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Orang-utan Bridge Engineers come to Look-Look

A team of orang-utan bridge specialists including researcher Nobuo Nakanishi of the Bornean Conservation Trust and freelance guide Jamil Sinyor came to see the small rivers surrounding DG this month to assess potential sites for rope bridge construction for orang-utans. Some forest fragments have always been inaccessible to these red apes due to natural barriers such as the Kinabatangan, as unlike monkeys; they cannot swim; but since the rainforest has suffered deforestation and logging, previously accessible forest fragments along the Kinabatangan separated by small rivers are now unreachable due to the lack of fallen trees and extensive canopies of old growth forests which previously provided bridges. Rope bridges built in the Kinabatangan in 2003 as a project undertaken jointly by KOCP and the Sabah Wildlife Department were proven to be successful after a male orang-utan was snapped by a photographer mid-swing. Hopefully with future

construction of rope bridges, isolated populations can be reconnected to prevent genetic isolation. Dr Benoit Goossens said when referring to the research in the Kinabatangan: "The data from these shows that the populations of orang-utans in the Lower Kinabatangan river areas are estimated to go extinct in our lifetime if they are not reconnected through schemes like the rope bridges."



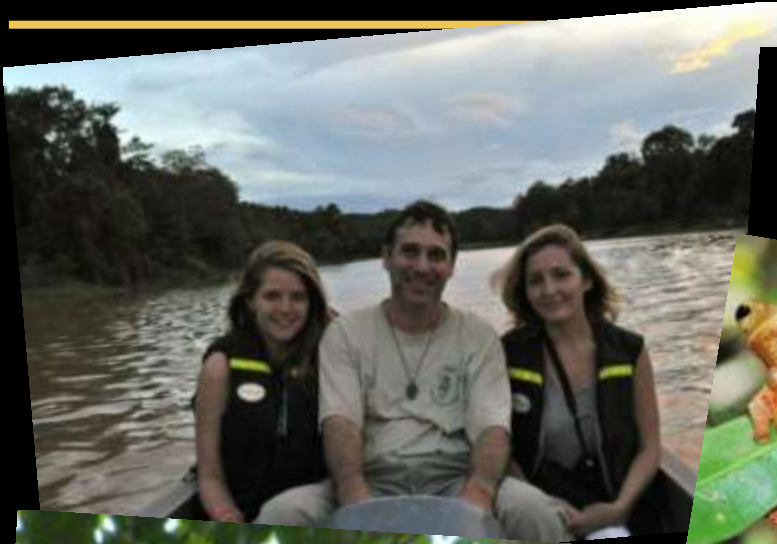
(C. <http://news.mongabay.com>)

Canopy Viewing Platform? Yes Please!!!

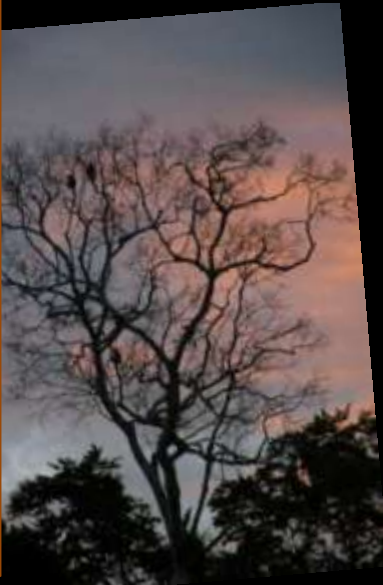
Yeah, that's right - we have our own canopy viewing platform now! At 18m high and around 2m x 3m across, the wooden platform has been constructed in a carefully selected tree to get a brilliant bird's eye view over Danau Girang. The platform was constructed over roughly a week by Sabah based company Rope Skills Rigging (http://www.fieldskills.com.my/content/ropeskills_intro.php). Eager beavers Alice, Jenny and Budin were

the first members of Danau Girang to climb the dizzying height of the ladder up to the platform to take a look at Danau Girang from a new angle, after being fully kitted out with climbing equipment and carefully supervised by the Rope Skills Rigging staff. We look forward to future visitors being able to make use of this tree top view, thanks to the guys from Rope Skills Rigging for all their help!





Clockwise from top left: Benoit with his favourite girls; a harlequin tree frog; kingfisher; pink sunset; orang-utan grabbing a bite to eat; Jen and Budin enjoying the canopy platform; Andy weightlifting; a tree frog; scary tarantula; a wrinkled hornbill.



Conservation Corner:

Malayan Sun Bear *Helarctos malaynus*

Go to any tour company in Sabah, and you will be met by brochures, flyers and posters advertising nature tours in which you can apparently see Asia's infamous sun bear among other rainforest animals: but what are the chances of really seeing one in the wild? After around a 30% decline over the last 30 years (3 bear generations) the chances are next to nothing.

The Malayan sun bear, the world's smallest bear, is classed by the IUCN as "Vulnerable". However, there have not been any in depth population studies, and it is suspected that their numbers have plummeted after deforestation and oil palm development has reduced the area of occupancy (AOO), the extent of occurrence (EOO) as well as the quality of the remaining habitat.

The killing of bears is illegal in all countries within the sun bear's habitat boundaries; ranging from Bangladesh, India and China in the north, to Borneo and Sumatra in the south of Asia, yet uncontrolled

poaching is still at large due to the commercial demand for bear body parts. Although China is largely to blame for the majority of the commercial export of sun bear body parts (such as the use of sun bear paws as a dinner delicacy and bile from the gall bladder in traditional medicine): local communities also use sun bear in their everyday lives. After a study in 2002 on the ethnozoology of the Kinabatangan, the Orang Sungai were found to have been found to use sun bear amongst many other animals for food, ointment and rituals.



Sunbear paws as a delicacy.
www.sunbears.wildlifedirect.org

Not only do sun bears have to deal with habitat loss and poaching, but they are also perceived as pests by farmers and villagers who may be concerned about their crops, or scared for their safety. Oil palm workers have been known to shoot bears on site as the sun bear's foraging methods may have long term destructive effects on crops: a bear that has been chased away is a lot more likely to come back than a bear that is dead. But there is still hope for the Malayan sun bear as conservation efforts become more in depth and attract more and more attention. The Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) spearheaded by Wong Siew Te and run in conjunction with Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), and Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) aims to raise public awareness as well as rehabilitating and releasing captured and injured sun bears back into the wild. If you wish to support the BSBCC then head to <http://sunbears.wildlifedirect.org/bornean-sun-bear-conservation-centre-bsbcc> to make a donation that could save a bear's life.



Left: Sunbear conservation centre logo. Right: Sunbear named for the bright patch of fur on the chest. www.indonesianfauna.com

JUNGLE FASHION

The beauty of the jungle and its creatures is inspirational for photographers, artists and nature lovers alike, so why not for fashion too? The Jungle Times presents JUNGLE FASHION, for the latest looks inspired by the Kinabatangan.



Blue Pansy

Red Helen

Tree Nymph

Common Bird
Wing

This month's JUNGLE FASHION was inspired by the beautiful butterfly species found in the Kinabatangan, some of the most vibrant and colourful animals around, as they use their beauty to attract a mate.

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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