



Press Release

Seventeen Orangutans Return to the Natural Habitat of the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park

Seventeen orangutans, all of whom have completed a lengthy rehabilitation process, will soon return to the natural habitat of the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park thanks to a collaborative effort by the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR) Authority, USAID LESTARI, and the Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation. The release of these seventeen orangutans will increase the total population of reintroduced orangutans in the national park to 152 individuals. Furthermore, one wild orangutan will be translocated to TNBBBR.

Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, 19 November 2019. Seventeen orangutans, all of whom have completed a long rehabilitation process at BOS Foundation's Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, will soon be released to the wild. This release is the result of a collaborative effort involving the Central Kalimantan BKSDA, the TNBBBR Authority, USAID LESTARI, and the BOS Foundation. It will be the 18th orangutan release to take place in TNBBBR, in Katingan Regency since the first BOS Foundation release in the national park was conducted in August 2016.

In addition to the release of this group of rehabilitant orangutans, one fully flanged, adult male orangutan will be translocated. This 20-year-old wild orangutan was rescued just 2 months ago from an oil palm plantation in Pulang Pisau Regency, Central Kalimantan. Due to his advanced age and wild disposition, he was not in need of rehabilitation and will instead be directly moved to the safe forests of TNBBBR.

Ir. Adib Gunawan, Head of the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency BKSDA, said: "The forest and land fires this year were quite worrisome, but thanks to the hard work of all involved parties, we have been able to prevent further devastation. We are proud to be working with committed stakeholders like the BOS Foundation and USAID LESTARI to preserve orangutans, a key species protected by law. This collaboration, strengthened by the private sector and local government, has succeeded in returning hundreds of orangutans to natural forests.

"Efforts to preserve the environment need to be supported by everyone. Anybody can participate, by reporting any attempts at hunting, capturing, killing, or domesticating animals protected by the law, like orangutans. As a key species, orangutans play an important role in forest ecosystems. We must protect our forests and the biodiversity within them."

Agung Nugroho, S.Si., M.A., Head of the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park Authority (TNBBBR), added: "Based on a pre-release survey, the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park forest has everything needed to support a sustainable orangutan population, with the backing of adequate security and area management. Releasing rehabilitated orangutans to TNBBBR is a positive step in ensuring the preservation of Bornean orangutans, which are currently classified as 'critically endangered' by the IUCN.

"In TNBBBR, routine security patrols are conducted. We hope that by taking this measure, released orangutans can live safely in the forest, and form a new and sustainable wild orangutan population."

Rosenda Chandra Kasih, USAID LESTARI's Central Kalimantan Landscape Coordinator, said: "USAID LESTARI is committed to working closely with the Indonesian Government to protect its natural environment. The Bornean orangutan is a key species that is not only protected by law, but one that



also is critically endangered. Efforts to release Bornean orangutans into protected habitats have our full support, to help support the Indonesian Government in protecting and preserving its forests and the biodiversity found within.”

Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite, MSc., BOS Foundation CEO, explained: “We are conducting a total of three separate trips to release these 17 orangutans and translocate one wild individual to TNBBBR. Today’s trip is bound for the Bemban watershed, and two trips will be carried out next week are destined for the Hiran watershed. We hope that this effort helps to better distribute the population of rehabilitated orangutans in this particular forest.

“The collaborative effort with three extraordinary stakeholders - namely the Central Kalimantan BKSDA, the TNBBBR Authority, and USAID Lestari - to organise this release in TNBBBR has helped relieve pressure at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre from the growing number of orangutans ready for release. However, the release sites that we currently manage are inching closer to maximum capacity. In Central Kalimantan, we release orangutans in Bukit Batikap Conservation Forest and the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park, but these will not be sufficient to hold all the orangutans still awaiting release.

“We must continue our search for suitable forest release sites and I must also stress the need for firmer action against those who break the law and endanger the future of orangutans and their habitat. We must succeed in stopping the deforestation that forces orangutans out of their natural habitats, as success is more probable when conserving the existing wild habitat and populations. However, this must be supported by all stakeholders. Conservation can only succeed if all parties actively participate in their own capacity.”

The complete group of eighteen orangutans is comprised of seven males and eleven females, including one mother-infant pair. They will be transported in three trips, with the first group of nine orangutans departing today, November 19, to the Bemban watershed in an estimated 15-hour journey. The second and third groups, will transport the remaining nine orangutans on November 26 and 28, to the Hiran watershed, in an approximately 20-hour journey.

All of the rehabilitant orangutans to be released have lived on a pre-release island for a portion of their rehabilitation. These pre-release islands are semi-wild habitats that are closely monitored by a team from the BOS Foundation, and accommodate semi-wild orangutans rescued from conflict areas or those who have completed all stages of Forest School. On pre-release islands, orangutans get the chance to utilise the survival skills that they have learned throughout their years of rehabilitation. Of these 17 orangutans, 4 individuals have lived on the Salat Island cluster in Pulang Pisau Regency. This island cluster is part of a 2,089-hectare conservation area obtained through a partnership between PT. Sawit Sumbermas Sarana (SSMS) Tbk and the BOS Foundation.

To ensure a successful conservation effort involving all stakeholders, the BOS Foundation continues to work closely with the Government of Indonesia at all levels, including the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government, the governments of Katingan and Pulang Pisau Regencies, the Central Kalimantan BKSDA, and the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park Authority.

The BOS Foundation would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the communities of Katingan and Pulang Pisau Regencies, our official global partner organisations (BOS Australia, BOS Germany, BOS Switzerland, BOS UK, and Save the Orangutan), institutions such as USAID LESTARI and private-sector donors like PT. SSMS, alongside individual supporters from around the world, that contribute to and assist conservation efforts in Indonesia.



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The release is supported by:



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 natural habitats, working together with local communities, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia, and international partner organisations.

The BOS Foundation currently cares for as many as 500 orangutans in two orangutan rehabilitation centres, with the support of 440 highly dedicated staff members 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 USAID LESTARI

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to promote and demonstrate democratic values and advance a free, peaceful and prosperous world. Through international development programs and disaster assistance, USAID partners to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people emerge from humanitarian crises to progress beyond assistance and attain self-reliance.

The USAID LESTARI project supports the efforts of the Government of Indonesia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to increase biodiversity conservation in forest ecosystems and ecosystems of high conservation and carbon value.

ABOUT ORANGUTAN RELEASES

Since 2012, the BOS Foundation has released 436 orangutans (453 after today's release) into two release sites in Central Kalimantan (Bukit Batikap Protection Forest, and Bukit Baka Bukit Raya



National Park) and one in East Kalimantan (Kehje Sewen Forest). This year alone, the BOS Foundation has released 50 orangutans to natural habitats (as per September 2019).

This is the 18th release conducted by the BOS Foundation in the TNBBBR since August 2016, and takes the total population of released orangutans in the TNBBBR to 152.