

Jungle Times

IN THIS ISSUE

Parasites: Amy B starts her project!

Amy has started her PTY project! Allow her to explain more at the bottom of the page.

Borneo Bird Festival

The team represented DGFC at Borneo Bird Festival

Catching Ketua

Following the unfortunate loss of Santai to a python, the team collared another cat for Amanda's PhD project.

Find out the answer to our 'Spot the Species' challenge, and what was in the clouded leopard's mouth in our last edition!

Page 4

Saying goodbye to volunteers Sam Tillett and Camille Steux

We were all very sad to see Sam and Camille go. Hear about their experiences in this edition.

Visit from St Joseph's Institute, Singapore

We had the privilege of hosting students and staff from St Joseph's Institute. Find out what they got up to during their stay!



Wrinkled hornbill: *Rhabdotorhinus corrugatus*

Parasites: Amy B's PTY project has begun!

By Amy Besant-Roberts



Parasites are an integral part of most ecosystems; they frequently play important roles in food webs, can affect host behaviours and even morphology, and can help control population size. Despite this, they can often be overlooked. The Kinabatangan is home to 19 different species of non-volant small mammals, yet small mammal parasites have not yet been studied in this area. When monitoring biodiversity for conservation, the inclusion of parasite research can be very useful, as they can help indicate ecosystem complexity.

This project aims to investigate the changes in parasite biodiversity in areas of restored forest. Focussing on gastrointestinal and ectoparasites in small mammals, small mammal traps are set in 'Regrow Borneo' sites, and faecal samples are collected, as well as combing to collect any ectoparasites. The samples are then studied in the laboratory at DGFC, and any parasites are identified under a microscope. Changes in biodiversity between sites being actively replanted and their fully restored counterparts will be compared to assess how the age of the restoration site affects the parasite diversity. A better understanding of how biodiversity of restoration sites changes over time can help to inform future conservation and restoration efforts, for which this project hopes to contribute.



Gastrointestinal parasite egg under a microscope.

BORNEO BIRD FESTIVAL

By William Bryson



During the weekend of the 26-27 October, some of the DGFC team travelled to the Rainforest Discovery Centre in Sepilok to host a stand at the annual Borneo Bird Festival. The team had the chance to explain the work we do and its importance to many tourists and locals that were attending the event. Over the 2 days of the festival some members of the team met with Julinis Jimit, CEO of the Sabah Tourism Board. We also had the chance to help educate some of the children attending the festival using some creative “spin the wheel” games made by the PTY's and volunteers. Over the weekend we had the chance to explore the Rainforest Discovery Centre. Members of the team enjoyed the sites along the rainforest canopy walk. It was interesting to see the vast difference between primary and secondary forest. We would like to give a big thank you to the Borneo Bird Festival for inviting us.

Catching Ketua

By Jemma Barrett



Amanda Wilson



Camille Steux

On the 27th of November, a team, led by Amanda Wilson, managed to capture a leopard cat and successfully collar it for tracking. The cat was named Ketua by Mal, the Field Assistant that caught him; Ketua means ‘leader’ in Malay. The collar used was a UHF radio collar, which can be used to track the cat’s location and movement patterns. This data is collected as part of Amanda’s ongoing PhD project. The capture of Ketua brings the number of leopard cats currently being tracked at DGFC up to 3. The cat was caught late into the evening, just after 10pm, with many of the team no longer expecting to capture anything that night. This team was the fourth group to go out looking for cats to capture, with previous teams going out on the evenings prior. The cats are located using flashlights. The beam from the flashlight reflects off of the cat’s eyes, allowing for the team to spot the cat. Ketua was caught using a large net, similar to what would be used to catch butterflies. Once it was determined to be healthy and of sufficient weight by DG’s veterinarian, samples were taken and the collar was fitted onto him. After the procedure had been completed, Ketua was allowed time to recover before being released back into the habitat. The capture team did not get back to the field centre until 2am, but the late night was worth it to capture another leopard cat for Amanda’s research.

Spot the Species



And the answer is?

A frilled tree frog!

Kurixalus appendiculatus



And the answer is?

Well, we are still not 100% sure to be honest. We think it's either a primate or feral plantation dog.

Saying Goodbye

Hi everyone! I'm Camille, I arrived at DGFC in October, and I left last week on the 12th of December. I was there as part of my PhD (on population and conservation genomics) to see what projects are going-on at the station and have a better idea of how conservation is done in the field. I was very impressed with the amount of work that is achieved at the centre, and I learnt a lot, both on the tropical forest ecosystem and its wildlife, and how applied research can help face the issues related to habitat loss and fragmentation. I took part in everyday fieldwork, which included for instance animal tracking or habitat assessment, and I was lucky to help to collar a leopard cat and release a captured pangolin, which was pretty cool!! I already miss working and living in the jungle, and I'm deeply thankful to Benoît and everyone at DGFC for welcoming me so well.

- Camille Steux



Camille (4th from the left) & Sam (4th from the right)



After recently finishing my master's degree in Global Ecology and Conservation, I travelled to DGFC to volunteer as a research assistant and gain invaluable experience in this remarkable setting. My work focused on trialling the "Tillett Trap," an innovative X-shaped camera trap design I created during my postgraduate research. This non-invasive method proved highly effective, capturing a wide variety of reptiles and small mammals while minimising disturbance to their natural behaviour. The local macaques, however, seemed determined to test both the traps and my patience!

Working alongside the incredible staff and students at the centre, I not only gained hands-on experience in biodiversity monitoring and conservation practices but also formed connections with amazing individuals who I know will become lifelong friends. This experience deepened my understanding of tropical ecosystems and the importance of collaborative efforts in conservation.

- Sam Tillett

A Field Trip from Singapore

by Katie Mizuro

Students and staff from St Joseph's Institute paid us a visit in November. As well as the experience of living and sleeping in the jungle during their stay at DG, we put on a variety of activities to help them learn about the jungle ecosystem. These activities included night walks, primate cruises, nighttime cruises and an animal tracking exercise. During the tracking exercise, we showed the students how to use our radio tracking equipment and asked them to use it to locate a stuffed animal, to which we had attached a radio tag. A firm favourite with the students was fishing on the Kinabatangan River, where they were able to catch and identify fish from our diverse freshwater ecosystem.

It was great to introduce the students to the forest of the Kinabatangan, and we hope that they enjoyed it!





William Bryson
Crimson sunbird
Aethopyga siparaja



Samuel Tillett
Bornean orangutan
Pongo pygmaeus



Katie Mizuro
Long-horned orbweaver spider
Macracantha sp.

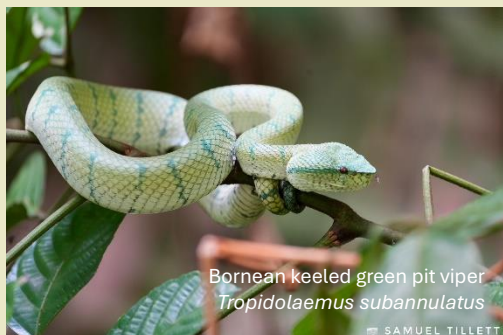


Katie Mizuro
Metcalfe's land snail
Videna metcalfei



Katie Mizuro
Blue-eared kingfisher
Alcedo meninting

Photo highlights



Bornean keeled green pit viper
Tropidolaemus subannulatus



Samuel Tillett
Water buffalo
Bubalus bubalis
Great egret
Ardea alba



Samuel Tillett
Oriental darter
Anhinga melanogaster



Samuel Tillett

Event highlights

The staff and students from St Joseph's received a health and safety talk from John.



Field work for Amy B's project.

The team were made aware of a pangolin found in a house in a local village and were able to release him into the forest.



Amy Little

Root picking to collect data about carbon sequestration for Maz's PhD.



Sam set up his Tillet trap in the field.



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