



Press Release

First Release of 2020: Three Orangutans Return to their Natural Habitat in Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park

The orangutan release effort moves ever forward, with cooperation between 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 enabling the return of more rehabilitated orangutans to natural habitat. Just a few weeks into 2020, this latest release will bring the total population of rehabilitated orangutans in TNBBBR to 166 individuals.

Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, 15 January 2019. Three orangutans that have completed the rehabilitation process at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre will be released in the forests of the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR). The group of three includes one male (Chio) and two females (Rizky and Mia), with ages ranging from 13-18 years.

These three orangutans will depart today from Nyaru Menteng and head directly to the Hiran watershed in a journey estimated to take around 19 hours. The Hiran watershed area – located within the national park – has been utilised for orangutan releases since August 2019. The area is currently accommodating 33 orangutans from the four releases the BOS Foundation conducted there thus far.

Andi Muhammad Kadhafi, SHut., Msi., Acting Head of the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), said: “As a representative for the Indonesian government on the issues of wildlife and natural resources protection, the Central Kalimantan BKSDA is responsible for all efforts to save, rehabilitate, and release orangutans. We greatly appreciate the involvement of other stakeholders in this intensive release effort.

“It is very important to us to start the new year with a positive spirit. Therefore, we are pleased to be able to release more orangutans that are ready to live in the wild, starting with these three individuals. We would also like to call on the local community to be more actively involved in efforts to protect orangutans and their habitats. Anybody can contact us and report attempts to capture, keep, or hunt orangutans. Together we can ensure that orangutans have a safe and proper place. Let's join hands in protecting the forest and its biodiversity for the sake of our children and grandchildren.”

Agung Nugroho, S.Si., M.A., Head of the Baka Bukit Raya National Park Authority (BTNBBBR), added: “The Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park Authority is fully committed to safeguarding the orangutans that are released here. The national park can accommodate these orangutans to live wild and free, while being safely protected and given the chance to thrive in a sustainable manner.

“The utilization of the Hiran watershed as an orangutan release area since last year is our way of optimising the distribution of released orangutans here in this national park. The effort has also helped orangutans to breed, with two natural births recorded. This is certainly encouraging news, particularly since the conservation status of the Bornean orangutan is still assessed as ‘critically endangered’. We need to help them to not only survive, but thrive.”

Erlinda Ekaputri, USAID LESTARI Deputy Chief of Party for Aceh and Central Kalimantan Landscape, asserted USAID’s commitment to support the Indonesian government: “USAID LESTARI is fully committed to helping the Government of Indonesia in preserving its environment. On this occasion, we support the preservation of the Bornean orangutan which, despite having a very important role in maintaining the quality of forests and the integrity of the ecosystem and being protected by law,



remains 'critically endangered'. We believe that the preservation of this umbrella species in the forests of Borneo and Sumatra will provide great benefits to us all, because humans simply cannot live without healthy forests.”

Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite, MSc., BOS Foundation CEO said: “We are still strongly committed to our pledge to release as many orangutans as possible from our rehabilitation centres into forests, and to liberate those currently being homed in enclosures to sanctuary or pre-release islands. This is what drives us to release more orangutans so early in the new year. For us, there is no break.

On the other hand, with the high intensity of orangutan releases, the two release sites we are using in Central Kalimantan are approaching maximum capacity. The forest areas of the Bukit Batikap Conservation Forest and Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park are not large enough to accommodate all the orangutans we are currently rehabilitating. We have to continue to look for suitable forests for the purpose of orangutan releases. We desperately need support from both the Government of Indonesia and the private sector to achieve this.”

The three rehabilitated orangutans to be released have all spent time on pre-release islands, semi-wild habitats that accommodate orangutans who have completed all stages of Forest School, closely monitored by the BOS Foundation team. On pre-release islands, orangutans get the chance to utilise all of the survival skills that they have learned throughout their years of rehabilitation. One of these pre-release islands lies in the Salat Island cluster in Pulang Pisau Regency, Central Kalimantan. The 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, especially 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 (i.e. BOS Australia, BOS Germany, BOS Switzerland, BOS UK, and Save the Orangutan), institutions such as USAID LESTARI, private-sector supporters like PT. SSMS Tbk., as well as like-minded conservation organisations (including but not limited to Orangutan Outreach and The Orangutan Project) and individual supporters from around the world, all of which contribute significantly to our work and conservation efforts in Indonesia.

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This 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 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 463 orangutans (466 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 is the 20th release conducted by the BOS Foundation in the TNBBBR since August 2016, and takes the total population of released orangutans in the TNBBBR to 166.