



primates helping primates

Edition 22 • Oct 09

Orangutan guardian

The story of Delvi

Instead of presents

Welding for Welfare 2009

Return to the wild

Thank you Cadbury

Upcoming events

New baby, Dodo, to adopt

Make your voice heard

Building a better life for the sun bears

The year in review

Funds allocation

New merchandise for sale

Whittakers

Notice: BOS Australia AGM

2010 DESK
CALENDAR



Just \$13.50!

grapevine

Orangutan guardian

November 2009 marks 10 years since Lone Droscher-Nielsen has been saving orangutans, and when she opened the doors of Nyaru Menteng Sanctuary. It is therefore fitting that we begin this edition of "grapevine" with an article written by Jess McKelson of how it all began, and pay special tribute to this miraculous woman.

If you are lucky enough to be in the United Kingdom on 19th November, you can hear Lone speak at the Royal Geographical Society in London. Contact BOS Australia if you require more details.



Seven years ago I was introduced to one of the most inspirational ladies I have met. Hidden away in Central Kalimantan, Borneo Indonesia is this woman of extreme dedication and strength who has devoted her life to saving orangutans and their habitat home: Lone Droscher-Nielsen. Having rescued close to 1,000 orangutans, she has never turned one away, and never will. Lone says, "Until the last orangutan breathes its last breath, I will have hope."

Danish by birth, Lone started her career as an airhostess. A job that always made her happy seemed to 'lose its appeal' when Lone decided to take up a volunteer job in Borneo with orangutans.

Tanjung Puting National Park is where it all began. Moving permanently to Borneo in 1993, Lone began her devoted journey to save the orangutans. Working with orangutans gave her an insight into how she could make a difference in long-term protection and preservation of this endangered ape.

An estimated 100 orangutans being illegally held in homes and in need of rescue was enough for Lone to take action and establish Nyaru Menteng. In collaboration with the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) in Indonesia which already had a successful rescue centre in the eastern part of the island, she had the support to begin "Nyaru Menteng Orangutan and Rescue Centre" in 1999. Mastering the tools and skills needed to manage an orangutan rehabilitation centre, Lone decided that she could build on her expertise taking into account the successes and mistakes of others and create a new method of rehabilitation. Lone created a rehabilitation model that used 'schools' of learning for the orangutans. She developed the project to imitate the childhood behaviour and learning which orphan orangutans would have had with their mothers in the forest.

At the time, Nyaru Menteng was built for 100 orangutans, but today it provides sanctuary for approximately 600 orphaned and displaced orangutans, making it the largest primate rescue and rehabilitation centre in the world. It is the only orangutan project actively rescuing wild orangutans from their certain death from palm oil plantations (an agricultural crop replacing their native habitat). Over 95% of the animals that enter the centre today are from or associated with oil palm development.

Reminiscing to me of the early days of the project, Lone explained, "I would place every cent back into the project: feeding orangutans, employing a few staff to help clean cages and general operational costs. I spent all day actively working with orangutans and in the mornings we would take the babies out into the forest. I would show the baby sitters (local Dayak women) how to teach an infant orangutan the skills required in nest building, what fruits and leaves can be eaten, how to climb and eventually how to recognise predators within the jungle. Each skill is what a mother orangutan would teach their infant."



The story of Delvi

In December 2007, the Nyaru Menteng rescue team were called to come to the aid of Delvi, a 4 year old female orangutan. She was being kept as a pet in a cage under a house – a cage so small, she couldn't even stand up.

The team was shocked by her physical condition. Her body was emaciated and her skin pale and dry.

While there were food scraps in her cage, she didn't eat them. The reason soon became apparent. She was unable to hold the food in her hand with all her limbs virtually paralysed. These crippled limbs meant she also couldn't support her bodyweight.

The BOS rescue team immediately fed Delvi fruit and took her away from her life of misery.

On arrival at Nyaru Menteng, she was cared for by babysitters and her condition quickly improved. Initially she could only crawl and she was matched with other younger playmates to compensate for her disabilities. Over time though, she regained the use of her hands to hold on to trees and branches.

We are pleased to report that now, nearly 2 years later, Delvi is thriving. Thanks to the good care and training from Nyaru Menteng staff, she is now climbing and has joined forest school where she is friends with Ruthie and Nody, BOS Australia's adoption orangutans. She is not quite as adventurous as some, choosing to climb and play on the lower branches but she has certainly come a long way in her rehabilitation.



Orangutan guardian: continued

Since Nyaru Menteng was first conceived, Lone made the decision of only employing the Dayak communities from within the local region. Today there are over 200 local staff employed and it has developed into one of the largest alternative community livelihood projects within Central Borneo.

Holidays are a rare opportunity for Lone, and 24-hour work commitments are required. Being on standby for orangutans that are in danger or need to be rescued has become a frequently occurring event, as large areas of forest have been destroyed, resulting in more and more orphaned orangutans.

A visual indicator that the project has grown rapidly over the past 5 years is when 200 orphan orangutans exit the forest each evening, ready for bed time. The lawn is a sea of red and the emotive impact is immense. It is estimated that for each orangutan that has been rescued, 5 orangutans have died, either in their capture or soon afterwards. Although it is a depressing sight to see so many orangutans that had to be rescued, it is also a positive sign that the model Lone has created is a success. But when she gazes from her office window, it triggers much more of an emotional response: "When I look out from my office onto the lawn, I am constantly reminded of the fact that each orangutan has witnessed its mother's brutal slaughter. They shouldn't be here; they should be with their mothers in the forest."



Although the number of orangutans at the Centre shows their future is 'hanging in the balance', it is also outweighed with positive experiences, such as when an orangutan takes its first tentative steps towards returning to a life in the wild: "It is very rewarding when you see an orangutan climb a tree for the first time or build its first nest. I cannot help but feel like a proud mother. When an orangutan can recover from such a traumatised start in life, then it makes it all worthwhile. I must keep hoping otherwise I cannot do this work."

Each time I visit Nyaru Menteng I feel so lucky to be there. I have nothing but sincere respect for Lone. Not only is she a close friend who has given up her life to battle issues that surround one of our closest living relatives, she is also a teacher, ambassador and one of the most beautiful hearts that I have ever met. Sometimes I think that without such a remarkable person working so tirelessly on saving orangutans, what would have happened to all those animals if she hadn't followed her heart?



Lone says: "As long as there are orangutans to be saved, I must carry on. If we cannot save a species as noble and magnificent as an orangutan, what hope is there for the planet?"

*Jess McKelson
Supervisor Primates,
Melbourne Zoo*

Instead of presents

Claudia, from Sydney, is a fan of orangutans. She says, "I was lucky to see orangutans when I went to Borneo with my family.

Each year when Claudia invites friends to her birthday party, she asks for a donation to a charity instead of receiving presents. This year for her 8th birthday she wanted to support the orangutans in Borneo. Claudia received enough donations to adopt 2 orangutans!

"I am glad there is a place where orangutans that are in trouble can be looked after and where they are safe," Claudia said. She is looking forward to hearing how they fare. "I hope my friends learn about the orangutans and the ways in which we can help them," Claudia said.



If you would like to follow Claudia's lead, you too can adopt an orphaned orangutan instead of receiving or giving presents...something to think about as Christmas gift-giving approaches! For details on how to adopt read the article about Dodo, the most recent infant to join our program or go to our website at www.orangutans.com.au

Welding for Welfare 2009

The 4th Welding for Welfare project is finishing. This program has been funded by BOS Australia and supported by Zoos Victoria. It focuses on skills exchange at Nyaru Menteng. This year it has involved: an electrician, Adrian Darby; a welder, Garry Salisbury; and me.

The team was working at Nyaru Menteng during July. Adrian was putting in earths to make the electricity safe for both staff and animals. He was also working out on the islands to repair and modify the containment systems. Garry trained a new welder sharing his immense knowledge. He repaired cages, built slides, and constructed a workshop. I was working with the enrichment team and assisted with husbandry issues across the project.

The rescue team from Nyaru Menteng were out most of July translocating orangutans out of palm oil plantations. At least 7 were rescued. It is hard and frustrating work. The following is from Brum one of Nyaru Menteng's paramedics.

"The burning season has started. Smoke is starting to fill the air. Wherever we go we see fire. For 5 days we have been trying to find a big male orangutan. We keep getting reports of him stealing food in the plantations. The area we are working in is a huge palm oil plantation about a 4 hour drive from Nyaru Menteng. The plantation manager has asked us to relocate the orangutans from the area. This plantation has cleared 20,000 hectares and produces 120 tonnes of palm oil per hour. The forest area we are trying to rescue the orangutans from is about 30-60 hectares. On one side of the forest is a lake of waste from the mill. The forest close to this lake is turning brown and dying. The orangutans in this area are starving. We managed to rescue 2 females this trip. Both were very skinny and hungrily ate the food we gave them inside the transport box. They will be released in a safe forest. It is sad to return without finding the big male. Hopefully he has found enough food until we can come back again."



*Fleur Butcher
Senior Primate Keeper, Melbourne Zoo*

*Fleur with Melvin: Photo courtesy
Nyaru Menteng*

Return to the wild

The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) has successfully released 46 orangutans back into the wild. These orangutans had been rescued from starvation, injury, illness or captivity by BOSF's Nyaru Menteng Rescue and Reintroduction Project, and have now been returned to a tropical rainforest in the remote heart of Borneo, where they should be safe from human intervention and the devastation of their habitat by the palm oil industry. Finding a safe place to release them has, however, been difficult, because nearly all suitable habitat for orangutans in Borneo is being illegally logged, converted to plantations or already has a wild orangutan population.

Nyaru Menteng currently has 200 orangutans ready to return to the wild, and preparations for their reintroduction are underway. Requirements include: leasing helicopters; ensuring long-term security of the site; and providing post-release care and monitoring for the released orangutans.

If you would like to find out the details of the release operation, go to the "News – BOS International" section of our website at www.orangutans.com.au



Thank you Cadbury

We reported in the last "grapevine" our disappointment at Cadbury's decision to substitute palm oil for cocoa butter in its Dairy Milk chocolate in Australia and New Zealand. It seems that we were not alone in our disappointment; Cadbury was faced with a barrage of complaints from both sides of the Tasman. The great news is that as a result of consumer pressure, Cadbury has announced it got it wrong, and will revert to its original recipe. Palm oil will be removed from its entire moulded block chocolate range in Australia and New Zealand. We applaud the company for this decision and its commitment to move to Fairtrade certification for Dairy Milk chocolate in 2010.

Cadbury is not palm oil free – it continues to use the oil in caramels and fillers – but at least you can now consume that block of Dairy Milk without concern.

Upcoming events

Come and see us at one of the following events:

Melbourne:

Bourke St Mall – 7 November

Come and see our stall at the Mall, to help us recognise Orangutan Caring Week.

Mind Body Spirit Festival – 20-22 November

Come and see us at Australia's longest running and most respected wellbeing event.

Where: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Sydney:

Mind Body Spirit Festival – 5-8 November

- Where: Sydney Exhibition Centre

New baby, Dodo, to adopt

In addition to Ruthie and Nody, you can now adopt Dodo, another orphaned infant orangutan.

When Dodo arrived at Samboja Lestari Rescue Centre he was the youngest orangutan in the baby group, too young to be without his mother. He often played by himself as the older orangutans were much better at climbing and much stronger.

Many orphaned orangutans have been rescued, but they must learn skills to survive on their own in the rainforest before they can be released back into the wild. At the reintroduction projects the orangutans are looked after around the clock by professional staff.

For \$120 you can adopt Ruthie, Nody or Dodo for one year; and it is tax deductible. You will receive:

- a certificate of adoption;
- a photograph of your chosen baby;
- an information sheet about your baby;
- a half yearly update on his/her progress;
- our "grapevine" newsletter online;
- a gift; and all postage is included.



To find out more go to our website at:
www.orangutans.com.au

Make your voice heard



Orangutans have no choice in their future, and at the moment neither do you. It's not too late for orangutans; we have the power to change their fate. An informed trip to the supermarket is the perfect opportunity to protect the habitat of orangutans. We need FSANZ (Food Standards Australia) to know that we care about orangutans, and we want the choice to make informed decisions about what we eat. We need you to tell FSANZ you want palm oil labelled in food products so you can make a choice.

Zoos Victoria's "Don't Palm us off" campaign is picking up momentum, with nearly 39,000 signatures to date". We need your help to make this campaign a success. Together we can make a difference. Let your voice be heard, it's easy.

1. Direct friends, family, e-mail contacts to: www.zoo.org.au/palmoil to sign online.
2. Send this link of the launch to everyone you know:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdTaEoJh0Yg>

The voices of wild orangutans can't be heard, but yours can be. **Don't palm us off.**

Building a better life for the sun bears

We wrote in the last edition of "grapevine" about the significant improvements that a group of volunteers from NSW working with staff at a BOS Rehabilitation Centre at Samboja Lestari are bringing about in the lives of 52 sun bears.

The first step, which has taken place over the past year, was to introduce new husbandry and enrichment techniques which have resulted in improved behaviour and health for the bears. The next step was to create a new 12 acre rainforest enclosure within the sun bear sanctuary to allow the bears more freedom on a daily basis.

In July 2009, a team of 9 volunteers travelled to Samboja Lestari to begin work on this new enclosure. Overgrown vegetation was cleared, extensive fruit tree planting completed and 150m of new fence line was erected.

Unfortunately, delays were incurred and so another team has been working to complete the remaining 300m of fence line as well as continuing to add enrichment to the yard.

Meanwhile the enclosures continue to be improved with new enrichment installed, additional ponds set up and climbing facilities built. To keep the bears busy and stress levels low, food and enrichment is hidden in every corner and tree hole. Foraging helps develop the bears' senses and muscles.

Hery, who is responsible for the bears, says "Improving the conditions of the bear enclosures is a very rewarding job. I can immediately see when they are happy, busy and get good food. Some bears that were held in small cages at private homes showed stereotypical behaviour; they would continually repeat the same movements. Some of them have retained this behaviour, but many have improved! Now they take a swim in the pond or climb up onto a platform. To me, these moments are the reward for doing this difficult job."

As a result of fundraising events for the sun bears, BOS Australia is funding a project to improve conditions for the sun bears with \$40,675 allocated to date.





The year in review

2009 has seen many changes in BOS; the organisation has grown and has continued to play a critical role in the race to save the planet's endangered orangutans.

Last year, in May 2008, we launched our new website; bright colours, online shop, and a membership database all in one. The site now generates around \$5,000/month, a steady income for BOS. Rebecca King (our Secretary) spends many hours keeping it up-to-date, researching and adding articles, and updating the database. Along with a steady income, the information that the site holds is useful to students and parents alike. PALM OIL is one of our busiest sections, thanks to Rebecca King and Debbie Carruthers who have spent many hours this year walking the aisles of supermarkets, gathering information and contacting manufacturers. If you haven't seen it, have a look at the list of PALM OIL FREE products on our website to help you with your purchasing decisions. The list is "a work in progress" though, as more product lines are being added all the time. Talking about palm oil, we have also produced a new brochure which has just been printed.



In May 2009, we launched our infant orangutan adoption program. Two beautiful orphans were allocated to BOS Australia and to date we have welcomed over 160 adopting parents to the program. Another new baby, Dodo, has just joined the program with another joining before the end of the year. I would also like to thank Lucy Clarke for the great job she does in dispatching adoption materials to adopting parents.

June saw our strong volunteer and supporter base from NSW involved in the "Big Walk". The idea of raising funds and awareness was the inspiration of volunteer Benita Gevorkian. Benita arranged the event and "coerced" friends and family to walk 40kms. The walkers arranged their own sponsorship. Some of the walkers were up

and walking by 5am; what dedication! The event raised around \$7,000. Benita is keen to be involved in a bigger Big Walk in 2010.

We have secured our first corporate sponsor Trilogy, which launched an ongoing world-wide campaign in its support of endangered orangutans in South East Asia. Last month Trilogy kicked off its campaign by donating NZ\$1 to BOS Foundation from the sale of each specially marked box of its hero product, Certified Organic Rosehip Oil. Thank you Trilogy!



BOS Australia has once again partnered with Melbourne Zoo, and helped financially in supporting a skills exchange program with Nyaru Menteng staff. In March a technician from the project spent one month developing his skills by working alongside the welders at Melbourne Zoo and mid-year, an electrician, a welder and animal husbandry expert from the Zoo travelled to Nyaru Menteng to further the progress in improving skills and conditions at the sanctuary. Without BOS Australia contributing these funds and without the partnership with Melbourne Zoo, many orangutans would still be suffering in substandard conditions.

Through BOS Australia funding, a team of volunteers from NSW has been instrumental in the integration of male sun bears from cages to a roaming yard at Samboja Lestari, a BOS project. The team headed by Darek Figa is now on its third tour. This has been another first for BOS Australia and we thank Jan Hindmarsh, our Vice-President for all her efforts in personally supporting this project; we hope that this valuable work will continue.

Orang-U-Friends - our schools' program has been reborn with the help of Emily Rumble. In 2010 I hope to see the program extended to other States.

The year in review - continued

"Grapevine", our newsletter, edited by Debbie Carruthers has had a new life. This quarterly newsletter is now sent to over 2000 people worldwide. Emailing this, along with other information, has helped reduce costs this year.

Ruth Comey, our longest serving Committee member and our graphic design expert, as always, has been developing our branding and presenting beautiful images. Ruth has been exceptionally busy this year with the design of the following new material: palm oil brochure; adoption certificates and brochures/flyers; a free postcard distributed to over 30,000 people; envelopes; badges; magnets; letterheads; website graphics; banners; stickers; calico bags; T-shirts; desk calendar; and most recently, free advertisements in "The Age" newspaper (Victoria) as well as "grapevine". Phew!

Rebecca King has been an outstanding contributor as our Secretary over the past 2 years. She has been the engine behind BOS Australia, volunteering enormous hours on a wide range of fronts. Sadly, Rebecca is standing down from this role. Another outstanding Committee member is Cheryl Looker who is standing down as Treasurer after 2 years. Cheryl has also volunteered a huge number of hours keeping our finances in order; the organisation is indebted to them.

My duties this year have been more varied; this is due to the exposure that BOS is obtaining. I am chatting with people by phone and email every day (answering the BOS Australia telephone line and email address) including teachers and the media, and liaising with international organisations and their representatives. Then there are the awareness /fundraising events in Victoria and Brisbane which I have attended to assist with selling merchandise and raising awareness of the plight of orangutans. Then at the more mundane end is arranging and mailing stock which is a daily activity of mine. This is counterbalanced by one of my joys: sourcing new merchandise for the website and developing new marketing opportunities. It is pleasing that we now have representatives on the Committee from NSW, South Australia and Victoria. In case you didn't know, all BOS Committee members and office bearers are volunteers, so a high percentage of money raised goes directly to BOS projects.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank all our supporters. It is only through your generosity that we are able to make a difference to the lives of more than 800 orangutans and 59 sun bears.

Thank you and I wish you all well for the festive season.

Sue Floyed
President, BOS Australia



Funds allocation

One of the responsibilities of the BOS Australia Committee is to allocate funds to the BOS projects. This is always a subject of hot debate as the need for funds is inevitably greater than the availability.

Both Nyaru Menteng and Samboja Lestari are supported in their operational budgets by two external organisations but both have shortfalls which need funding by the various BOS sister organisations. Both also are in need of capital improvements and expansion.

Nyaru Menteng houses around 600 orangutans and 7 sun bears. It was built to cater for 100 orangutans. It is essential that it acquires islands to complete the rehabilitation process and free up space for new arrivals.

Samboja is the home for about 200 orangutans and 52 sun bears. Wanariset still houses over 20 orangutans. Samboja also needs funds to create islands for the orangutans and to ensure that there are facilities for the remaining orangutans at Wanariset to be relocated. It also faces the challenge of developing the sun bear sanctuary to ensure the sun bears have an improved quality of life.

It is the view of the current BOS Australia Committee that both projects should be supported and that is what we have done in 2009. We have approved funds for 5 specific projects:

- Operational costs (Nyaru Menteng) \$171,000
- Welding Program (Nyaru Menteng) \$23,000
- Bear yard development (Samboja Lestari) from specific fundraising events \$40,675
- Orangutan enrichment (Wanariset/Samboja) \$15,000
- Orangutan relocation (Wanariset/Samboja) \$78,000
- Medical equipment (Samboja Lestari) \$28,000.

This totals nearly \$194,000 for Nyaru Menteng and nearly \$162,000 for Samboja Lestari.

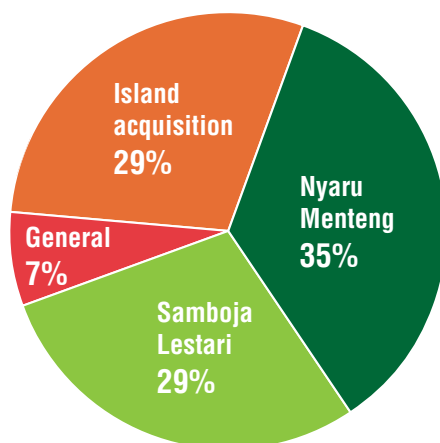
In addition, we were in receipt of a \$160,000 donation for the specific purpose of acquiring an island near Nyaru Menteng. This was the result of the relationship between Melbourne Zoo Senior Primate Keeper Fleur Butcher, and BOS Australia.

The chart to the right shows the split of funds between projects as approved in 2009.

Not all funds have yet been spent – for example, delivery plans for both the orangutan enrichment program and relocations are still in progress and purchase of the island is pending.

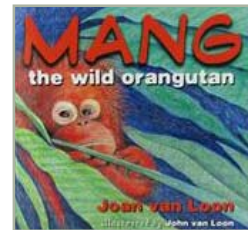
We would also like to direct funds into securing land for releases but this is a long term and difficult process.

Sue Floyed
President, BOS Australia



New merchandise for sale

In the lead-up to the festive season, we have been busy sourcing a range of new products to help you with your Christmas gift-giving.



Brennah with new friend

New items include:

- our popular desk calendar (new content for 2010);
- a children's book called "Mang the Wild Orangutan" (sourced at a very competitive price of \$25);
- a fine china mug;
- a melamine serving tray;
- a melamine teabag holder;
- the "Orangutan Diary" DVD; and
- tea towels are back.

More items will appear on our website soon at www.orangutans.com.au. So, get in early so you don't miss out as stock is limited on certain items.

Whittakers

Whittaker's has kindly donated over 2,000 palm oil free dark chocolate chunk bars to BOS Australia. The 50g "Dark Ghana" chunk bars are 6 months past their "best by" date but quality is not affected - as the company said, "Dark chocolate is like red wine, it improves with age!"



So, thanks to J. H. Whittaker & Sons for making this possible and for having product that is palm oil free for us to enjoy.

Notice: BOS Australia AGM

When: 7:00pm Thursday 26th November 2009

Where: Oaks on Collins, 480 Collins St, Melbourne

All BOS financial members are welcome to attend.

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.