



The Jungle Times

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Departures

Betsy Marshall

Betsy left at the start of this month to return to Kota Marudu for a few days before returning home to Charlotte, North Carolina! Betsy was involved in many of the projects here at DG including tracking the slow loris sleeping sites, tracking the civets and even helped out with sampling a bearded pig and a crocodile! We will miss Betsy's never ending enthusiasm and wish her all the best in the future.



Irene Artuso

After volunteering for 3 months, Irene left us this month to continue her travelling of Asia. Shortly after leaving DG, Irene climbed Mount Kinabalu on Christmas Day and is now celebrating New Years in Singapore with current PTY Aaron! Irene is leaving DG with a huge amount of field work experience under her belt and was also lucky enough to help out with the clouded leopard sampling and collaring! Irene will always be welcome back to DG and we wish her success in her future endeavours!



Visitors

Yasmin Fisher

This month we had Yasmin come and visit for 2 weeks. She is a veterinary nurse from the UK. Just after her stay at DG she got engaged while diving in Cambodia! Congratulations! She also went to Sukau to see the elephants, and before leaving Sabah had a catch-up with Max and Jaz in Sandakan. We wish you the best of luck for the future.



Justin Brashares

We also had Dave's supervisor, Dr Justin Brashares stay for a week. Justin is a professor at the University of Berkeley. Although Justin was at DG advising Dave on the bearded pig project, he was full of great stories and it was a shame he couldn't have stayed longer. We all wish you the best.

Interview with Justin

Could you tell us about research you've done previously?

I started off studying animal behaviour, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and east Africa. Being based in Serengeti national park in Tanzania, it was kind of a dream come true opportunity but during that work I realised that I was studying animal behaviour in a place where people were consuming wildlife or relying on wildlife. It occurred to me that I had my head in the sand and I made a point somewhere later in my PhD that I still wanted to do animal behaviour but I also wanted to pursue work that had strong connections to the real life challenges and the persistence of species, the reliance of people on wildlife and wildlife habitats and other things. I worked in West Africa with the bushmeat trade and the impacts of wildlife consumption on ecological communities and at first, I just looked at direct impacts. For example, when you remove large cats from African ecosystems, you see a huge increase in baboon populations, much like the long-tailed macaques here. It means you have much lower bird density because they are incredible bird predators. I've spent a lot of the last 10 or 15 years really including humans in ecosystems and how the species interact with humans and the long terms effects with it.

Could you tell us about recent research?

I run a university research group, but people accuse us of being our own NGO because we have many projects around the world. Currently we have projects studying wild dogs in Botswana, studying restoration in Gorongosa National park in Mozambique and hippopotamus in Tanzania where we conducted the first tagging in order to learn about how hippos are responding to the drying out of Africa which is mostly due to the diversion of major rivers for irrigation. We also study wildlife conservation policy in Columbia and we have some big projects in California and Canada. I have ongoing projects in West and Central Africa that are really looking at how these ecological communities are pushed out of balance through human alteration of the landscape similar to here where the incredible food subsidy of oil palm, which makes its way through the food web creating ecological winners and losers. That's an approach I use all over the world; thinking about who wins and who loses and what are the long-term consequences.

What is your involvement in supervising Dave?

I co-advise and -mentor Dave as well as working closely with everyone in the group. We enlist about 20 undergraduates a year for the field and lab. I work really closely with the graduate students from the very beginning and help them develop the foundation work they need. Our training is gradual, and we encourage our new graduate students to spend a year or even two years really developing the technical skills and analytical tools that they'll need to really develop a strong project, helping them building that foundation and that's what my interaction with Dave has been so far. However, as Dave has now jumped into his research, I transition less from how to build that foundation and more into the practical day to day, how you collect the data, are you going to have enough and what are you going to do with it? I continually help to develop students' data analysis, reading and professional writing capabilities but also identify the next steps, what's the job that's out there for them.

What do you think of DGFC as a research centre?

I found it hard to believe Dave when he said you had this secondary forest surrounded by oil palm that is so loaded with megafauna. I mean it's very amazing that its right here and even from my first few days when you guys pointed out the orangutans here I just kept asking him if it was a release programme and he just kept saying it's a wild population. I think the organisation seems really strong and I really appreciate how many different projects are going on. Running a group myself, we have vehicles and really basic field stations but this is a much bigger operation, bringing university students through field courses and volunteers, I'm just really impressed, it's a daunting amount of work that really must go into running this and fund raising.

What's your favourite thing you've seen at DGFC?

I was complaining when he did it, but Dave dragged me out to this oxbow lake. It's just this beautiful wide-open oxbow that has this fairly different kind of vegetation. There were all these ferns and we ran into a male orangutan there, who was quite wild. It was just a really cool landscape and there were otter tracks everywhere and so maybe it was my favourite thing as it felt like another world.

Houston Zoo!

This month we were pleased to welcome Houston Zoo who are huge supporters of DGFC, including sponsoring several of our ongoing projects, including small carnivores (Meg), pangolins (Elisa) and elephants (Farina). While they were here, the group had the opportunity to get an insight into the research that happens at DG, including an exciting crocodile sampling! We are very grateful for their ongoing support.



100th Civet!

Congratulations to Meg and the whole team involved in the Small Carnivore Project, who earlier this month sampled their 100th unique civet.



Congratulations Dr Farina!

On the 20th of this month Nurzhafarina Othman passed her viva with minor corrections, making her the first Malaysian PhD graduate from DG! Farina has spent the last 7 years collecting data on the behaviour and spatial ecology of different family units of the Bornean elephant. We'd like to wish Farina a massive congratulations from everyone at DG!



Bornean Banteng Workshop

After the proboscis monkey and Sunda clouded leopard workshops earlier this year, the Bornean banteng was the third and final project funded by Yayasan Sime Darby undertaken by DGFC and SWD. The two-day workshop took place in Kota Kinabalu and discussed the research achieved in the last 5 years.

Since the recent extinction of the Sumatran rhino in Sabah, the Bornean banteng is the most endangered large mammal present in Sabah with 400-500 individuals remaining. These individuals are split up into 4 main populations across Sabah. The need to protect this species was further highlighted in October after 3 banteng were poached in quick succession.

An action plan will be drawn up from the work discussed from the workshop. A potential method of conserving the Bornean banteng is to set up a captive breeding.

Thank you to all who attended and for the valuable discussion on how to protect the banteng in Sabah.



Crocodile Tagging!

This month PhD student Kerisha tagged her first crocodile, after setting the traps for just one night! With the help of research assistants, a GPS unit was attached to a 4.5m estuarine crocodile that was later named Ranggi. This unit will allow Kerisha to test whether or not the crocodiles do in fact pass under large bridges, as well as unveiling other aspects of the animal's ecology. Wishing you all the best for this leg of data collection Kerisha!



Jungle Wordsearch!

W	M	L	G	D	V	T	R	G	V	P	B	E	O
S	V	O	P	E	H	U	N	F	D	O	V	X	Y
X	X	R	U	Y	C	E	M	A	X	R	S	S	M
Y	Q	F	P	S	T	K	D	W	T	C	O	P	D
A	M	T	F	N	E	M	O	O	O	U	Z	Y	B
N	Z	R	A	W	H	D	E	Q	R	P	J	F	T
A	L	B	J	U	G	B	E	W	R	I	W	D	P
F	L	Y	C	A	T	C	H	E	R	N	A	A	A
Z	I	C	O	B	R	A	R	Z	R	E	N	K	R
J	B	D	P	J	N	Y	O	X	E	G	L	S	G
P	N	W	O	W	W	F	T	B	O	G	K	E	S
K	R	T	Y	H	H	J	M	L	Z	S	A	E	E
T	O	I	C	D	Y	Y	I	B	Z	D	E	X	Y
D	H	X	W	R	T	N	A	H	P	E	L	E	C

Words to search for:

- Pangolin
- Banteng
- Elephant
- Cobra
- Flycatcher
- Hornbill
- Porcupine
- Mousedeer
- Adjutant
- Gecko

Conservation Corner:

Common name: Storm's stork
Scientific name: *Ciconia stormi*
IUCN status: Endangered



Description and Ecology: The Storm's stork is approximately 75-91cm tall, with the colouring shown in the above picture. The males and females have a similar appearance, but the male is slightly larger. The adults are usually silent when it is not breeding season however during breeding season they make vocalisations described as 'Kurau'. The Storm's stork is primarily found in lowland tropical forests of Indonesia, Malaysia and southern Thailand. There are only an estimated 150 individuals left in Malaysia.

Threats: The main threat is degradation of the Storm's stork habitat for logging and palm oil plantation space. Hunting by humans for food and the international zoo trade are also smaller threats to the Storm's stork.

Conservation: The Storm's stork has been classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List since 1994. The species is legally protected in Indonesia, Sarawak and Thailand. The best solution to protect this species would be the large-scale establishment of protected areas holding undisturbed lowland forest and riparian features.

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: Luke Davies, Max Lawson, Alex Rose,
Aaron Sambrook and Jasmine Walker*

Director of Publication: Benoit Goossens

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