

Forest Chatter



Issue 11 | March 2015

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From the President...

The latter part of 2014 brought some serious challenges in Borneo. Firstly, our Nyaru Menteng sanctuary was afflicted with the loss of 11 orangutans. Then it became evident that we had lost contact with some of our released orangutans in the wild.

As you can understand, these two serious setbacks caused deep concern and sadness amongst our hundreds of dedicated staff in Borneo. To their great credit, however, they relentlessly investigated the causes of these tragedies with scientific dedication. This in turn allowed us to quickly find solutions.

The Nyaru Menteng disease was identified (see page 2 for more detail) and our Vice President Lou rallied colleagues to assist. Despite being early January and in the middle of Australian 'silly season', vaccines were quickly packaged and dispatched by hand back to Indonesia and administered promptly.

The second challenge was not as easy to solve and still is the subject of much research and debate. There are still orangutans unaccounted for from our release programs. However, the good news is that there are fewer missing than we first thought.

Our definition of initial success is for a released orangutan to 'live wild and unassisted by people' for a period of 12 months. Depending on whether we find all or none of the missing orangutans we can count our success at 72% to 92%. Not the 100% we strive for, but either worst or best case scenario would place the BOSF release program as one of the most successful release programs ever.

I can assure you though that we don't accept the loss of even one orangutan lightly. And we are totally dedicated to continual analysis and improvement of our programs.

We are well under way with our 2015 release plans (see page 3) and with a trial release already undertaken in Central Kalimantan without

the use of expensive helicopters. This paves the way for more and more economical releases, thus speeding up the process of returning orangutans to the wild.

The safe release of orangutans back to their home in the wild is, of course, our main focus and without your generous support we could not achieve that. This issue features more unique and fun ways to raise awareness and fundraise and we encourage you to get involved.

We look forward to a fabulously successful 2015 and remind you that every extra dollar we can raise returns an orangutan back to the wild.

Tony Gilding
President

Follow our orangutan release blogs:
goingback2dforest.wordpress.com
orangutanforest.wordpress.com

We want you!

The annual Mind Body Spirit Festival for 2015 is on Thursday 28 May to Sunday 31st May at the Sydney Showground, Olympic Park.

As usual the BOS team will be there to raise awareness of our wonderful work, sign up members and sell our fantastic merchandise. If you can assist, we are looking for volunteers for half-day shifts days at this event, particularly on the Thursday and Friday.

To find out more please send us an email to volunteer@orangutans.com.au with your availability.

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BORNEO ORANGUTAN SURVIVAL



MindBodySpirit
FESTIVAL



A mystery solved

You may recall in a previous issue of *Forest Chatter* we mentioned that 11 orangutans had been lost to an unknown illness at Nyaru Menteng.

After many months of extensive laboratory testing we are able to share with you the news that the samples tested positive for EMCV.

EMCV or Encephalomyocarditis Virus is a rodent-spread virus (through urine and faeces) which has been known to occur at other primate facilities and zoos. Sudden mortality is a classic indicator for EMCV and was on the radar as a potential cause of these deaths.

The veterinarians and technicians at Nyaru Menteng are now in the process of completing an extensive

vaccination program to prevent the disease as well as improving rodent control management at the facility.

Extensive support was provided internationally to pinpoint the causes of these sudden deaths including BOS Australia, OPF (Orangutan Protection Foundation) and Taronga Zoo — whose Head Vet provided expert guidance in the vaccination process.

The team at Nyaru Menteng were also instrumental in managing quarantine and vaccination processes, and managing the on-going care of all the Centre's orangutans to ensure they stay safe and healthy.

Shop for the Orangutans!

If you thought nothing good can come from shopping, except empty pockets, think again!

There is now a new way that you can support BOS for free. Yes, free!

Shop and save!

BOS have found a great way to raise money for free, simply by shopping online through a website called Shopnate (shopnate.com.au/charity/borneo-orangutan-survival-bos-australia)

Hundreds of big name retailers will donate a percentage of every purchase that you make to BOS when you visit Shopnate.

So just by shopping online for your favourite things you are donating to the BOS!

How does it work?

Join Shopnate at shopnate.com.au/charity/borneo-orangutan-survival-bos-australia Joining is free.

Shop with famous brands like ASOS, Expedia, The Iconic, Booktopia, Deals Direct and hundreds more via Shopnate without paying a cent more.

The retailers pay a commission and it is given automatically to BOS.

So not only are you getting some wonderful new purchases through your favourite retailers, you are providing BOS with additional funds to continue the fantastic conservation work they do.

Guilt free shopping never looked so good so get shopping now at shopnate.com.au/charity/borneo-orangutan-survival-bos-australia!



Years of Living Dangerously

Recently, SBS aired a 9-part documentary series called *Years of Living Dangerously*. This Showtime series combines the blockbuster storytelling styles of Hollywood's top movie makers and stars to present key issues around climate change.

It includes Jessica Alba, Matt Damon, Harrison Ford and Arnold Schwarzenegger as well as climate change and environmental experts from around the world.

An unexpected star in the series is BOS founder Lone Droscher-Nielsen! Lone takes Harrison Ford deep into the Indonesian forests to the Nyaru Menteng rehabilitation centre to discuss the connections between deforestation for agriculture

(particularly palm oil plantations) and the impact on orangutans and the environment.

It is fantastic to have Hollywood heavy-hitters highlighting climate change issues and in particular, highlighting the plight of Borneo's precious orangutans. The series illustrates the interconnectedness of our world and the impact of human political, economic and social activity on our natural world.

If you missed this wonderful series then it is now available for digital download or purchase on DVD. Why not use Shopnate (see right hand column) to purchase this DVD and a portion of your purchase price goes back to BOS!

www.orangutans.com.au





A positive start to the 2015 release program in Kalimantan

The year is off to a great start in terms of the BOS release program.

On January 3 this year a collaborative team from the BOS Foundation and Restorasi Habitat Orangutan Indonesia (RHOI) successfully rescued and relocated a young male orangutan named Waang Laas.

Waang Laas was discovered by villagers in the East Kalimantan village of Nehas Liah Bing. He was reported to the BOS and RHOI team because he was damaging the local crops. He was named Waang Laas by a village elder in honour of their ancestors.

In many instances local villagers may harm orangutans to prevent them from damaging crops. Thankfully Waang Laas was reported to the BOS and RHOI team.

It took a full week of thorough searching in the local forest to find

him though and another 2.5 hours to rescue him. The rescue team found him to be overall healthy, but little underweight and suffering from slight malnutrition.

After being sedated, Waang Laas was taken to the Wehea forest. In a symbolic gesture a representative of the village opened Waang's cage.

The moment the cage was opened, Waang Laas went straight towards a tree, climbed up and built a nest.

Today, Waang Laas is back in his forest home living the life he deserves.

Thanks to the dedicated work of veterinarian Dermawan Saputra and the other team members Tyo, Angga, Arif, Imam, Agus and Musa another orangutan has been released to safe forest areas.

It's great to see the changing attitude of locals in contributing to orangutan conservation. This story is also testament to the work being done by BOS in collaboration with local villagers. Villagers now have the option to alert BOS to endangered orangutans rather than caging them or killing them because of tensions between human livelihoods and habitat for wildlife.

Let's hope Waang Laas' namesake is looking over him as he adapts to forest life.

And you can make a difference too by continuing to support the work of the BOS Foundation in these areas.

Read more release stories at goingback2dforest.wordpress.com



Forest school drama queen

School is an important part of human life. It's where we learn how to socialise and develop appropriate behaviours for living; as well as gaining the knowledge and skills we will need for our future careers.

And it's exactly the same for the orangutans enrolled in Forest School. They are learning skills for survival and success such as climbing trees, building nests, finding food and interacting with other orangutans.

It seems that the rite of passage through Forest School is more similar to human classrooms than you think too. There are class clowns, studious pupils, truants and, in the case of Lesly at the Samboja Lestari Forest School, a coquettish drama queen.

Lesly exhibits all the usual behaviours of a developing orangutan including playing, climbing trees and building

nests; but she also tries hard to win over her carers with some interesting attention-seeking behaviour.

She preys on newcomers by soliciting affection and attention with her entertaining moves — popping a watermelon hat on her head or reaching out for a cuddle. She knows that feigning an injury will also get her special attention when the technicians or vets appear.

The individual and unique behavior orangutans such as Lesly display is endearing and why the BOS team are so committed to their ongoing education. Lesly still has a lot to learn but she is a very smart orangutan and your continued support will see her successfully return to the forest.

Read more release stories at goingback2dforest.wordpress.com

Volunteer profile

Meet our one of our new **Orang-u-friends** coordinators, Georgina. Georgina is passionate about conservation of primates and is a regular volunteer at the Mind Body Spirit festivals.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I live in Sydney and I work in the non-profit sector which has a particular focus on education and community development programs.

I've been fortunate to have lived overseas and travelled to some amazing places, including Africa and Sumatra, where I've seen mountain gorillas, chimps, orangutans and plenty of monkeys in their own environment.

The Orang-u-Friends program brings both my love for primates and education together. I'm really excited to be part of BOSA and seeing where we can take the program.

How did you become involved with BOSA and how does your work assist orangutans.

I started volunteering with BOSA at the Mind Body Spirit festivals, where we raise awareness about the issues affecting orangutans, the work done by BOS and how people can help.

Now I'm coordinating the Orang-u-Friends program with co-coordinator Annette. It's a fantastic opportunity to help create a sense of social



responsibility and positive action in our future generations.

What compelled you to work with BOSA?

When I was a kid I wanted to be the next Dian Fossey, I've always had a love for the great apes and I've wanted to assist in their protection for many years. It's only now that the timing is right in my life and the Orang-u-Friends coordinator role became available, perfect!

What is your hope for the future of orangutans?

My hope for orangutans is that they survive and thrive, however their future is very uncertain. Education can play a huge role in creating change and we're starting to see some big businesses switching to sustainable palm oil. This is a start, but there's a long way to go.

Be our friend

Orang-u-Friends is a schools-based program that teaches students about orangutans, the issues causing them to be endangered and how they can help.

Students can get involved by supporting BOSA's rescue work and feel part of the process of returning rehabilitated orangutans back into the rainforest.

Students hold a fundraiser (we have heaps of cool ideas!) and send in the proceeds to help care for an orangutan they choose to adopt. Students receive e-newsletters and updates throughout the year on how their orangutan is progressing.

The program is suitable for all ages, email contact@orangutans.com.au and we'll send you all the information you need to get started!



BOS Australia
primates helping primates

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Thank you for your continued support.



We love hearing from you

We know you've been spreading the orangutan word, so why not tell us about what you're up to? Email contact@orangutans.com.au or post your photos online at www.facebook.com/bosaustralia

Can you help us?

Your donations provide food, shelter, protection, medicine and companionship for orangutans in our care. Visit www.orangutans.com.au to help us set them free.

Donations by cheque are payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia at PO Box 3916, Mosman NSW 2088.

Make a one-off or regular payment via direct debit or by credit card either online or by calling us on (02) 9011 5455. We now accept **pay pal** donations too! See the link on the homepage of our website.

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www.orangutans.com.au