

Issue 34 | March 2021

BOS Australia | + 61 2 9011 5455 | PO Box 3916 Mosman NSW 2088

## From the President ...

**I hope you all made it healthy and safe through these first two months of the year. While 2021 started off much as the last year ended, with a lot of uncertainty and challenges, we have high hopes for the rest of this year.**

Despite the hurdles that are still in front of us, I am thrilled to inform you that we are back to what all of us at BOS are aiming for: Releasing orangutans to their true forest homes. After 12 months of being in lockdown, 13 orangutans are now free! We moved three to one of our sanctuary islands. And 10 took the flight of their lives to safe release sites in the Bornean rainforest (see page 2).

You can imagine how excited we are. Were we worried to start releases again? Yes. But we worked very hard to make the journey as safe as possible for both humans and orangutans. Our comprehensive COVID-19 safe travel and release plan

includes regular testing of each animal and any human that comes into contact with the orangutans leading up to and during their journey home. And by transporting the orangutans via helicopter, we avoided all external human contact and therefore the risk of COVID-19 transmission, from the moment the animals left the sanctuary until their release.

I was overwhelmed by the worldwide media interest in our latest release with stories on the BBC, ABC, The Guardian and hundreds more. The viewer reach in Australia alone was estimated at 1.2 Million. And how cool was Stephen Fry tweeting about the release to his 12.6 Million followers?

I can write about great news and success stories like the above only because of you. Without your continuous support and trust in our cause, we couldn't have done what we did and couldn't do what lies ahead. Many more orangutans in our

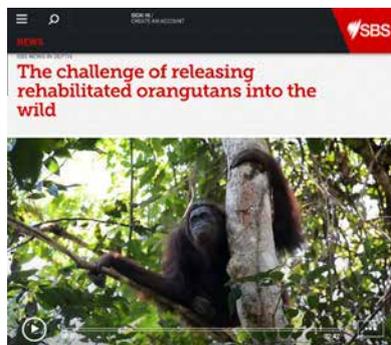
centres are ready for take-off. We plan to release a further 23 orangutans in a similar COVID-19 safe plan, pending the successful release and monitoring of this first group.

Be part of the journey and help us raise A\$75,000 before April 15. We know we can make our 2021 subsequent release program come true with you on our side. Thank you, on behalf of the orangutans.

Tony Gilding, President



## BOS captures worldwide media for latest release





## Orangutans flying high

**Get ready for a fantastic journey! We have started to release orangutans again. After 12 months in lockdown, ten release candidates from our two rehabilitation centres in Central and East Kalimantan took the flight of their life to freedom.**

Nenuah is sitting high up on a branch, checking out her new environment. She is slowly turning her head in all directions of the lush green that surrounds her. It looks like Nenuah still needs some time to realise that she finally made it – back home.

The 19-year-old orangutan was ready for release when the pandemic hit Indonesia, and we had to suspend all our release activities. Last month, after almost one year in lockdown, we could finally reintroduce Nenuah

and nine other rehabilitated orangutans back to the Bornean rainforest. From our centre in Central Kalimantan, seven of them took off in a helicopter to the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest. Joining them in freedom are three orangutans from our centre in East Kalimantan, who went airborne just two days later, destination Kehje Sewen Forest.

With the coronavirus pandemic still around, our main priority was and is the safety of both our staff and the orangutans in our care. Therefore, we prepared our first release with no details left untouched.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have implemented new strict health protocols and procedures to help curb the spread of COVID-19. “We conduct regular tests on staff to ensure that those who interact with orangutans are safe from COVID-19, as well as ensure the orangutans released from our rehabilitation centres are also healthy and free of the SARS-CoV-2 virus”, BOS Foundation CEO Jamartin Sihite emphasises.

Both release days started with the sedation and final health check of the ten orangutans. Our team then carried the soundly sleeping travellers to their transport boxes and onto a truck. From our Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Centre, the journey to freedom continued with the drive to the airport in Kuala Kurun, where the helicopter was waiting. Once ready for take-off, the pilot flew the seven apes directly to

our release points in the heart of the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest.

Usually, it takes three days and two nights to reach the camp in the forest by car and boat. Therefore, the option of using a helicopter not just significantly cuts travel time and the need to cross human settlements; under the current circumstances, it is also much safer for our staff and the orangutans.

The release in East Kalimantan happened immediately after the one in Central Kalimantan. From our Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, a team from PT. Rehabilitasi Habitat Orangutan Indonesia transported three orangutans - two males and one female - to Juq Kehje Swen Island in Muara Wahau. There, the same helicopter waited to take the precious freight nonstop to the release point on the northern side of the Kehje Sewen Forest.

These two releases take the total population of reintroduced orangutans in the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest to 190 and in the Kehje Sewen Forest to 121 individuals.

Seeing the boxes firmly tightened inside a net and attached to a long line flying high up in the sky always gives us goosebumps and tears of joy. After an often traumatic childhood, many years of learning in Forest School and on our pre-release islands, these amazing creatures are finally on their way home. We couldn't be more proud of each one of them.



The stories of the ten are typical for most orangutans in our care. They were victims of the illegal wildlife trade, kept as pets, rescued from plantations, villages and areas close to human settlements, with many of them being orphaned after their mums were killed.

We already introduced you to Nenuah. She was repatriated from Thailand in 2006 after being used in an entertainment show. She came to Nyaru Menteng along with 47 other individuals.

Prior to Nenuah's release, only six other group members had made it all the way through rehabilitation and were released to the wild. Unfortunately, the rest couldn't develop the natural skills needed to live a free life due to their long captivity when they were young. What an achievement for Nenuah!

Then there is Bali. He arrived at Nyaru Menteng in 2003, at the age of just four months. Like so many others, he lost his mother and was in poor condition. We first released him in 2019, but he injured one of his fingers so badly that we had to take him back to the clinic for treatment. Now, he has his second chance.

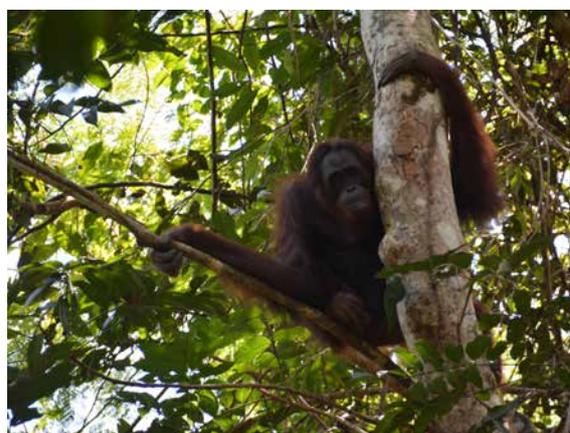
15-year-old Hugus was 18-months-old when he was rescued in 2007

after being confiscated from an oil palm plantation employee. Strada and Noah both came from villages in Central Kalimantan in 2005 and 2007. And mother-child pair Disha and Deijo are wild orangutans that were at high risk of being involved in a conflict with humans, so we moved them to Nyaru Menteng in March 2020.

The three orangutans from our Samboja Lestari centre have a similarly tragic past. 28-year-old Britney was rescued from captivity in Bali in June 2000. 27-year-old Freet, a now strong and beautifully flanged male, was found in a local village and entered the rehabilitation centre in 1998. And 25-year-old Juve was confiscated in Jakarta in 2001.

With the recent releases, we now have successfully reintroduced 478 orangutans in 24 operations from Samboja Lestari and 36 from Nyaru Menteng. But there are currently still 23 more orangutans in our care that have successfully completed their rehabilitation process and need your help to get back home.

Please support their journey to freedom and **donate now here!** With your generous help, they can take-off for the flight of their life soon.



## Baby alert!

**We are happy to announce the 21st and 22nd natural birth among released orangutans. Our two proud mums are Signe and Inung.**

After releases like the above, our best marker of success is when a reintroduced female gives birth to a baby in the wild. And being able to celebrate two births in a short time brings us great joy.

Signe arrived at our Samboja Lestari Rehabilitation Centre in 2009 when she was two years old. She completed Forest School and gave birth to her first infant in 2015, a male named

Bungaran. A year later, we released both to the Kehje Sewen Forest in East Kalimantan.

Our Post-Release Monitoring (PRM) team made the wonderful discovery of Signe's second baby end of 2020 while they were preparing for a normal day of patrolling and observing orangutans in the forest. Suddenly, they spotted Signe, who was busily moving in the canopy and foraging.

After a while, she climbed down to the forest floor in search of more food sources. As our team members inched closer, they discovered that Signe was carrying a baby. The new mum diligently foraged for food, keeping herself in optimum condition for breastfeeding.

Shortly after this discovery, our PRM team in the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest in Central Kalimantan embarked on their usual patrol when Inung appeared. She was released

eight years prior, and clinging to her body was a little infant.

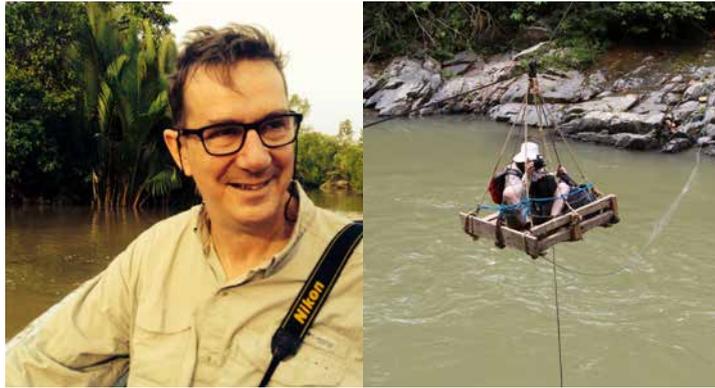
As Inung foraged, her infant, whom we named Indie, clung to her body to breastfeed while occasionally stopping to sniff the different food options. We estimate that Inung must have given birth to her baby between July and October 2020, as Indie was old enough to boldly reach out and touch the branches that his or her mother was dangling on. Indie had also gained the skill of being able to cling to Inung's back.

Both new babies and their mums looked to be in good health and appeared to be thriving in the forest. The babies' presence indicates that the population of rehabilitated orangutans at our release sites is working hard to create the next generation of wild orangutans.

Way to go, Signe, Inung and Co.!



# HELLO, I AM TONY



**In this edition, we would like to give the floor to our president Tony Gilding. We recognize his 10th year in this position, while at the same time, we are celebrating BOS Australia's 20th anniversary.**

**Happy Anniversary, Tony! Could you tell us a little bit about your engagement for BOS Australia and how it all started?**

I've had a fascination for South-East Asia and orangutans for some decades now. When Jan Hindmarsh, who had been president since the inception of BOSA, tapped me on the shoulder, I was more than delighted to nominate and eventually become elected to the post.

**What do you love most about your work?**

The thing I love most is inspiring our staff and volunteers to learn fundraising skills and see their

talents and energies directed to such a great cause.

**Do you have a favourite memory from your past ten years with BOS Australia?**

There are two. The first is when we commissioned our enormous wastewater system at the Samboja Lestari and Nyrau Menteng sanctuaries. We built it with volunteer expertise from Ecoteam in Lismore and donations from our supporters. It is a lasting legacy.

The second is attending an early release and watching two orangutans busting out of their cages and up a tree into freedom. I had tears of joy in my eyes.

**What are the biggest challenges BOS is facing, besides the current pandemic?**

Habitat, habitat, habitat. As David Attenborough reminded us in his

recent witness film "A life on our planet", orangutans must be left enough large tracts of habitat to survive and prosper. Human removal and defragmentation of habitat is their biggest threat.

**Please finish this sentence: Orangutans are...**

...the coolest animals on the planet. They are cute, majestic, smart, peaceful and mischievous, but so vulnerable if we take them for granted and don't protect their forest home.

—  
*We have another dedicated volunteer who is celebrating her 10th anniversary at BOS Australia. A shoutout to our graphic designer Ilona Samcewicz-Parham. Thank you, Ilona, for your continuous support and beautiful work!*



**BOS Australia**  
primates helping primates

**Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia**

+ 61 2 9011 5455  
PO Box 3916  
Mosman NSW 2088

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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](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au) or post your photos online at [facebook.com/bosaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/bosaustralia) or [instagram/bosaustralia](https://www.instagram.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](http://www.orangutans.com.au) to help us help them.

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 +61 2 9011 5455. We now accept **Paypal** donations too! See the link on the homepage of our website.

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