

SINTANG ORANGUTAN CENTER PROJECT REPORT Q1

January - March 2024



**14th Release
Candidate**



The 13th Released:

MONA & MARKUS AMING

On Friday, 26 January 2024, Mona and Aming finally felt freedom in the Kalimantan forests after experienced 8 years of rehabilitation at the Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC). They returned to Betung Kerihun National Park. Mona (female, 8 years 11 months) and Aming (male, 9 years 5 months) have been together since the age of 1 year at the Sintang Quarantine Center. They experienced forest school at Jerora Forest School (January 2019) and Tembak Forest School (October 2020). On 26 January 2024, they were also released together.

Upon release, Mona first climbed a tree, waiting for Aming. They explored the forest together, sometimes Mona followed Aming. After being released, Aming pulled the cage rope, climbed a tree, and played. He rested in the middle canopy of a tree until 1:10 p.m., then tried to approach the observer. After several failed attempts, he got bored, moved upstream, and relaxed by the riverbank. Around 15:00, he climbed a hill, then made a nest on the forest floor at 4:40 p.m. Mona followed Aming, and by 5:00 p.m. they slept together on the forest floor.

Mona was released 3 minutes before Aming. She climbed a tree, then moved towards the hills. After resting, she followed Aming to the riverbank. Seeing Aming descend to the forest floor, Mona stayed in the tree. After some time around the riverbank, she returned to the tree until the evening, when both slept together on the forest floor.

On the second day of observing Aming, several important things were noted. Firstly, Aming was still observed in good condition. He explored the middle and lower canopies, sometimes also climbing to the upper canopy. His eating pattern tended to be light but frequent, consuming young leaves, termites, fruit from the night wood, shoots, rattan shoots, and wood fruit. During the day, Aming appeared lazy and often remained in the middle canopy without following others much. He also made a nest in the middle canopy around 9:20 a.m. and slept for quite a while.



The moment when Aming and Mona finally returned to their home

Moreover, Aming was seen exploring separately from Mona, occasionally following activities at the flying camp, and several times moving to the slopes and heading towards the flying camp. Aming's sleeping nest was located on the forest floor at an altitude of 147 meters above sea level, and he slept with Mona. During the second day, Aming did not defecate, but he urinated 3 times and sneezed twice, with visible mucus. He also occasionally chased the observer and descended to the river at the release point.

On the third day of observing Aming, several interesting developments were noted. Firstly, Aming showed interest in a new female observer, or at least appeared to, as he returned to the riverbank and tried to enter the river, even taking wood and placing it in the water to try to step on it. During that day, Aming explored the forest floor and lower canopies more, showing more active activity than the previous day. Furthermore, Aming appeared healthier than the previous day and did not sneeze. He also consumed a variety of foods. At 3:00 p.m., he made an afternoon nest in the middle canopy and slept for 20 minutes near the river. Then, in the late afternoon, Aming made another nest on the forest floor and relaxed there. He was observed urinating twice and appeared quite aggressive and bristled when seeing the observer from a distance having an evening meal. Around 5:00 p.m., he was seen sleeping alone on the forest floor near the flying camp, and that night, Aming slept alone.

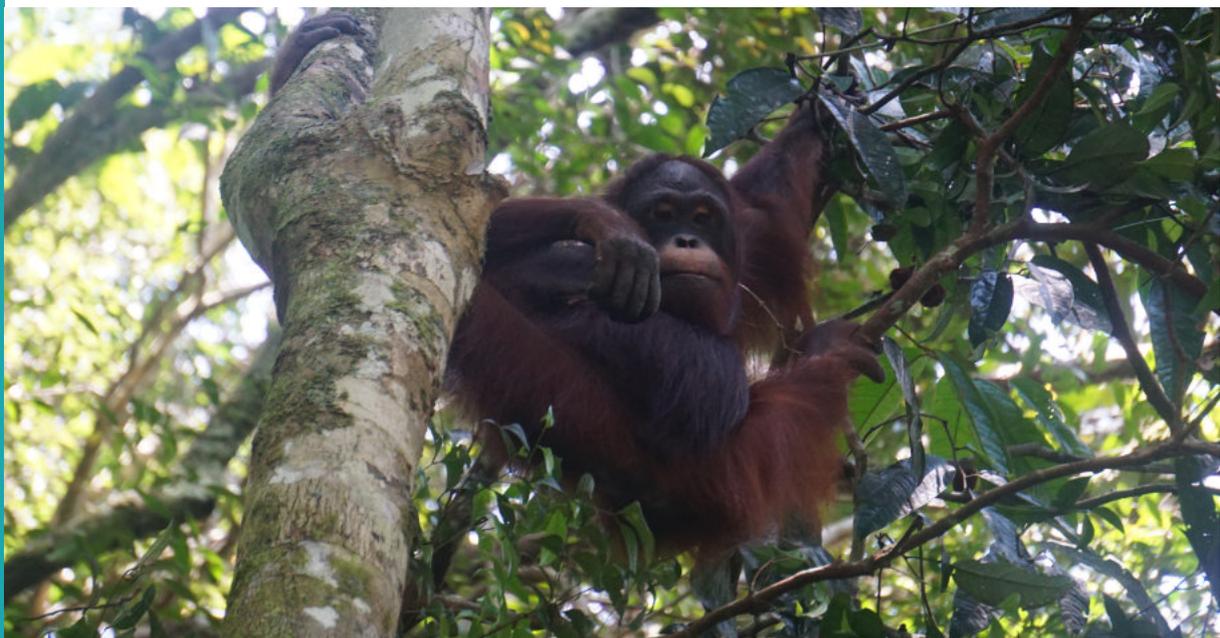


On the second day of observation, Mona was seen consuming a lot of forest food, noted to have consumed 9 types of food with a larger volume than the previous day, such as young leaves, *payam* leaves, *uvah putri* leaves, liana leaves, *sumpak* flowers, *perupuk* shoots, *pa'i rattan* shoots, night wood fruit, and forest fruit. However, her exploration activity was not affected; she was still frequently seen exploring the lower canopy, exploring the surrounding environment while searching for food. On several occasions, Mona was seen making a nest in the middle canopy, near Aming.

Although Mona enjoys exploring, she remains close to Aming and is only a few trees apart. They are seen interacting and are quite friendly, Mona even inviting Aming to explore when Aming is resting. Their social interaction appears intimate, especially when Mona is seen stroking Aming.

During observations, Mona was also seen descending from the tree to drink water at the riverbank but showed no interest in the observers around. Meanwhile, Mona's defecation activity was also observed, with her defecating once and urinating twice. Not only focused on eating and social interaction activities, Mona is also active in exploring various altitudes, seen going up and down in the range of 150-200 meters above sea level. In the afternoon, Mona was not seen making a nest but chose to sleep in the nest built by Aming on the forest floor, and there they slept together.

On the third day of observation, Mona was only observed for half a day, after which she disappeared. Initially, Mona's team was able to follow Mona's movements around 200 meters above sea level, but around 11:00 a.m., Aming seemed interested in the Mona's female observer, who happened to be there at the time. As a result, he tried to approach with higher intensity, causing Mona's observer team to run towards the Mendalam River. There, Aming continued to observe the observer team and after a long time finally resumed exploring because he couldn't approach the team that had entered the river. After that, the observer team returned to Mona's initial location, but when they arrived at the starting point, Mona was already gone. The team tried to call her, but there were no signs of Mona's presence around the location. The team continued the search uphill and towards Rongun but still did not find Mona's location. Until the search activity was completed, Mona's whereabouts remained unknown.



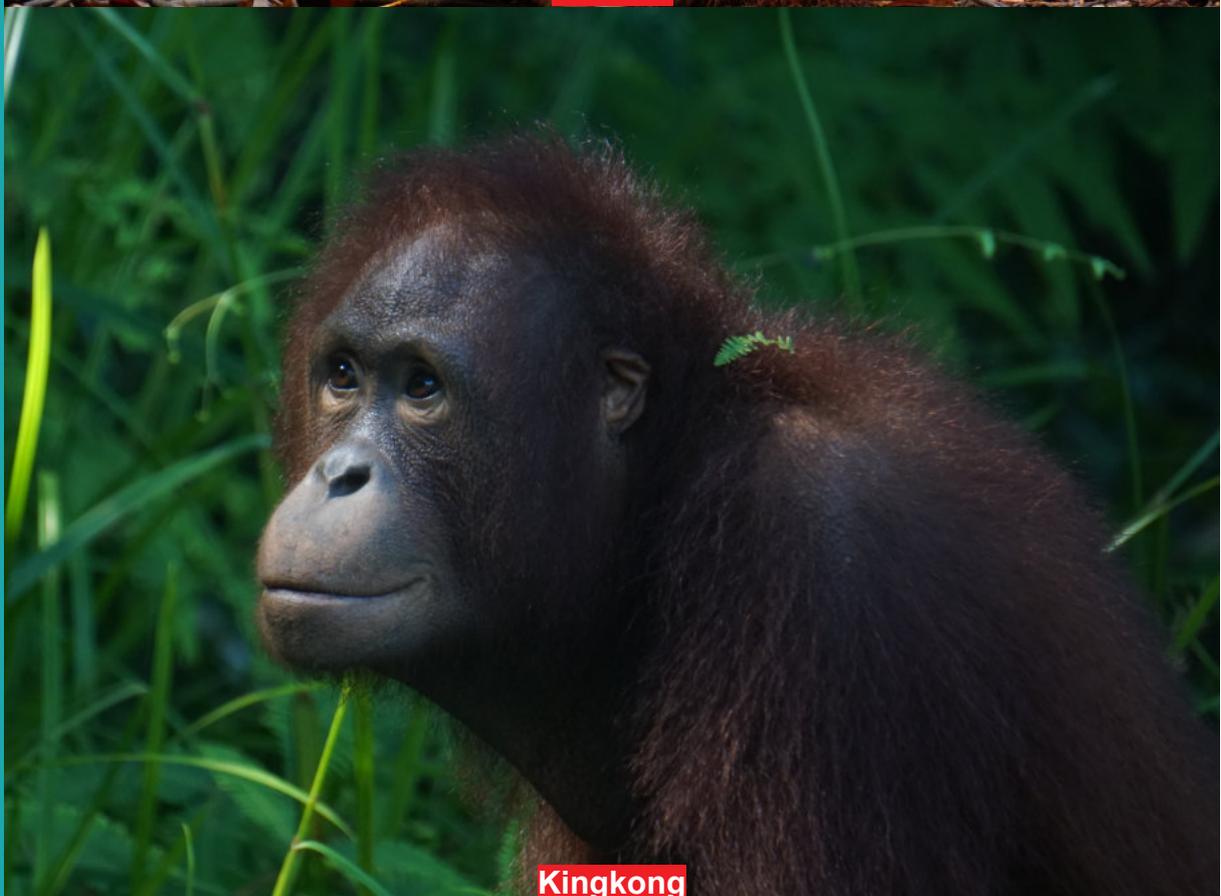
On the fourth day of observation, Aming reached his lowest point. He appeared very lazy, rarely walked, and more often slept and remained silent. It seems Aming felt lonely after being left by Mona and was seen following the observer because he did not want to be left alone. Although eating, Aming did not consume much food, only a few young leaves and forest fruit in limited quantities. Throughout the day, Aming was still in the area near the release point, going up and down hill ridges but showing no significant activity. No urination or defecation was observed, and throughout the day, he mostly relaxed in trees, occasionally ate, and in the evening returned to sleep in the same place as the previous night, although it rained, Aming might have moved his sleeping location.

On the fifth day, Aming's behavioral pattern seemed similar. In the morning, he didn't move much in the trees and was more stationary, then descended to the release point and hung around its vicinity. It was observed that Aming often went up around the flying camp and consumed many forest fruits. However, there was no observed defecation. On that day, Aming was also seen building nests during the day and nests on the forest floor, indicating more daytime activity.

On the sixth to the tenth day when he disappeared, Aming's exploring pattern was not much different from the previous days where he spent most of his time relaxing while eating food. Meanwhile, during his exploration, he was more interested in exploring the understory to the forest floor. There, he found several types of food such as young leaves, shoots, forest fruits, termite nests, cambium, and some other unidentified types of food. Since when observed, Aming was no longer with Mona, consequently, Aming seemed more interested in the observer. This can be seen from his interaction, which was quite intense in chasing the observer, which also triggered Aming's disappearance at an altitude of 375 meters above sea level. At that time, Aming was trying to chase the observer. Aming was last seen heading towards the Rongun River. The cause of his disappearance was when the observer tried to avoid Aming's chase, and then Aming quickly turned towards the Rongun River, causing the observer to lose track of him. After the incident, the Monitoring Team immediately conducted a search with various strategies. The team checked old nests, traced the paths previously taken, and searched around the point of disappearance. The search efforts continued along the edge of the Deep River, then moved towards the flying camp, and finally returned to the initial release point.

New Release Candidates:

Jochem & Kingkong



The release of orangutans is the culmination of efforts to conserve orangutans in their natural habitat. This time, SOC has planned to release two individual orangutans back into their natural habitat in the Betung Kerihun National Park which is expected to be carried out in May-June 2024. The two orangutans that will be released are Jochem (male, 8 years 10 months) and Kingkong (female, 8 years 6 months).



When he was still young, Jochem was kept in a small cage by his owner

Jochem has a long and interesting background in his rehabilitation process at SOC. The beginning of Jochem's discovery began with information received by SOC from one of the KPH Melawi staff. This information indicates that there are people who keep illegal orangutans. Quickly, the SOC investigation team carried out checks and succeeded in finding Jochem in Desa Suka Maju, Tanah Pinoh District. Jochem was found in healthy condition even though he had been treated like a human for approximately 4 years. Since then, Jochem has undergone various stages of rehabilitation at SOC, such as at the Sintang Quarantine Center, Jerora Forest School, Tembak Forest School, and returned to Jerora Forest School. During the rehabilitation process, Jochem showed good progress and managed to meet all the eligibility criteria for release.

Meanwhile, Kingkong has a different but quite interesting background. Kingkong was found after SOC received information from the West Kalimantan BKSDA that there was resident in Mempawah Regency who kept orangutan. After an approach made by the police, the resident was willing to hand over Kingkong. After the recovery process and medical examination at the Sintang Quarantine Center, Kingkong also underwent a rehabilitation process at Jerora Forest School, Tembak Forest School, then returned to Jerora Forest School. Even though Kingkong is dependent on humans because of the treatment she received while being kept, she showed excellent abilities when she was in forest school. She is able to explore, look for food, and shows no interest in the staff conducting observations.

These two orangutans have experienced an intensive rehabilitation process at SOC and have successfully met all eligibility criteria, both behavioral and medical. Therefore, they are considered ready to return to their natural habitat and live a life like orangutans in nature.

To ensure the success of the release, SOC has made thorough preparations. The relevant team has conducted a survey and evaluation of habitat conditions in Betung Kerihun National Park to ensure the availability of sufficient natural resources to support the lives of these two orangutans.

Apart from that, the team has also coordinated with various related parties, including BKSDA and other related agencies, to obtain support and assistance in the release process. Overall, the release of Jochem and Kingkong is an important step in efforts to conserve orangutans in Indonesia. With cooperation and support from various parties, it is hoped that these two orangutans will successfully live their wild lives and become symbols of the success of orangutan conservation in their natural habitat.



Both Jochem and Kingkong are skilled when they are in forest school





New Orangutan Rescued:

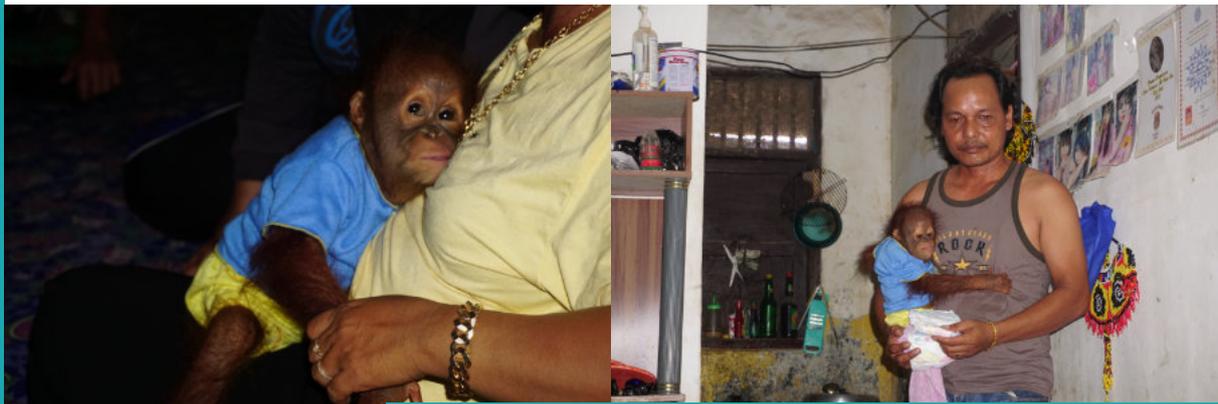
BODAT

In 9 January 2024, an evacuation was carried out by a joint team between the West Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), the Sintang Orangutan Center, and the local military personnel in Kekurak Village, Badau District, Kapuas Hulu Regency, in response to the voluntary handover of baby orangutans kept by local residents. The journey to the evacuation location takes around 10 hours from Sintang. Upon arrival at Kekurak Village, the team immediately rushed to the location where the baby orangutan was kept, which was named Bodat by its owner, a trader.

The female baby orangutan was found alone in the forest by a villager who was fishing in the area of Empaik Hamlet. The discovery location is around Lake Sentarum, whose habitat is threatened by oil palm plantations. Interestingly, villagers had previously seen orangutans during the clearing of palm oil plantations, indicating how their natural habitat had been disturbed.

Initially, villagers who were fishing at the top of Lake Sentarum heard a sound like crying from inside the forest bordering Empaik Hamlet. Even though it was initially thought to be an ordinary natural sound, they decided to ignore it and continue fishing. However, when they wanted to move locations, one of the villagers decided to look for the source of the mysterious sound.

Carefully walked through the Kekurak forest, among the trees, a baby orangutan was seen, looking weak, covered in mud and tree sap. When he found the baby orangutan, later named Bodat, he felt shocked and sad. Bodat, with her eyes full of fear, seemed to be looking for help. Bodat condition was very poor, and the villager quickly decided to take her home. When asked by the team for information, the villager speculated that the mother orangutan ran away upon realizing the presence of humans with dogs in the forest.

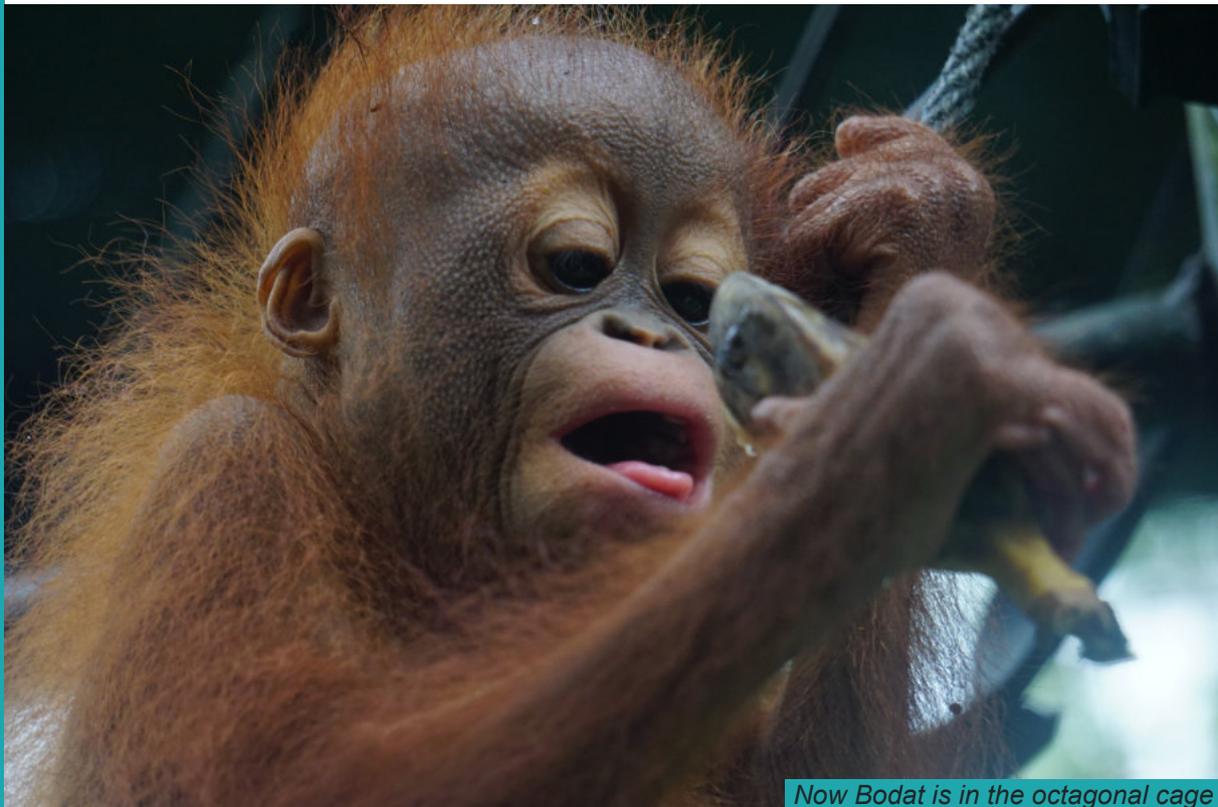


The moment when the team from BKSDA and SOC evacuated Bodat



Bodat are treated like family members. Every day, the owner interacts with Bodat and regularly bathes her and then dresses her in human clothes. When evacuated, Bodat had been with her owner for about 2 weeks. While being kept, Bodat experienced illness and was given paracetamol. However, her condition when evacuated was not encouraging. Bodat have diarrhea and refuse to eat, indicating the negative impacts of living outside their natural habitat. During this time, Bodat was given various types of food by the owner, including sweetened condensed milk, watermelon, bananas, noodles (Bodat's favorite), rice and chicken eggs.

Bodat, who is estimated to be 1-2 years old and whose tooth growth reflects the developmental phase in which the lower canine teeth have appeared, is currently in an octagonal cage with three other baby orangutans, namely Annette, Jack and Piet. The four of them are now starting to learn to interact and improve their nutrition.



Now Bodat is in the octagonal cage



Outreach activity to SDN 12 Jerora

In the spirit of conserving nature and wildlife, on March 12 2024, the Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) held an outreach activity to inspire and educate the younger generation who care about the environment. This activity was held at Rumah Betang Kobus, and was attended by 36 students and 2 accompanying teachers from SDN 12 Jerora. SOC conveys various important information about the great ape, particularly Orangutan. Starting with an introduction to Orangutans, the physical characteristics that differentiate them from other animals, to an overview of their natural habitat. Apart from that, participants were also given an in-depth understanding of the importance of caring for and preserving the environment for the survival of orangutans and biodiversity as a whole. Students not only listen, but also engage in a variety of interactive games and activities designed to educate and entertain.



A total of 36 students attended the orientation activity conducted by SOC at Rumah Betang Kobus

Furthermore, the most awaited moment is a visit to the Sintang Quarantine Center, where they can see directly the orangutans being cared for and have an unforgettable experience. Enthusiasm could be seen from the cheerful faces of the participants. Indeed, this activity is not just an event, but is a concrete effort to instill the values of care and love for the environment and nature in the younger generation, as well as building the foundation for a more sustainable future.



In addition to being presented with material, participants were also involved in observing orangutans at the Sintang Quarantine Center, as well as in game sessions and group photo sessions





JAMILAH'S FIRST FOREST SCHOOL

On March 7, 2024, Jamilah finally began her long-awaited forest school journey. Aged 23, Jamilah has been waiting for this moment since her arrival at the Sintang Orangutan Center at the age of 12, when she was evacuated from Landak Regency in January 2013.

After 6 years at the Sintang Quarantine Center, Jamilah was transferred to the Jerora Forest School on December 9 2019. However, at that time Jerora only had one enclosure, so Jamilah had not had the opportunity to attend the forest school.

Only in 2023, Jerora will have two forest school enclosures. And on March 20, Jamilah carried out a trial of introducing the enclosure's electric wire. However, the journey to forest school did not go smoothly.

When the tunnel to the forest school opened, Jamilah looked hesitant and not interested in entering. Even persuasion from the staff she liked with the promise of various kinds of food did not make her move. Until finally, the team decided to pretend to use an anesthetic blowpipe which succeeded in attracting her attention.



Even though coaxed with food by the staff, Jamilah still refused to enter the forest school



After seeing the anesthetic blowpipe brought by the staff, Jamilah quickly ran towards the forest, even ignoring the food and drink available in front of the tunnel. As soon as she arrived at the forest school, she immediately climbed the nearest tree and continued up towards the top of the tree without ever descending to the forest floor.

Jamilah looks very adept at exploring, always staying in the middle canopy and upper canopy of trees. She was also seen eating several types of forest fruit and even young leaves. When not eating, Jamilah prefers to relax among the tree branches in the middle canopy.

Until the afternoon, she was seen mostly in the tree canopies, perhaps because this was her first experience at forest school. Nevertheless, this first step promises to be an amazing adventure for Jamilah in a new jungle world.



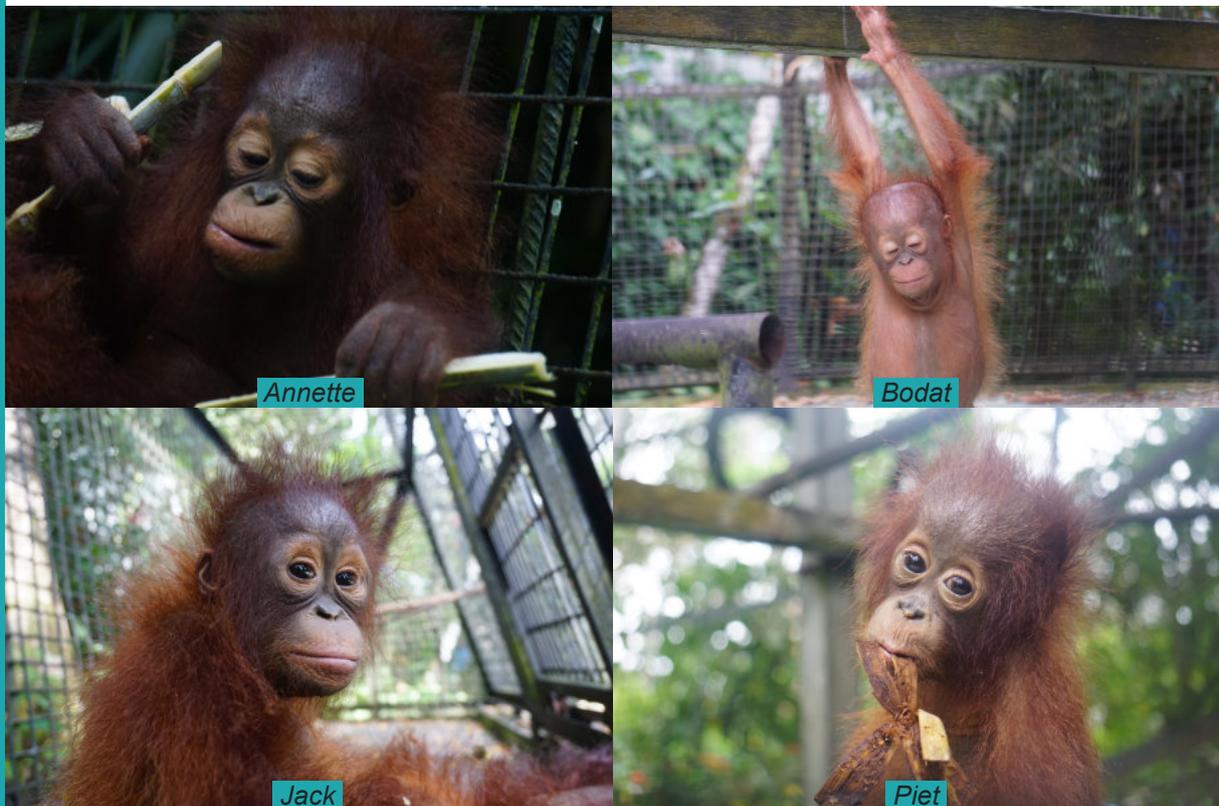
After entering the enclosure, Jamilah immediately climbed a tree and refused to come down to the forest floor



The activities of Annette, Piet, Jack, and Bodat in the Octagonal Cage

Since August 2023 until January 2024, SOC together with West Kalimantan BKSDA has successfully evacuated a total of 4 individual orangutans, namely Annette, Jack, Piet, and Bodat, each of whom arrived at SOC respectively on 2 August 2023, 25 September 2023, 29 September 2023, and 9 January 2024. Currently the four orangutans are living together in the octagonal enclosure at the Sintang Quarantine Center to learn together.

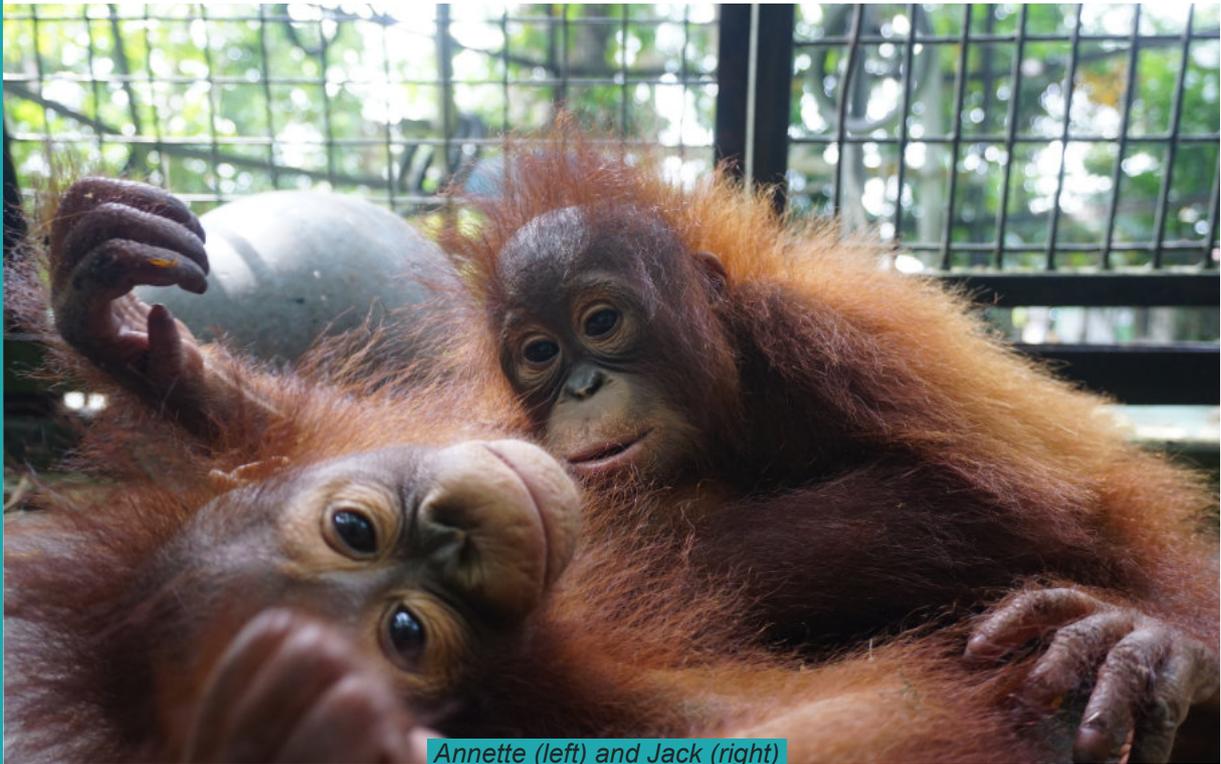
Although still babies, the four of them have begun to show certain emotional bonds, such as Annette who is more interested in befriending Jack, meanwhile Jack who doesn't care about Annette's presence, while Piet and Bodat prefer to do activities on their own.



The relationship between Annette and Jack is indeed interesting. When the two are separated by keepers, Annette usually cries and tries to chase after Jack. Even when the staff takes Jack out of the octagonal cage to eat, Annette will try to chase Jack around the octagonal cage while crying. Meanwhile, the same does not happen with Jack; even when separated from Annette, he remains unfazed and shows no reaction.

They all interact only when they are being fed and given milk, as during that time, they all approach the staff to receive their portion. Among them all, Bodat is the easiest to snatch food from, especially his milk, which is often taken by Annette, while Piet and Jack can eat calmly and do not like to take others' belongings. When there are no staff watching their activities, they usually are active, moving and swinging on ropes and drums in the octagonal cage.

Interestingly, although they are not very close to each other, while sleeping, all four of them are often seen sleeping on the same drum.



Annette (left) and Jack (right)



Outreach Activity to English Language Study Program Students at STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang

The Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) is again holding a series of educational programs entitled "HARPA & SOC Go to School". The main aim of this activity is to provide a broader understanding of orangutans, the important role of the SOC conservation institution in environmental conservation to students from various levels of education, from elementary school to university, as well as the role of the participants in helping environmental conservation activities surround them.

On 16 March 2024, Jerora Forest School welcomed 30 students from the English Language Education Study Program STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang. They were not only given information about orangutans, but also given the rare opportunity to see orangutans directly from a safe distance. The activity provided an in-depth experience for the participants, strengthening their understanding of the importance of preserving the existence and natural habitat of this species.



presentation at the educational house



The event did not end with just providing information and observing orangutans. The participants also had the opportunity to interact directly with SOC workers and volunteers, discuss various aspects of conservation carried out by SOC, and gain insight into the challenges and obstacles in protecting the orangutan population and their habitat which have been carried out so far.

After the outreach and observation session, the event continued with tree planting activities. The participants enthusiastically planted 40 trees saplings around the forest school area. A symbol of commitment to protecting the environment and supporting nature conservation efforts.

The hope of this collaborative activity between SOC and teachers majoring in students is that they will gain a deep awareness of protecting the environment, and become agents of change who are able to spread environmental awareness to the younger generation in various regions. Because the role of teachers is very important in forming the character of the nation's children who care about the environment.



About Sintang Orangutan Center

The Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) is a local environmental NGO that collaborate with the Indonesian government to rescue, rehabilitate and release orangutans back into the wild.

In addition to the orangutan work, SOC also provides awareness and education programs for local people to reduce deforestation by providing sustainable agricultural alternatives, stop illegal poaching and the keeping of illegal pets like orangutans.

SOC is located in Sintang, West Kalimantan, an Indonesian province on the island of Borneo.

SOC's rehabilitation program aim is to rehabilitate orangutans and provide them with the survival skills to prepare them for release back to the wild. After a series of medical health examinations healthy orangutans are transferred to the socialization groups where they can learn together with friends. The final stage before release is a training period in a so-called forest school which is a fenced in intact rainforest.

We work under an official agreement with the Forestry Ministry Department. So far we have rescued and taken care of more than 50 orangutans since 2010. Orangutans were rescued from illegal wildlife trade, or confiscated from people who kept them as pets. We also collaborated in rescue orangutan victims of conflict with local people. We release orangutans in a special part of the Betung Kerihun National Park.

SUPPORT US IN PROTECTING ORANGUTAN AND THEIR FOREST

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