



Forest Chatter



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From the President ...

Welcome to our newest edition of Forest Chatter! I am thrilled to begin this issue just like the last one - with great news.

After our successful releases in February, we have now released 15 more orangutans in April and June. Once again, with strict COVID-19 protocols in place. Seven orangutans moved to Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park in Central Kalimantan, and eight to Badak Besar Island in the Salat Island Cluster in East Kalimantan (see pages 2 and 3).

The latter group includes familiar faces: Cinta, Jumbo and Valentino. All three were long time favourites of our adoption program. We can only imagine how proud you, our valued

adoption parents, must have been when you received the exciting news about your orangutan's huge step towards freedom.

However, there are many more orangutans in our care that are desperately waiting to go home. Will you help us get them out of their cages? Thanks to two incredibly generous donors, every dollar you give to our tax appeal by 30 June will be matched up to a total of \$50,000. Please don't miss this wonderful chance to **double your impact!**

In this issue, we also share with you the heartbreaking stories of three rescued babies. And we introduce you to the manager of our Mawas Conservation Program, Bang Uji.

As always, enjoy the reading and thank you for your continuous support. It is only because of you that we can achieve our ultimate goal: To give orangutans the freedom they deserve.

Tony Gilding, President



Three babies rescued

In the last months, we rescued three infant orangutans. Their stories are heartbreaking. All three lost their mum and are now under the care of surrogate mothers in our Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Centre.

The first arrival was Onyer (in the photo). He was rescued by members of the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency. They confiscated the 10-month-old male from a villager, who later



claimed to have found Onyer alone in a forest not far from his field. On his first day in our centre, Onyer was very nervous, especially at night. He cried whenever a surrogate mother stood up. Probably out of distress that they might leave him alone.

6-month-old Ramangai was handed over to us by another villager, who claimed to have discovered the male infant in a forest while hunting for birds. The man reported that he was shocked to suddenly see a baby orangutan fall from a tree without any trace of its mother. Therefore, he decided to take him home. The first three days, he fed the infant only coffee and bananas, which resulted in Ramangai becoming severely dehydrated and weak.

Shortly after, a 9-month-old female joined the two male babies.

A farmer claimed to have found the infant while he was out fishing. He took care of her for about one week before voluntarily handing her over. Luckily, she was generally in good health. We later named her Aiko, which means "little loved one" in Japanese. It was the winning choice of our naming competition.

"The rescued babies indicate that deforestation and irresponsible exploitation of forest ecosystems is still ongoing", says Denny Kurniawan, Nyaru Menteng Program Manager. "This is what ultimately prompts wild orangutans to roam into human gardens and fields in search of food and causes the human-wildlife conflict."

Onyer, Ramangai and Aiko have now entered Nursery School - the first step of their long journey to freedom.



Homeward bound

What does freedom smell, sound, feel, look and taste like? Musty? Like birds twittering? Raindrops touching your skin? A lush green? Fresh fruits? We can only imagine. It must be like the joy of fireworks awakening all senses when the transport cage finally opens, and bars give way to branches, treetops, open space.

The journey to freedom continues. After successfully releasing 13 orangutans in February, we recently transferred another seven home to the wild (see page 3) and eight more to a pre-release island.

Three of the lucky ones that moved from our Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Centre to Badak Besar Island in the Salat Island Cluster are familiar faces: Cinta, Jumbo and Valentino. All three are part of our adoption program and stars on the documentary series 'Orangutan Jungle School.'

Cinta (photos above) holds the record. She has been one of our adoptable orangutans since 2013, the year we rescued her. It was on 14 February when our team received a call about an orangutan infant in a palm oil plantation. When we arrived, we found the female baby motherless, screaming and shivering. She was just around five months old and weighed a tiny two kilograms. The former president of Indonesia,

Megawati Soekarnoputri, was visiting our rehabilitation centre in Nyaru Menteng at the time and gave her the name 'Cinta', which means 'love' in Indonesian.

Cinta grew up into an energetic, funny, and self-confident orangutan girl. In Forest School, she was known as the little princess as she was quite demanding and wouldn't let go until she got her way.

"The good thing is, Cinta is quite independent", says her surrogate mother, Ibu Sri. "She likes to climb high, explore, and move through the trees, and when she sees a threat from a predator, she does not back down. She would reach for a stick to smack them." As hard as it was for Ibu Sri to say goodbye to her girl, she knows that Cinta is now exactly where she wants her to be: just one step away from her true home in the Bornean rainforest.

You can think of a pre-release island as a university for orangutans who have successfully graduated from Forest School. We still look after the students by providing supplemental food and making sure they are adapting well. But we will also give them more room to explore and thrive to grow into completely independent orangutans.

Guess when Valentino entered our centre? It was on Valentine's Day,

hence his name. His story is similar to Cinta's. A sad one. A rubber planter rescued him in 2015. When Valentino (photos below) arrived at our centre, he was in deplorable condition. Wounds covered the tiny five to six-month-old baby, and his skin was crusty and irritated. As he was pretty comfortable around humans, we assume that someone must have taken him away from his mum shortly after being born.

Veterinarian Arga Sawung Kusuma remembers Valentino's first time in Nyaru Menteng very well. "We rubbed him with oil every day, which created a close bond between the veterinary team and Valentino."

Who would have thought that this little tortured infant would become the class clown in Forest School! Intelligent, innovative, creative. "Valentino is very slick", says Vet Arga. "When he was in Forest School, instead of looking for food deliberately hidden by the surrogate mothers, he knew it was more effective to try and steal directly from their bags or other orangutans."

Jumbo came to Nyaru Menteng just two days after Cinta, and both instantly became best cuddle buddies. He was one year old at the time and luckily in good health. A villager had found him in a field and looked after him for about a month before handing him over.





As he grew up and got bigger, Jumbo (photos on the left) became quite cheeky and strong, his surrogate mothers remember. "He would climb on one of us and threw twigs at the others or pull down our woven baskets from behind while we were walking."

Three orangutans, three tragedies, three success stories. Cinta, Valentino and Jumbo can now enjoy a free life on Badak Besar Island, and we couldn't be more proud of them.

How does freedom smell, sound, feel, look and taste like?

"Like something a bit scary" could have been Valentino's answer. He was more hesitant than the others when Vet Arga opened his cage. "I thought that maybe he would not want to leave it." But then Valentino quickly scrambled out and into the trees, where he foraged for leaves.

For Jumbo, it could have been: "It tastes like fresh fruit". The nine-year-old immediately shot out of his cage and snatched some bananas, completely ignoring the humans around him.

And Cinta? A high tree captured her attention. Hanin, who we released earlier, had already climbed it and was foraging for food. So, Cinta quickly joined her – eventually disappearing in the treetops of her well deserved new home.

No better time for giving!

Have you ever wondered how it feels to release an orangutan? It is an experience you will remember forever! Pure joy and relief. Almost instantly, you forget that you are drenched in sweat, and your body is tired from hours of travelling and walking through rough terrain, water and mud. You are finally there, right in the middle of the lush green Bornean rainforest. And then years of hard work pay off in seconds when the cage opens, and this beautiful red ape runs towards freedom.

You can experience this feeling right from your home! By helping us release orangutans, you become part of our team. So far, we have released a total of 485 orangutans, 17 of them this year. But many more are fully rehabilitated and ready to go home!

Why not use the end of this fiscal year to show your love and support for orangutans? The great news is that two generous donors have kindly offered to match donations received by 30 June up to a total of \$50,000. So, your help and generosity will have double the impact. What are you waiting for? **Donate today!**

Seven more went wild

We are thrilled to have successfully returned an additional seven orangutans into the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR) in Central Kalimantan at the beginning of June.

Our release team transported the four males and three females by land and river. They faced many challenges along the journey, but their strong dedication and tireless efforts led to freedom.

With the arrival of the seven new individuals, the total number of released orangutans in the TNBBBR increased to 234 since 2016 – including five wild-born babies.

Amber, Barlian, Darryl, Randy, Reren, Suayap and Unggang are between eight and 22 years old, and they have all gone through a lengthy rehabilitation process that took between seven and 16.5 years.

22-year-old female Suayap's story is especially touching. Together with 48 other orangutans, she was repatriated from Thailand in 2006. Until now, Suayap is only one of seven of them who completed the rehabilitation process and could be returned to the wild. All 48 had been forced to live like humans for entertainment in boxing shows and

other performances. What a success for Suayap to now be able to live a free life in the forest!

Despite this wonderful news, we urgently need your support to bring more rehabilitated orangutans home. Every dollar helps and will be matched if you **donate** to our tax appeal by 30 June. Thank you in the name of the orangutans!



HELLO, I AM BANG UJI



Jhanson Regalino is known to his friends and colleagues as 'Bang Uji'. He has been working for the Mawas Conservation Program in Central Kalimantan since its inception in 2002. At present, he is its Program Manager.

Can you tell our readers what the Mawas Conservation Program is?

The Mawas Conservation Program aims to protect and restore a 309,000-hectare peat swamp forest. This particular forest area had been severely damaged by a failed rice cultivation and development program, yet it is still home to thousands of wild orangutans.

What makes your job unique?

We were the first within the BOS Foundation to work closely with a degraded environment, a wild orangutan population, and

disadvantaged communities, all within the same working area.

What are your primary duties?

The main activities include forest rehabilitation through replanting, peat restoration through canal blocking, community empowerment through economic development activities in 13 villages, community-based forest fire prevention and control, and research support.

Can you describe the challenges of working with the surrounding communities?

The hardest part is getting them to accept our view without them feeling as if it contradicts their lifestyle and beliefs.

Can you share an example with us?

I was involved in confiscating a baby orangutan that was being held

captive by a local villager. At that time, the residents didn't see anything wrong with keeping an orangutan as a pet, as it was common practice. They did not even know that orangutans are protected by law. So, I had to delicately inform them of the law and explain the importance of leaving orangutans in their habitat.

Are you happy with what you have achieved so far?

Yes, but there is still plenty of room for improvement and much work to be done. I hope that the community empowerment and capacity-building programs will continue to help the communities within our working area. We can only do our conservation work through the support of external parties. If the villagers are happy, our efforts to protect the environment will receive support from them and be more successful.

Your feedback matters!

At BOS Australia, we value and respect our passionate and loyal supporters and their opinions. We want to continually improve the way we conduct our work and communicate with our donors and the general public. To help us be the best we possibly can, we have put together a short [survey](#), which should take you less than five minutes to complete. Your feedback makes a difference!



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primates helping primates

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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 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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