



# THE JUNGLE TIMES

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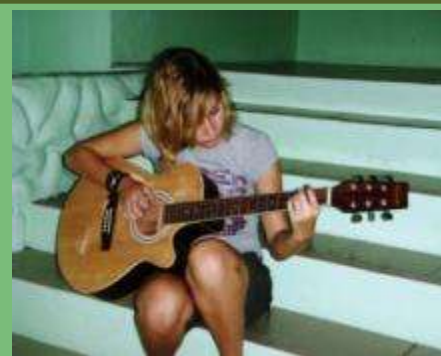
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# Timbaan Tungog Eco-camp Officially Opens to All!

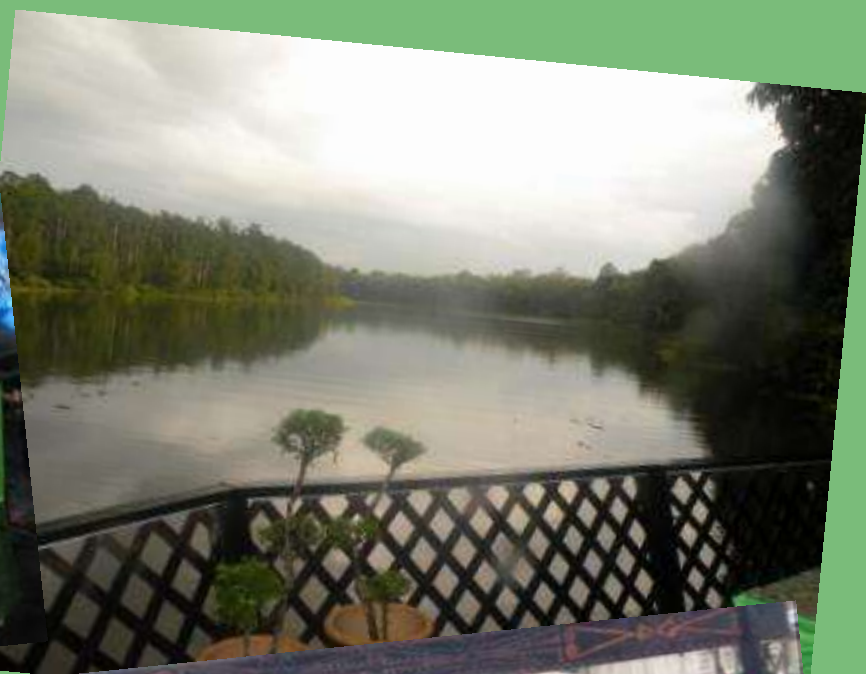
The Timbaan Tungog Eco-Camp was officially opened on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, with the attendance of many influential faces of environmental importance for the Kinabatangan, as well as the DGFC crew.

The new eco-camp situated just upriver from DGFC will be showing eager tourists the many sights to see around the lower Kinabatangan, from the bright birds, to the monster crocs, to the monkeys of the jungle!

The new jetty was decorated for the occasion, and guests were able to stroll down a shiny new board walk to the eco-camp centre with a lovely terrace facing the newly weed-cleared oxbow lake.



Clockwise from top left: Pretty flag on the jetty, Welcome to the Eco camp!, Lots of locals enjoying the ceremony.



**Clockwise from top left: Enjoying a casual drink; the oxbow lake at the eco-camp; traditional music at MESCOT; the boat used for cleaning the lake taking part in the ceremony; Datuk Masidi Manjun, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment giving his speech in front of the lake; and traditional dancers put on a show.**

The Sabah Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, was proud to be at the launch and felt it was very important to be there. He pointed out that **the eco-camp will sustain the increase in tourism in the Kinabatangan** and also talked about the benefit of not only raising awareness of the great biodiversity in the Kinabatangan, but also its significance in bringing in profitable opportunities for local people. He explained that **white people will not stay in a 5\* hotel if they are coming to bird watch, they will stay in local home stays, they will not use American or English**

**tour guides, if local people are trained to guide them.** He pointed out that bird watching is a highly profitable sector of tourism, bringing in billions of RM per year in other similar countries, and so local people may use this chance to become involved in eco-tourism. The Kinabatangan was gazetted as a bird sanctuary as of 2001 after being declared Malaysia's first Gift to the Earth in 1999, and so holds a surplus amount of amazing bird biodiversity to encourage bird-watching tourism. Tourists may also look forward to forest treks, boat cruises and kayaking at Timbaan Tungog Eco-Camp.

The Forestry Director and the Chairman of KOPEL also gave speeches concerning the new eco-camp and it's many benefits to the local community, but unfortunately only Ridzwan could properly understand what they were saying as all the speeches were in Malay; however Alice and Jenny did manage to pick out the odd word or two to get the gist. Budin did a great job of ferrying the many visitors back and forth from the camp to Batu Putih amongst the busy river traffic, props to him for helping make a great day run smoothly.



# Deck DGFC with boughs of holly – fa la la la laaaaaaaa....

A traditional Christmas dinner was magically produced this month with the skills of the PTY students to the delight of all. Christmas crackers and party hats adorned the table, and an array of good old English cuisine was presented to the inquisitive Malay staff. Luckily the meal went down a treat without the need for extra chilli sauce.





PHOTO ALBUM:  
Clockwise from top left: Ridzwan mastering the boat; some of the many rats caught!; Budin trying out a new hairstyle; a pretty rainbow on the Kinabatangan; Jen making crackers; A tortoise that came for a visit; Alice playing some tunes; The oxbow lake.



## Undercover Macaque...

Over the past week there have been reports from a number of members at DGFC of a mystery macaque who has been following and spying on projects under way. When Jenny and Budin have been making their regular jungle trips setting traps for the nocturnal primate project, the curious monkey has been never more than a few metres away avidly watching and possibly taking notes or hidden camera CCTV footage; for what or whom the furry investigator is working for or representing is currently unclear. A wild pig has also shown similar behaviour, using the guise of wanting to scrounge left over fruit used for bait in trapping. The pair may be working collaboratively or for separate parties, but only time will tell.



**Artist impression of the culprit**

## Wildlife Sightings...



This month has seen some new (for some of us!) wildlife sightings at DGFC including Alice's first sighting of a tarsier! A tortoise came for a brief visit to the main building, and the friendly civet has also been spotted hanging around outside the kitchen in the hopes of some scraps. A Wallace's Hawk Eagle has also become a regular visitor, after deciding the rats in traps would make an easy meal..! He has been imaginatively named Wallis/Wallace as we're not quite sure whether he's a he or a she!

## In Other News...

- Renovations are still ongoing at DGFC with the water pipe being relocated along the jetty, so no excuse not to shower now!
- PTY students Jenny and Alice went back to the cold climate of England for Christmas – with -20 arctic conditions and a foot of snow, it was quite a contrast to the tropical jungle heat!
- The PTY students for next year have been selected – congratulations Rob and Rodi!!!

# How To: Make Kontok Kontok

Kontok Kontok is an excellent snack to accompany afternoon tea. Essentially fried batter with sugar; it's a beautiful treat to have every now and again, but don't go too mental if you're not keen on having a coronary heart attack.

## Ingredients:

Small bowl of flour

1 tsp yeast

2tsp sugar

(½ tsp salt and 1tsp of MSG if required)

Water to mix

Icing sugar to sprinkle



1. Mix flour, yeast, sugar and salt in a big bowl.
2. Gradually add a little water until mixture takes on a smooth porridge-like consistency.
3. Deep fry in a whole load of oil until golden brown.
4. Sprinkle with icing sugar and serve hot with Milo.

A good way to pass the time eating them is to make up which animal they are the foetus of. Look how happy it makes us!





# Species of Interest: Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa affinis*)

This squirrel, of the giant variety, was spotted having a bite to eat outside the centre.

**Name:** *Ratufa affinis*

**Appearance:** This bad boy is the King-Kong of squirrels as the largest squirrel in Borneo at 320-380mm from nose to anus, (around 5 x the length of the Bornean Plain Pigmy Squirrel!). It has dark upper parts and pale under parts but the colour varies between subspecies of which there are four.



**Distribution:** Borneo (Malaysian and Indonesian), Peninsular Burma, Thailand, Sumatra, small Indonesian islands and Peninsular Malaysia. Likes dipterocarp and lower mountain forests and will have a go with secondary forests too.

**Behaviour:** Runs along the tree canopy with its tail held out horizontally, but when it stops for a pause the tail hangs vertically. It makes a loud call that is a short, harsh chatter often heard from several hundred metres. It also has a softer call consisting of a series of “hgip... hgip...” (according to Francis and Phillips 2005 *Mammals of Borneo* – but I think this description makes it sound like its hiccupping). Lives in a nest at night usually in the crown of a tall tree, then forages for seeds in the day along the tree branches but will eat leaves and bark too.

# Tarsiers Really Aren't Made-Up!

After four months of staggered night walks, that proved unsuccessful to the point of seeing next to nothing, I had begun to wonder if the Bornean Tarsier (*Tarsius bancanus*) was merely a figment of the imagination of previous researchers desperate for success and media attention. However, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December on a night walk with researcher Ridzwan, I was shocked and delighted to see one of the small primates clinging to a small tree, looking at us as if we just walked in on him sitting on the loo. The Bornean Tarsier has been sighted on several occasions over the past year by Ridzwan and researcher Rachel, and without sounding like too much of a girl – it was possibly the single most cute thing I have ever seen.

-Alice Evans



The tarsier, spotted at the start of the yellow trail

## A Rainforest Reunion!



December saw Benoit return to snowy Cardiff to give two lectures on conservation biology to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, and pick next years lucky PTY students! He also enjoyed a reunion dinner with past field course students, and previous PTY students Chloe and Rachel.; the night was a great success and enjoyed by all!

### Did they really say that...!?

“I like squirrels. But they just shouldn't be allowed to be that small!” – *Jenny on noticing a pigmy squirrel.*

**Alice:** Everything is better with sugar...

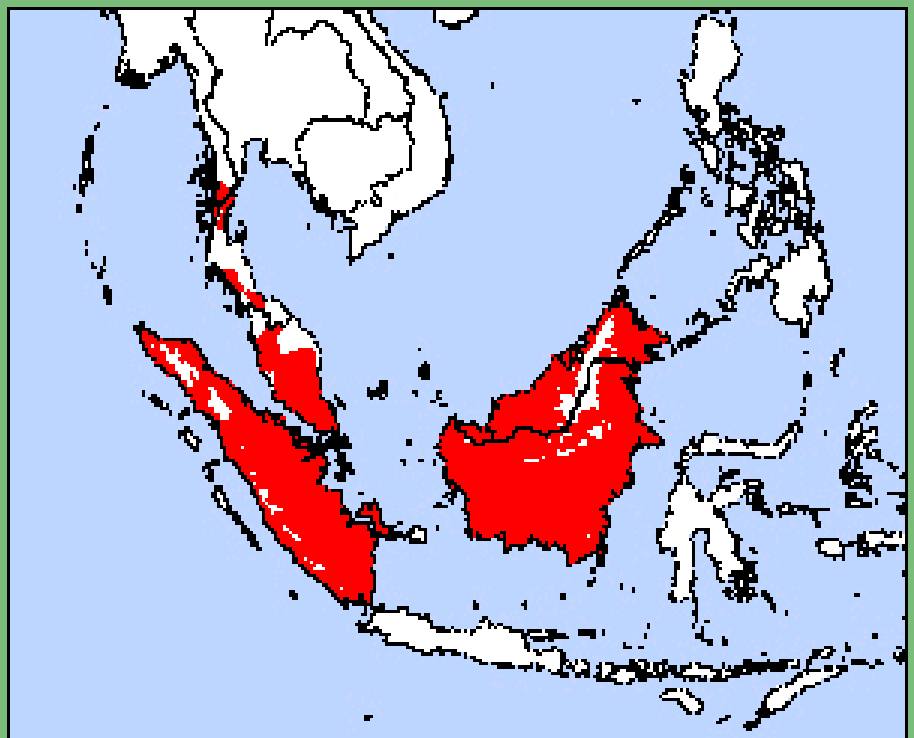
**Jenny:** Everything is better fried ... and the best things are fried **with** sugar!

# Conservation Corner: Wallace's Hawk-eagle *Spizaetus nanus*

This month, conservation corner is investigating the Wallace's Hawk Eagle after one seems to have taken residence here at DGFC. This bird of prey sits in the tree behind the kitchen at DGFC happily minding his own business, but unfortunately for the rest of his kind, the IUCN has placed the Wallace's Hawk-eagle in the Red List Category named "Vulnerable". Along with many other species, Wallace's main threat is the loss of lowland forest, a constant problem here in Sabah due to the amount of deforestation over the years for logging, and particularly palm oil in the last decade. Wallace's Hawk-eagles grow to around 46cm, and are boldly patterned with three dark bands across the tail, dark barring on the cream chest, black streak along

the head and dark brown wings. The population estimate is currently 2,500-9,999 according to Bird Life International, but unfortunately this number is decreasing. Wallace can be found in southern Tenasserim, Myanmar, peninsular Thailand, Peninsular and East (Sabah and Sarawak) Malaysia, Brunei, and Kalimantan and Sumatra,

Indonesia (See map) but although the species is widespread, it is sparse in the areas where it is found. Wallace may sadly be nearing extinction in Thailand and is declining everywhere else, but figures maybe confused due to his similarity to *S. alboniger*.



[www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org) – red areas showing the distribution of the Wallace's Hawk Eagle

The Wallace's Hawk-eagle is resident in evergreen forests, mainly in lowlands and lower hill-slopes, but is sometimes seen up to 1,000 m above sea level. Some habitat degradation is tolerable as it has been recorded in Kalimantan and Sumatra in heavily logged forests, and logged forest in Malaysia. But, a study in Malaysia showed its presence in a primary forest before logging but not afterwards.

Deforestation between 1985-1997 cost nearly 9 million and 7 million ha of forest in Kalimantan and Sumatra, respectively. In Thailand, nearly all lowland forest has been cleared, hence why Wallace is near extinction in that area, but in spite of these negative facts, Wallace has shown resilience to at least some habitat modification, even recorded within small lowland forest patches within oil palm plantations in Sabah.

**But what is being DONE to try and preserve this lovely bird of prey?**



Conservation measures underway started with the designation of the Kinabatangan as a bird sanctuary in 2001. Other wildlife reserves include four national parks and two wildlife reserves in Sumatra, two national parks and a wildlife reserve in Kalimantan, one national park and four wildlife sanctuaries in Thailand, and two national parks and one wildlife reserve in Malaysia. Conservation measures proposed include: extensive surveys to analyse the distribution compared with *S. alboniger*; research into

ecological requirements concentrating on habitat degradation; promoting forest management units in Sabah; assist forest managers in habitat identification; and afford Wallace's eagles full length protection under Myanmar, Thai and Malaysian law.

Hopefully these proposed measures will be introduced in the future to help protect and preserve not only the Wallace Hawk-eagle, but the many birds that populate the Kinabatangan, Borneo, and South East Asia.

*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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