



PRESS RELEASE

NYARU MENTENG, CENTRAL KALIMANTAN, 4/2/2021

Hope for 2021, as the BOS Foundation and SSMS Relocate Three Orangutans to Badak Kecil Sanctuary Island

The Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation, together with PT. Sawit Sumbermas Sarana (SSMS) Tbk., have prepared three orangutans for transfer to a forested, sanctuary island located in the Salat Island cluster, Pulang Pisau Regency, Central Kalimantan. This is the first attempt to transfer orangutans since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic last year. The transfer will be carried out under special, strict protocols to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus to both humans and orangutans.

Badak Kecil Sanctuary Island is utilised to accommodate healthy 'unreleasable' orangutans. The arrival of these three orangutans will increase the island's population to 10 individuals.

PT. SSMS and the BOS Foundation will work together to transfer three orangutans, all of whom have undergone rehabilitation at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, to Badak Kecil Island; a secure, forested sanctuary island in the Salat Island cluster, Pulang Pisau Regency, Central Kalimantan.

The three orangutans - Dilla, Mawas and Jeliva - are all female, with an age range of 13-17 years. All three spent years undergoing the rehabilitation process at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, but were ultimately deemed unsuccessful in developing the natural skills and behaviours needed to survive independently in the wild. Their good health, however, allows them to live on a sanctuary island with an environment similar to that of a natural forest.

The Nyaru Menteng team is mindful that this transfer effort will be conducted in the midst of a pandemic, making it a different mission than usual. The risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus to both staff and orangutans is always lurking. For this reason, the BOS Foundation has introduced special protocols for all activities involved in the movement of orangutans outside of the rehabilitation centre, including the testing of orangutan candidates for COVID-19 while in pre-transfer quarantine.

HANDI NASOKA, S.HUT., Acting Head of the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency, said that orangutan and habitat conservation activities must continue: "We are aware that the pandemic makes it difficult to carry out orangutan rescues and rehabilitation activities. However, conservation efforts must continue, and we truly appreciate the efforts made by our BOS Foundation colleagues in introducing new protocols that will enable us to continue operations despite the challenging situation. I am confident the transfer will take place as planned."

The Salat Island cluster, an area of more than 2,000 hectares located in the Kahayan River delta, is managed by SSMS and the BOS Foundation to function as an orangutan conservation area. Badak Kecil Island, covering an area of 104 hectares, is part of this cluster of islands, and is used specifically as a sanctuary for orangutans who are physically healthy, yet lack sufficient natural skills and behaviours to be released to the wild.

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VALLAUTHAN SUBRAMINAM, President Director of PT. Sawit Sumbermas Sarana (SSMS) Tbk., added: "We have been working very closely with the BOS Foundation to support efforts to conserve orangutans and their habitat, especially in managing sanctuary and pre-release islands as part of the overall orangutan rehabilitation process. Despite current turbulent business conditions, we remain committed to environmental sustainability. We believe, even in the midst of the pandemic, we can continue to carry out conservation activities for orangutans and their habitat."

To ensure the successful transfer of orangutans to Badak Kecil Island, the BOS Foundation has introduced updated protocols to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus to staff, local residents in our working areas, and the orangutans. These protocols cover the use of masks and protective equipment, regular sanitation efforts, pre-departure and post-return staff health tests, extended quarantine periods, and much more.

DR. IR. JAMARTIN SIHITE, BOS Foundation CEO, said: "We at the BOS Foundation are working hard to ensure that orangutans are always managed under the safest conditions, and protected from exposure to diseases that might jeopardise their health and safety as well as their chance to live wild and free in the forest. We strive to ensure that every orangutan we care for at our rehabilitation centres is healthy and given the chance to work through all stages of the rehabilitation process in a timely fashion.

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out last year, we have had to cancel all release and transfer activities. We have studied conditions and worked hard to improve our protocols to guarantee the safety of our staff members and animals, both in our rehabilitation centres and in the release forests. Now, we have prepared ourselves to work under new protocols, to ensure a smooth transfer process. To this end, we also conduct regular health tests on our staff, to ensure that our team members and the orangutans we move outside of the rehabilitation centre are safe from the SARS-CoV-2 virus and other diseases."

With this transfer, the total number of orangutans on Badak Kecil Island will increase to 10 individuals. Orangutans living on the island get the opportunity to live in an environment similar to that of a natural forest, but with security and support provided by a team of technicians on duty and an on-call veterinarian.

Successful cooperation in the management of the Salat Island cluster - to be utilised as a pre-release habitat for rehabilitated orangutans and a sanctuary for unreleasable orangutans - can only be achieved with the participation of a number of stakeholders, including the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government, the Pulang Pisau Regency Government, the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), and communities in Jabiren Raya District. The BOS Foundation is grateful for the support of PT. SSMS Tbk. and all global partners and supporters that have helped fund this important initiative.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

About BOS Foundation

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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 across two orangutan rehabilitation centres, with the support of 400 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 PT. Sawit Sumbermas Sarana Tbk.

PT. Sawit Sumbermas Sarana Tbk. (SSMS) is a palm-oil company founded in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan. SSMS aspires to be a world-class plantation company, with the belief that palm oil is the answer to the growing demand for vegetable oil; a driver for national development; and a beneficiary for society and the environment.

SSMS manages all plantations and mills according to industry best practices and sustainable palm-oil standards. Find out more at www.ssms.co.id.

About Salat Island

The Salat Island cluster is an area of more than 2,000 hectares located in the delta of the Kahayan River. It is jointly managed by PT. SSMS Tbk. and the BOS Foundation, to be utilised as an orangutan conservation area in Central Kalimantan.

The Salat Island cluster was chosen for its forest environment that resembles that of a natural orangutan habitat, with sufficient natural food sources. Surveys show that this area has a high-quality forest; is isolated by a river throughout the year; has no identifiable population of wild orangutans; is large enough to support adaptation and socialisation; has sufficient orangutan food availability; and can accommodate around 200 orangutans.

With all its features, Badak Kecil Island, as part of the Salat Island cluster, is considered a suitable sanctuary for unreleasable orangutans. Security of the island and its orangutan inhabitants is fully monitored by our team of dedicated technicians.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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