



# The Jungle Times

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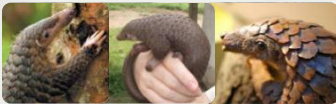
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## Welcome

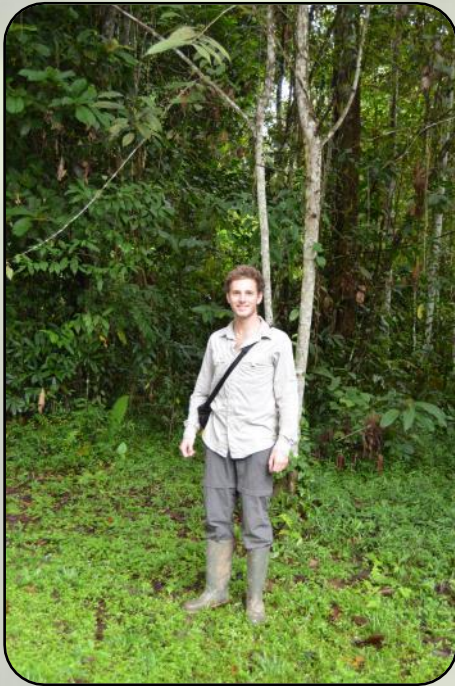
December has been a quiet month for DG, but the jungle times is packed as ever! In this issue we bring you news about the NGO sports day (Budin and Alex managed to bag a couple of prizes!), we say a sad goodbye to Alex and tell you all about our behind-the-scenes glimpse of the palm oil industry. Read on to find out more ...

*Josie Alice Becky*



# This month's visitors

*This month was a very quiet month for visitors, but Guillaume, Valentine's boyfriend visited for a short while to keep her company over Christmas...*



**Guillaume Chaumont**

*Masters in BioEngineering, Brussels University (ULB)*

“ I came to DGFC to discover the wonderful biodiversity of the tropical rainforest and assist Valentine in her observations on the proboscis monkey behavior. I really enjoyed the boat surveys and observing the monkeys in their habitat. Furthermore, people at DGFC are very welcoming like most people I met in Malaysia. This short stay gave me the desire to travel around the world and, who knows, to work in a place like this. Thanks DGFC for welcoming me! ”

# Sports Contest

At the start of the month, Budin and Alex were invited to join the NGO team in an annual sports contest against the Sabah Wildlife Department.

The NGO team consisted of WWF, BORA, Orangutan UK Appeal, Wildlife Warden and DGFC.

The event took place from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December and we had a day out of the forest to watch the opening ceremony held by the Director of the Wildlife Department, Dr Laurentius N Ambu.

The sports played included football, volleyball, tug of war (which at one point involved an elephant!) and badminton.

The overall winners were Sabah Wildlife Department KK team, but Alex and Budin came back with trophies from volleyball and football.



# Assessing biodiversity in a forest fragment

*On the 16th December, our three PTY students, along with Mark and Budin, took a trip to an IJM oil palm plantation to assess the possible biodiversity within a forest block located inside the plantation.*



“ We gained further insight into the processes from picking to shipping of this controversial industry, whilst also hearing of their conservation efforts.

The forest fragment within, was in good condition and we spotted many tree species that were not present around Danau Girang Field Centre. One of the trees was so wide that over 20 people had to join hands to reach around it!

Hopefully, with a better understanding of the importance of preserving forest and conserving flora and fauna, the detrimental effects that this industry has on wildlife can be reduced.”



# Conservation Corner: Malayan Pangolin



**Scientific name :** *Manis javanica*

**Conservation status:** Endangered

**Wild population:** Unknown

The Malayan pangolin, otherwise known as the Sunda pangolin, scaly ant-eater, or tenggaling, is present throughout most of southeast Asia and belongs to the only extant genus of the order Pholidota. It is covered in thick keratin scales, from the tip of its snout to the end of its prehensile tail and is toothless, living almost exclusively on termites and ants, which it gathers using its elongated claws and long, thin tongue.

There is little information on the ecology or population numbers of *Manis javanica*, perhaps due to their elusive, nocturnal and partially arboreal habits. Some publications estimate a decline of 50% in the

last 15 years (3 generations). Some interviews with local hunters report as much as a 99% decline in numbers in the last 30 years. With fears that the rate of this decline may be increasing, the future looks bleak for these unique creatures.

## Conservation issues

The main threat to this species comes from illegal hunting. In Chinese medicine the scales, blood, meat, organs and even foetus of pangolins are believed to cure ailments from skin conditions to cancer. Their meat is considered a delicacy and their skins are used in the fashion industry. Because of this they have been poached heavily, a practice which is becoming more and more lucrative, with meat sold for RM200 to RM300 per Kg.

It is estimated that tens of thousands of pangolins are exported from Asia every year. Just this month 4,988 kg of pangolin meat worth RM3.9million was confiscated in Sandakan, triggering fears that international smugglers may begin to target pangolin populations in Malaysia as supplies elsewhere begin to run out.

### Why does it matter?

Pangolins play an important role in their native ecosystems. The holes they dig when hunting for termites **increase local biodiversity**, by providing nesting spaces and burrows for a variety of different species. They also act as **natural 'pest control'** by feeding almost exclusively on termites. The loss of this service could have a substantial economic impact as well as having consequences for forest regeneration.

### What needs to be done?

All pangolins are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna (CITES) since 2002, and in Sabah, *Manis javanica* is protected under the Wildlife Conservation Bill, 1997. Despite this, the illegal trade in

pangolins only seems to be increasing.

Contributing factors include a lack of information on population numbers, ecology, and the extent of illegal hunting and trade. Lax enforcement laws and a lack of political motivation have also been blamed. If pangolin populations in Asia are to recover, these issues need to be addressed through **better research, increased awareness and tougher laws**.

### What can you do?

Don't buy pangolin products, report any illegal hunting or trade, and help raise awareness. This can be anything from telling friends and family, to supporting conservation charities or taking part in research and education programmes.

### Want to know more?

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/12763/0>

<http://www.savepangolins.org>

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/pangolin\\_proceedings\\_final\\_print\\_2.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/pangolin_proceedings_final_print_2.pdf)



# Au revoir Alex!

*Alexandre Laizé, a French forestry student, spent the last 4 months at DGFC as a volunteer. Here is what he has to say of his stay at the field centre ...*

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First of all, my stay in DGFC was a source of personal wonderment. The biodiversity along the Kinabatangan river is extraordinary, and being able to discover it so closely was amazing. I've done and seen so many things that I had only pictured in my dreams: I witnessed an elephant collaring by DGFC staff and the Wildlife Rescue Unit, I met the secretive sunbear, I watched proboscis monkeys making love three times in a row (which is quite unexpected according to Danica Stark), I have been a blood donor for hungry leeches (7 bites in 4 months), I chased macaques who robbed peanut butter, and so many incredible things that it would be too boring for everybody to read everything ...



Then, my internship was very enlightening professionally. I helped Danica Stark with tree and vine census methods on her proboscis monkey project. So I learnt a lot about how research on wildlife ecology works in a tropical area, and I have been able to really understand the importance and the purpose of such studies for the integration of wildlife conservation in forest management. I know all the field work we've done will be very useful in my future professional life, since I am sure now I want to work in the field of tropical forest management.

Finally, I have met really nice people at DGFC. My first thought goes to the PTYs (Josie, Alice and Becky) and the other students (Kaddi, Jenny and Valou), I really had GREAT moments with all these funny (but still studious) girls. The ambiance was so cool (but still studious)! Furthermore, the staff are extraordinary, from the cooks (the food was simply 'délicieuse' and I didn't lose a kilo in four months!) to the research assistants who were so nice and really competent! I will really miss everybody!



So terima kasih Ben, for allowing me to do my internship in DGFC, terima kasih Mark for taking care of all of us like a second mother, terima kasih Danica & co. for enduring my French temperament for 3 months, and terima kasih everybody else for all these amazing memories! ”

*Au revoir Alex (a.k.a Frenchie) from everyone at DG. We won't forget you in a hurry and we wish you the best of luck in your quest to becoming the new Indiana Jones ...*





# Spot the Difference!



Valou is out watching proboscis monkeys, can you spot the **5** differences between the photos?!



Answers: Hat, radio antennae folded, leaf in right pocket, no binoculars, no earrings.

# Pics of the Month!



**Clockwise from top left :** *Orangutan, brightly coloured lantern bug, malayan box turtle eating a rat!, crocodile on the river, the DG students playing croquet on a trip to Sandakan, Alex opening his goodbye gift, full lunar eclipse, cheeky otter.*

# It's that time of year again !



December is a time for giving, so if you want to make a gift to DGFC and contribute to our research and conservation work on elephants, proboscis monkeys, bantengs, crocodiles, slow loris, tarsier, frogs and more, then click on the following link:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/3E5DOBPUIJAG>  
V1 -

**Thank you very much to all of our supporters,  
have a great 2012!**

## 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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