



grapevine

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Hello and welcome to our Christmas issue

Dear BOS Supporters,
Since you last heard from us, we've had an eventful time, but it's also been very rewarding.

In early October Louise, Tony and I went to Kalimantan, Indonesia, to the BOS Foundation International Donor Conference, where we renewed national and international partnerships with donors, sponsors and our sister organisations around the world.

As soon as we put our feet down in Australia, we held the annual general meeting (AGM) and formed our new committee (see *Meet the committee*).

Most recently, we had a flying visit from members of BOS Foundation, Board of Trustees Chairman Professor Dr Bungaran Saragih, CEO Dr Togu Manurung along with Joel Palmer, Senior Advisor on Communications and Fundraising to talk about the historic release program, (read more at *History in the making*).

We kept our guests very busy with media engagements and meetings in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, including lectures at Sydney University and Monash University, interviews with ABC, Channel 7, and radio meetings with Flora and Fauna

International, AusAID and donors, and a dinner with some of our supporters.

We also took the opportunity to formalise an agreement between BOS Foundation and BOS Australia, cementing our working relationship and common goals.

Our wonderful volunteers

We must mention the many people who made the tour happen, volunteering their time and resources. Hunter Hall Investment Management Limited; LPN for banners and printing; Mark Richardson for donating a helicopter flight as a raffle prize (still to be won); and Joan Pearson for opening her home and providing a wonderful dinner.

Of course, much of the visit would not have been possible without our band of enthusiastic volunteers.

We would also like to thank Cardinal Spin, who we engaged to look after the publicity for the tour—booking the many media engagements and getting our cause heard.

We wish you, your family and friends a safe happy time over the festive season and we'll see you in the New Year.

Regards, Jan Hindmarsh, President



Left: Professor Dr Bungaran Saragih at the conference

Centre: Our wonderful, wonderful volunteers

Right: Jan Hindmarsh (President, BOS Australia),
Dr Togu Manurung (CEO, BOS Foundation),
Tony Gilding (Vice President, BOS Australia),
Professor Dr Bungaran Saragih (Chairman
Board of Trustees BOS Foundation)

Photos: Cardinal Spin



170,000 year old generic bottleneck

Bornean Orangutans descend from a relatively small number of ancestors about 176,000 years ago, according to the broadest genetic analysis to date, of their species.

"The genetic data suggests an ancient population bottleneck," says anthropological geneticist Natasha Arora of the University of Zurich, "in which animal numbers shrink but eventually expand again when conditions improve".

A serious chill gripped the planet roughly 190,000 to 130,000 years ago. Borneo itself wasn't iced over, but rainforests where orangutans live may have shrunk during that time, constraining the orangutan population within it. Such work, says Arora "is important to better understand one of our close relatives, the only Asian great ape."

Today orangutans only live in Borneo and Sumatra, in two species that diverged several million years ago. "The new genetic findings are 'very surprising' in light of the ancient split," says Lounès Chikhi, a population geneticist in Toulouse, France.

"Something really important happened roughly 170,000 years ago", Chikhi says. "That something, however, does not seem to have bottlenecked gibbon and macaque species that shared ancient Borneo with the orangutan Pongo Pygmaeus."

Evidence for the orangutan bottleneck turned up due to a collaboration of 17 researchers who collected fecal and hair samples from 211 wild orangutans at 12 study sites. A previous, smaller analysis set the date for common ancestry of orangutans in Borneo to 860,000 years ago. "That date doesn't hold up," Arora says, "now that researchers have updated sequencing for the old samples and added new ones".

"Orangutan history has been complex," says conservation geneticist Erik Meijaard, of the Jakarta based firm People & Nature Consulting International. "A simple bottleneck may be the most straightforward explanation for the recent shared ancestry," he says. "But some more complex scenario involving extinctions and repopulations might also fit the data."

The study also fuels some conservationists' worries. The genetic evidence confirmed that female orangutans don't move around much, with rivers in particular being a big barrier. So what may look to a human like a fine stretch of rainforest, just waiting for orangutans to move in, may in reality be blocked off to animals.

Source: *Science News*, 23 November 2010. Susan Milius

History in the making

We've set ourselves the huge task of raising \$150,000 to assist with the historic release program—allowing the first group of rehabilitated orangutans from our Nyaru Menteng sanctuary to return to the wild. Orangutans will be selected from a colony that has been living in the sanctuary for some time.

This large scale release program, planned to commence April 2011, will help to ensure the survival of Bornean Orangutans in a natural, protected habitat. For some it will be their first time living freely in the wild.

But before the release, there's a lot to be done:

- selection of suitable orangutans—they need to be capable of living without human intervention, interact together as a colony and meet stringent health checks;
- construct a quarantine area of individual enclosures as well as larger socialisation-areas. These enclosures are designed so the orangutans are facing one another at all times while the socialisation area allows interaction so the keepers can identify any possible behavioural problems.

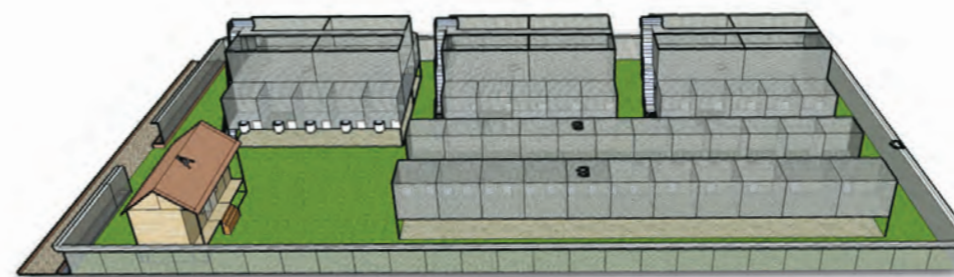
Our \$150,000 goal

We have pledged \$150,000 as Australia's contribution to the release program. This money will provide much needed funds to make the release happen.

Being quarantined for up to a month before being transported by helicopter to the release site is a really important step. This money allows the construction of one block of ten quarantine enclosures.

Once in the wild, the orangutans will have a monitoring and protection unit ensuring their long term safety and ability to cope on their own. Monitoring includes behavioural, ecological and health studies, such as their ranging patterns, social interactions and feeding activities.

► Plan of the proposed quarantine enclosures.



Meet the Committee

At our annual general meeting (AGM) in October, we formed a new committee, continuing with some familiar faces and adding some new ones:

- President: Jan Hindmarsh,
 Vice President: Tony Gilding,
 Treasurer: Deborah Mohr,
 Secretary: Chris Thornton,
 Committee members: Ruth Hatten,
 Louise Grossfeldt, Jennifer Gillespie



Did you know?

People didn't really think about subspeciation of Bornean Orangutans until recently and the only way to tell for certain which species each ape belongs to is by DNA testing.

There are three types or subspecies of orangutans found in Borneo:

- *Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus* is the most endangered species of the Bornean Orangutans with an estimated population of between 1,500 to 3,500 individuals. Found in Western Kalimantan and also in Sarawak.
- *Pongo pygmaeus morio* is found in the North East around Sabah and East Kalimantan, with a population estimated between 8,000 and 18,000.
- *Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii* is the Central Kalimantan subspecies and the most plentiful with up to 40,000 individuals.

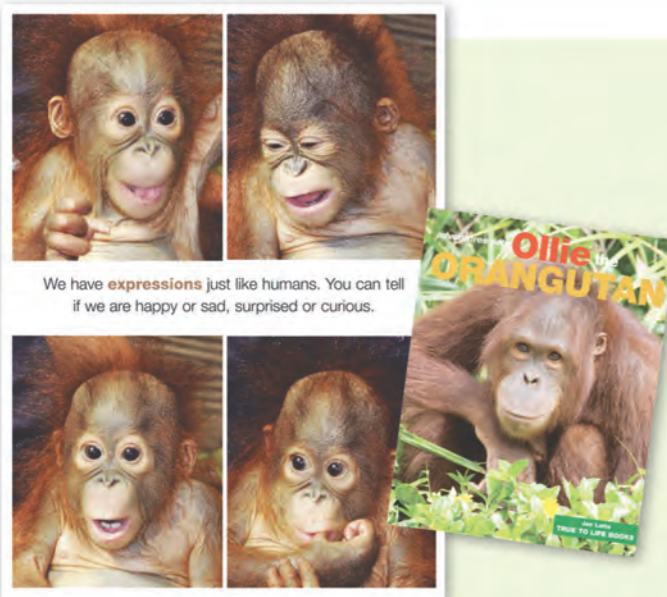
We have all three in our care so, when returning them to the wild, we must ensure they go to their endemic areas and it's why we have several release sites in Indonesian Borneo.

For our younger readers

Author and wildlife photographer, Jan Latta has published a series of 'True to Life books'. Our favourite (naturally) is Ollie the Orangutan.

To create Ollie the Orangutan, Jan travelled to Borneo and hired a guide to go in search of orangutans. "It was a struggle hiking through the jungle. I was always covered in mud and I didn't like the leeches! But my reward was watching orangutans swing through the trees with their bright red hair catching the light. Each day I photographed and wrote about orangutans in their natural habit so children could learn about these endangered animals."

We support Jan in educating children about endangered species and have copies of Ollie for sale at our online shop: www.orangutans.com.au



The future of BOS is in small but very good hands...

Hollie's mum, Kerri, wrote to us about a truly dedicated supporter: "My daughter recently turned 5 and wanted to promote conservation awareness, particularly the BOS cause."

Hollie scrutinises soaps to ensure they are palm oil-free and explains the impact on the orangutans and their habitat to all her little friends. Not only did Hollie insist on donating her money box collection to BOS, but she also raised money at

her birthday celebration—totalling \$56! With this, she has become a member and donated the balance.

She's taken the Grapevine to pre-school and personally handed it to the receptionist, pointing out fundraising ideas. She hopes to coordinate an 'orange' or 'Ranga' day to raise enough proceeds to adopt a baby orangutan.

Kerri says "I am very proud and thought it would be reassuring for BOS to know the next generation of supporters are eager to continue this very important cause." Welcome Hollie—one of our youngest active supporters.

The quarantine enclosures are crucial to the release program...BOS Australia has committed to funding a block of ten enclosures at \$150,000



Ranga Raffle is just the ticket

A big thank you to everyone who put their hand up to run a Ranga Raffle. The response has been fantastic—and it's never too late to join in and run one too.

The idea came about because so many supporters ask us what they can do to help the orangutans. Of course, it isn't within everyone's reach to give regular donations, so we looked for something that would get people involved and help to spread the word to raise much needed funds for the care centres.

What happens? We supply the prize and guidelines on running the raffle and you, our supporters, do the rest.

There's no time limit—you can run a Ranga Raffle when and where it suits you—at work, a local market, anywhere.

If you think you could raise \$50 or more by running a raffle, why not give it a go?

Email us at fundraising@orangutans.com.au to register (including your postal address and phone contact) and we'll send you a Ranga Raffle pack to get you started.

Orangutans in the schoolyard

Orangutan Day, held November to coincide with International Orangutan Awareness Week, was a great success at Vincentia High School.

Orange outfits were the flavour of the day for Year 7 Indonesian students, many of the staff and previous students who still remain passionate about the plight of the orangutans.



► Some of Vincentia's wonderful supporters.

The whole school attended an assembly and watched a video presentation, followed by a 'best-dressed in orange parade' with the winners all receiving a BOS badge, bookmark, magnet, and banana. A 'Ranga Raffle' offering great prizes proved very popular.

Many thanks to Vincentia High School, who raised \$300 to continue to support Kesi.

Hume Building Society helps buy rainforest

Hume Building Society has been a strong supporter of BOSA for some time and held a charity evening on Friday, 22 October. It was a great success with more than 60 people attending.

Proceeds from the evening purchased 106 sqm of rainforest and donations were also received through the branch network.

Hume staff adopted baby Ruthie and Hume Building Society matched this by adopting Nody as well.

Highly visible and invaluable

We'd like to thank Benita Gevorkian, a long time supporter of BOS, for promoting the plight of Boreno's orangutans in Western Australia. She has arranged large advertisements in the West Weekend Magazine; we appreciate your efforts very much Benita.

Pics from Pleasant Street...

Children in Grade 1 from Pleasant St Primary School (Victoria) and the whole school community are very proud to have been able to adopt Ruthie and Nody.

They hope to continue to raise the awareness about all kinds of issues in our world so that future leaders are equipped with the knowledge and passion to make a difference.



► Portraits of Ruthie and Nody by Pleasant St Primary School.



We love hearing from you

There are so many unsung heroes out there, each helping us raise funds for the orangutans, so why not let us know what you're up to. You can write to us at: contact@orangutans.com.au

And remember, when sending photos, please give us your permission to put them on our website and in the newsletter.

Can you help us?

Please visit our website to donate: orangutans.com.au or if you wish to send a cheque, please make it payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia and send to: PO Box 3916, Mosman NSW 2088.

Perhaps the most convenient method for you is to set up a one-off or regular payment via direct debit (or your credit card): please call us on (02) 9011 5455 to arrange it.

e-Newsletter: if you prefer to save paper and get your next newsletter via email, please drop us a note at: contact@orangutans

Thank you for your continued support.