



Press Release

Number of Orangutans Released in the Kehje Sewen Forest Surpasses 100

The Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation is again cooperating with the East Kalimantan Natural Resource Conservation Agency (BKSDA) to release six orangutans to the Kehje Sewen Forest, East Kutai Regency, as part of their East Kalimantan Orangutan Reintroduction Program at Samboja Lestari. These releases bring the total number of orangutans released in the Kehje Sewen Forest to 103.

Samboja, East Kalimantan, 8 July 2019. The BOS Foundation continues to work with the East Kalimantan BKSDA to carry out releases of rehabilitated orangutans from the Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Center to Kehje Sewen Forest, an Ecosystem Restoration Concession covering 86,450 hectares in Muara Wahau District, East Kutai Regency. The ultimate goal of releasing rehabilitated orangutans in Kehje Sewen Forest is to create a new, viable orangutan population that can survive in the forest with minimal human intervention.

Several weeks ago, on 26 June, BOS Foundation and the East Kalimantan BKSDA released four orangutans to Kehje Sewen: three males named Komo (21 years), Gino (14), and Zakir (15), and a female named Petak (22). Today, two more orangutans will be released: a male named Lito (25) and a female named Laila (22). The long journey to freedom for all these orangutans takes roughly 48 hours to complete by both land and river. More details on the release carried out on 26 June can be found on the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry's website here > http://ppid.menlhk.go.id/siaran_pers/browse/1967

These two orangutan releases are the 18th and 19th releases conducted by BOS Foundation, and their government partners, in East Kalimantan since 2012, and will bring the total number of orangutans released in the Kehje Sewen Forest to 103.

With this release, Kehje Sewen Forest is fast approaching its maximum carrying capacity of 150 orangutans. Given that roughly 140 orangutans are still undergoing rehabilitation at the Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre — many of whom are eligible for release — the BOS Foundation urgently needs to acquire further orangutan release sites in East Kalimantan.

Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite, BOS Foundation CEO, said; "Our commitment to keep wild orangutans in the forest, and to create and safeguard new, viable orangutan populations in East Kalimantan never fades. We continue to carry out the rehabilitation process for rescued orangutans, with the aim of returning them to natural forests once they have completed their rehabilitation. Unfortunately, we are still constrained by the capacity of our existing release sites. We are currently applying for another Ecosystem Restoration Concession to expand the size of our Kehje Sewen Forest release site in East Kalimantan. We sincerely hope that the Provincial Government of East Kalimantan and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry will grant us the permit soon.

"In addition to being a rare and protected species, the orangutan also plays an important role in forest ecosystems. Orangutans help maintain the quality of forests; in turn the forest gives us clean water and air, timber and non-timber forest products, and a well-regulated climate. We all receive benefits from the presence of orangutans in the forest. So, it makes perfect sense for us to work hard to keep them safe in their natural habitats."

Ir. Sunandar Trigunajasa N. M.M., Head of the East Kalimantan BKSDA, said; "Our collaboration with stakeholders such as the BOS Foundation has succeeded in saving and maintaining the important orangutan population in East Kalimantan. To date, we have managed to release 101 orangutans to Kehje Sewen Forest located in East Kutai, since 2012. Today, we will add two more to that total. While this is an impressive achievement, we all—the government, local communities, civil society organisations, and the private sector—need to continue to recognise our responsibility to protect and increase the population of orangutans in East Kalimantan.

"You and I can also play a role. You can help report or stop efforts to hunt, catch, kill, or keep protected animals such as orangutans. These animals play a major function within the forest ecosystem. Let's protect our forests and the biodiversity within them."

The BOS Foundation would like to express our deepest gratitude to the East Kalimantan BKSDA, the East Kalimantan Provincial Government, the Regional Governments of the East Kutai and Kutai Kartanegara Regencies, and the residents of these regencies, for their support, assistance, and understanding of our orangutan conservation work in East Kalimantan. These releases were made possible by the generous financial support of BOS Switzerland; and by our other global partners and supporters around the world who supported the rescue and rehabilitation of these orangutans, and the wider orangutan conservation effort in Borneo.

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Editor's Note:

ABOUT BOS FOUNDATION

Founded in 1991, the BOS Foundation is a non-profit Indonesian organisation dedicated to the conservation of Bornean orangutans and their habitats, working together with local communities, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, and international partner organisations.

Currently, the BOS Foundation is working to rehabilitate roughly 500 orangutans, with the support of 440 highly dedicated staff and experts in the fields of primatology, biodiversity, ecology, forest rehabilitation, agroforestry, community empowerment, communications, education, and orangutan welfare.

For further information, please visit www.orangutan.or.id

ABOUT PT. RHOI

PT. Restorasi Habitat Orangutan Indonesia (RHOI) is a company established by the BOS Foundation on April 21, 2009, solely to acquire a Utilisation of Forest Timber Products through Restoration of the Ecosystem Licence (IUPHHK-RE), also known as an Ecosystem Restoration Concession (ERC).

As a non-profit organisation, the BOS Foundation is not permitted to apply for certain licences due to government regulations. Hence, RHOI was established. The permit gives RHOI the authority to manage a concession area - in this case, a forest area – which is imperative in the planning and implementation of orangutan releases.

On 18 August 2010, RHOI was issued an ERC permit by the Ministry of Forestry, for an 86,450-hectare section of rainforest in East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan. This ERC provides a suitable, protected, and sustainable habitat for orangutans for at least the next 60 years, with the option of extending for another 35 years. The funding to purchase the permit, which cost around USD 1.4 million, was received from donors and the BOS Foundation's global partner organisations in Europe and Australia.

The forest's name, 'Kehje Sewen', translates as 'orangutan' in local Dayak Wehea language. By name and nature, the Kehje Sewen Forest has become a forest for orangutans. For further information, please visit <http://theforestforever.com/>

ABOUT ORANGUTAN REINTRODUCTION

Since 2012, the BOS Foundation has released 396 orangutans (after this release, 398) to three release sites in Central Kalimantan (Bukit Batikap Protection Forest, and Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park) and East Kalimantan (Kehje Sewen Forest).

These releases are the 18th and 19th conducted by the BOS Foundation in the Kehje Sewen Forest, East Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan. These releases will take the total number of orangutans released to the Kehje Sewen Forest to 103.