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Visitors



Jean-Marie Cornuel:

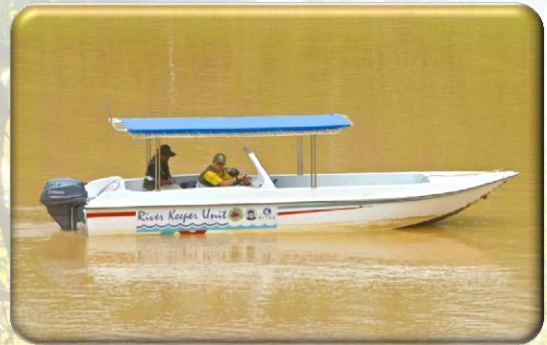
Jean-Marie, a French nature documentary director, came to DG for a few days to see what's going on at the centre at the moment. He was here during the crocodile capture and filmed the whole session to produce a short clip. He plans to return to DG late this year to carry out more filming.

The Sabah Society:

Six members of the Sabah Society, Kota Kinabalu Branch, visited DGFC from 24 to 27 May. They combined boat cruises and jungle walks, as well as followed some of the students during their daily activities in the forest.

Launching the River Keeper Unit

Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), HUTAN and Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC) have established a River Keeper Unit, which will be assisting the department in protecting elephants and other wildlife within the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (LKWS).



Hailing from the local community, the River Keeper's Mohd Syafendy Yajit and Sudirman Sawang are well suited for the job as both have years of experience working with HUTAN - Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Programme. They have a lot of field experience, especially on elephants. Both of them are gazetted as Honorary Wildlife Wardens by the SWD.



The River Keeper Unit will be based at DGFC and second function of the unit will be to monitor tourism activities along the Kinabatangan river and stop any boat going too close to the elephants or tourists disembarking on land. Although tourism can boost economic development, ill-managed activities can also be a nuisance to elephants and their habitat.



With this in mind, one of the major roles of the River Keeper Unit will be to investigate elephant responses to tourism activities along the Kinabatangan and to come up with wildlife watching guidelines that will be provided to the different tour operators in the Kinabatangan with the goal of minimizing tourism disturbance for wildlife. We would like to thank our funders the Elephant Family and the Kinabatangan-Corridor of Life Tourism Operators Association for their support in establishing the River Keeper Unit.



Introducing Project Monkeybar

Danau Girang Field Centre is collaborating in a large interdisciplinary project incorporating primatology, social science, parasitology, epidemiology, and entomology.



The project aims to investigate the risk factors associated with the emergence of *Plasmodium knowlesi* (a simian malaria parasite) in an area of decreasing forest cover. *P. knowlesi* malaria has become a substantial public health problem in Malaysia and, to some extent, in other regions in South East Asia.



This project will be run in parallel between Palawan, The Philippines, and the region of Kudat in Sabah. DGFC is responsible for the primatology component of the project in Sabah.

The partners of this project are: Menzies School of Health Research, Australia; Sabah Wildlife Department / Danau Girang Field Centre, Malaysia; University of Glasgow, United Kingdom; Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia; Malaysian Ministry of Health / Queen Elizabeth Hospital – Clinical Research Centre, Malaysia; Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom; Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, University of the Philippines, Los Baños, Philippines and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom.



The funders are: Biotechnology and Biosciences Research Council (BBSRC); Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); Medical Research Council (MRC) and Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).



Sun bears in a fragmented Landscape

DGFC's sun bear project now has four traps set up in the vicinity of DGFC and are monitored by DGFC veterinarian Dr Sergio Guerrero Sanchez and PTY student Grace Dibden.



Roshan Guharajan is running the project for his master at University of Minnesota, he will use satellite telemetry to study sun bear home range and their use of riparian corridors and plantations.



Roshan was in the US from November and has just returned to DGFC last week and will be with us for 18 months. A few days ago, we had our first sun bear sniffing around one of the traps! The project is currently funded by the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA) and DGFC.

Crocodile capture at DG!

DGFC and the Wildlife Rescue Unit captured a female crocodile of 2.90 m as part of their project on the crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*). The project aims to try to understand the movements of large crocodiles in a mosaic landscape of palm oil plantations and forest.



We also want to investigate the nesting behaviour of the females. We plan to collar a few females in the area. We tested a couple of different satellite units to be set between the scutes on the nuchal plate.



After taking measurements and a tissue sample for genetic analysis, we released the female that we called Doya. This project is currently funded by Chester Zoo and DGFC. Pictures taken by Jean-Marie Cornuel.

Illegal hunting enforcement workshop

Our two River Keepers, Mohd Syafendy Yajit and Sudirman Sawang attended a workshop on enforcement and prosecution of illegal wildlife hunting organised by WWF-Malaysia and Sabah Wildlife Department.



The unit will conduct day and night patrols to monitor and prevent illegal activities such as encroachment in riparian reserves, illegal logging and hunting along the 260 kms of river within the LKWS, from Lokan to Abai villages.



Our River Keeper Unit was launched in the local press on Monday 13 May 2013 in four different languages, English, Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Kadazan-Dusun and Chinese.

New Sumatran rhino paper published

"Genetics and the last stand of the Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*" is published online in the scientific journal *Oryx*. In this paper, we advocate the mixing of gametes between populations of Sumatran rhinos in Sumatra and Borneo to boost reproduction in the Sumatran rhinoceros.



On the 16th of May our local and national press featured our work on the Sumatran rhinoceros in particular the paper in the journal *Oryx*. It was published in *Asia Times*, *Borneo Post*, *Daily Express*, *New Sabah Times*, *New Straits Times*, *Star* and *See Hua Daily News*.



New Sabah Times HOME 7 Thursday May 16, 2013

Last stand for the Sumatran rhinoceros

KOTA KINABALU: With only about 100 left in Indonesia and Malaysia, researchers and conservationists in Sabah stress the need to consider the populations of Sumatran rhinoceroses in Sumatra and Borneo as a single management unit.

They demonstrated the need in a paper published this week in the scientific journal *Oryx*.

The study was carried out by members of the Sabah Wildlife Department, the Department of Wildlife and Natural Parks, the Borneo Rhino Alliance (BRRA), Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Cardiff University and the Chester Zoo's Field Centre (CFZC).

"The Sumatran rhinoceros is critically endangered with a decreasing population trend and a total number of individuals as low as 100 confined in a few distinct populations in Borneo (in Sabah) and possibly Kalimantan and Malaysia," said Dr. David Payne, Executive Director of BRRA and co-author of the paper.

"Although habitat loss and poaching were the reasons for the species' decline, today's reproductive isolation of individuals, not genetic, occurred even within geographically close areas. In the main threat to the survival of the species," said Payne.

Dr. David Crockett, Director of CFZC and the lead author of the paper said they discussed the pros and cons of considering the populations of Sumatran rhinoceroses from Sumatra and Borneo as a single management unit.

"For a species such as the Sumatran rhinoceros, where time is of the essence in preventing extinction, we must ask what errors should genetic and geographical distance be taken into account in deciding the most urgently needed conservation interventions," he added.

"Genetic differences are minimal and we strongly believe that the observed differences are not justify keeping the Sumatran and Borneo populations as separate management units."

"A study of the Java rhinoceros showed very genetic diversity in that population and there was a critical need for population expansion for the species to survive."

"Despite clear results demonstrating that the Long Leang (Indonesia) and Cal Tien (Vietnam) populations represent distinct evolutionary significant units, it was argued that demographic considerations should override genetic issues in the short-term," said Crockett.

"The Indonesian and Vietnamese governments were eager to exchange these rhinoceroses but an action was taken and a Cal Tien rhinoceros was found dead in April 2011."

"We certainly do not want the same thing to happen to the Sumatran rhinoceros and we therefore strongly recommend that such exchanges be avoided."

"To set low and challenge goals with us species and sub-species (and possibly individuals) between the captive populations of Sumatran rhinoceros at Sabah (Tabin), Sumatra (Way Kambas) and Cincinnati Zoo when it is still possible," he recommended.

The Sabah Wildlife Department has been working closely with the Lembaga Penelitian dan Riset Wildlife Research.

12-year-old Rata and her new born baby Andati, at the Sumatran Rhinos Sanctuary at the Way Kambas National Park in Sumatra. It is only the fourth known case of a Sumatran Rhino being born in captivity in 100 years.

ing sending Tam, our captive male rhinoceros, to Cincinnati Zoo in the US to breed with their future female," said David Dr. Laurence Aplin, Director of the department.

The Sabah Society visits DGFC

Six members of the Sabah Society, Kota Kinabalu Branch, visited DGFC from 24 to 27 May. They went on a number of boat cruises and jungle walks, as well as following some of the students during their daily activities in the forest.



On their last night, DGFC's students gave presentations of their projects.



Collar retrieved from proboscis monkey

On morning of the 18th of May, Danica and two field assistants retrieved Gambu's radio collar that had been fitted the year before. They found the group in the early morning and waited until they had moved into the forest before going into the forest to look for the fallen collar. Luckily, the collar had dropped right onto a trail, about 2 m from the river!



The collar recorded 15 GPS positions daily and dropped off 364 days after being collared by the Sabah Wildlife Department's Wildlife Rescue Unit and Danau Girang Field Centre. Funding for this project is provided by Sime Darby Foundation and Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation.

Conservation Corner: Large flying fox

Common name: Large flying fox

Scientific name: *Pteropus vampyrus*



Appearance:

The largest of all bats with a wingspan greater than 3m. They are black backed with grey streaking while the head, neck and shoulders are reddish in colour.

Diet:

The large flying fox is insectivorous, but can also feed on fruits, nectar and pollen. When eating fruit, the bats prefer to drink the juices, obtained by squeezing pieces of fruit pulp in their mouths, they then spit out the remaining pulp and seeds.

Ecology:

Crepuscular, the large flying fox, feeds on fruiting trees at dusk and remains there to eat, rest and digest before returning to their roosting sites. Large roosting colonies can be found on open tree branches in South Indochina, Thailand, Java, Peninsula Malaysia, Sumatra, Bali, the Phillipines and Borneo. On Borneo they are prevalent throughout lowland areas, particularly near coastal areas.

Threats:

- Hunting for meat.
- Habitat destruction.

Photos of the Month!



Photos left to right:

Spider; UNO and snacks in the office for Grace's birthday; Wrinkled hornbill; Glowing mushrooms; the elephants visit DG; broadbilled kingfisher; ruddy kingfisher; team DG during the crocodile capture; Benoit and Sergio watch the crocodile being restrained; members of our elephant team; rhinoceros hornbill.

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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