

# Forest Chatter



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## From the President ...



**In the last 20 months, BOS has rescued 27 orphaned and injured orangutans that would have otherwise died or perhaps worse; lived a short life caged as a pet.**

In three separate cases, one 18-month-old male, as well as a 6-month-old male and female orangutan, were recently saved from the brink of death. Weak, malnourished and dehydrated, we can only imagine what they had been through before reaching the safe haven of the BOS Foundation.

It breaks my heart every time I hear about the rescue of another baby orangutan, often stolen from their wild home in the rainforest. Many are orphaned after their mother has been killed due to poaching and the illegal pet trade.

These were three of the lucky ones, and they are now all slowly recovering, but are still weak and spend the majority of their time resting in hammocks or in the warm, loving arms of their surrogate mothers.

Another recent case was of a 3-year-old baby girl rescued from a local

farmer. The farmer claims to have found her wandering alone in his field and kept her as a 'pet' for nearly two years. During the captivity, she was chained to a tree next to his house and fed primarily rice and coffee. She obviously had rarely received food that is appropriate for a baby orangutan, such as milk and fruit. Luckily, an initial examination showed that she was in relatively good physical health. But it is the scars that can't be seen that worry me the most.

These innocents have already experienced more tragedy in their short lives than anyone deserves in their entire lifetime. They cannot speak of the horrors they have witnessed, but when you look into their eyes, the trauma is plain to see.

Not only will these rescued babies have to recover from the injuries and trauma they have suffered, but they will need to learn how to be an orangutan once again. It will take many years of Forest School and dedication from their surrogate mothers, as well as money to feed and home them all. But I have confidence that with your help, one

day, these amazing creatures will be able to live their lives in peace back in the wild home where they belong.

BOS Australia is doing everything possible to achieve this outcome, and with your help, our goals can be reached. Since 2012 BOS has released 433 orangutans back to their wild homes, but we still have hundreds more in our centres waiting for their opportunity of freedom. And the sad fact is, there will be more orphaned and injured orangutans that need our help in the very near future. Will you kindly consider donating today?

Your support today will help us be prepared for the next rescue that will, unfortunately, happen any day now. It will ensure we have a team at the ready with medical supplies, a safe, secure place for a rescued orangutan to recover, learn and grow.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to orangutan welfare and conservation. Having your support will help us continue the fight to save orangutans from extinction. Together we can make a difference!

Tony Gilding, President

**Here** you can donate to our Christmas Appeal





## HELLO, I AM AGUS FAHRONI



Agus Fahrani is a veterinarian at the BOS Foundation's Nyaru Menteng Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Central Kalimantan, Borneo.

#### How long have you been working for the BOS Foundation, and what attracted you to this job?

I have been working for the BOS Foundation since 2006, so for 13 years. This has been my dream job ever since I was in high school. I always wanted to save orangutans and help them find their way back to the forest where they belong. Since I am from Kalimantan, I think it is my duty to help protect orangutans.

#### What is your main responsibility as a veterinarian coordinator?

To provide medical support and look after the health of the orangutans from the day they arrive until the day they are released. For new orangutans that come to the centre we do a general health check. It is very important that sick orangutans are isolated from the other ones to prevent a disease from spreading. The first thing we do is to examine a sick orangutan thoroughly and identify the problem. Then we treat her or him accordingly. Every orangutan is unique, so we always adapt our treatments to their individual characters.

#### What do you love most about your job?

When an orangutan heals after a long time and is finally big, strong and prepared enough to be released.

#### What is the most challenging part of your job?

It is hard for me to see orangutans sitting in the cage for a long time, waiting for their release.

#### Do you have a favorite orangutan?

I like especially the big ones, like Hercules. He is old and has poor eyesight, so for now, it is safer for him to be in the cage than on a release island.

## Rescued with a body full of bullets

**Who shoots about 70 times at a defenseless orangutan? It is hard to digest, but it is the brutal reality for many orangutans that enter palm oil plantations and farms in the search for food. The destruction of their habitat forces them into nearby areas, which frequently leads to conflicts with humans.**

Sapat was found in a palm oil plantation in Kapuas Regency. A joint team from the BOS Foundation and the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) rescued the 25-year-old male orangutan and immediately brought him to our Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Center.

The impressive flanged male was too weak to move, and his physical condition alarming. At the time, he weighed only 45 kilograms, less than

half of the average body weight for male orangutans his age, and x-rays revealed no less than 67 pieces of shrapnel in his body.

Luckily, under the care of our medical team, his appetite grew and he gained weight again. But Sapat still has a long recovery ahead until he can be released back to a safe forest.

BOS Foundation CEO Jamartin Sihite states that the bullets in Sapat's body are clear evidence of his escape from a conflict with humans. "We implore the Indonesian Government to limit the use of air rifles." At the same time, Sihite emphasizes the importance of people reporting incidents like this and, in turn, allowing BOS to save the life of orangutans like Sapat.







## The growing threat of illegal logging

**While busy battling forest fires the last few months, there is another threat the BOS Foundation staff has to fight against: Illegal logging. It is the third greatest menace to orangutan survival and a tough one to contain. More support from stakeholders is urgently needed.**

When the security staff from our rehabilitation centre in Samboja Lestari went out for their morning patrol a few months ago, they heard an alarming sound: Chainsaws. Following the sound to its source, the patrol team found a plot of approximately 5000 square meters of illegally cleared land, with logs neatly piled up, ready to be transported, while four men were still cutting more logs from newly felled trees.

The same happened to our Mawas Conservation Program team in summer last year, when they discovered hundreds of logs from illegally cut trees in the BOS Foundations working area. Since BOS does not possess the legal

authority to take action against these violations, the teams in both cases immediately contacted the local authorities.

“In the past few years, we have been overwhelmed with land clearing incidents within our working area by individuals claiming to be local people”, says BOS Foundation CEO Jamartin Sihite. “We have taken numerous actions, but have yet to reach a solution.”

To address the problem, the BOS Foundation is cooperating closely with the local communities, the police and other stakeholders like the “Protection Forest Management Unit” and the “Natural Resources Conservation Agency”. The BOS teams also increased patrols and protection against fires in the area.

The connection between illegal logging and forest fires is fatal: The more areas are cleared, the higher the potential for fire outbreaks in the highly flammable peat forest areas. Consequently, orangutans

are threatened not only by losing their habitat through illegal logging but also through forest fires fueled by the clearing. Although the tree species the illegal loggers are after may not be food trees for orangutans, they are important nesting and living spaces.

Other negative effects of illegal logging involve the intrusion into the forest caused by loggers. They often cut canals and trails to be able to access the area, which also makes it easier for illegal hunters and other intruders to enter.

As they lose more and more of their habitat, orangutans are forced to look for food in neighbouring plantations and farms, where they are often shot and killed.

We hope that with more support from all stakeholders, we can better protect orangutans and their habitat from this growing threat so that our working areas remain a safe place for their rehabilitation and journey back into the wild.





# Joyous ending and a trip of a lifetime

Yes, there are a lot of sad stories we have to report about. But, hey, it's Christmas time, and we like to end our December newsletter with two happy stories.

Jubaedah and Jubaedi are wild orangutans again! Do you remember them? We wrote about their rescue in our July newsletter.

The mother-infant pair was found earlier this year in Guntung village, not far from Bontang City, East Kalimantan. Upon rescue, the wounded 20-year-old mother, Jubaedah, was extremely underweight and suffered from traumatic injuries. Her 2-year-old son's physical condition was stable, but Jubaedi was under extreme shock. He cried a lot and was afraid of the presence of humans.

After several months of intensive treatment at our Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, both are now fully recovered and on 13 November were released in the Kehje Sewen Forest alongside Titon, an adult male orangutan.

This release would not have been possible without the full support of the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the Natural Resources Conservation Agency, and the provincial and regional governments. We also cannot thank donors like you enough for giving us the chance to take care of wounded and/or

orphaned orangutans and to help us set them free again. Welcome to your new home, Jubaedah, Jubaedi and Titon!

Can you imagine not only witnessing a release but also opening the cage for orangutans like Jubaedah and Jubaedi yourself? Ashling Hartigan, the winner of our trip of a lifetime to attend an orangutan release, is back from Borneo. She spent time in our rehabilitation centres in Samboja Lestari and Nyaru Menteng, where she prepared vital enrichment items for orangutans and sun bears, joined a monitoring team, and learned how to open an orangutan cage – not knowing that soon after she would be releasing 6-year old female orangutan Suci to one of our pre-release islands. "I got the shock of my life when I was told I would be releasing an orangutan myself", Ashling remembers. "We all thought we would only be watching the release from a boat. Best experience of my life!"

In the next issue, we will tell you all about Ashling's trip of a lifetime. Meanwhile, please check out how you can support our staff in Borneo. As an **Orangutan Program Volunteer**, you will be a key part of the enrichment program at BOS - and you may get the "shock of your life" like Ashling, given the amazing beauty of these critically endangered great apes and the habitat they are living in.



**BOS Australia**  
primates helping primates

**Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia**

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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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