

SINTANG ORANGUTAN CENTER PROJECT REPORT Q2

April-June 2023





Three orangutans relocated from Tembak Forest School

TOM, KINGKONG & MANFRED

In early June, the SOC team, along with the West Kalimantan Conservation and Natural Resources Agency (BKSDA Kalimantan Barat), conducted the relocation of three individual orangutans, Tom, Manfred, and Kingkong. These three individuals, aged 6, 5, and 7 years respectively, were moved from Tembak Forest School to Jerora Forest School. The decision to relocate them was based on the more adequate forest school facilities and the additional enclosures at the Jerora facility, as well as the efficiency of all activities that were centred at the Jerora Forest School.

Tom, known for his unique habit of walking with his hands behind his back, was placed together with Manfred, the youngest and smallest member of the group, who possesses a brave personality, and Kingkong, who has a hobby of exploring while in the forest school. The three of them are now placed in the same cage as before but with the advantage of occupying the new forest school enclosure in Jerora.



Manfred (5 years old)



Tom (6 years old)



Kingkong (7 years old)

After spending time at the Tembak Forest School from 2021 to 5 June 2023, these orangutans were relocated safely to the Jerora Forest School on 5 June. On 13 June, they were introduced to the new forest school environment, where they will continue their learning and skills development process under the supervision of our team. Through the expansion of activities at the Jerora Forest School, our goal is to increase the welfare of all orangutans at SOC.

This relocation is part of our ongoing effort to preserve and protect endangered species, it is also proof of our commitment to protecting their future. Transferring these three orangutans to the Jerora Forest School not only expanded their living space but also provided them with access to improved facilities designed to support their physical and cognitive development.



The transfer process of Tom, Manfred and Kingkong to Jerora Forest School

At the Jerora Forest School, 2 forest school enclosures are functioning and ready to use. Forest school conditions that closely resemble orangutans' natural habitat, allow orangutans to engage in natural behaviours such as climbing, hanging, building nests, and foraging. This spacious forest school environment allows these intelligent creatures to explore, learn and develop essential survival skills. To ensure their long-term adaptation and potential reintroduction into the wild if opportunities arise. Apart from physical health, we prioritize the psychological and emotional well-being of orangutans. Our team utilizes positive reinforcement techniques and enrichment activities to stimulate their cognitive abilities and encourage natural behaviour. Sustainable care and management for these orangutans involve regular health assessments, veterinary care, and nutritional monitoring.

The relocation of Tom, Manfred, and Kingkong to Jerora Forest School would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of many individuals and organizations. We would like to express our gratitude to government agencies, conservation partners, and donors who have contributed to this important endeavour.



New forest school facility to cover more orangutans

COMPLETED NEW ORANGUTAN CAGE!

The construction of an orangutan's overnight cage is a time-consuming process that requires dedication and a significant amount of manpower. Every step in this construction process is carefully planned to ensure the safety and comfort of the orangutans who will inhabit this cage in the future. From the initial stage of clearing the designated construction area to the installation of water pipes, every task is carried out with meticulous attention to detail.

The construction process for the orangutan cage began on November 23, 2022, starting with the clearing of the land and the excavation of the foundations. The foundations are a crucial element as they provide support for the entire structure, demanding stability and security. Local welders were also employed to assemble the cage's components, which proved to be the most time-consuming part of the construction process.



the newly completed overnight cage

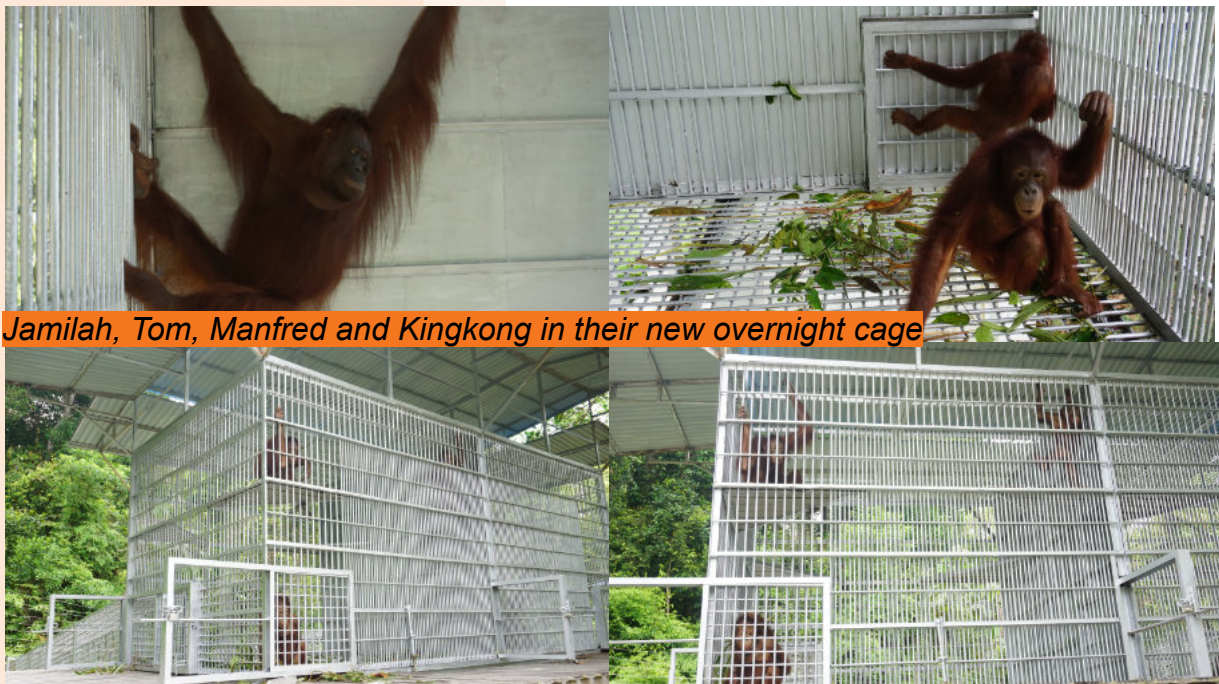


On March 3, 2023, the construction of the cage's components was completed, marking the beginning of the installation phase. The team commenced the assembly of the entire cage, including the walls, doors, tunnels, and roof. Finally, on May 11, 2023, the installation of the water pipes, the last component of the orangutan overnight cage, was accomplished.

Now that the cage is finished, it is time to relocate the first orangutan residents to their new homes. It is hoped that the addition of this new cage will provide a better environment for the orangutans at the Jerora Forest School and expand the opportunities for orangutans to participate in the forest school program.

Currently, there are four individual orangutans inhabiting this cage. They are Jamilah, a 22-year-old female, along with a new group from the Tembak Forest School, Tom (6 years old), Manfred (5 years old), and Kingkong (7 years old). All of these orangutans appear to be thoroughly enjoying their new cage.

The completion of this cage brings new hope for the orangutans at the Jerora Forest School. They now have a more comfortable living environment and the opportunity to continue to grow and thrive within the forest school.



Jamilah, Tom, Manfred and Kingkong in their new overnight cage



TANJUNGPURA UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP AT SOC

Three students from Tanjungpura University took part in the latest internship at YPOS from 21 March 2023 to 3 June 2023. These students took their time and effort to contribute to various activities organized by SOC, to gain valuable experience in wildlife conservation.

During the internship period, students are actively involved in various tasks supervised by SOC. Such as giving daily feeding to orangutans, and making sure they get food three times a day. They also provide milk to the orangutans twice a day, ensure their drinking needs are met and participate in orangutan enrichment twice a day. Every morning, they also clean the cage and maintain a clean and hygienic space for the welfare of the orangutans. Apart from that, the students also help to observe orangutans in the forest school and provide support for other SOC activities, such as in the organic farming area.

The existence of student interns in an NGO such as SOC provides significant benefits for both students and organizations. Activities like this provide opportunities for students to apply their academic knowledge and gain practical experience in wildlife conservation. This hands-on experience allows them to deepen their understanding of the challenges and complexities of protecting endangered species. In addition, working alongside experienced professionals at SOC allows students to learn from their expertise and gain insight into effective conservation strategies and practices.

Simultaneously, the contributions of these students are invaluable to SOC. Their active participation and dedication in carrying out various tasks help increase the efficiency and productivity of the organization's daily operations. The students bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and youthful energy which can contribute to the development of new approaches and initiatives in wildlife conservation. In addition, their involvement fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing, creating a mutually beneficial learning environment for both students and SOC's staff.

The internship program that students undertake at SOC serves as a vehicle for young individuals who are passionate about studying wildlife conservation, enabling them to gain practical skills, broaden their horizons, and nurture their commitment to environmental stewardship. SOC is proud to have provided such an opportunity and encourages more students to get involved in such programs, contributing to the preservation of our natural heritage.



The students were actively participating in SOC's activities



We extend our gratitude to the students from Tanjungpura University who participated in the internship program, as well as to SOC's staff members who mentored and guided them throughout their internship journey. Their combined efforts reinforce SOC's commitment to fostering the next generation of conservationists and empowering them to make a positive impact on the protection of orangutans and their habitats.



HOVAT'S VOLUNTEER TEACHING PROGRAM WITH STKIP PERSADA KHATULISTIWA SINTANG

The volunteer teaching program in Nanga Hovat Hamlet reflects the spirit of collaboration between volunteers and the community, as well as the active participation of the community in Nanga Hovat Hamlet. By integrating it with the Independent Campus Learning Program curriculum, the students not only fulfil their academic requirements but also actively contribute to improving the quality of life of the community. This holistic approach shapes individuals who are broad-minded, and have theoretical knowledge and practical experience in dealing with real-world challenges.

Furthermore, this volunteer teaching program has a profound impact on the local community. The active participation of the students brings fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and a renewed sense of hope to the Hovat community. The dedication and willingness of the students to learn from community members create a dynamic exchange of knowledge and experiences. Through collaborative efforts, it can foster a sense of shared responsibility and inspire the younger generation to take an active role in community development.

We extend our gratitude to the students from STKIP Persada Khatulistiwa Sintang who participated in the volunteer teaching program, as well as to the local community members who facilitated this activity. Together, we continue to foster educational opportunities and empower the younger generation, to create a brighter future for all. The collective efforts of the students, community members, and SOC demonstrate the power of collaboration in building sustainable communities and driving positive change.



Volunteer's activities in Hovat: Teaching & blend in with the locals



TANJUNGPURA STUDEN'S VISIT TO SOC

On 3-4 April 2023, the Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) hosted a visit from students of the Faculty of Forestry, Tanjungpura University. This activity is part of the Independent Campus Learning Program (MBKM) in 2023. The program takes place at the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park and Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan (KPH) from February 20 to June 3, 2023. The purpose of this visit is to gain insight into forests, as well as the management of the orangutan conservation centre at SOC.

Over the two days course, students actively participated in activities at SOC. On the first day, they explored the Sintang Quarantine Center, where the behaviour team and the education team gave an overview of the SOC's organization and its various initiatives. Topics of discussion included orangutan evacuation activities, rehabilitation programs, forest schools for orangutans, orangutan release activities, and community empowerment initiatives. In the second session of the day, the medical team provided insights on orangutan medical rehabilitation, handling sick orangutans, and zoonotic diseases that are commonly found in pets such as cats and dogs.



First-day activity with a discussion

On the following day, the students were introduced to the various activities that are available at Jerora Forest School. It begins with a comprehensive tour of the forest school facilities, including the clinic, basecamp, guest house and organic farming area. Subsequently, the agricultural team gave a presentation on composting techniques and various organic farming activities typically conducted at the Jerora Forest School area.

Through this experience, students gain a deeper understanding of forests, as well as important management practices applied at the SOC. The knowledge acquired during their visit will undoubtedly contribute to their academic and professional development in forestry and conservation.



Second-day activity on the field

The 12th orangutan release: **HOPE & AMORY**

We are pleased to provide significant updates on the recent orangutan releases conducted by SOC, West Kalimantan BKSDA, Betung Kerihun and Danau Sentarum National Parks. On June 16, 2023, two orangutans, Hope (a 7-year-old female) and Amory (a 9-year-old male), were successfully released into their natural habitat.

Hope, who has been cared for by SOC since June 30 2018, was evacuated from the Sekadau district when she was around 4 years old. Hope has a sad story background, she grew up in a 4x6x2 meters wooden and iron cage. Initially, she was bought by the owner for Rp. 1,500,000. Hope was brought to the Plywood area to be treated temporarily. Unfortunately, she was then treated as a pet and was given human food such as milk, rice, vegetables, cakes, meat, and noodles and bathed every day. Sometimes Hope is allowed to play outside the cage, the owner even takes her to the shop to indulge her with her favourite food, cake.

Meanwhile, Amory spent about a year in a cage, confined in a wooden and bamboo cage behind his owner's house and sometimes under the house. He was given human food and milk and occasionally given fruit. During the evacuation of Amory, there was a false claim by the owner, he said that officers had taken the orangutan at night. However, because there was no evidence, in the end, the owner voluntarily surrendered Amory after mediation efforts.

Amory before rehabilitation



Amory nowadays



Hope before rehabilitation



Hope nowadays



On June 16, 2023, at 10:30 am, Hope and Amory were released together. When out of the cage they immediately climbed a tree and explored their new environment, but a tragedy occurred an hour later. Hope and Amory, as well as a team of observers, are being chased by the bees. This is common during the bee season. Fearing for everyone's safety, the entire team ran in panic, while Amory and Hope quickly dashed down towards the forest floor to escape the bees' relentless pursuit. The dedicated team worked tirelessly to protect the orangutans, enduring constant bee attacks that persisted throughout the ordeal.



A moment before Hope & Amory was released

Amory was finally found around 1:00 pm, still being chased by the bees. Staff and monitoring teams had to jump into the water to avoid being attacked by bees. An unfortunate circumstance happened to Amory, who doesn't like water. Instead, he ran around and found shelter in a dead tree hollow, and he stayed there for a few hours. However, Hope could not be found until 4:00 p.m. Throughout this incident, neither Amory nor Hope was able to find food due to the constant threat from the bees.

We were quite relieved that it started raining around 4:00 pm, causing the bees to stay away. This ends the bee's challenging encounter, allowing the team to regroup and focus on Amory and Hope. As a result of this prolonged chase, the two orangutans had no opportunity to find food.

This unexpected event is a reminder of the unpredictable nature of NATURE in the conservation world. Our team will continue to monitor Amory and Hope, providing the necessary support during their transition to the wild. We are committed to ensuring their safety, enabling them to adapt to new environments and develop important survival skills.



Amory trying to explore despite the swarms of the bees

On the second day of observation, June 17, 2023, Amory briefly disappeared. He was seen going up and down the slope, and as he climbed higher, the number of bees following him decreased. Amory played around Dora's nest, an orangutan that had been released in February. At that time, he found a bee's nest, took some honey from the treetop, and was then chased by bees. He descended and sought refuge in the leafy bushes before finally staying still. Despite being pursued by bees, Amory managed to consume a small amount of honey he had obtained.

Later, Amory built a new nest in front of the flying camp from 15:16 to 15:54. After building the nest, he stayed in the area for a while, not moving much, and occasionally only went out to gather more tree branches to reinforce his nest. His nest was separate from Hope's.

On the third day of observation, June 18, 2023, Amory's activities started at 05:20. Amory was seen near his nest, where he appeared to be urinating. After leaving the nest, he explored a bit higher on the hilltop before descending back to the release point, where he built a new nest. He then climbed higher and ate a termite nest before descending again towards the release point.

Next, Amory walked towards the estuary of the Rongun River, playing around the area and crossing the Rongun River through the connected canopy bridges formed by the trees. Although he encountered some bees, the number of attacks was not as high as the previous day. Amory briefly built a resting nest under a tree but soon moved and built a nest on a different tree. He then moved again and built another nest. Amory built several nests on the forest floor, but those nests were only temporarily occupied. Amory's nest was not far from Hope's nest, although Hope preferred to stay in the trees.

During the fourth day of observation, June 19, 2023, the observation started at 05:11, and Amory was found near his nest. Shortly after that, he left the nest. Interestingly, Hope had moved from her previous sleeping location and shared a nest with Amory.

Amory was seen consuming root fruits while exploring around. As he explored, a swarm of bees once again surrounded him. Both Amory and Hope started running up the hill, and eventually, they disappeared. They were last seen fleeing on the forest floor, trying to escape from the pursuing bees.

Search efforts were immediately conducted in the direction they disappeared. All nests in the treetops were checked before descending to the release point. The search continued around the area of their disappearance until late afternoon. The monitoring team expanded their search area to the riverbank upstream towards the flying camp area and then returned to the initial release point. Both of them were last seen heading towards the Rongun area.



A lot of trees grows flower this time, and it is very suitable for bees to gather nectar



Amory hide on the forest floor to avoid the bees

Meanwhile, on the second day of Hope's observation, the monitoring team arrived at the nest at 06:02, and Hope was already out of the nest. It was unclear whether she was exploring or running from the bees that were chasing her. The monitoring team momentarily lost contact and searched the surrounding area. Shortly after that, Amory came from above, followed by a considerable number of bees, and the observer was also attacked by the bees brought by Amory.

Due to the bee attack, the observation was briefly disrupted, and at 07:32, the monitoring team lost track of Hope again. The team searched the area and eventually found Hope hiding inside a hollow tree trunk. From 09:00 onwards, Hope didn't move much and appeared to be in pain, with her entire body swollen from the bee stings.

At 11:00, Hope climbed a tree but was attacked by bees, causing her to fall to the ground. She didn't move for a while, possibly due to injuries. Despite being stung by bees, Hope managed to consume some food such as shoots and young leaves.

At 13:00, Hope started moving again, seeking shelter in another smaller tree. She continued to be followed by bees, and the monitoring team tried to observe while also driving away the bees that were following the observer. In the evening, Hope only built a nest on the forest floor and appeared unwell, lying on her back.

On the third day of observation, the monitoring team arrived at the nest at 05:18, and Hope had moved to her old nest located above her forest floor nest. When the observer approached, Hope came out of the nest. She climbed a nearby tree and started eating, but was soon disturbed by bees, preventing her from consuming a significant amount of food. She descended by gliding and sought refuge in the nest located on the forest floor.

At 09:52, Hope left the nest and explored the banks of the Rongun River for about 25 minutes. Then she returned to the nest while running to avoid the pursuing bees. She remained inside the nest, only occasionally briefly coming out to stretch her body and observe the bees before returning inside.

Hope came out again to eat, but due to the presence of many bees, she decided to bring the forest fruits she obtained back to the nest to consume. Her nest remained safe from bee attacks as she folded and spread all the leaves over her body, providing protection from the bees.



Hope actively explore before the bees attacked

At 14:29, Hope ventured into the upper canopy of the forest along the riverbank, heading towards the flying camp area. She consumed an adequate amount of food during this exploration as the number of bees had decreased. Hope appeared quite curious when she saw the tarp across the river where the flying camp was located. However, she soon resumed her exploration towards the initial release point. There, she built another relatively large nest but quickly fled as if running from something, and then descended to the riverbank. At the release point, Hope built another large nest, where she eventually rested and slept.

On the fourth day of observation, the monitoring team arrived at the nest at 05:11, and Hope came out of the nest. It turned out that Hope had moved from her previous nest the previous night and moved to Amory's nest. As they explored, they attempted to flee from the bees, so now both of them were followed by a group of bees. Eventually, they ran up the hill until they disappeared. The monitoring team immediately searched in the direction they disappeared, checking all the nests they previously occupied. Then, the monitoring team returned to the release point and continued searching the surrounding area until evening.

The search for these two orangutans has continued for 21 days after losing track of them, starting from June 19, 2023. The monitoring team will continue to search, especially around the release point and extending the Rongun area. Now the monitoring team is continuing the search, and the latest information regarding the search was obtained on June 23, 2023.



The beehives are scattered around the forest, and it interrupts both the orangutan and the observer



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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