



The Jungle Times

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Arrivals

Andrea Jankov

Andrea is a biology teacher from Germany and is with us for two months as a volunteer. She will be assisting with all projects and lending a hand to Tim following orangutan pairs!



Noemi Naszarkowski

Noemi is with us for 2 months as a volunteer and is a Swedish biology student taking some time out to travel before beginning her masters. She is getting involved with the Nocturnal Primates Project and has been lucky enough to see one of our slow lorises already!



Amy Tipton

Amy has joined us from Melbourne, Australia and will be at the centre for one month. She will be assisting with all the projects currently underway at DG and is hoping to see as many kingfisher species as possible during her time here!



Goodbyes

Aubery Lebas

Aubery has been with us as a volunteer for five months and has been involved with all of the projects currently undergoing at the centre. She has been a huge help to the Nocturnal Primates Project by learning how to find and track the animals and she will be a sorely missed member of the team. Bon voyage Aubery!



Martijn Reijerkerk

Martijn was with us for four months and has been involved with the orangutan project with Tim van Gorkum looking into mother-infant pair interactions and mechanical properties of the foods they were eating. He now plans to take his research back to the Netherlands to continue to use for his bachelors degree.



Goodbyes continued



Rudi Delvaux, our frog expert and photographer extraordinaire has left us once again after staying at DG for 3 months collecting more data for his PhD. He spent his time here looking at frog species diversity in limestone outcrops and cave systems, surveying by walking night transects and installing camera traps at each location. This gave him the opportunity to better explore some of the more unknown regions of the wildlife sanctuary, and of course he has provided us with some amazing photos of the wildlife he encountered during his explorations.

Return of PhD students

Meaghan Harris

Meg is back with us to continue her research on the Kinabatangan Small Carnivore Project. She will be aiming to trap and sample as many civets as possible in order to collect hair and blood samples which she will use to analyse differences in toxin levels. She will also be collaring and tracking certain individuals to collect data on home range and sleeping site selection.



Sergio Guerrero-Sanchez

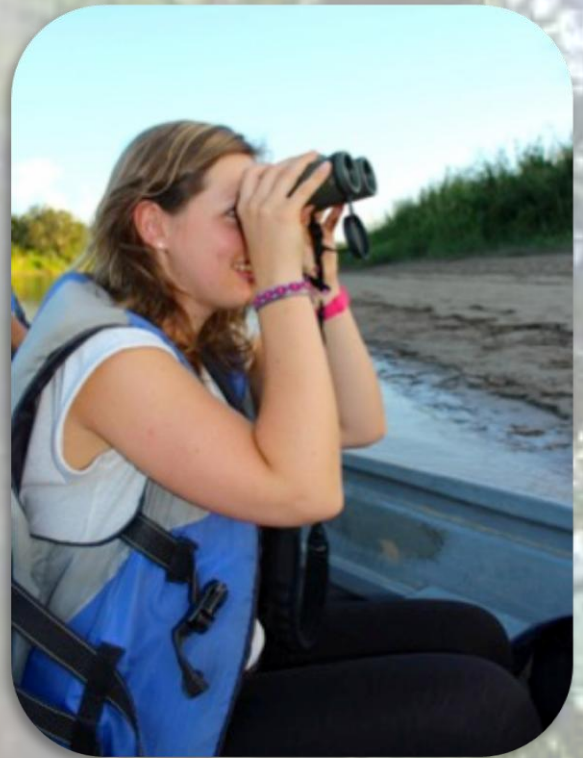
Sergio has returned from Mexico and will be continuing his PhD research into monitor lizards. He will be trapping to collect blood and scale samples and inserting a microchip to ensure that he can record recaptures accurately. He also has some individuals collared which he will be tracking over the next few months.



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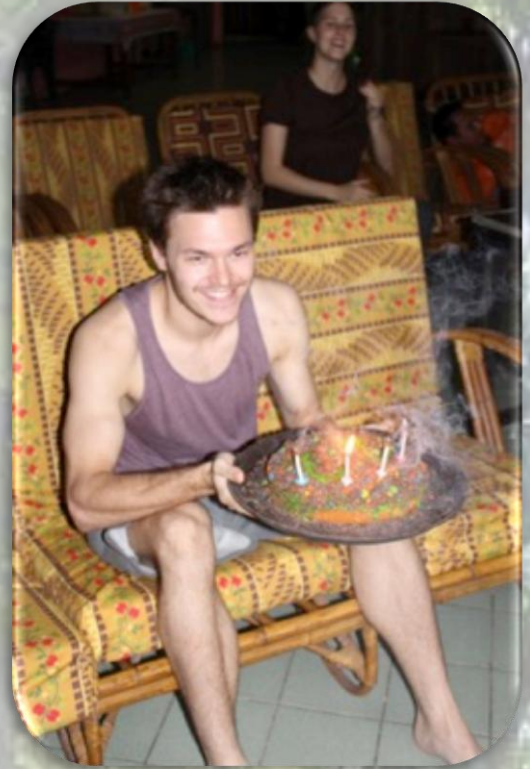
Valentine Thiry

Valou is back with us to continue her research into proboscis monkey feeding ecology. She will be carrying out observations of groups at various sleeping sites along the river and returns to these sites the following morning to collect faecal samples. She will use these along with tree and vine species samples to conduct DNA analysis and compare these with the faeces obtained.



Happy Birthday Joe!

On the 27th January PTY Joe celebrated his 22nd birthday at DG in style! He was treated to a delicious birthday cake and spent the evening watching a film with the rest of the DG family.



He is now looking forward to the remaining 5 months at DGFC, and is currently carrying out his project into tarantula behaviour.

Interview with Wildlife Impact



From the 9th until the 11th of December we hosted two members from a new start up project called Wildlife Impact. David Lucas from Australia and Julie Sherman from Portland, Oregon - joined us for two days to experience our unique forest as well as learn about all the interesting projects currently underway at the centre.

During their short time at DG Julie and David were able to experience a quick snapshot into everything that goes on at the centre and explore our trails both at night and during the day. After driving through hours of oil palm plantations on the way to DG they left us with encouragement that in some areas at least, wildlife is still thriving.

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What is Wildlife Impact and how did it all begin?

Julie: It started with a group of people who had been working together in different capacities for at least a few years and some of us for many years; we were looking to continue our collaboration and had a particular interest in projects that worked with wildlife in developing countries. Our aim was to bring those countries resources, capacity and to be able to monitor and evaluate the projects as they were carried out. Prior to the start of Wildlife Impact we spent around 6 months looking at all the possible ways we could do that. By talking with other scientists and their projects, as well as funders; we were able to refine those ideas and work out what would be most valuable to the sector. One of the main things that came out from that was to help monitor and evaluate projects; most projects that are working on the ground day to day are dealing with huge challenges and are focused on big goals of conservation. We also carry out capacity development, so when there is a particular need a project has, a particular skillset they are looking for some training on or something, we can fill that need. Another aspect of our project is policy and advocacy, this came up with a lot of our stakeholders. You can carry our research for years and years but you need to have the policies in place to give the projects lasting protection. Due to the fact that we don't work on the ground, we mainly operate at the policy level working with societies and helping people address moving something through to a policy as an end goal.

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What were your first impressions of DG?

Julie: Oh my gosh, it's amazing! The setting is just unbeatable; certainly driving here from Sandakan which was I suppose quite frankly a depressing experience. It really highlights the importance of the centre being here and there being a continuous presence with the level of protection that alone affords and the really strong commitment of Dr Goossens and everyone involved to connect these landscapes and keep them protected.

David: The facilities really add the research, it allows you to create such a strong platform and base to all of the on-going research being carried out. To be able to cater for this number of people from all over the world and to keep creating a data base in biology in this setting, it's really important.

So I know at the moment you are currently working in Asia, are there plans to carry out projects elsewhere as well?

Julie: Yeah so we have actually been asked to evaluate three connected projects in Africa and are currently negotiating dates on that, but it will be sometime next year. After that there is a 4th project which is in a different part of Africa. Following that we have been asked to look at some ongoing projects in Sabah.

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What has been your favourite part of your stay at DG?

David: For me it was one thing to hear about the project and read about the project, then to drive here through the oil palm was pretty deflating. But after getting here and just seeing the richness of this place, it's extraordinary. We haven't been here that long and the wildlife we have seen has been off the scale, it's just everywhere you look. Just to know this place is here and the condition that it's in considering all the pressure it's under, is pretty amazing.

Julie: I agree with all of those things, the wildlife is just amazing. I do feel like it gives me some hope, of course there are species out there that just can't adapt to mosaic landscapes and later on in life we may lose a lot of those species. To me that is just morbidly depressing but to see that there are these amazing little known species like the clouded leopard, pangolins, tarsiers, slow loris and all these things which are actually managing. If we can carry on and keep these places protected we can still have a good biodiversity for generations to come.

Thank you very much for your time!

We hope Wildlife Impact have a chance to visit us again in the near future and we wish them the best of luck for the progression of Wildlife Impact to ensure projects around the world get the support they need to keep undertaking valuable research.

Visit from Banteng!

Earlier in January we had the pleasure of welcoming Glesni - one of our Banteng PTYs to Danau Girang. She stayed at DG for 2 weeks before making the trip across Sabah to continue assisting the Banteng project and carrying out her own research on the focal species.



During her time at DG she assisted with all ongoing projects such as tracking civets and nocturnal primates. In addition to this she lent a hand to all other aspects of work DG PTYs undertake, such as trail clearing and taking visitors on night walks. For her work with the Banteng project, Glesni frequently finds herself in new and interesting forests in order to monitor the elusive native species of cow; making her trip to Danau Girang and the Kinabatangan another forest she can tick off her list. Everyone at DG wishes her luck for the remainder of her project and we look forward to welcoming her back next month for the annual general meeting.

Oregon State Delegation

This month we welcomed a delegation from Oregon, U.S.A. Visitors included Tom Hughes, who is the President of Portland Metro Council, Suzanne Hashim who is the President of the Oregon-Sabah Collaborative, Dr John Bliss and Michele Justice from Oregon State University, Dr Margaret Everett and Dr Lisa Zurk from Portland State University, Renee Meyers from Forest Park Conservancy, and also Dr Melanie Billings-Yun who is the wife of the US Ambassador to Malaysia. The group were kept very busy during their stay starting with a talk from DG Director Dr Benoit Goossens about the conservation work undertaken at the field centre followed by jungle walks, a primate cruise, a pangolin release and PTYs Joe and Katey lead nightwalks to show the visitors their project species, tarantulas and nocturnal primates.



Interview with John Bliss and Michele Justice

We managed to catch Dr John Bliss and Michele Justice from the Oregon delegation for an interview during their stay at Danau Girang.

Tell me about your roles in the College of Forestry at Oregon State University

John: I am the Associate Dean for international programmes and graduate programmes. So, working with Michele, my job is to try and expand opportunities for students and to facilitate our faculty doing research and teaching abroad. Also I need to try to recruit international students, and to host scholars from around the world when they come.



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Michele: We have launched a number of initiatives to help bring our students and faculty to different parts of the world. We are really interested in South East Asia given its situation on the Pacific Rim and Oregon's similar situation on the other side of the Pacific. Certainly looking at how this part of the world operates and collaborates in terms of both production of resources from forest and conservation, tourism, and also how it encompasses of science and engineering. It covers almost everything you could do or think to do with the forest.

John: And Michele is Director of International Programmes.

So you guys have helped organise the internship at Oregon State University for Hugo, the Banteng Team Leader.

Michele: So we facilitated for Hugo to come to Oregon State University, he's actually working with a couple of lecturers in the department of Fisheries and Wildlife, which happens to be in the College of Agricultural Sciences. But we have had a fair amount to do with him and we hope to continue to help students who have been involved in Danau Girang to come.

John: And we sent Isaac Soper (previous volunteer).

How did you first come to hear about Danau Girang?

Michele: We really first heard through US Ambassador's wife and her interest in fostering the connections between Sabah and Oregon. She's a native of Portland and she saw a lot of similarities between Sabah and Oregon in terms of focus on conservation and sustainability; an opportunity for mutual conservation support.

Continued...

Michele: They brought a delegation just a little over a year ago, which Benoit was included in and Dr Sen Nathan from the Sabah Wildlife Department. So we met them and the idea of working with DG came from with Ben, and we got a sense of how interesting this was going to be for our students.

John: After that delegation came, they were pretty interested so we asked if funding would be available for one of us to send one of our students. Isaac was our first student to come, and he spoke so glowingly about his experience at the facility and his friendship with the other students.

And now from Isaac's visit and further research you have now decided to send a two-week field course to Danau Girang! Are there any main ideas you have for it?

John: So it's very much in the imagining stage right now, Portland State University is planning a course in August, and this would be a capstone course for those students. It's a zoology/biology field course right in the main line of what DG does, and what we want to do is bring 10 students and have classes with PSU conducted as one. Their focus is mainly on fieldwork, ours will be on a forest conservation and habitat conservation and global conservation. But this trip for Michele and I has been a really great chance to see the opportunities and whom the key people we want to expose our students to; a lot of pretty inspirational leadership in field of conservation.

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And finally, what's been your favourite about being here at DG?

Michele: I think just going out into the jungle at night and just hearing the sounds and the sense of being robbed of one sense to the others taking over.

Also I noticed just sitting watching the proboscis monkeys with Valentine, to just be looking at the variation in plant life and comparing that to where we are and realising how staggering the diversity is here. It's all been wonderful though.

John: I've really enjoyed being on the river, and seeing how students and staff can spot things! It's true last night on the night walk, but also along the river spotting proboscis monkeys or langurs, knowing the behaviour so well. I really like that.

Michele: It's been wonderful to listen to you guys and hearing your passion and knowledge about your subjects, and watching Katey striding off into the jungle finding these minuscule animals. The expertise and the backgrounds you guys are developing are pretty impressive as undergraduates.

John: One thing that is going back with me is the commitment and passion that these individuals show into their fields.



Pangolin release

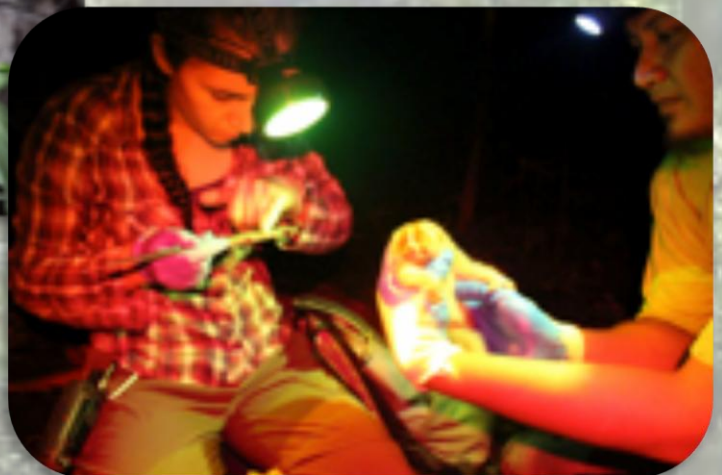
This month Sabah Wildlife Rescue Unit brought a male pangolin for release within the forest of the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary. A family saw the captured pangolin for sale at a roadside market outside of Sandakan, bought it and surrendered it to the custody of the Sabah Wildlife Department. Its health was assessed and it was then brought to Danau Girang where the delegation from Oregon, including the US Ambassador's wife, had the chance to see it released back into the wild.



Nocturnal Primates Project Update

As mentioned in November's issue of Jungle Times, the NPP team has been working hard to add some new individuals to the project. The girls' hard work and endless night walks finally paid off and Abbie and Katey are happy to announce the addition of two new slow lorises and three tarsiers to their research!

The first capture was a juvenile slow loris, caught by RAs Alut and Koko. The youngster was PTY Katey's first solo collaring, and with Alut on hand to assist it all went very smoothly! As the slow loris is still juvenile it isn't possible to identify the sex yet however it has been named Gebu, which means "fluffy" in Malay.



Several days later the girls were able to locate Gebu's sleeping site and by waiting beneath the tree, the team was able to catch Gebu's mother, Gadis. The girls with the help of RAs Doyo and Koko also successfully collared Gadis, which means "young lady" in Malay. Abbie and Katey will spend remainder of their year following this pair, something that Katey is especially excited about as she is looking at infant-mother interactions during maternal care and the dispersal patterns of infant slow lorises and tarsiers.

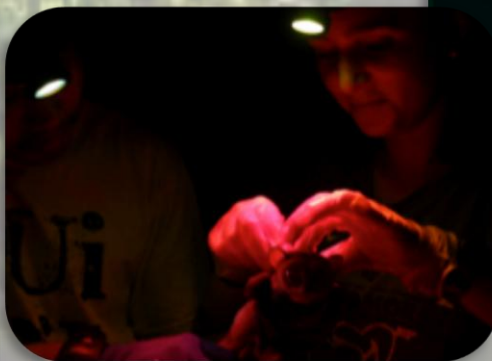


As the collared slow loris population was flourishing, Abbie and Katey were very keen to also bring some new tarsiers to the group. The first of our three tarsiers was actually spotted by RA Doyo's four-year-old son Ikram on the main path! Luckily he was with Doyo at the time and so Doyo was able to catch the individual and bring it back to the lab for the girls to collar. The tarsier is an adult male, the second to be collared by the girls this year, and has been named Kenyitan which means "wink" in Malay, as during collaring he was pulling some very cute winking expressions!



On the team's last day of tracking before the Christmas holidays, they got one final gift as when they found Kenyitan's sleeping site, to their surprise they found Como sleeping on the same tree just underneath him! Como's collar broke shortly after collaring in October and the girls had been unable to relocate her up until now. Even better, she now has a young infant!

Upon their return in January the girls were able to re-catch Como and her baby by looking for her near Kenyitan's sleeping trees, and put a new collar on her (which we are pleased to report is working perfectly!). The infant was also sampled, but as it only weighed 40g it is still too small to collar, so the girls will be tracking its progress as it grows and hopefully will be able to collar it once it is older.



Hantu sighting!

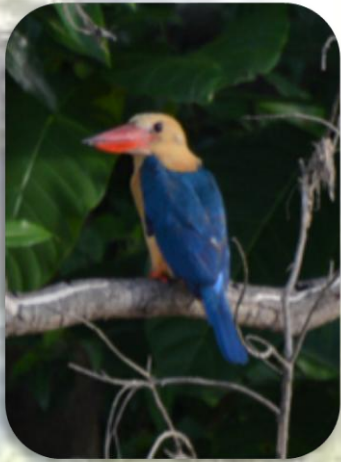
Introducing our resident flanged male orangutan Hantu, which translates into 'Ghost'. He is named so due to his rarity; his visits to the field centre are never long so this gave a great opportunity to get lots of photos.



Match the Kingfisher

Pictured below are three species of Kingfisher that can be found on the Kinabatangan River. Try and match the species to the photo!

1



2



3



A

Oriental dwarf kingfisher

B

Collared kingfisher

C

Stork billed kingfisher

Fact of the month!

The lone call of a flanged male orangutan can be heard up to 1km away, even in areas of dense forest!

Conservation Corner

Common name: Violet orchid
Scientific name: *Phalaenopsis violacea*
IUCN status: Vulnerable



Description and Ecology:

The violet orchid can be found in lowland tropical rainforests, often close to or along rivers. It is an epiphytic flower that grows low on trees, especially on low hanging branches over a water source. It grows in particularly moist areas of rainforest, in regions with uniformly high rainfall.

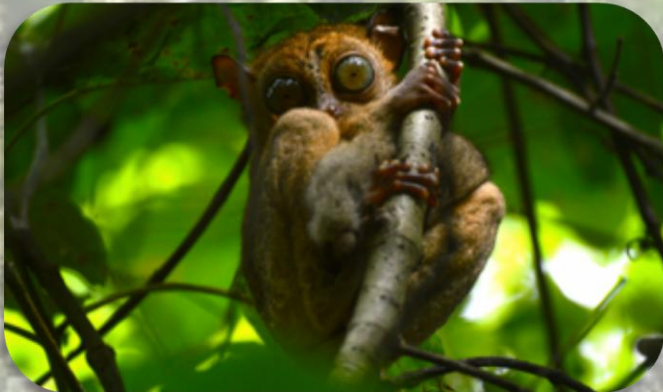
Threats:

- The most prevalent threat to *Phalaenopsis violacea* is the reduction of habitat due to increase in agriculture, particularly palm oil plantations.
- This species has also been subjected to collection by orchid hunters.

Conservation:

This species is listed in CITES Appendix II which protects it from illegal international trade; it is cultivated *ex situ* for trading purposes, removing the need for collection of wild specimens.

Photos of the Month!



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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