



Primate helping primates

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Destruction of orangutan forest – Why? – PALM OIL

In April I visited Sumatra; I was on an adventure hoping to see wild orangutans.

I had not been to this part of Indonesia previously and although I knew very well that a great deal of land had been cleared of the magnificent trees that once formed a jungle and home to orangutans, I was shocked at what I saw. What greeted me was beyond comprehension.

The populated areas gave way to land that had nothing but rich orange soil; dead trees lying in rows or on top of each other. Sometimes there was a remnant of an old growth tree; the base was all that was left.

I travelled for kilometres, nothing but bare land, then out of nowhere came a lush green plantation. Neat as a pin, palm oil trees all in a row standing up straight. Then came the overloaded palm oil trucks carrying the nuts to the processing plant. Truck after truck on some of the worst roads I have travelled on. Another few kilometres down the road locals are busy working at a nursery loading smaller trucks with immature palm oil trees. These trees will be planted in one of the thousands of plantations that populate Sumatra.

Reaching my destination I was again amazed at the difference in the landscape. I was staying on the logged side of the river. Palm oil trees or bare land that was it; erosion everywhere. The rains came and the water flooded the ground; it rushed with such force that I was knocked over at one stage.

On the other side of the river I looked at a beautiful jungle which until eight years ago was logged for the timber. At least in this area the logging has stopped. Around the perimeter of the forest there are palm oil trees, plantations just waiting to creep into the forest.

It was decided that the group would venture to look for wild orangutans. After a two hour drive through numerous palm oil plantations we reached our destination. Off we went in search of the wild ones. The forest is a mix of palm oil and rubber trees and some very spindly natural trees. Were orangutans spotted? I am pleased to say that yes, one was. Yes one. I was advised that there could be up to three in the area. I wonder if this is so! Not a great deal of natural habitat.

The communities that are engulfed by the plantations make their living from the palm oil. Some grow their own trees to help sustain their income. To an outsider it is very sad. These people have very little; they need to survive.

The threat to the land and animals is the multi-million dollar plantations owned by foreign investors. This insidious oil that is in so many products that we use from day to day is causing irreversible damage. We as consumers can make a difference. Here is how we can help save orangutans as well as the environment:

- look at the BOS website www.orangutans.com.au to get a list of products that DO NOT contain palm oil;
- read the label of products before you buy and DO NOT purchase products that contain palm oil;
- support manufacturers that DO NOT produce palm oil related products and lobby those that do to change to an alternative oil;
- lobby the government;
- help educate people about palm oil; and go to the Palm Oil Action Group's website for more information at www.palmoilaction.org.au

You can make a difference. To help the animals, the environment and each other, please start purchasing products that are PALM OIL FREE and tell others to do the same thing.

Sue Floyed

President, BOS Australia



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Now just \$20!

Baby adoption update

In the last edition of “grapevine” we told you about our two new orphaned baby orangutans that we welcomed into our adoption program. As mentioned, for \$120 (which you can split into quarterly payments) you can adopt either Ruthie or Nody for 1 year; and it is tax deductible. For this you will receive:

- a certificate of adoption;
- a photograph of your chosen baby;
- a profile about your baby;
- quarterly updates on her/his progress;
- an online copy of Grapevine;
- a gift; and
- all postage is included.

To find out about Ruthie and Nody and the program, give us a call on (03) 9877 0377, or go to our website at: www.orangutans.com.au. You can either adopt online or download the brochure and post it with a cheque or your credit card details.

On behalf of the babies, thank you to everyone who has generously supported this program so far. One family in particular is worth a special mention: instead of a birthday present, mum asked for donations for the young birthday girl who really wanted to adopt an orangutan. They raised \$480 and now they have adopted 2 babies for 2 years. Great stuff!!!

Palm Oil Tidings

The good:

Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne Zoos have taken the lead in changing consumer behaviour and opted to remove all products from their retail shelves that contain palm oil. Melbourne Zoo’s “Don’t Palm Us Off” postcard campaign takes this a step further, aiming to get enough signatures to encourage change in labelling standards.

KFC will move from cooking in palm oil to a canola-sunflower blend, in line with McDonalds. The change-over will not be completed until well into 2010. A healthy move for the orangutans and for consumers with a reduction of about 80% in saturated fat.

The bad:

Cadbury has recently changed its milk chocolate recipe for Australia and NZ to include palm oil. Cadbury states that it has a “passionate commitment to making everyone feel happy.” Let it know that this is not the way to do that. Contact details can be found at www.cadbury.com.au.

Welding a partnership

Since 2006, with the assistance of BOS Australia supporters/volunteers and in collaboration with the Melbourne Zoo the “Welding for Welfare” program has continued to reap beneficial outcomes in line with its original goals (see “grapevine” edition 13). And it continues. See Jess’ story below for the most recent developments. This month, further financial support is being provided by BOS Australia for Fleur Butcher and two electricians from the Melbourne Zoo to travel to Nyaru Menteng* to continue this important work.

Recently Surip, a welder from Nyaru Menteng spent five weeks in Melbourne as continuation of the “Welding for Welfare” program. Whilst working at Melbourne Zoo with the welding team Surip had the opportunity to further develop his skills, expertise, and knowledge in the maintenance and construction of animal exhibits. Surip spent the majority of his time at the Zoo learning more skills of the trade. He developed a close relationship with the supervising welder Gary Salisbury and worked closely with the other members of the works team, strengthening relationships for the project. Not only did he take direction well, he applied his skills and initiative to each job as well as showing other members of the team how to produce and fix products where equipment may not be available onsite (one of the master crafts you need when you are in Central Kalimantan and access to equipment and tools is very difficult).

Surip’s enthusiasm and dedication to his work impressed all the staff, completing his allocated jobs to a high standard. Some of his work included:

- design and construction of an orangutan blood draw sleeve;
- design and construction of some orangutan proof bi-fold doors;
- construction of fencing for the upcoming Seal exhibit; and
- design and construction of some sump covers.



This capacity building program is important, not only for Nyaru Menteng but also as a means to train and reward local staff that have the motivation and determination to continue to learn. These vital skills that are being passed onto the local staff at Nyaru Menteng help not only for individual skill development, but most importantly, orangutan welfare at the Centre.

Thank you to LYNX (In-house Zoo keeping fundraising group) at Melbourne Zoo for funding Surip’s expenses to Australia and to BOS Australia for also contributing funds towards this program. Both LYNX and BOS Australia work together in close cooperation to help fund these important initiatives.

Jessica McKelson

Acting Supervisor, Rainforest Precinct, Melbourne Zoo

**Nyaru Menteng in Central Kalimantan is a rehabilitation and reintroduction Centre for orangutans, founded by BOS Foundation in 1999.*

BOS membership renewal time

It’s membership renewal time, with subscriptions for 2009/2010 falling due this month. To renew, go to our website www.orangutans.com.au.

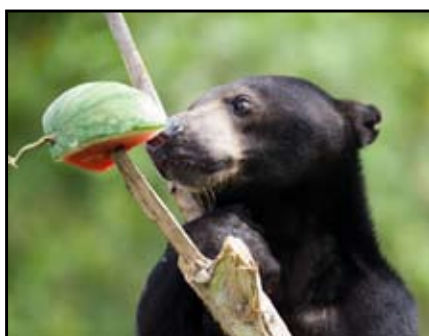
Fees are unchanged at \$45 for singles and \$75 for family memberships. You can purchase a membership online from our website or you can contact us by telephone or mail (see contact details on the last page). As an added bonus, members receive a 10% discount on merchandise (when a telephone order is made).

Those who joined as members since April are: Narayan Gopalkrishnan (family), Yvonne Torn-Broers, Maria Venn, Sue Bail, Ian Davison (family) and W Lovett.

Life looking up for BOS Sun Bears

The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation is best known for its efforts in orangutan rescue and rehabilitation. But BOS is also involved in the rescue of a number of other species, including the Sun Bear.

A 58 hectare site has been allocated for the 52 Sun Bears at Samboja Lestari but until recently, the bears have been far more restricted with many of the males housed in cages and the females rotated from yard to yard only once every six months. Concerns as to how they would interact when housed together was resulting in a life of relative isolation and little if no enrichment for most of the bears.



The wonderful news is that an environmental and behavioural transformation has taken place in the last 6 months. This is thanks to the work of Heri Estaman (Head Keeper) and Meike Kunkel (Volunteer Co-ordinator) from Samboja Lestari along with Darek Figa, an animal behaviourist from Australia.

Darek's expertise has been invaluable in giving staff at the sanctuary the skills and the confidence to try new husbandry methods and enrichment techniques to improve life for these bears. Over the past six months, as well as volunteering considerable time and resources himself, Darek has also involved 17 Australian volunteers in establishing what will be an ongoing program.

Enrichment programs have been designed and implemented across the yards, cages and quarantine facility. These have included food based stimulation such as scatter feeds, smears and food puzzles, in a way that complements the standard diet yet also extends foraging behaviour.

This has brought many benefits – more natural behaviours, fewer abnormal behaviours plus healthier coats and improved body weights from an improved diet. It was believed that these enrichment steps were essential in preventing any aggressive behaviour when the animals were allowed to interact.

And the result?

Now 41 of the 52 Sun Bears have increased yard access, including 16 of the males that were housed in chronic isolation. There has been no sign of aggression with the bears happy to explore their new surrounds and forage for food.

There is still work to do with some bears remaining in cages. Some of these bears need special solutions such as higher protein diets or are in quarantine. In the meantime, conditions have been improved for them too with the cages now including hammocks and other enrichment items.



BOS Sun Bears continued...

Where to from here?

With only 2 hectares currently being utilised, the next step is to develop the remaining area with construction of a 12 acre yard. The land is rich with natural resources including an established secondary rainforest, maturing fruit trees and a flowing river: all suitable for Sun Bears.

A team of 10-12 specialist volunteers will shortly travel to the site to commence development of the fence line, bringing with them skills in animal welfare, habitat design, forest regeneration, zoo-keeping and veterinary nursing as well as fencing and concreting.

It is expected that completion of the project including installation of an electric fence and development of yard enrichment will be completed in 2009, subject to funding availability.

Following a number of successful fundraisers for the Sun Bears by our NSW team, BOS Australia is contributing \$30,000 to kick-start this important project. However more funds are required to complete the development. If you would like to help the Sun Bears, contact us on (03) 9877 0377 or donate online at: www.orangutans.com.au

Thinkers of the Jungle - Price reduced

"Thinkers Of The Jungle defies categorisation. It is in equal measures love story, polemic and memoir." (Nick Galvin, Sydney Morning Herald)

This is a book, like no other. The photography by Jay Ullal is unmatched and no holds are barred as Gerd Schuster and Willie Smits relate the tragic story unfolding for Indonesia's orangutans.



The publisher Herbert Ullmann visited Dr. Willie Smits in Borneo and showed just how impressed he was by his efforts and great success: *"There are books that can be published, and books that have to be published. Thinkers of the Jungle belongs unequivocally to the latter category."*

Now is your opportunity to buy this superb book from our website for just \$50 plus \$6 postage at www.orangutans.com.au

The Big Walk

Long time BOS supporter, Benita Gevorkian, banded together about 20 other supporters to complete Sydney's Big Walk on June 27th. And big it was – covering 40km from Palm Beach to Taronga Zoo and raising over \$9,000!



Decked out in orangutan t-shirts and draped with furry orange friends, the walkers enjoyed some of Sydney's best scenic spots along the way. The clouds started rolling in around Dee Why but our intrepid supporters marched onwards and upwards, tackling the Spit Bridge as the rain came down. Fortunately the skies cleared for the final walk through Mosman to the zoo.



Congratulations and thanks to all the walkers for your efforts. Thanks also to Karen Stenner for organising the support vehicle, and to Nick Holt who raised close to \$3,000 and wins a family Zoo pass. A tired Benita is reported to be already thinking about 2010's walk! Thank you Benita for organising this successful event.



Cakes for orangutans

Recently, the annual Sports Day at Birdwood High School, South Australia, saw the annual cake stall for the orangutans take place, for the third year in a row. Dozens of trays of cakes, slices and biscuits appeared out of nowhere after a general appeal through the school newsletter, with some even in team colours!



Two of our students, Chris and Rekahn, enjoyed spending the day serving their peers, and along with the cakes served dozens of ice-cream spiders. Although healthy food is generally promoted in our school, the cake stall is a bit of a treat, and provides some quick energy!

We broke our record from last year with over \$300 raised, all of which was sent to BOS for Birdwood's adopted orangutan, Waru. BHS' Save the Orangutans Club has successfully raised awareness of the plight of orangutans through this annual fundraiser, and through letters and petitions to companies using palm oil. Last year a petition containing the names of more than 400 secondary school students was sent to KFC.

The students love the orangutans, and like all of us, couldn't bear to see a world without them. Let's all keep going!

Lynton Vonow

Birdwood High School

“The Burning Season” on show again

The Australian TV Premiere of “The Burning Season” was shown on ABC1 late last year. It was recently shown in Melbourne on 3rd June at the Cinema Nova in Carlton and on 6th June at the Sydney Film Festival. Donations from both screenings will support Nyaru Menteng. It is expected that further screenings will occur in other capital cities in the coming months.

For those in Sydney, an exhibition of stills from the film is on display as well as screening of the trailer at the Customs House at Circular Quay until 26th July.

There are a number of resources available for teachers and students about issues related to palm oil so go to the following website for more: www.theburningseasonmovie.com



Donations to BOS Australia can be made in a number of ways:

via our website: www.orangutans.com.au

or by sending a cheque or money order, payable to:

Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia
PO Box 33, Nunawading VIC 3131

call us (03) 9877 0377 to arrange direct debit or credit card donation.