

# Jungle Times

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*Photo of the Month Credit:  
Elisa Panjang*

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# Regrow Borneo Update!

2021 is here and we would like to update you on our Regrow Borneo project: our planting journey has been like many others in 2020, fraught with difficulties and delays. However, by the end of October we had planted 5,258 trees, over three hectares in Ladang (1 ha) and the Kaboi Lake (2 ha) sites. We have also made progress by clearing a further two hectares at the Kaboi Stumping site and one hectare at Laab Swamp site.

The rains in the Kinabatangan began in September and we entered a nail-biting period as we monitored how our saplings were coping with the seasonal flooding. The situation at the Kaboi Lake site was challenging. Although the tree species planted there were selected for their flood resistance and coped well with two 5–7-day floods early in August. In early November a third flood rose 40cm above the year's previous floods, submerging the site for three weeks. Unfortunately, it caused significant damage in that site, killing half of the saplings. To make things worse, what the flood did not kill, the long-tailed macaques did. The monkeys did not eat the leaves, they sucked the sweet juice out of the stems. In the 50x50 m botanical plot we set up at Kaboi Lake site, out of the 463 trees planted, 300 survived the flood. But for 95% of those that survived, the shoots were ripped off by the macaques and many were split open.

On the bright side, the trees at the Ladang site (riparian reserve) are thriving and we are planning to plant new saplings in Kaboi Lake site as soon as the raining season stops.

Unfortunately, these are the challenges that make reforestation in the Kinabatangan difficult. However, the reward for re-establishing these peatland forest systems (that sequester larger amounts of carbon than other tropical forests) and that are crucial for wildlife survival will also be significant.

Please continue supporting Regrow Borneo by donating on

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/regrowborneo>

We will continue updating you with the progress of the project.



Shot on Y11  
Vivo AI camera

**Protecting Our Forests: one year running -**  
**A Press Release from Sabah Forestry**  
**Department and Danau Girang Field Centre**

After a year of active ground operations, Sabah Forestry Department's PROTECT team has notched significant achievements in its role as enforcement frontliners in combatting forest crime, wildlife poaching and trafficking in the state.

"I'm pleased to report that between January and December last year, more than 200 enforcement operations have been carried out by our PROTECT team in forest reserves, protected areas and public roads, despite the Covid-19 pandemic," said Mr Frederick Kugan, Sabah Forestry Department's Chief Conservator of Forests. "As a result of these operations, 68 arrests were made with suspects handed to the police and Sabah Wildlife Department for various offences under the law. This includes the arrest and prosecution of two suspects detained in Tawau for possession of elephant tusks last January. The team also managed to confiscate about RM3.1 million worth of forest produces from various illegal activities," said Kugan.



*Coastal and river patrolling to counter illegal exploitation of mangrove bark. Courtesy: Sabah Forestry Department*

“While we are unable to technically cover the whole state and have permanent presence in every forest reserve or protected area due to limited resources, it is undeniable that our rangers have put the pressure on poachers and illegal loggers,” stressed Kugan. “At the moment, the PROTECT unit consists of (only) 50 forest rangers, out of which 25 members are currently funded by Yayasan Sime Darby for two years as part of its RM4 million grant for combatting wildlife crimes in Sabah,” he added.

“The recent killing of a male elephant in Tongod shows that the task of protecting our wildlife against unscrupulous poachers is extremely challenging. We aim to further intensify our efforts in identified areas, working closely together with our partners. The Department is fully committed to put every effort in protecting our forest resources and in tackling poaching and wildlife crimes,” said Kugan.



*Roadblock at strategic location carried out by one of the PROTECT units. Courtesy: Sabah Forestry Department*

Project partner Dr Benoit Goossens, Director of Danau Girang Field Centre and Professor at Cardiff University echoes: “The challenge of fighting poaching and wildlife trade is immense and cannot be easily solved in a few months. It requires massive resources to enable intensive ground presence and intelligence gathering by enforcement bodies such as Sabah Forestry Department, Sabah Wildlife Department, PDRM and many others.

He added, “Equally important is the participation and awareness of these crimes from the public. We all understand and acknowledge the importance of wildlife for Sabah, and it is through everyone’s combined effort that we can fight wildlife crimes. I truly appreciate the commitment that has been shown by the PROTECT team and applaud their achievements so far.”

“With full commitment and proper financial support from the state government and other agencies, I am confident that we will be able to win this fight. And we are all hopeful that when the pandemic situation improves, we will be ready to welcome tourists again to appreciate what Sabah has to offer,” concluded Goossens.



**(Left)** Four poachers were arrested under firearm act and the case was surrendered to the police. Courtesy: Sabah Forestry Department. **(Right)** Poachers are often circulating on motorbikes in forest reserves. In this case, three suspects were handed to the police and motorbikes were confiscated. Courtesy: Sabah Forestry Department.

# Recent Publications

Our latest research on the spatial ecology of the Malay civet has been published with Springer Nature in Landscape Ecology. Using satellite collars, we showed that while civets foraged within oil palm plantations, all animals utilised forests. At population scale, civets consistently and more intensely used habitats closer to plantation edges and taller tree canopies.

A second paper has also been published which assesses the physiological status of the Malay civet, persisting within an extensively human-modified system in Sabah. In this study we characterized hematology and serum biochemistry panels from civets sampled across a mosaic landscape, from which we discovered a significant variation in dietary biochemistry and immune cell counts in relation to proximity to oil palm plantation boundaries.

This research is part of the PhD work of our ex-Cardiff University School of Biosciences student Dr Meg Evans. It was funded by Houston Zoo, Phoenix Zoo Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong (OPCFHK) | 香港海洋公園保育基金 and Yayasan Sime Darby.

Both papers are Open Access.

Read and share here: <https://rdcu.be/cdHZw>

And here:

<https://academic.oup.com/conphys/article/8/1/coaa127/6055342?login=true>





Photo of the  
Month

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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 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.*

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