



The Jungle Times

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Arrivals



Julia Beach Bartel arrived on the 20th of November, and is staying for a month. No stranger to field work, she has previously volunteered for Frontier in Madagascar for four months, and has previous forest conservation experience in Vancouver, where she is from. She will be assisting with a variety of projects and has a keen interest in birds. We wish her a warm welcome and hope she enjoys her time here!



Oriana Bhasin (pictured here with one of our RAs, Alut), who had previously visited DG this year as part of the Primate Ecology Field Course, arrived late this month. She will be carrying out the practical element of her Masters, which will involve close work with Valou on proboscis monkeys. She aims to investigate a potential mutualistic relationship between proboscis monkeys and the Bangkal tree (*Nauclea orientalis*), one that would show the first evidence of seed dispersal activity in proboscis monkeys. Good luck Oriana!

PhD Update: Proboscis monkeys



Valou returned to Danau Girang this month, and immediately resumed the field work element of her PhD, looking at proboscis monkey feeding ecology. Faecal samples are being collected and analysed, with particular attention being paid to the seeds found within. Behavioural observations are also being recorded in the mornings and evenings. Welcome back to DG, Valou, and good luck with your work!



Danau Girang Visit to Kinabalu International School

Our education officer, Clarice Samih, gave a presentation to 120 children in Kinabalu International School. The presentation, which took place on November 28th, included the activities happening at DG, as well as secrets about the fauna in the Kinabatangan forest. A talk on the clouded leopard was also given by Dr Diana Ramirez of the Wildlife Rescue Unit.



Dr Diana Ramirez and Clarice Samih (on the left and right, respectively).



Some of the 120 children looking interested as Clarice presents.

Attack on NGOs

Earlier this month, Danau Girang was sad to hear that Sukau assemblyman, Datuk Saddi Abdul, majorly criticised non-governmental organisations working in Sabah, during a speech debating state budget. Levelling baseless claims against DG and other organisations such as HUTAN and LEAP, the assemblyman accused the NGOs of acting in their own interests purely for monetary gain and using the guise of forest conservation in order for the misappropriating of funds and donations.



The assemblyman was quick to receive criticism for these false statements. Darrell Webber and other associates of WWF Malaysia penned an open letter that sought to highlight the good that these NGOs have brought to the local area writing that “The scientists involved, and the organisations they represent, have a long history of generating highly regarded, independent science, as well as policy development and extensive local engagement – particularly with the Sabah Wildlife Department and Sabah Forestry Department.”

Sabah-based NGO Land Empowerment Animals People (LEAP) has stated that if the “Sukau Assemblyman has any evidence to support these serious allegations that he should inform the police” and demanded a public apology for the insulting nature of his claims.



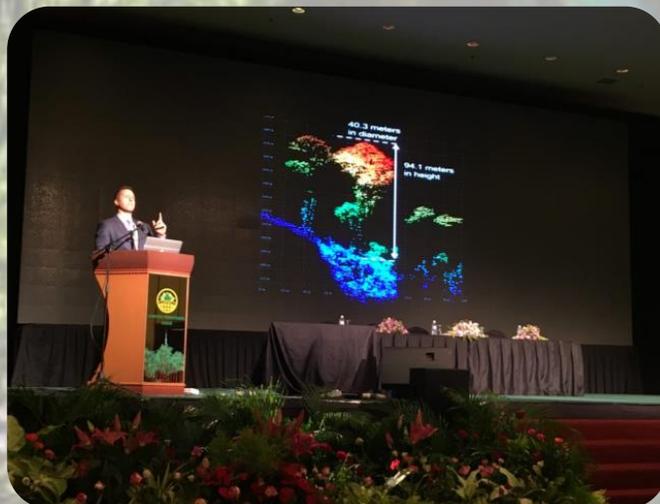
LEAP executive director Cynthia Ong further went on to say “We are blessed that they have chosen Sabah as their base. Rather than make erroneous allegations and dismiss them as outsiders, it would be appropriate for us to acknowledge their contributions and regard them as honorary Sabahans.”

It is no surprise that this attack comes after a petition against the project to build another bridge across the Kinabatangan was given to the chief minister. This petition was handed over by LEAP and has the support of many of the Sabah based NGOs. These same NGOs in have worked tirelessly to provide the government with scientific evidence of the damage this bridge project will cause to the environment. We hope that the Chief Minister of Sabah will decide not to go ahead with the bridge construction and protect the fragile state of the Kinabatangan’s forests and its wildlife.

HoB conference and Ramsar site workshop

This month saw the 8th edition of the international Heart of Borneo (HoB) conference, an initiative which aims to improve biodiversity within Borneo's forest reserves through the expansion and sustainable management of protected areas.

During the conference a recent collaborator with DGFC, Dr Gregory Asner from the Carnegie Airborne Observatory (CAO) team, presented some exciting results from the Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) mapping carried out last May in Sabah using the CAO, a plane capable of firing beneath it 500,000 laser shots per second in order to construct a detailed 3D map of the forest canopy down to the ground level.



HoB continued...

Not only did Dr Asner and his colleagues discover the tallest tree in the tropics, a tree in Danum Valley standing 94.1m tall and belonging to the genus *Shorea*, they discovered another 49 trees throughout Sabah all taller than the previous record! Furthermore, from the LiDAR mapping results the team produced the first high-resolution forest carbon stock map, showing that Sabah's forests sequesterate more carbon than the Amazon! All the more reason to preserve Borneo's forests!

Another highlight of the conference was a pledge from the State Government to expand the size of Totally Protected Areas (TPAs) from 24% to 30% of Sabah's land mass within a decade, a target to be achieved in tandem with enhanced resources to protect wildlife species and the rationalisation of land use for the socio-economic wellbeing of local communities.

Ramsar Conference

Following the conclusion of the HoB conference, the 2nd Sabah Ramsar conference was held which provided updates of the ongoing efforts and achievements on establishing the largest Ramsar site in the country: the Lower Kinabatangan-Segama Wetlands Reserve. During the conference, Dr Wong Siew Te from the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre gave a presentation highlighting the threats faced by sun bears from illegal hunting, and also raised the issue of how the proposed bridge to be built in Sukau would further fragment the forest and destroy a section of the Kinabatangan river; sentiments shared by the researchers at DGFC!



Human-Wildlife conflict workshop in Sandakan



From 21-23 November 2016, Sabah Wildlife Department and the Malaysian Palm Oil Council organised a Biodiversity Workshop "Enhancing Conservation and Mitigating Human-Wildlife Conflicts" at Four Points by Sheraton, Sandakan. It was organised in response to the increasing number of conflicts between human and wildlife, especially elephants, especially in oil palm plantations and villages. A number of participants came from the different villages that are facing conflicts with elephants, and many oil palm estates were also represented. Benoit Goossens gave a presentation on human-elephant conflicts research. During the workshop, the Elephant Action Plan 2012-2016 was reviewed and assessed and new recommendations were proposed during a working group discussion. Benoit facilitated a working group on connectivity while Farina and Lucy facilitated a working group on human-elephant conflict and local communities. The Elephant Action Plan will be revised by a small group including Benoit and Farina, and a new action plan (for 10 years this time) will be drafted before June 2017.



Human-Elephant Conflict!



Image courtesy of the Star Online, shows the tragic loss of Jumbo the young male.

On the 19th of November an Indonesian man was sadly trampled to death by a young bull elephant whilst working at a timber plantation in Tawau. In response to this tragic event, the Sabah Wildlife Department rangers were sent to cull the young male elephant.

The director of the Sabah Wildlife Department, Augustine Tuuga, said "There was a real possibility that this bull elephant would attack again if it came across anyone in its path...we did it with great reluctance but human lives are paramount".

A Letter from WWF-Malaysia has stated it does not condone the culling of the bull elephant "as it greatly impacts the shrinking population of Sabah's pachyderms."

The tragic event has highlighted the urgent need for the Human Elephant conflict (HEC) to be approached strategically; WWF-Malaysia and DGFC are working with state agencies such as Sabah Wildlife Department and Sabah Forestry Department to figure out options to reduce the HEC. Solutions include the strategic placement of electric fences and wildlife corridors that connect fragmented forest.

We hope that with raised awareness, we don't hear of any more lives lost, human or elephant.

Conservation Corner:

**Common name: Bornean
bristlehead**

**Scientific name: *Pityriasis
gymnocephala***

IUCN status: Near Threatened



Description and Ecology: The bristlehead is known to be an elusive, rare and medium sized bird at around 9.8 inches in length. Standing out with its red coloured thighs, throat and neck, with a yellow featherless crown.

Bare feather shafts protrude from the crown giving the appearance of bristles. These projections are therefore the reason these birds are known as 'Bristleheads'. The birds have a heavy hooked bill to help them clean leaves, twigs and trunks in search for invertebrates. Social birds found in feeding groups of 6-10 individuals. These groups will call almost contently with a wide variety of unmusical calls.

Threats:

- Destruction of lowland forest
- Burning of peat swamp forests.

Conservation:

- Protection of forested areas and the Bristle heads nesting sites.

Drawings by Annalie Dorph

A volunteer for the Nocturnal Primate Project, Annalie uses her spare time to work on her art, which has included some lovely pieces of the fauna around DG. Below are a few of our favourites.



This portrait of Nyaring, our most recently collared tarsier. This was based on a photo captured during sleeping sites.



Based on a photo in 'Phillips Guide to the Mammals of Borneo', this leopard cat was one of the first drawings that Annalie did when she arrived at DG.

Guess the Squirrel

Pictured below are three species of squirrel we commonly see around DG, can you guess their names?

1



A

Common pygmy

2



B

Pale giant

3



C

Prevost

Fact of the Month!!

The whip scorpion sprays a foul smelling combination of acetic and caprylic acid repellent from glands at the rear of their abdomen to warn off potential predators.

Photos of the Month!



Photos by Jack Devlin

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

Lot 6
The Jungle
Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary
Sabah

Email: danaugirangfieldcentre@yahoo.com

*Editors: Angus Chaplin Rogers, Francis Roy,
Jack Devlin and Toby Stock*

Director of Publication: Benoit Goossens

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