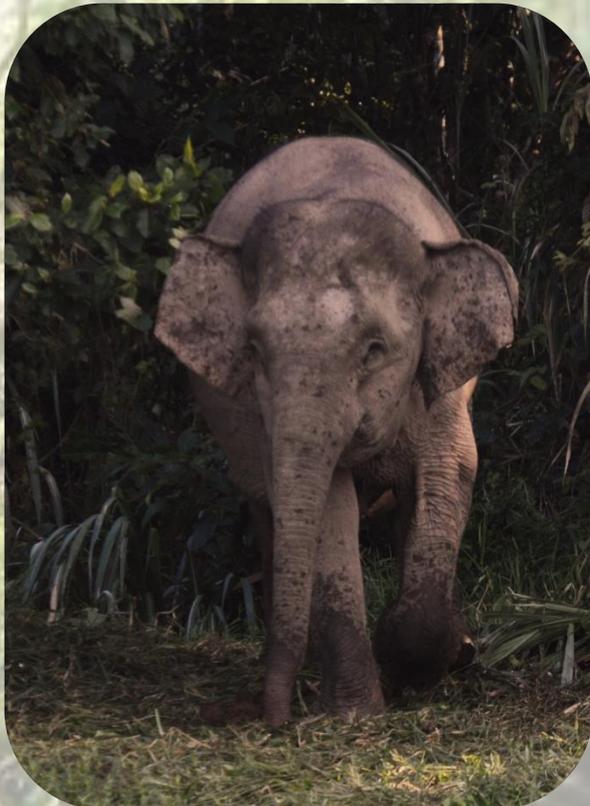
Pictured right is the tag provided by SIRTRACK attached to Kurus during the tagging process.



We will continue to track the crocodiles to help develop the future of crocodile based projects here at DGFC and monitor their movements and home ranging within the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary.

Elephants!

The elephants found their way back to DG this month, with large groups passing through before moving upstream. Here are some pictures captured!



Interview with Karen Povey & Karen Wolfe

Could you tell us about your career working in wildlife and conservation?

Karen Wolfe: Well, I've been a vet at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium for eight years now, prior to that I did a Masters degree working with black footed ferrets which are an endangered North American species. I've worked at a few small animal clinics but by far the most fascinating is the diversity of wildlife, which is what led me to be a zoo vet.

Karen Povey: Most of my career I've worked hands on with animals as a zoologist in engaging the public with conservation. Trying to find the best way to engage people in conservation with my position at the zoo, I'm the education curator so am in charge of all the messaging at the zoo, whether that's through shows and animal programmes and graphics and other sorts of programmes.

Could you tell us a bit about the Cause for Paws project that you run?

Karen Povey: One thing that we are really interested in raising awareness about is the palm oil issue. But we are really trying to make that connection with people on the other side of the world and right here we already have this connection because of how consumers use products that are being developed in this amazing wildlife habitat. So for example, how can we find ways to be more sustainable in our consumption in the US and still maintain great quality of life for the animals here as well as the people because we realise that the palm oil industry is a huge economic driver. We want to encourage the companies in the US to encourage the companies here to produce in ways that aren't impacting the forest as much. It's always going to have some impact but we know there are ways to do it that impact less.

How do you feel about the projects being run at DGFC?

Karen Wolfe: I think it's awesome, you guys are terrific and there is a huge array of projects being run - people here are very passionate, and very dedicated, and are doing very important basic spatial analyses of animals that are in the area. To me that's incredibly important, as humans and animals become closer and closer and their habitats are being encroached upon, it's really important to know how the animals are using that space and that's exactly the type of work that's being done here so it's critical.

Karen Povey: It's fascinating, I love living vicariously through what you guys do! This is my 4th trip to Borneo and it's always been predominantly cat researchers so it's really fun to see the monitor traps, the civets and obviously the elephants so it's neat for me to have an opportunity to keep learning as I've been in the business for 30 years now. It has just been a really amazing trip.

What have you enjoyed most about your stay here?

Karen Wolfe: That is going to be a hard one because honestly there are two things that tie, the people here are fabulous, I really feel that it's collaborative, I feel like people are super friendly, opening and very welcoming. Also the Bornean pygmy elephants really rock, seeing those within a four day time period was just incredible, and the tarsier, and food that was cooked for me!

Karen Povey: The elephants! I've seen elephants here before but I've never seen elephants crossing the river before so that was really neat. But I have to admit even though I'm a cat person I'm just nuts for hornbills and we saw five species. It always amazes me how many there are, and every time I'm ever going to say the word tarsier I'm going to say it with a British accent! And the bioluminescent fungi! It's impossible to pick one thing!

Civet collaring

This month has been an exciting one for Meaghan Harris and her PhD work on civets, with two new males being collared! On 5th August, a malay civet named Kunau (named after the Malay fruit) was sampled and collared and weighed 5kg. Shortly afterwards, on 8th August, another male malay civet named Belang (after his unusual coat markings) was captured, weighing 4.25kg.

This marks the first collaring in a large forest block of the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary and should provide us with some exciting baseline data! The collars have now been running for one month and are functioning well. The three civets now collared as part of the small carnivore project will continue to be tracked to provide data on the spatial ecology and home ranges of these civet species in Lot 6. Meaghan will continue to trap for the next few weeks to collect samples before she heads back to Cardiff!



Miriam Kunde & Aaron Sandhu Interview

Miriam, could you tell us about your PhD on sun bears?

Miriam: So my PhD on sun bears is split into three components. The first looks into re-introduction strategies of large carnivores, the second component deals with some of the threats sun bears are exposed to such as trade. I've been working to develop a forensic marker with samples provided by CITES Australia to detect sun bear in traditional Chinese medicine. The third component is a phylogeographic study of sun bears. So what I'm trying to do is get the genetic fingerprint of each sun bear population's distribution range, across south East Asia.

Aaron could you tell us a bit about your role here?

Aaron: My role here is more as a sort of documentarian hoping to record the fantastic work the scientists do here and also get an insight and show people back home. I think for the most part people are unaware of the sort of work that goes into conservation biology and science that's related to animals. I hope somehow I can try and shed a light on that which became my primary motivation for coming out here. You are in such a rich habitat and it's so easy to see things out here. It's a really fantastic place.

Can you tell us a bit about the project you both are currently working on?

Miriam: So what we are trying to do is set up a website where everybody that works with sun bears in any shape or form - may it be media, may it be in a social science context or may it be actual sciences. They will then be able to access the website and start talking to people who are already in the field and working with sun bears. This will provide researchers with a resource to see what's already been done and what current research is underway. By doing this you find new collaborations, avoid double research as well as wasting a lot of time and money.

Aaron: And not necessarily just scientists but anyone who is working around the field and anyone who is already carrying on that conversation. Doing this will allow new conversation channels to open up to all those involved or interested in sun bear conservation.

How did you come to know about DGFC and why did you decide to visit here?

Miriam: I also thought it was important for Aaron working on this project who is predominantly exposed to sun bear research topics through me talking about it, so it was nice to demonstrate the issue. It's very important, especially when developing a project like this and really trying to understand it. It's important to understand every part of it and the foundations of it inside out before we can really put it into action and this is really the first step in that action. Everything else has just been planning until this point.

Aaron: Miriam told me about this place actually. Once you have this place exposed to you and someone shows you this little view through a keyhole. You start to get an idea of what's here, which immediately motivated to come here and find out what's going on. Since I was going to open up conversations about sun bears I needed to know what the environment they live in was like: How they live, where they live and what animals they might be interacting with. Using this I could build a picture of the keystone species in that sort of ecology and what makes up the sun bear's day to day life. I knew that it would be a slim to zero chance to see them in the wild. But being in a place where there is a potential for sun bear was essential, I feel it was very important for us to be here.

How do you feel about the projects that are currently run at DGFC and what have you most enjoyed about your stay?

Miriam: Fantastic. We both really enjoyed the monitor lizard project, Sergio has been an absolute champ, just shadowing Sergio and his work has been amazing. Crocodile tracking has got to be another highlight, it was so exciting, it was like being at Universal Studios.

Aaron: There's something about being in this environment as well that people don't appreciate what it means to be where you are, it almost doesn't feel real at times. It's so detached from anything else. I think beside the animals it's been great to use this experience to make some new friends. It's been a cracker.

Conservation Corner:

Common name: Banteng
Scientific name: *Bos javanicus*
IUCN status: Endangered



Description and Ecology:

Wild banteng population worldwide is known to be as little as 8,000 individuals living in small, fragmented areas. They are grazers and eat fruits, grasses, bamboo, trees and shrubs and tend to be located near permanent water supply. They have a diurnal pattern of behaviour in which they alternate between long periods of feeding (2-3 hours) followed by periods of rest. Social groups are often sexually segregated, with female-juvenile groups and male groups seen separately, and the composition of these groups can remain the same for years. In areas of dense vegetation, solitary animals are much more common.

Threats:

- Hunting – for food, traditional medicines and trophy horns
- Habitat loss/degradation (often due to agriculture)

Conservation:

Banteng populations are legally protected in all range states, providing active conservation management in countries such as Borneo, Java, Thailand and Cambodia. DGFC is currently carrying a Sabah-wide banteng survey funded by Sime Darby Foundation with the ultimate goal to produce a Banteng State Action Plan.

Guess the Hornbill!

1



A

**Rhinoceros
Hornbill**

2



B

**Black
Hornbill**

3



C

**White-crested
Hornbill**

Fact of the month!

Monitor lizards regurgitate their food as a defence mechanism. It is thought to be to distract predators and has been experienced first hand in the field by our researchers!

Photos of the Month!



Photos by Stephen Edwards,
Charlie Cooper, Joe Hampson &
Katey Hedger

Danau Girang Field Centre

*Danau Girang Field Centre was opened in July 2008.
It is located in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary,
Sabah, Malaysia.*

*Danau Girang is owned by the Sabah Wildlife Department
and supported by Cardiff University. Its purpose is to further
scientific research with the aim of contributing to long-term
conservation projects in the area, and develop a better
understanding of our environment and the living things we
share it with.*

Danau Girang Field Centre

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