



The Jungle Times

Issue 32; September 2011

Independent Newsletter of Danau Girang Field Centre, Established 2008

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This month's volunteers....

Karena Spowart

"I have just finished my first year of Zoology at Cardiff University and thought I would gain some practical experience by coming to DG to see how science takes place in the field. I have assisted with the nocturnal primate study with Alice and helped Josie and Becky with their project assessing small mammals, frogs, habitat analysis and camera trapping. This has been a very rewarding and valuable experience which I feel has put me in good stead for a career in science."



Alexandre Laizé – *Forestry engineer student, AgroParisTech-ENGREF, Nancy, France*

"I have been given the opportunity to carry out a 4 months training period at DGFC. The main goals of my internship are:

- To discover a foreign research organization in order to put my French experience into perspective
- To discover and understand a subject related to tropical forest management
- To improve my English!

During my stay, I will be assisting Danica Stark on the proboscis monkey project, helping with tree measurements and phenology methods.

I'm really excited about discovering the incredible biodiversity of the Bornean rainforest! "



Maggie Van Cantfort



“I am incredibly grateful to DGFC for enabling me to fulfil not one, but two life dreams! Commune with wild orang-utans in their native habitat – check! Try out being a field biologist – check!

My time at DGFC has been incredible! Day one I was fortunate to spend with a wildlife videographer tracking down the wild forest elephants and learning about what it takes to get all of the incredible footage we enjoy on programs like BBC’s ‘Life’. An amazing start to my stay here. Soon enough, I had watched orang-utans on 4 occasions; including getting to watch nest building and rain ‘hat’ making!



While my main goal for my time in the forest of Borneo was to see wild orang-utans, I enjoyed participating in the process of developing and setting up research projects and assisting with data collection along side the PTY students and other visiting researchers. I have much greater respect for what field researchers do for the sake of science! Slogging through mud, torrential rains, waist deep water, razor like vines, and leeches....not for the faint of heart. Thank you DGFC! “

This month's guests....



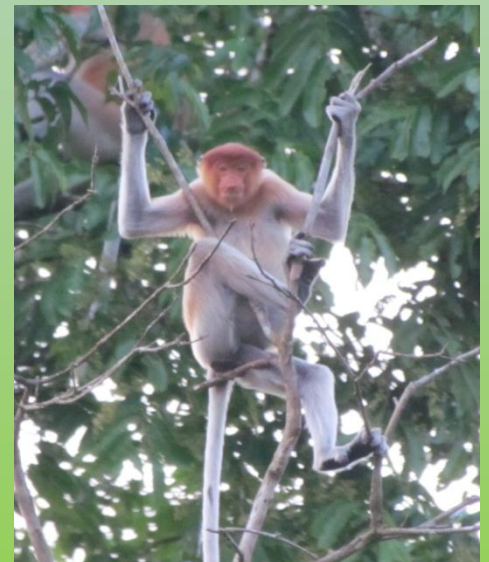
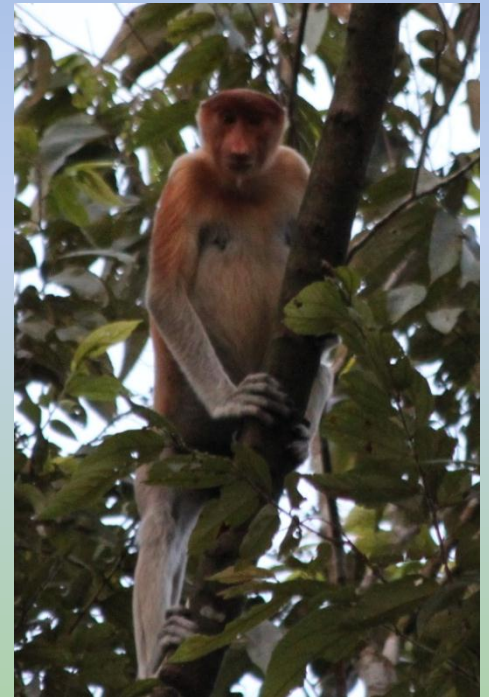
Along with the three volunteers came Elke Zimmermann and her colleagues ; Marine Joly and Marina Davila Ross , from Hannover University. They spent their time here catching up with Kathrin and Jenny and also getting involved with the other projects going on at DG. Marine joined Alice in tracking Krik, the Slow Loris, and compared this with her own research tracking mouse lemurs in Madagascar.

“ My visit to DG had three major aims:

1. To coordinate two cooperative research applications for the German Research Foundations with Benoit. One project will be to study the evolution of extravagant sexually dimorphic traits on the model of the proboscis monkey. The second project will examine the effects of habitat fragmentation on terrestrial tropical small mammal communities along the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary.

2. I am interested in the role of communication and cognition in primate adaptation and evolution. In Borneo, I am interested in geographical variation of loud calls in proboscis monkeys. Kathrin and I have therefore recorded the voice of males of different proboscis monkey groups along the Kinabatangan river for a comparison with those in Brunei and Indonesia. We also explored the usage of new equipment which seemed to be quite promising.

3. I was interested to see the possibilities for collecting individual faecal samples of proboscis monkeys for genetic, parasitological and hormonal analysis. “



The Amazing Race....Environmental Style!



A group of local Sabahan teachers came to DGFC for one night to complete an environmental education course with a difference. Organised by the Rainforest Discovery Centre, the course is set across 6 different districts of Sabah, including the Kinabatangan and involves the teachers travelling around to complete environmentally themed tasks. The assignment they were given here was 'The Diversity of Wildlife at DGFC' and required them to identify the different species we have captured on a selection of camera traps and to learn how to identify frog species using a dichotomous key. They were successful in their task and we wish them luck in the rest of their environmental adventure!



Above: Harlequin treefrog spotted at DG
Below: Camera trap image of a sunbear



Conservation Corner: Sumatran rhinoceros

As it was World Rhino Day recently (22nd September), this month we focus on the Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*). There are 5 extant species of rhinoceros, the Sumatran being the smallest at just 1m tall, 2.5m long and weighing in at 800kg. One of the two subspecies is found in Borneo (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis harrissoni*).

Scientific name: *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*

Habitat: Forested areas of southern, eastern and central Sabah

Wild population: Less than 400 Sumatran, estimates suggest 50 Bornean rhinos

Conservation Status: Critically endangered (IUCN Red List)



Conservation issues:

The Sumatran rhino numbers are drastically decreasing, with some reports stating that they have dropped by half in the last 15 years. These are the main reasons why:

- Their horns are used often in Asian medicine and years of heavy poaching mainly has drastically impacted numbers.
- Deforestation, joined by the palm oil industry, is disrupting their natural habitat, fragmenting populations and pushing the remaining dwindling numbers into pockets of forested areas.

Why does it matter ?

Forestry access roads deep in to the forest have led to an influx of poachers, especially in Tabin Wildlife Reserve and areas near Danum Valley Conservation Area. Easier access means more poaching and this endless cycle could lead to the extinction of the Sumatran rhino. Fragmented populations also means that breeding frequency is infrequent and increased chances of inbreeding.

Future directions:

In Indonesia and Malaysia anti-poaching teams are being put into place, as well as breeding centres (BORA in Tabin Wildlife Reserve). Captive breeding is also having some successes such as at the Cincinnati Zoo which had successful births in 2001 and 2004.

Macaques vs DGFC !



For new visitors to DGFC it is usually exciting seeing your first monkey, and in most cases it will be a macaque. Although they may appear funny and cute on first inspection, this impression will quickly be turned upside down.

WANTED : Have you seen this peanut butter thief ?

It is now a daily routine here to be on full alert when the power is turned off at 2pm, as this seems to be when they attack. Doors are shut, screens are closed and confectionaries are placed securely beneath a wicker cover. The prized possession targeted by them? Peanut butter! Once the peanut butter is in hand and they are safely outside, they indulge themselves openly in view of the DG residents.

This isn't tolerated lightly and measures have been taken by hiding the peanut butter, placing decoys and even Alex, Aldi and Rizwan heading out in search of the culprits...

But for now its...



Above: Alex, Aldi and Ridzwan on macaque patrol !

Macaques 1 – 0 DGFC

The Kinabatangan Wildlife Monitoring Program gets underway!

This month the PTY students began their project work. Whilst Alice has become a nocturnal primate herself (following Krik, the collared Slow Loris from 6pm – 6am!) Becky and Josie have been working together on The Kinabatangan Wildlife Monitoring Program in collaboration with Jenny, from Hannover University.



The program, which is partnered with Hutan, DGFC, and Zoos Victoria, Australia, aims to create a census of mammals, amphibians and reptiles throughout the Lower Kinabatangan .

Graeme Gillespie, the scientific adviser, visited DG this month to start planning the project. Josie, Becky and Jenny were taught how to handle small mammals, spot and identify frogs and perform habitat analysis.

Advice and helpful tips were provided by Eddie and Badul from Sukau, who have lots of experience in this field. Paul Crump from Houston Zoo, another visitor this month, joined Graeme to select sites and also came along for frog census' at night.

How to: measure river depth



1) Find a suitable pole-shaped-object that is at least 10m long. A water gutter will do the trick! Saw lines around the pole every 5 cm.

2) Paint the pole every 5cm and 10cm (preferably in different colours). This is not a quick process, prepare your back for major aching!



3) Wait for the paint to dry and for a perfect time to put the pole in the river - when the water is not too high, not too low. This time period happens very rarely and you may have to wait a while (as Danica found out the hard way !).



4) Find a completely straight tree trunk to put inside the pole for stability. Danica also found out this task was much harder than first anticipated.



5) When the perfect time has come, put the pole in the river- as straight upright as possible.



6) If this happens →
Start again!

One day Danica, you WILL be able to measure the river depth....

Spot The Difference!

Alice is just about to set off to track Krik, can you spot the difference between the two photos....?

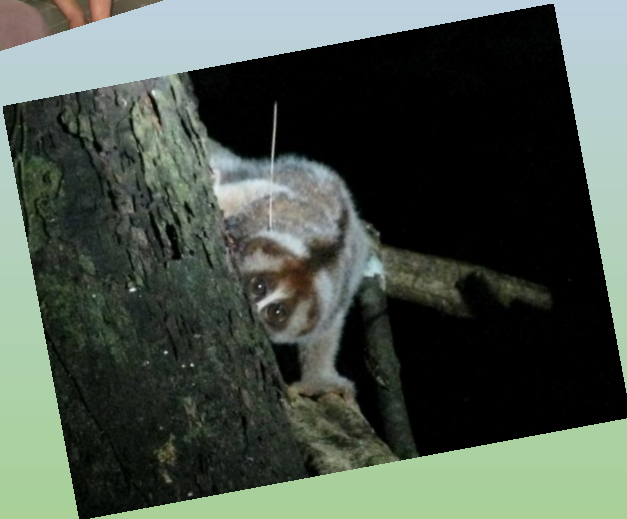
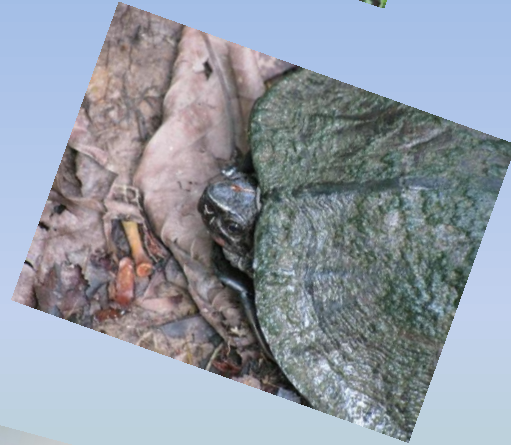


Answers:



1. Hair
2. Telemetry pack
3. Watch missing
4. Clinometer
5. Boot missing

Photos of the Month....



Clockwise from left: monitor lizard; sun set over the Kinabatangan river; elephant; kids busting a move in the office; our first moon rat; tortoise; Krik eating and a proboscis monkey

Danau Girang Field Centre

Danau Girang Field Centre was opened in July 2008. It is located in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, Sabah, Malaysia.

Danau Girang is owned by the Sabah Wildlife Department and supported by Cardiff University. Its purpose is to further scientific research with the aim of contributing to long-term conservation projects in the area, and develop a better understanding of our environment and the living things we share it with.

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Cardiff University.

