



PRESS RELEASE

SAMBOJA LESTARI, EAST KALIMANTAN, 16/05/2023

Release Efforts Continue, with 126 Orangutans Now Thriving in the Kehje Sewen Ecosystem Restoration Concession

East Kalimantan, 16 May 2023. The East Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), together with the Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation and other parties, are releasing five more rehabilitated orangutans from the BOS Foundation's Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre (Samboja Lestari) into the natural Kehje Sewen forest. The group consists of three female orangutans (Leann, Elaine, and Riana) and two male orangutans (Mayer and Andreas). The release site is an 86,593.65-hectare Ecosystem Restoration Concession forest located in East Kutai and Kutai Kartanegara Regencies, East Kalimantan.

The release of these orangutans, which are protected by Indonesian law, is the culmination of a long and close collaboration between the East Kalimantan BKSDA, the BOS Foundation, and PT. Restorasi Habitat Orangutan Indonesia (PT. RHOI) as an effort to protect and preserve orangutans in Kalimantan.

M. Ari Wibawanto, S.Hut., M.Sc., the head of the East Kalimantan BKSDA stated, "The five orangutans being released have undergone extensive rehabilitation after being rescued from the people who kept them as pets. Wildlife conservation efforts today face great challenges, however, conservation work must not stop. Today's release of orangutans is a battle that must be continued and won. Orangutans are one of the flagship species that continue to be a priority for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Through various conservation efforts, we are working to maintain their presence in their natural habitat and create healthy and growing wild orangutan populations.

"The persistence of wild orangutan populations is an important indicator of good forest conditions, not only for orangutans but also for other animals. As a protected species with the status of 'Critically Endangered', the orangutan is not only a concern of the parties at the national level but also at the international level. Therefore, our collaboration and support are needed for its successful conservation. Additionally, the involvement of the community around the release sites is expected to increase public awareness to help save orangutans and their habitat in the Kehje Sewen ecosystem restoration concession forest.

"Thank you to our partners, especially the BOS Foundation, who have supported the East Kalimantan BKSDA in carrying out our mandate in the field of wildlife conservation in East Kalimantan."

Dr. Ir. Jamartin Sihite, M.Sc., the BOS Foundation CEO, said, "The release of these five orangutans is the first release from Samboja Lestari to be carried out by the BOS Foundation in 2023. It has been almost two years since we released an orangutan from Samboja Lestari due to restrictions mitigating COVID-19 risk and the availability of orangutan candidates who are ready to be released. By remaining fully committed to efforts to save orangutans, we took advantage of this two-year gap to prepare orangutan candidates.

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“Currently, there are around 400 orangutans being rehabilitated by the BOS Foundation, many of whom are ready to live freely and independently in the forest. The task and responsibility for protecting and preserving orangutans is not only the responsibility of the BOS Foundation and the BKSDA, but a joint effort that requires all parties and stakeholders to work together because we all reap the benefits of healthy forest ecosystems. For these ecosystems to thrive, they need the presence of orangutans and, in return, they provide us with fresh air, clean water, and a regulated climate.”

The East Kalimantan BKSDA, together with the BOS Foundation, expresses its appreciation and gratitude to the East Kalimantan Provincial Government, the East Kutai and Kutai Kartanegara Regencies, and the community for their support and cooperation.

The BOS Foundation would also like to express its appreciation for the support and contributions of our global partner organisations: BOS Australia, BOS Germany, BOS Switzerland, BOS UK, BOS USA, and Save the Orangutan. We are very grateful for the support from prominent business entities such as PT. Bank Central Asia (BCA) Tbk., various other conservation organisations including Orangutan Outreach, and individual donors from around the world who support our work and nature conservation in Indonesia.

CONTACTS

Nunu Anugrah, S.Hut., M.Sc	M. Ari Wibawanto, S.Hut., M.Sc	Dr. Aldrianto Priadjati	Paulina Laurensia Ela
<i>Head of PR</i> The Ministry of Environment and Forestry	<i>Head of the East</i> <i>Kalimantan BKSDA</i>	<i>Regional Manager</i> <i>BOSF East Kalimantan</i>	<i>Head of</i> <i>Communication</i> BOS Foundation
081281331247	Call Center BKSDA: 082113338181	HP: 08111110747	Mobile: 081347337003
