

Forest Chatter



Issue 7 | February 2013

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From the President...

Soon after I started volunteering in orangutan conservation, over 10 years ago, I began to hear the name Lone Dröscher Nielsen in revered terms. She was the Danish stewardess who started working at the very tiny Nyaru Menteng conservation project in central Kalimantan in 1993 who went on to become manager of the largest primate rescue centre in the world with more than 600 orangutans in her care.

Anyone who has read about primate conservation, and especially anyone that has read the book *The Intimate Ape*, knows the primate world is full

of interesting souls. Amongst this diverse group of dedicated, but rather eccentric individuals, Lone has developed a reputation of one who could stay above the politics and achieve miracles on a small budget. She is widely respected.

I was sad not to have the opportunity to meet Lone before she was forced to get out of tropics and back to the UK in 2009 on doctor's advice.

However, I have followed Lone's achievements for the Nyaru Menteng Centre which she has managed for The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation for 20 years. Her story has been told in many magazine and newspaper articles and TV specials on the BBC, Animal Planet and many others in many countries. She has become a living legend in Denmark and the funds she has raised in her home country have allowed the Nyaru Menteng Centre to continue its excellent work.

The good news is that Lone has made an excellent return to health and is now starting to make small moves back into orangutan conservation work as an author and speaker.

I was therefore delighted when she accepted BOSA's invitation to come to Australia for the first time ever and do a small tour. She will tell the enchanting story in words and pictures of her remarkable association with her family of 600 orangutans and the humans who support them.

Lone's presentation, which she recently delivered to sold-out crowds in Denmark, lasts about 75 minutes. It is an entertaining, enthralling rollercoaster-ride of desperation, humour and hope. It is said that Lone has never met a grown man that she can't make cry.

Join us for a unique experience with Lone in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne (details below). I urge you to rush to the BOSA website and book your tickets now. Lone has requested small theatres of only about 100 people so it will sell out very quickly.

Tony Gilding
President BOS Australia

Follow our orangutan release blogs:

goingback2dforest.wordpress.com
orangutanforest.wordpress.com



A special event with Lone Droscher Nielsen...

Brisbane

Sunday 9th March
5pm – 6.30pm

L Block, Level 1, Room L101
Queensland University of Technology
Victoria Park Road, Kelvin Grove

Sydney

Wednesday 12th March
7.00 – 9.00 pm

Smith Room
Wesley Conference Centre
220 Pitt Street, Sydney

Melbourne

Thursday 13th March
7.00 pm – 9.00pm

Kaleide Theatre, Building 8, Level 2
RMIT University
360 Swanston St, Melbourne

How to buy tickets

Seats are limited for this special presentation, so don't miss out. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for concessions. You can purchase tickets and get additional details about the venues such as maps, public transport options, parking and accessibility at www.orangutans.com.au



About Lone

For the very first time, renowned orangutan conservationist Lone Dröscher Nielsen will be visiting Australia to talk about her work with the BOS Foundation. Don't miss this unique opportunity.

Lone Dröscher Nielsen is the remarkable Danish expatriate behind the world's largest orangutan rehabilitation centre. Lone dedicated her life to saving orangutans nearing extinction. Eighteen years ago, she quit her job, said goodbye to family and friends and left her home in Northern Jutland, Denmark to travel to a new continent. Her goal was to establish a rescue and rehabilitation centre for orangutans who had lost their mother and home in the rainforest of central Borneo. Today, the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation is the largest primate rescue project in the world, with over 600 orangutans in its care.

Far from the blithe lifestyle of her 20s — *au pairing* in California, working as a chef on a yacht and travelling the world as an air stewardess — Lone volunteered in an orangutan conservation project in 1993 and her interest, skills and mission to save the orangutans developed from there.

Her undertaking has always been to release the orangutans back into

the wild. Lone's project is one of the few which is actively rescuing wild orangutans from certain death by palm oil plantations and returning healthy orangutans to safe forests. Though she felt it her calling, years of stress took its toll on Lone's health and in 2009, with a life-threatening illness, doctors ordered her out of the tropics.

She reluctantly returned to the UK in a 'pit of despair'. Monumentally though, returning to Borneo in 2012, Lone experienced the heart-warming culmination of many years of work and passion that had first driven her there: the release of the first orangutans back to their forest home. Like a proud mother, Lone witnessed orangutans she and her team had raised from baby orphans climb their way to the real orangutan world where they belong.

Reaching this milestone marked a long release process of locating and securing suitable release sites, extensive negotiations with the Indonesian government and raising much needed funds over many years.

Aptly described as a *mother of one thousand*, Lone is now a special adviser and fundraiser for Nyaru Menteng, a Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation project. And health withstanding, Lone spends

a third of the year back in Indonesia focussing on finding safe sites to release those orangutans ready for return to the forest. So far over 100 orangutans have been returned with more to follow.



With nearly 10% of the world population of rescued orangutans in her centre's care, Lone Dröscher Nielsen has become an expert on these orphaned primates, and her methods of raising them and helping them to learn wild skills are recognized internationally. Her experience and expertise are immeasurable. Her work to save and rehabilitate Borneo's red ape has been featured on the BBC's *Orangutan Diaries*, *Animal Planet's Orangutan Island* as well as a top rating TV special in Denmark where Lone is a household name. Lone tours Australia in March for a series of intimate lecture presentations in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.



A slippery problem

What is palm oil?

Palm oil is extracted from the fruit of African palm oil trees. It is a highly saturated vegetable fat commonly used for cooking in Africa, South-East Asia and Brazil. It is now widely used commercially worldwide. In fact it is contained in 50% of the products we find in the supermarket today including baked goods and confectionery (listed as 'vegetable oil'), and beauty and cleaning products (often listed as Sodium Laureth Sulfate or similar). It's often hard to identify palm oil in products and Australia has no mandatory labelling to help consumers.

Why is palm oil a problem?

It is a very attractive plant crop because it is quick to grow and cheap to produce. As a consequence it is very common in developing countries. Malaysia and Indonesia are the biggest producers of palm oil globally. It has both negative and positive social, economic, environmental and health impacts on these communities.

While it has provided income, employment and infrastructure for many people it has also

displaced Indigenous people and caused social conflict. In some places working conditions have been eroded and multi-national companies prioritise profit over sustainable farming practices, fair wages or fair market price for community farms. The mass clearing and burning of forests and destruction of peat bogs is a significant threat to endangered species such as Pygmy Elephants, the Sumatran Tiger, Sunbears and the Orangutan as well as significantly increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Scientists globally are particularly concerned about the mass deforestation of large tracts of forest in Malaysia and Brazil and links to greenhouse emissions and climate change.

There's also little evidence to suggest that palm oil is any better for you than the trans fats or saturated oils it replaces. In fact, the World Health Organisation also recommends limiting palm oil because of its impact on heart health and cholesterol.

Take action!

The Palm Oil Action Group (POAG) is running a palm oil campaign targeting Aldi!

Why Aldi? Because Aldi have no current published palm oil policy and are gaining market share from Coles and Woolies. There is a great opportunity to encourage Aldi to commit to Segregated Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) and labelling - and once Aldi are on board then other supermarkets can be pushed to follow suit.

POAG is looking for volunteers to run actions in their local area. Volunteers are also needed to distribute protest postcards. There's nothing quite like being involved in a direct action campaign — just try it and see!

If you'd like to be part of this campaign, in any capacity, contact action@palmoilaction.org.au (Anasuya) or 0490 058 107. Find out more about palm oil and the Palm Oil Action Group by visiting www.palmoilaction.org.au



Adopt an Orangutan

In previous issues we have profiled a number of orangutan babies that need your help. Baby Dodo, who had a number of health issues is now thriving through the medical care provided by BOS; Baby Miko, who came to Nyaru Menteng suffering from dehydration is now in forest school; and cheeky Baby Ruthie who was an ill-treated pet.

These orangutans would not have survived if they had not been rescued by BOS. Everyday orangutans like Dodo, Miko and Ruthie are at risk of extinction from hunting, the pet trade and habitat destruction. With your help we can change this.

How can you help?

By adopting one of our orangutans, you can take comfort in knowing that they are being cared for around-the-clock by dedicated 'nannies' who teach them everything they need to know to survive in the forest.

You can adopt a beautiful baby orangutan for yourself or for someone special. It's the perfect gift! The payment options (yearly, quarterly or monthly in Australian dollars) are easy on the wallet.

- \$120.00 per year, one-off or ongoing
- \$32.50 per quarter ongoing
- \$12.00 per month ongoing

Make a real difference for these beautiful creatures and visit www.orangutans.com.au to adopt an orangutan today!



www.orangutans.com.au

Volunteer profile

Meet **Gabrielle O'Brien**, our newest member and Volunteer Editor for *Forest Chatter*.

Tell us a little about you.

I am from Brisbane, I love to travel, I have a niece and nephew (my biggest fans) and very spoiled cat. I work in the higher education sector where I assist disadvantaged groups gain entry to tertiary study. Facilitating access to education is one of my passions and I love my job.

What are your personal interests?

I love to travel and I try to combine each experience with wildlife encounters and by delving into the culture of the country or communities I visit. In recent years I have swum with Humpback Whales in Tonga, Minke Whales and Whalesharks and this year I am shedding my water wings and flippers for something land-based in Borneo so I can visit the orangutans and other forest creatures.

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

I have been following the work of BOS for a year or so (learning a lot!) and wanted to do something useful to help. 2014 is the start of my work with BOS and I hope I can spread the word about the great work BOS is doing in Borneo. I want my niece and nephew to see these animals in the wild and not just in books.

What compelled you to work with BOSA?

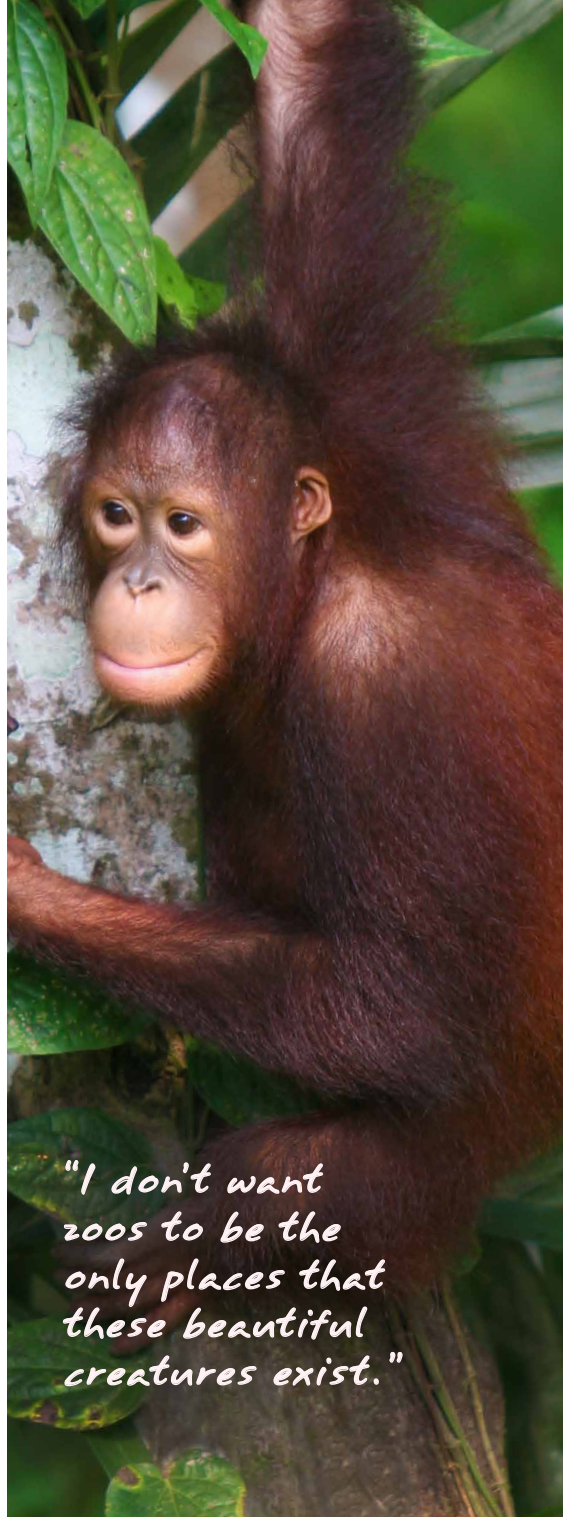
There are many endangered animals across the world and it would be easy to be overwhelmed by the challenges to conserve them. But everyone can find ways to assist threatened species — from writing a letter to your local MP, donating money or supporting fundraising. I am very concerned about the immediate threat to orangutans and their habitat. The work of BOS is community-oriented, grass-roots, scientifically-based and sustainable — this is important to me. Animals can't stand up for themselves so we have to. I don't want zoos to be the only places that these beautiful creatures exist.

What is it about orangutans that inspires you?

Borneo is our neighbour and orangutans (and other primates) are our closest relatives both genetically and in the way they live — their family lives, care for young, behaviour etc. They have almost been forced to extinction by habitat loss yet they still reach out to be our friends despite the hurt some humans perpetrate. That kind of forgiveness is special so I want to help preserve it.

What is your hope for the future of orangutans?

Healthy and harmonious orangutan and human communities coexisting happily.



"I don't want zoos to be the only places that these beautiful creatures exist."



BOS Australia
primates helping primates

Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia

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www.facebook.com/bosaustralia

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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.

Save paper and the environment and opt-in to receive our e-letter via email

www.orangutans.com.au