



Jungle Times

Independent Newsletter of Danau Girang Field Centre, Est. 2008



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*Photo of the Month Credit:
Emma Remotti*

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What's Going On?



LEIDEN FIELD COURSE

We recently hosted Leiden University from the Netherlands for a jam packed two weeks of jungle activities and mini research projects! They started their visit by getting acquainted with the rainforest, going for walks at night looking for cryptic spiders, and heading out on the afternoon boat to observe primates on the river bank. We also had some interesting talks from the lecturers, who work alongside the Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, and the PTYs had a chance to present their projects as well for some scrutinising! This field course was part of their masters programme of study so they carried out mini projects to present to us and write a report on. We had some interesting ideas including biodiversity on the main path, sun bear sign surveys, home range of dragonflies and capture mark recapture of millipedes.



Visitor Fact File



EMILY DZIEDZIC

Emily is a PhD student from Oregon, America, but she spends half her time in the UK, she has come to DG for a month long pilot study. She is carrying out a project under the title of novel molecular solutions for wildlife health and conservation, this is with Oregon State University. At DG her mini study was focusing on trapping mosquitos, sand flies and carrion flies, using hanging scented baits traps and also CDC light traps. She is hoping to collect these blood feeding insects to look for presence of mammals, particularly pangolins, along the transects, by sequencing the genomes from collected blood. She worked alongside Elisa to set up transects along the trails around DG where pangolins are known to have slept before. Her most memorable wildlife moment was following a female orangutan as she slowly made her way down the main path trees!



Visitor Fact File



VIRGINIE

Virginie is a Belgian photojournalist who has been working in the industry for the past 8 years. She is currently doing a long-term project focusing on the impact of palm oil in Malaysian Borneo. The story is about the impact on wildlife, the entire environment and on the indigenous people and their communities. The project is also looking at the different initiatives that are driving towards a more sustainable palm oil industry which she says is “probably the best and only solution to reduce all of the negative impacts that the palm oil industry is having. Not many people in Europe share this point of view, as they are not very aware of the impact that it can have”. Virginie has been doing this story since November 2019 travelling between Sabah, Sarawak and her base which is in Kota Kinabalu. Virginie’s article is to be published in “La Libre Belgique”. Her hope is that this article will hopefully enlighten people to the effects of the palm oil industry. Of her brief stay at DG she claims she found the “community feel of the centre very interesting”, and how much information is shared leading to the potential of learning so much valuable information. One of her highlights was being able to watch a python procedure. Apparently, she has “never been so close to a snake in my life!”, further adding that “it is also very interesting to know that even through a python you can study the effects of the palm oil. It’s important to show that what you are doing here is not only about orangutans like most people in western countries think, but it’s also about other species that are just as affected”.



Departure

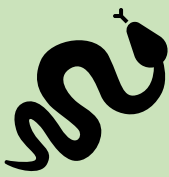


MIRIAM KUNDE

This month, after two years of working here, Miriam left to go to the UK and work on a new media project! It was very sad to see her leave as she has been such an important part of the team. During her time here Miriam was carnivore conservation officer, and she ran the carnivores of the Kinabatangan project. This involved working with sun bears, civets, leopard cats, clouded leopards and flat headed cats. She also helped the bearded pig project to continue running, and set up several hornbill nest boxes. Another side project that was continued alongside our vet Maca, was the camera trapping at the Batangan ridge wildlife corridor. These cameras were helpful to spot clouded leopards and sun bears to set up traps. Many animals have been collared with Miriam's help and she has trained our RAs to continue this and hopefully get a sun bear one day!

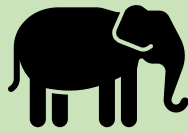
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Volunteer Departure



HANNAH SHWARTPAUL

Hannah was with us for just over two months, but she was very busy as vet assistant to Maca! She collared two civets, a clouded leopard, and helped to VHF tag two reticulated pythons, which all meant getting up at sunrise each day to check the traps! Whilst she was here she also helped out with other projects such as camera trapping, and went out with the PTYs to help with their fieldwork, which was greatly appreciated. After this Hannah was meant to travel to Singapore for holiday with friends and then Malaysia again to get her diving certificate, however due to Covid-19 she has headed back to Germany, and in September she will return to university to complete her veterinary medicine degree. Her highlight was collaring the clouded leopard named Pacman after its patterning!



Arrival



AMANDA WILSON

Amanda has returned to DG after her visit last summer to carry out the field work for her Masters degree. Her Masters is with Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), and will be looking at the ecology of leopard cats. So far this has involved going for night walks in the plantations near us to catch a leopard cat and collaring it. On her second night out she successfully collared a male Lincah and has been tracking him most mornings on the Hillco plantation since. She will be stationed at DG for one year before returning to Kota Kinabalu to write up her research. It is exciting to have a new project at the field centre working on this species as they do actually use both forest and plantation to sleep in. Amanda is also keen to journal and hopes in her down time to be able to explore more about the animals she sees around her and draw and learn more about them!

Coronavirus Update/ Goodbye PTYs



Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 outbreak all the Professional Training Year students who produce this newsletter were called home by Cardiff University. This doesn't mean the end of Jungle Times though, but we will be moving to bi-monthly issues instead, with a slightly different format. The next issue will include a reflection of each of our experiences. We hope everyone is staying safe at home!



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 Departments 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.

Contact Us:

Danau Girang Field Centre

Lot 6

The Jungle

Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary

Sabah

Email: contact@dgfc.life

Web Page Address: www.dgfc.life

*Editors: Harriet Miles, Olivia Fitzpatrick,
Katie Webb, Emma Remotti*

Director of Publication: Benoit Goossens

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