



# THE JUNGLE TIMES

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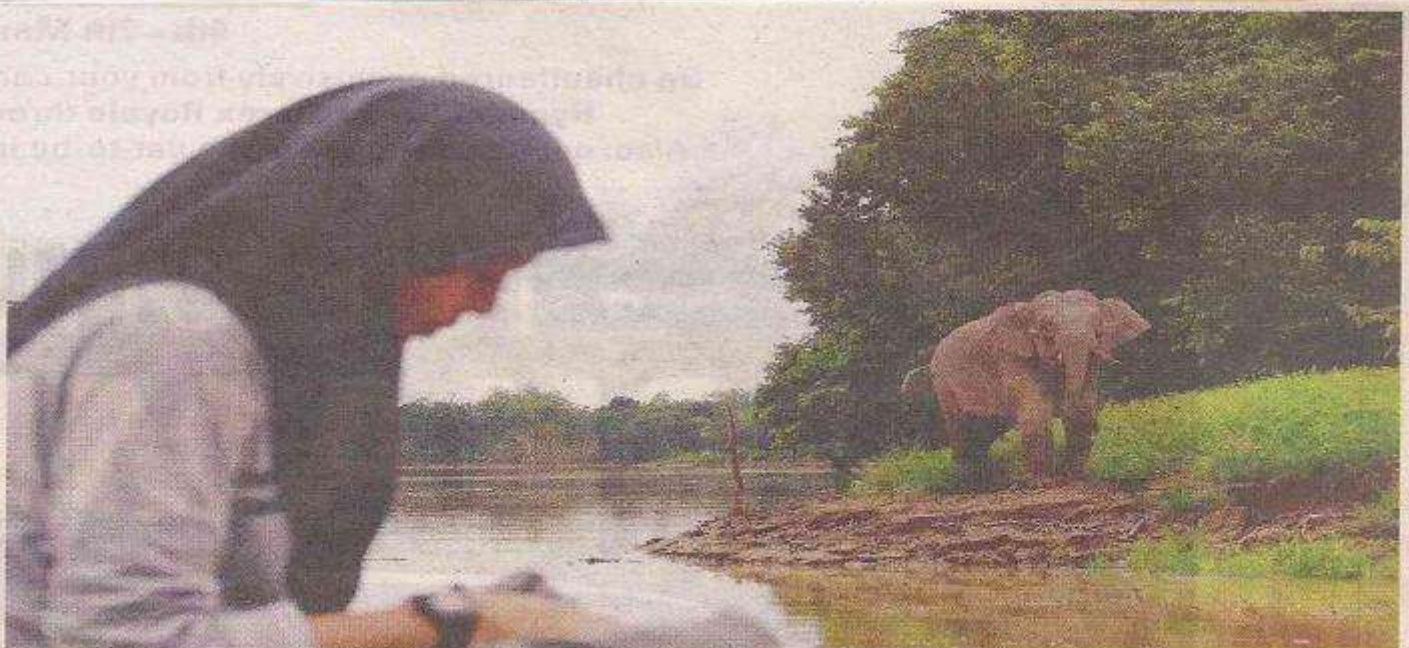


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# DGFC in the News...



**Research:** Nurzhafarina conducting a study on a Kinabatangan elephant.

## Male and female elephants going different ways, study finds

**KINABATANGAN:** Age and gender have been found to dictate the movement of Bornean elephants in the wilds of the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (LKWS).

These were among the initial findings of a study being conducted on three elephants, that were fitted with satellite collars two years ago, in an effort by experts to help minimise elephant and human conflicts.

"The data we have obtained so far shows that Bornean elephant movements in the wild varied between male and females," according to researcher Nurzhafarina Othman, who is carrying out a study on the social behaviour of the elephants.

The elephants were fitted with the satellite collars in a joint project carried out by Sabah Wildlife Department, Danau Girang Field

Centre (DGFC) and French non-governmental organisation, Hutan.

"We placed one collar on a male bull, which we named Gading, as he only has one tusk and another on a female identified as being a matriarch, named Benina.

"The final collar is on a younger female, that had been collared previously by WWF-Malaysia, named Bod Tai," said Nurzhafarina, who is based at the DGFC.

Meanwhile DGFC director Dr Benoit Goossens said: "It is crucial to know if there is any traditional or common routes used by the elephants at LKWS.

"This will help the wildlife managers to identify important areas within the sanctuary to establish wildlife corridors for the animals," he added. •

## BFG Studies Small Mammals at DGFC

Another (giant) member has been added to the DGFC gang this month in the form of Andy Harrison from Cardiff University. Andy is here to collect data for his MRes in Bioscience by studying the habits and habitats of the small mammals that are scurrying around the field centre and surrounding jungle. PTY student Jen will be working with Andy on the small mammal project, they have captured and recorded lots

already; Andy's favourite being the Plantain Squirrel. Towering above most of the population at 6ft.8, Andy is thankful of the big *friendly* giant variety. His interests include UltimateFrisbee, Drum n Bass and Slam Dunking (which happens to be rather easy when you can reach the net). His dream in life is to see a Bearcat, although he would also be quite happy with a Prevo's.



**Fast becoming best buds with little Ridzwan**

## PTY Supervisor comes to supervise PTY students



Mike Bruford, professor at Cardiff University and PTY supervisor to Jen and Alice came to visit between the 25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> this month to check that they are up to scratch with work and not just having fun in the jungle. Mike has visited DGFC previously with the Cardiff University field course, so is well familiar

with the jungle (and unfortunately trench foot). After taking a look at both the girl's work in and out of the field, he went back to Cardiff with a lot of boring forms to record. The girls definitely appreciated his whip-cracking to get their projects tip-top, and also appreciated his awesome guitar skills.

**Left: Mike on the new Kingfisher trail, excited after his first Tern sighting in the Kinabatangan**

## Bonjour Monsieur

Old friend of DGFC, Marc Ancrenaz came to stay for a few nights with Benoit this month for many a meeting to talk jungle stuff. Marc and Ben particularly came to help Thibaut with tree-plot plans; Thibaut will be establishing new plots in areas previously unstudied, including the old Uncle Tan site to analyse how tree succession regenerates.

## Here Comes the Rain Again



It's been one extreme to another... Flood followed by drought! After what has apparently been the driest period in the last 10 years, it has finally rained (and heavily)! — there was 625ml in one day on the 24<sup>th</sup> this month. Over nearly two dry months, the oxbow lake had dried to a puddle, the Kinabatangan dipped so low that it became clear enough to see the fish swimming below because of the lack of run-off, the streams vanished and the animals were crying out for some water – so for once, everyone is happy to see it chucking it down.

## Suicidal Macaque

Life had become too much for one of the Macaque's at DGFC this month. One morning when Jenny and Budin were on their nocturnal-mammal-trap-check, a 'log' was seen falling, only to run away when it reached the ground! Luckily the macaque didn't appear to cause any harm to himself and quickly regained his composure before scampering off. A reliable source indicates that the individual was suffering with depression after being spurned by a lover, who has taken interest in another stronger, more genetically compatible male.



## In Other News...

- Jen and Alice enjoyed a trip to Thailand this month, experiencing the famous beaches, diving, temples and tuk-tuks.
- Congratulations to PhD student and friend of DGFC - Farina Othman this month as she becomes a Mum! Her beautiful baby girl Aqeela was born at 9pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March.
- After all the attention Andy has been getting this month for his mighty height, Thibaut felt so ignored that he decided to take drastic measures to become on-par with the small mammal investigator by investing in cosmetic bone insertion. With the extra height he is now 6.10 and feels much more noticed.



*Left: Tibo feeling small.  
Right: Tibo feeling tall!*



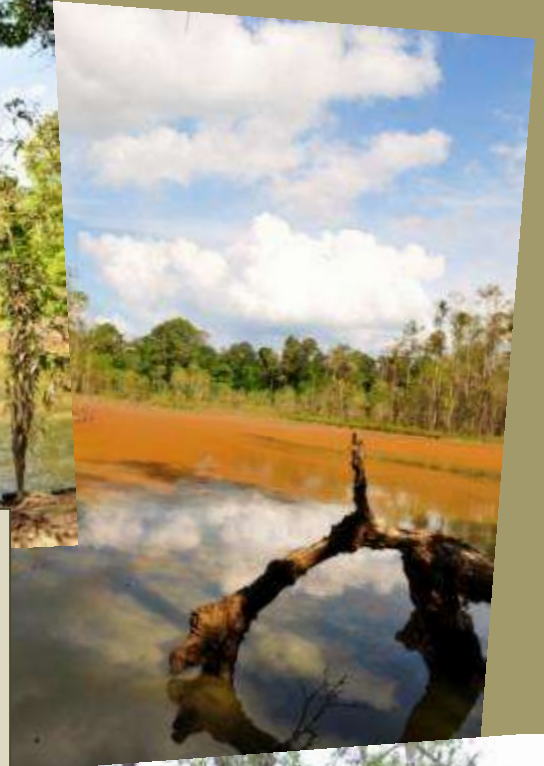
## Did they really say that....?!?!

Alice: It seems so wrong that butterflies look so pretty and then you see them eating piles of poo.

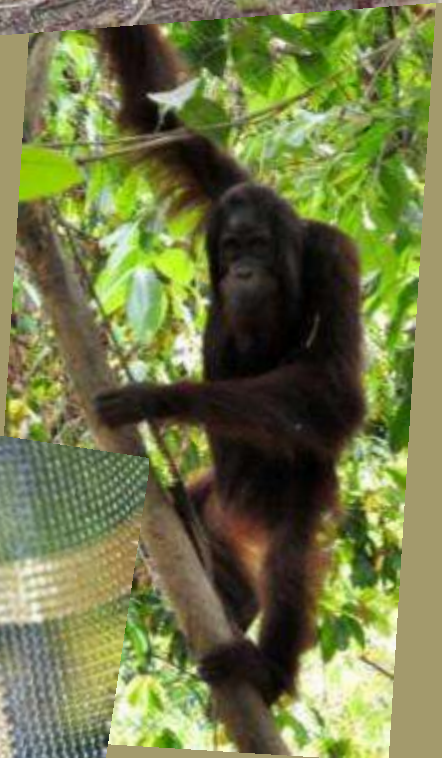
Thibaut: I think we can learn a lesson from them in real life you know?

Like... -

Alice: What? That you can be beautiful... but you can still eat shit?



**Photo Album:**  
*(clockwise from top left)* Mike Bruford enjoying a walk along the Kingfisher trail; Some bees who mistook Jens shoes for a flower; Tibo and Emma by the oxbow; the orange oxbow; Mike Bruford and Marc Ancrenaz by the lake with Benoit; Mr Orang-utan; Is it a leaf or a bug?! It's a bug!; Volunteers chillin'; Mr Croc; Budin learning the art of Frisbee.



# Conservation Corner:

## The Slow Loris

**The slow loris; cute and cuddly. Not quite as slow as the name suggests, but a gentle, shy creature none the less. Once spread throughout Asia, the slow loris is now facing extinction, listed as vulnerable by the IUCN, with a population reduction of over 30% believed over the last 20 years.**

The slow loris is a nocturnal primate who leads a solitary life; by night feeding on a range of fruits, sap, nectar and arthropods; and by day curling tightly in a ball to sleep hidden in a tree. It is a shy elusive creature with rare sightings even in areas it is known to inhabit. The Indonesian name '*malu malu*' translates as 'shy shy'; a fitting description for the animal that will shield its eyes behind its paws when under torchlight. Very cute. There are still a lot of aspects of a slow loris' life that require a better understanding, such as

specific diet and true mating system. There is also debate over the taxonomic status, with 5 species currently recognised, but ongoing research into potentially more. A better understanding of these areas would aid in conservation efforts.

***The number one threat to the slow Loris is the illegal pet trade***

Despite their protected status and being listed on CITES Appendix I they are still one of the most traded primates in Asia, with government officials either turning a blind eye, or unable to take the required action. The animals often suffer great cruelty during trade. Teeth are pulled out so that sellers can claim they are babies which is done without anaesthetic, and often leads to horrific mouth infections and traumatic death. Between 30% and 90% of loris die within the first few hours or

days of being taken from the wild, and the remaining often die after purchase due to stress, infection, or incorrect diet. **The slow loris is not meant to be a pet.**

Another problem resulting from the pet trade is that confiscated animals are often released into the wrong environment because of



***Picture from ProFauna showing the terrible cramped conditions slow Loris are kept in whilst in the pet trade.***

misidentification. Decent field guides are required to help government officials correctly deal with confiscated animals and determine the correct origin. The slow loris is also harvested for use in traditional folk medicine, with loris wine being believed to relieve pain during childbirth. They suffer from habitat loss and degradation, and are particularly susceptible to habitat fragmentation which leads to loss of genetic diversity and inbreeding.

The latest threat comes in the form of an undeniably cute viral You Tube video featuring a pet slow loris apparently enjoying a good tickle. From personal experience, if I ever mention the slow loris, the response is often 'oh that's the really cute animal being tickled on You Tube!' The video is believed to be responsible for an increase in demand for the illegal trade of slow loris. So next

time someone mentions the video, perhaps enlighten them to the disgusting treatment they receive during trade: how the babies are left sitting fur matted with their own faeces, unable to clean themselves; hands and feet are cut by the cages; teeth are ripped from the mouth without anaesthetic or antiseptic resulting in a slow stressful death; and how this is all contributing to the extinction of such an adorable animal.

Luckily for the slow loris, action is being taken around the globe, and specifically here in DGFC a long term nocturnal primate project has been running since June 2009. In 2010, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium (<http://www.columbuszoo.org/>) and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo/Cleveland Zoological Society (<http://www.clemetzoo.com/>) allocated respectively \$5,000 and \$3,000 to our nocturnal primates project. Funds will help collecting

information on the home range, social and behavioural ecology of the Bornean slow loris (*Nycticebus menagensis*) and Bornean tarsier (*Tarsius bancanus borneanus*) at Danau Girang Field Centre. It will also help building the capacity of a young Malaysian scientist and assist the Sabah Wildlife Department in monitoring the nocturnal primates community in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary.



**A slow loris and a Bornean tarsier seen at DGFC**





*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

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