

# JUNGLE TIMES

Independent Newspaper of Danau Girang Field Centre

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## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

**A team from National Geographic Television came to Danau Girang in November in search of the charismatic Bearded Pig (*Sus barbatus*).**

The pigs are often seen at Danau Girang Field Centre, particularly in the mid-



The film crew pose with the PTY students at Danau Girang

afternoon when attempts at finding rubbish bags to snuffle through are often witnessed. Students from Bungay High School had firsthand experience of this when one of their bin liners of rubbish from the Kinabatangan River was strewn across the area after a week of hard work collecting it in the sun.

The National Geographic team came to Danau Girang with presenter Mike Leaky in order to film the wild boar as part of a documentary about parasites often encountered by travellers. Mike Leaky is well known for giving himself a tapeworm for a U.K. documentary.

The team were hoping to film the animals in their natural environment, but unfortunately the pigs had other ideas and hid well out of the way for the duration of their short stay. Although the objective of obtaining footage of the bearded pig was not fulfilled, the visit to Danau Girang was very much appreciated by the PTY students who relieved the camera crew of fruit and biscuits in order to lighten their travelling load.

The pigs were spotted approximately 45 minutes after delivering the film crew to Batu Putih.

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## ADVENTURES IN SUKAU

**The PTY Students, Chloe Parker and Rachel Henson, spent six days in Sukau in November to gain firsthand experience of work with the Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Project.**

This was their second visit to the village and the students were made to feel at home by the friendly Hutan staff and family whose house they stayed in. This was the first time they had experienced a



Harija, Mislin, Farina, Rachel and Chloe in Sukau.

home-stay, and they thoroughly recommend it to anyone, despite being beaten at card games by the children...

In the field, each worked with a different team observing orangutans and recording their behaviour. A heavy downpour meant that Maria was 'lost' one afternoon—she'd obviously decided to make an escape whilst the humans were preoccupied with torrential rain. Chloe's team, however, had more success with the discovery of an unknown flanged male orangutan.

Chloe and Rachel took the opportunity to seek advice for their projects back at Cardiff University, experienced life in the field and were even fortunate enough to witness elephants entering in



KOCP field assistants observing Orangutan Maria

a palm oil plantation and the conflict mitigation that followed, something that was very much worth embracing the wonders of the rainy season for...

*Hutan* has been working in the Kinabatangan since 1996 and formed the Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Project to further the protection of the area and the animals that inhabit it, such as the orangutan.

### IN OTHER NEWS...

- A rain gauge placed outside the field centre collected an average of 220 ml water each day during December.
- Frederick Pautz, a botanist from Lyon, France, visited the centre in November and was very impressed by the diverse array of plant life.
- The PTY students managed to not only lock themselves out of a hostel room in Sandakan, but on gaining access again managed to lock themselves in the room. The pair were later rescued by confused hotel staff.

### DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?

"They're big!"

- observer commenting on elephants near Sukau.

## Save It For A Rainy Day... PHOTO ALBUM

During the rainy months, work in the forest becomes quite restricted by flooding, so two new activities have been introduced to keep everyone active and nurture their competitive spirit.

The new dartboard became the focus of attention in heavy downpours, hosting both practice sessions and intensive tournaments. Staff and students have battled it out so ferociously that the dartboard now has more holes than board. Handyman Ancu has been by far the most skilled darts player, leaving the PTY students with little hope of ever winning a game.

Badminton is the other sport to replace daily ventures into the forest. The path is used as a net, but otherwise all that is lacking is some badminton talent, as it's not unusual for shuttlecocks to end up on the roof or speedily heading into the trees.

Card tricks are another craze that's taken Danau Girang by storm, with Ancu teaching the PTY students, who in turn force any visitors to fake an expression of amazement as they make feeble attempts at being magicians.

Some afternoons have also been spent trying to perfect the butterfly catching techniques introduced during the Cardiff field course in July. Unfortunately this activity



Butterfly netting at Danau Girang

seems to be one that neither of the PTY students are capable of and only one butterfly has been caught. Furthermore, the pair were unable to identify the insect before its bid for freedom was successful. Bird watching from the jetty has proved far more fruitful though and identification skills are improving slowly.



Clockwise from top: Christmas celebrations, A proboscis monkey, Santa Claus playing guitar, the rain gauge, a proboscis monkey 'in flight'.

## CAST NETTING



Cast netting is an excellent way of small scale fishing to provide for an evening meal.

After several pathetic attempts at casting the net themselves, the students allowed someone with far more casting skill to show them how it's done. Asnih caught several small fish and prawns for dinner, which were eaten with Pakis, a vegetable collected locally.

The PTY students will continue to practice on dry land before trying to catch anything again.



## WILDLIFE SPOTTING

Alex Hinchcliffe and Charity Edoh visited Danau Girang in early December to explore possibilities for future work with the centre.



Alex and Charity explored the local area and took boat trips on the Kinabatangan River, where wildlife such as these birds were spotted.



They hope to return to Danau Girang Field Centre in the near future with a larger group of people and thoroughly enjoyed their time in the Kinabatangan.

## SPECIES IN FOCUS: Orangutan

**Common Name:** Bornean Orangutan

**Species Name:** *Pongo pygmaeus morio*

**Distribution:** The orangutan's habitat is restricted to the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. The Bornean orangutan is found in Borneo. The sub-species found in the Kinabatangan is found only in Sabah—*Pongo pygmaeus morio*.



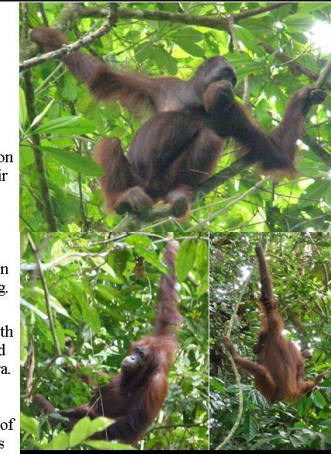
The Bornean orangutan is a mostly solitary animal, travelling in dispersed groups and communicating by long-calls. These are produced by flanged male orangutans which bear large cheek pads, a secondary sexual characteristic. Despite not travelling in closely associated groups, young orangutans tend to stay with the mother for about seven years. Orangutans also take a long time between giving birth to offspring—longer than

any other ape and have an expected lifespan of over forty years.

Orangutans feed mainly on fruits, leaves and bark. Their diet varies depending on what is available to eat throughout the year. They have a relaxed approach to life, spending a large portion of the day eating and resting.

Orangutans were once widespread throughout South East Asia but are now found only on Borneo and Sumatra. The Sumatran orangutan rarely, if ever, visits the ground due to the presence of terrestrial predators, but it is not uncommon for their Bornean counterparts to do the same. There are also differences in colour and morphology between the two species.

A male and a female orangutan visited Danau Girang Field Centre in December and were given the names 'Sheldon' and 'Lisa' respectively. They stayed in close proximity to the centre for several days before being lost by the PTY students who weren't able to cross large expanses of water created by the flooding. Neither Lisa nor Sheldon were disturbed by quiet observation, and whereas Sheldon



Orangutans at Danau Girang: Sheldon (top) and Lisa (Bottom) demonstrating their strong arms and hanging ability.

chose to remain towards the jetty, inquisitive Lisa spent an afternoon exploring the fruiting trees by the edge of the oxbow lake before crossing the path to 'hang out' by the hostel until it was time to make a nest for the evening. Orangutans usually make a new nest every evening by bending and twisting twigs and leaves to create a comfortable place to get a good night's sleep.

## HOW TO: Protect an Advent Calendar from Ants

*Nuggets of knowledge from the jungle...*

Anyone who has spent time in the jungle knows that anything tasty will usually be found by something else before you get the chance to eat it. Our main competitors are the ants, of which there seem to be rather a lot, which is a bit of a nuisance when a kind parent has sent a Cadbury's chocolate advent calendar for the run up to Christmas. So here's how to protect such an item from a premature ending:

1. Take a shallow tray and fill this

with water. Ants do not swim.

2. Place something waterproof but elevated into the tray, making sure that it doesn't touch the sides of the tray. (Don't create any ant-bridges.)

3. Stack any food on top of the waterproof item. Place less precious food items (such as breakfast cereals) on first. If any parachuting ants make it onto the tower then the chocolate will be safest on top, as ants are stupid and will eat the cornflakes first.

4. Place something heavy on top of the tower to stop the advent calendar from being stolen by wayward rodents.



5. Remember that the ants want your chocolate as much as you do—don't take any chances!

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*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.*

## JUNGLE JOKES

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Q) What do gorillas sing at Christmas? | Q) Who delivers Christmas presents to the leopard cat? | Q) What's an elephant's favourite Christmas song? |
| A) King Kong merrily on high!          | A) Santa paws  | A) Jungle Bells!                                  |

## The Twelve Days of Christmas

*Revised Lyrics: R. Henson, Music: traditional*

Twelve million mosquitoes  
Eleven bleeding leech bites  
Ten thousand ants  
Nine giant geckos  
Eight proboscis monkeys  
Seven crocs-a-swimming  
Six flying hornbills  
Five rambutan  
Four calling gibbons  
Three French men  
Two silvered langurs  
An orangutan in a fig tree

On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...an orangutan in a fig tree.  
On the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...two silvered langurs and an orangutan in a fig tree.  
On the third day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...three French men, two silvered langurs and an orangutan in a fig tree.  
On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...four calling gibbons, three French men, two silvered langurs and an orangutan in a fig tree.  
On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me...five rambutan, four calling gibbons, three French men, two silvered langurs and an orangutan in a fig tree... etc

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**Danau Girang Field  
Centre**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2009!**