



Press Release

The Final Release of 2019 Includes Three Repatriated Orangutans Returning to Natural Habitat in Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park

The Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR) will accommodate eleven more orangutans, including three who were repatriated from Thailand in 2008 and 2015, and two translocated wild orangutans. This final release of the year was made possible through collaboration between the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), the TNBBBR Authority, USAID LESTARI, and the Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation, and will increase the population of rehabilitated orangutans in the TNBBBR to 163.

Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, 15 December 2019. Several more orangutans that have completed a long rehabilitation process are ready to be released into their natural habitat. One female adult named Suja, along with mother-daughter pair Warna and Malee – who were repatriated from Thailand by the Indonesian government in 2008 (Suja) and 2015 (Warna & Malee) - are ready to return to the wild. They will be accompanied by four other orangutans who have also completed the long rehabilitation process at the BOS Foundation's Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and two dependent infants. Additionally, two wild adult orangutans will also be translocated to the forest. This release is the result of solid cooperation between the Central Kalimantan BKSDA, the TNBBBR Authority, USAID LESTARI, and the BOS Foundation. It will be the 19th orangutan release in TNBBBR, Katingan Regency, since the first release there in 2016, and will bring the rehabilitated orangutan population in the park to 163.

Ir. Adib Gunawan, Head of the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), said; "We are very happy to finally return some of the orangutan victims of illegal trafficking back to the forest. The fact that we are releasing three orangutans that were previously repatriated from Thailand shows that there is still hope for them to be returned to the wild - as long as certain requirements are met, such as being the appropriate age, having the ability to learn and develop natural life skills, and evidence of a successful rehabilitation process.

"This is proof of the effective cooperation between strongly committed stakeholders, like the BOS Foundation and USAID LESTARI, in trying to preserve orangutans, which are protected by law. The fact that we were able to repatriate orangutans who were previously smuggled out of the country proves that anybody can participate in protecting the environment by reporting any attempts of hunting, capturing, or killing animals that are protected by the law, such as orangutans. Let's protect and safeguard our forests and the biodiversity within."

Agung Nugroho, S.Si., M.A., Head of the Baka Bukit Raya National Park Authority (BTNBBBR), added; "It is our duty to ensure the safety of every rehabilitated orangutan released in the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park. Here in this national park, orangutans can live freely and safely, and are protected. Moreover, the forest area in the park has enormous potential to support and sustain the orangutan population.

"We have also begun to release orangutans in the Hiran watershed area. We are doing this to ensure the even and natural distribution of orangutans released in the forest, following a lengthy rehabilitation process in Nyaru Menteng. We hope that our efforts will encourage released orangutans to breed in the forest and increase the wild population. Thus far, we have recorded two natural births among our released females.



“Together with other stakeholders, we are part of the final frontier in preserving the existence of the Bornean orangutan, which currently holds the status of 'Critically Endangered'. Here, they can live safely and begin to form a wild, independent, and sustainable population.”

Rosenda Chandra Kasih, USAID LESTARI’s Central Kalimantan Landscape Coordinator commented; “USAID LESTARI remains fully committed to working with the Indonesian Government to preserve the sustainability and integrity of natural environments. The Bornean orangutan, which plays a vital role in maintaining the quality of forests and integrity of the ecosystem, despite being protected by law is still a 'Critically Endangered' species. The success of orangutans repatriated from other countries being eventually returned to the wild encourages us to further support rehabilitation and release activities aimed at conserving Bornean orangutans. We hope that the efforts undertaken by the Indonesian Government to protect and preserve Indonesia's forests and the biodiversity within them can be fully realized.”

Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite, MSc., BOS Foundation’s CEO said; “We offer intensive rehabilitation and, when appropriate, rapid releases as our answer to preserving orangutans and their habitats. Once an orangutan passes all of the stages of rehabilitation, we immediately begin preparations for release. Unfortunately, our two release sites in Central Kalimantan are approaching their maximum carrying capacities. The forest areas of the Bukit Batikap Protection Forest and the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park are unable to accommodate every orangutan currently undergoing rehabilitation in our Nyaru Menteng centre, including a number of the repatriated orangutans currently being cared for there. In the meanwhile, we are anticipating this problem by utilizing as large of range as possible within our release sites.

“We must continue to search for forests that suit the requirements to become release sites, and we need to stress the need for firmer action against those who endanger the future of orangutans and their habitats. We have to prevent future cases like that of the pair Warna and Malee, whom we had to work hard to repatriate and rehabilitate, before we were finally able to return them to their forest home. We must protect the forests so that the wild populations and habitats will remain sustainable. The cost of repatriation and rehabilitation is immense when compared to the cost of sustainably maintaining the forest. Conservation can only succeed if all parties actively participate.”

The orangutans returning to their natural habitat include two adult males, that were rescued several months ago for translocation, and nine rehabilitated orangutans, consisting of two males and seven females. Of these rehabilitant orangutans there are three mother-child pairs: Warna-Malee, Suja-Bella, and Hilda-Hadijah. The orangutans will be transported in two separate trips to the Hiran watershed in an approximate 20-hour road trip, including a night stopover in Tumbang Melawan village before the journey continues by boat to the release site.

All nine of the rehabilitated orangutans to be released have spent time 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 all of the survival skills they have learned throughout their years of rehabilitation. Four of the nine orangutans 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 that involves 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. Blue Bird Group Tbk., and PT. SSMS Tbk., alongside individual supporters from around the world, that contribute to and assist conservation efforts in Indonesia.

Contact:

Djati Witjaksono Hadi
Head of Public Relations Bureau of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Paulina Laurensia
Communications Specialist
 Email: pauline@orangutan.or.id

Hermansyah
Communication Staff in Nyaru Menteng
 Email: herman@orangutan.or.id

Pelepasliaran ini didukung oleh:



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 more than 400 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 453 orangutans (462 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 76 orangutans to natural habitats.

This is the 19th release conducted by the BOS Foundation in the TNBBBR since August 2016, and takes the total population of released orangutans in the TNBBBR to 163.