BOS Australia
primates helping primates

Forest Chatter

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From the president …

Welcome to the final Forest Chatter of 2025. This year has once again shown that when we unite to save the Bornean orangutans and their forest habitats, we can achieve significant milestones.

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we have now released 556 orangutans and protected over 485,000 hectares of crucial orangutan habitat. You have also helped care for 344 orangutans and 76 sun bears at our two centres.

Additionally, we have built a new forest school, and our 2025 tax appeal was our most successful to date, raising vital funds for a new hospital complex at our relocated Nyaru Menteng centre.

Although much work remains, our hope for a better future for orangutans drives us forward. Challenges only make us stronger, and our commitment and dedication will never fade with you by our side.

As we approach the end of this year and look forward to the beginning of 2026, our primary focus will be on completing our new Nyaru Menteng centre so we can transfer our remaining orangutans and reunite our family. With the transfer deadline quickly approaching, we have dedicated this year's **Christmas appeal** to raising funds for an urgently needed facility that will be the operational heart of the new centre. Find out more about this vital project on page 3.

In this edition, we also invite you to meet two record-breaking orangutan students, learn how rehabilitation strengthens conservation efforts, and join the community development team as they visit remote villages in the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest.

One of the highlights in this edition is an exclusive interview with the CEO of the BOS Foundation, Dr Jamartin Sihite, about our latest release of seven orangutans into the wild.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season.

With heartfelt gratitude,

K WELFORD

Kerin Welford

Temon and Lahei break the jungle rules

Do you remember the story of Temon and Lahei, the duo who once disappeared from Forest School? These little adventurers have now returned with another astonishing chapter—and have broken a longstanding record.

Unlike most of their peers, Temon and Lahei completed their Forest School lessons much faster than expected and advanced to the pre-release stage long before other orangutans their age.

Most orangutans enter the pre-release stage, which is the final step before returning to the wild, typically between the ages of eight and ten. By this age, they are considered ready, equipped with the survival skills necessary to live and thrive in their natural habitat. Some orangutans may take even longer to reach this crucial point in their lives.

However, Temon and Lahei were not willing to wait. At just five and six years old, they amazed their surrogate mothers and our animal welfare team. They prove that readiness and independence are not measured by age, but by instinct, courage, and the natural brilliance they carry within.

Thanks to the support of caring individuals like you, young orangutans such as Temon and Lahei now have a wonderful opportunity to reclaim their future in the wild.

Way to go, Temon and Lahei!

Shaping a brighter future for all

At BOS, we remain committed to orangutan conservation by engaging local communities. Recently, the BOS Foundation's Community Development and Communications Teams undertook a long journey to visit several remote villages near the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest in Central Kalimantan, Borneo.

The purpose of this trip was to convey crucial messages about forest and orangutan conservation to the young generations—the future stakeholders of our planet—while also introducing communities to more sustainable livelihood options that do not harm the forest.

One of the main challenges of environmental education is to simplify complex conservation messages so children can easily understand them. To address this, the BOS team engaged students with fun activities, such as singing and playing games, before introducing them to their forest "neighbours", the orangutans.

The teams tailored different approaches to each education level. For younger students, the focus was on understanding orangutans and their role in the forest. For junior high students, the lessons emphasised how to live sustainably and coexist with forests.

By involving students, teachers, and local communities, we aim to nurture awareness that conservation is not only about protecting wildlife but also about securing a sustainable future for us all.

However, the key to lasting change goes beyond education. Protecting orangutans and their habitats must go hand in hand with improving the quality of life for the local communities living alongside the forest. This is why BOS has initiated a program that not only focuses on forest conservation but also on empowering households–especially women–to build better and more sustainable livelihoods.

Many families living in villages around the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest own unused plots of land near their homes. Instead of leaving these areas idle, they can be transformed into small gardens that provide vegetables and herbs for daily household use.

The concept is simple yet deeply meaningful. It begins by identifying each household's food needs, followed by distributing seedlings and providing training in planting and gardening. In the long term, these household gardens are expected to grow into larger-scale ventures that align with the local commodities of each village. The result is twofold: it not only guarantees healthy food for families but also creates opportunities for additional income.

Although the program may sound straightforward, its implementation comes with challenges. The remote locations of these villages limit access to decent job opportunities and livelihoods. As a result, communities often turn to extractive activities such as illegal logging, mining, or unsustainable industrial farming, which ultimately destroy vital orangutan habitat.

The economic benefits from such activities have shaped how people perceive the forest and its natural resources. Changing this mindset is not easy. That is why this program offers practical, household-based solutions that bridge the gap between daily economic needs and reducing pressure on the forest.

At every stage, we uphold the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Rather than imposing solutions from the outside, the BOS Foundation works hand in hand with communities to design activities that reflect their own needs and values. Our goal is to promote independence, decrease reliance on forest exploitation, and ensure the long-term preservation of ecosystems for future generations.

In summary, by strengthening household economies, families can build brighter futures without compromising the conservation of orangutans and their forest habitats—a win-win for all.

Help us reunite our family this Christmas

The deadline to transfer the remaining orangutans from our old Nyaru Menteng centre to the new one is approaching quickly. However, before we can proceed with the move, we need to build a facility that will serve as the operational heart of the centre.

Do you remember our beloved Big Boy Beni and his unforgettable sneak into the banana storage? If you were impressed by the enormous mountain of bananas Beni climbed and rolled down, you should see the many other piles of food we need to keep our orangutans healthy and happy.

To ensure the welfare of the 233 rescued orangutans at Nyaru Menteng, we require about 4.5 tons of nutritious food every month, 80 per cent of which is fruit!

That's why we urgently need your help this Christmas to build a facility that will serve multiple important purposes. It will offer secure storage rooms for food, tools, and firefighting equipment. Additionally, it will feature dedicated meeting and break rooms for guests and staff, as well as functional workspaces for building and maintaining critical infrastructure, such as enrichment structures for our unreleasable orangutans.

For example, our beloved Beni wouldn't be where he is now—on a pre-release island just one step away from freedom—without a supporting infrastructure like this vital building.

With 233 hungry mouths to feed, including our little forest school students eagerly awaiting their well-deserved fruit breaks each day, your help is invaluable. Climbing, building nests, and learning to avoid predators require a lot of energy from our students, so they need plenty of fruit to regain their strength while learning and playing.

To successfully rehabilitate our orangutans, it is essential to provide them with fresh, nutritious food, regularly build, repair and maintain their enrichment structures, and ensure that firefighting equipment is readily available during threats of fire, both to our centre and the surrounding forest. These efforts give our orangutans the best chance to return to their natural habitat and help

foster the growth of a new generation of wild orangutans.

Embodying our commitment to the care and protection of our beloved red cousins, this building will truly be the heart of our entire operation.

With your support this Christmas, we can turn this vital facility into a reality and bring our orangutan family back together. Our goal is to raise $50,000 by 25 December to ensure that Beni and his friends continue to receive the best possible care on their long rehabilitation journey.

Please donate now here: orangutans.com.au/xmas-2025/fc

Inung – a symbol of conservation success

The story of Inung, a rehabilitated orangutan thriving in the Bukit Batikap Protected Forest, provides an inspiring example of how orangutan rehabilitation enhances conservation success.

Inung was released into the wild in 2013, at the age of 15, alongside her two young daughters, Indah and Ina. Since then, Inung has adapted remarkably well to life in the forest. Over the years, she has successfully raised four infants, a vivid testament to her resilience and the effectiveness of our rehabilitation program.

By 2025, Inung's impressive story reached a new milestone. She is now often seen accompanied by her two youngest children, Indie and Indro, who eagerly follow her as she explores the forest. Their daily lives

continue to overlap with the working area of the Totat Jalu Camp, where researchers and monitoring teams carry out their conservation efforts.

Scientific studies have highlighted that an orangutan's life history and learning experiences strongly influence their ability to adapt post-release. Inung's successful reintroduction demonstrates how structured rehabilitation can effectively prepare orangutans for survival in the wild.

In 2025, the Post-Release Monitoring Team observed Inung several times near the camp. For instance, they saw her reusing and repairing an old nest instead of building a new one. This behaviour demonstrates the resourcefulness of orangutans in conserving energy and materials, which aligns with findings that orangutans often exhibit innovative survival strategies.

Meanwhile, Indie, Inung's adolescent daughter, showed early signs of independence by crafting her own nest and even playing creatively with nearby branches, illustrating how Inung successfully teaches her offspring essential survival skills.

According to research on orangutan rehabilitation, the development of foraging and nest-building skills in young orangutans is a critical step toward successful independence in the wild.

However, Inung's story is not just about her survival. It represents the broader success of orangutan reintroduction programs. Conservationists stress that long-term survival in the wild is the true measure of success, rather than simply the act of release.

The fact that Inung has raised four offspring in the wild proves that reintroduced orangutans can establish sustainable generations. Indie's growing independence and Indro's ongoing learning under his mother's care further emphasise the long-term impact of successful rehabilitation.

From Inung, we learn that when given a safe space, rehabilitated orangutans can not only survive but also continue their lineage in their wild home.

HELLO, I AM JAMARTIN SIHITE

In this exclusive interview, we speak with the CEO of the BOS Foundation following our latest release of seven orangutans into the wild, including repatriated orangutan Kapuan.

What makes a release to the wild like this one so special?

Each orangutan release represents far more than a milestone for our team. It reflects the long and complex journey behind every individual's recovery. Kapuan's story illustrated this deeply. She was repatriated from Thailand after being forced to perform in a circus and has spent nearly nineteen years relearning the skills needed to survive independently. Seeing her return to a protected forest is not only moving; it demonstrates that long–term rehabilitation, when done properly, can rewrite even the most difficult histories.

Kapuan is one of 48 repatriated orangutans from Thailand who had been forced to perform for tourists. How difficult is it to repatriate an orangutan?

Repatriation is extremely complex. It requires a formal government–to–government process under CITES regulations, supported by cross–border coordination, extensive health and quarantine protocols, and long–term resources for rehabilitation. Individuals who have endured human exploitation often face deep behavioural and medical challenges, and not all can be returned to the forest. Kapuan's release, therefore, represents more than personal success. It demonstrates what

is possible when governments, conservation institutions, and dedicated partners work together over many years. Her journey is a reminder of resilience, hope, and the remarkable capacity of orangutans to recover when given the chance.

Why does it take so much longer to rehabilitate a repatriated orangutan like Kapuan?

Orangutans taken at a very young age and trained for performance lose crucial natural behaviours. When the 48 repatriated individuals arrived, many walked bipedally, avoided climbing, and lacked the motor coordination needed for life in the canopy. Years of human contact also increase their susceptibility to zoonotic diseases, while chronic stress affects cognitive development and confidence in natural environments. Rehabilitation must therefore rebuild both physical capabilities and instinctual behaviours. Kapuan is the fourteenth individual from the group who has successfully regained these capacities and returned to her natural habitat.

What does it take to achieve a successful release like this one?

A release of this scale is only possible through coordinated effort: government agencies, conservation organisations, scientific partners, private–sector supporters, and the public all play an essential role. Kapuan's release underscores that conservation is a collective responsibility. Long–term habitat protection, rigorous rehabilitation, and post–release monitoring all require collaboration. Kapuan reminds us that with the right support, even individuals who begin life in severe adversity can thrive again in the wild.

How can our readers support your efforts to help victims of the illegal wildlife trade?

Illegal wildlife trade remains one of the greatest threats to orangutan survival. Infants are taken from the wild after their mothers are killed, disrupting family groups and undermining forest regeneration, as orangutans are keystone species that disperse seeds across large distances. At the BOS Foundation, we rescue, rehabilitate, and release orangutans while also restoring and protecting their habitats. This mission is vital but cannot be achieved in isolation. By **donating** through our official partner, BOS Australia, readers can directly support medical care, behavioural training, forest school activities, and long–term habitat protection. All essential steps that allow orangutans like Kapuan to return to where they truly belong.

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Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia

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Our newsletter is proudly written and produced by BOS Australia volunteers.

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 **facebook.com/bosaustralia** or **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** to help us help them.

Donations by cheque are payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia at PO Box 7699, Bondi Beach NSW 2026.

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 also accept **Paypal** donations. See the link on the homepage of our website.

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