Christmas Treat for Orangutans at Jerora Forest School & Sintang Quarantine Center

As the festive season approaches, Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) once again organized its annual Christmas Treat for orangutans at Jerora Forest School and the Sintang Quarantine Center. This activity is designed as part of SOC's ongoing environmental enrichment program to support the physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being of orangutans undergoing rehabilitation programs.

Natural Christmas Tree Enrichment at Jerora Forest School

One of the main enrichment activities was the creation of a natural Christmas tree, constructed using a bamboo framework. The structure was designed to resemble a traditional Christmas tree and decorated with coconut leaves and a variety of fruits that are safe for orangutans to consume. The use of natural materials such as bamboo and coconut leaves ensures safety while also providing familiar textures and scents for the orangutans. Fruits were placed at different heights and positions, encouraging the orangutans to climb, reach, and coordinate their hands and feet—behaviors that are essential for developing motor skills, balance, and agility. In addition to physical stimulation, this enrichment also serves as cognitive enrichment. Orangutans are required to observe, plan, and choose the most effective strategies to access the food, indirectly enhancing their problem-solving abilities and building individual confidence.

Fruit Skewers: Feeding Stimulation and Natural Foraging Behavior

The Christmas Treat activities also included fruit skewers, consisting of pieces of fruit arranged in a way that makes them more challenging to access. This method of food presentation encourages orangutans to spend more time obtaining their food, closely mimicking natural foraging behavior in the wild.

Through variations in texture, color, and aroma, the fruit skewers provide important sensory stimulation that helps prevent boredom during the rehabilitation period. This activity also supports a more natural feeding rhythm, contributing to digestive health and balanced energy intake.

Durian Feast Enrichment

The most anticipated part of the Christmas Feast series of activities is the durian feast enrichment. Durian is a favoured fruit among orangutans in the wild and is known for its strong aroma and unique texture, which effectively stimulates the sense of smell and exploratory behavior. The presentation of durian is not limited to consumption alone, but also emphasizes the process of opening and handling the fruit. This activity promotes hand strength, precision, and motoric coordination, while providing a natural sense of reward when the orangutans successfully access the food. Although durian is high in energy, it is provided in controlled portions and adjusted to each individual's nutritional needs, in line with responsible feeding management practices.

Rescuing Lulung

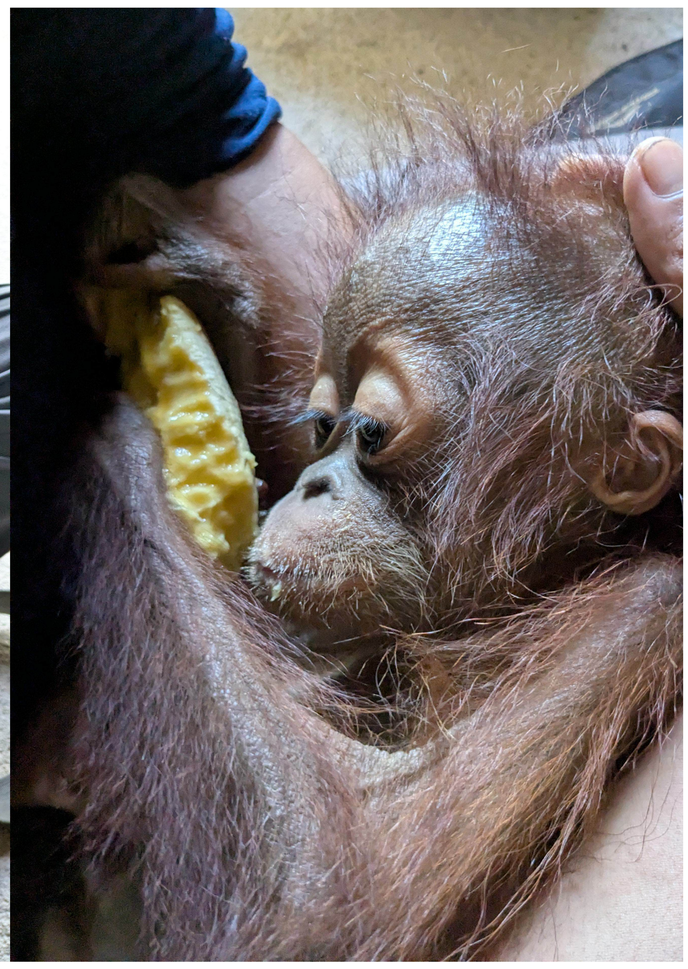
As 2025 draws to a close, the Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) Rehabilitation Center welcomed a new arrival: a male infant orangutan later named Lulung.

Lulung's rescue began following a report from local residents on December 14, 2025. In response, the SOC team, in collaboration with the West Kalimantan (BKSDA), immediately carried out a rescue operation involving an infant orangutan located in Jerora II, Akcaya Subdistrict, Sintang District, Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan. Lulung is estimated to be seven months old. Based on information gathered, Lulung was previously obtained by residents from a remote area of Nanga Pinoh (PT. Erna), which borders Central Kalimantan.

Lulung is an orphaned orangutan whose mother was killed during illegal gold mining activities in the forest. Following the loss of his mother, Lulung was taken to an illegal mining camp, where he remained for approximately one week. He was later kept overnight in the Pinoh area before being brought to Sintang. During the time he was kept outside his natural habitat, Lulung was fed inappropriate food such as rice water and cakes, which posed serious risks to his health and development. At the time of the rescue, Lulung was suffering from a fever. The SOC team responded swiftly by transporting him to Jerora Forest School for intensive medical care. Medical treatment included the administration of medications and intravenous (IV) fluid therapy. During the first few days following the rescue, Lulung underwent two blood examinations, as well as X-ray and fecal analyses. Overall, his condition showed positive improvement and became increasingly stable. His appetite was observed to be good, although his diet remained dominated by soft foods such as bananas, which are appropriate for his very young age.

Lulung is scheduled to undergo a one-month quarantine period, an essential phase in the rehabilitation process. This quarantine period aims to ensure that his health condition is fully stabilized and to prevent the risk of disease transmission before he gradually begins to interact and integrate with other orangutans at Jerora Forest School. Lulung's case once again highlights the critical importance of public awareness regarding the protected status of orangutans and the serious consequences of poaching and habitat destruction. Infant orangutans like Lulung cannot survive without their mothers, making every act of hunting a long-term threat to the survival of orangutan populations in the wild.

Sintang Orangutan Center hopes that Lulung will successfully progress through all stages of rehabilitation —from physical recovery and learning natural behaviors to developing essential survival skills. With proper care and a supportive rehabilitation environment, Lulung is expected to one day be released back into the wild and live freely in his natural forest habitat as part of a healthy and sustainable ecosystem.



Participation of Sintang Orangutan Center in the 2025 Iban Sadap Weaving Festival

Concluding its activities for 2025, Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) had the opportunity to participate in the 2025 Iban Sadap Weaving Festival, held at the Sadap Longhouse in Menua Sadap Village, Embaloh Hulu Subdistrict, Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan. The three-day festival, which took place from December 18 to 20, 2025, carried the theme "Caring for Nature, Weaving Knowledge," a powerful message that highlights the interconnectedness of culture, nature, and the collective identity of the Dayak Iban Sadap community. SOC's participation in this festival reflects the organization's commitment to expanding public awareness efforts, particularly in areas that still have the potential to serve as habitats for wild orangutans. The Embaloh Hulu region is known to retain significant forest cover that provides vital living space for wildlife, including orangutans. Therefore, community education is a strategic approach to mitigating potential human–orangutan conflict, while also strengthening the understanding that orangutans are an inseparable part of a healthy forest ecosystem.

Throughout the festival, SOC delivered educational sessions highlighting the interconnected roles of local communities, forests, and orangutans. One example emphasized was the role of orangutans as natural seed dispersers that support forest regeneration. Through their feeding activities and movement within the forest canopy, orangutans help maintain plant diversity, which ultimately supports the availability of forest resources for human communities. This understanding is essential in fostering the perspective that protecting orangutans also means safeguarding the balance of forest ecosystems that sustain local livelihoods.

In addition to workshop sessions, SOC also hosted an information booth presenting its core rehabilitation framework, known as the 3R approach (Rescue, Rehabilitation, and Release), which outlines the center's efforts in rescuing, rehabilitating, and eventually releasing orangutans back into their natural habitat.
The Iban Sadap Weaving Festival also shows the traditional weaving process, including the use of natural dyes derived from roots, leaves, tree bark, and forest fruits. This practice reflects local knowledge passed down through generations and demonstrates the close relationship between the Sadap community and the surrounding forest. Protecting natural dye plants indirectly supports forest conservation, as the sustainability of traditional weaving depends on the continued availability of healthy and diverse natural resources.

Through its participation in the 2025 Iban Sadap Weaving Festival, SOC hopes to encourage the community to further strengthen their cultural identity while reinforcing collective awareness that cultural preservation and environmental conservation are deeply interconnected and cannot be separated. By integrating local cultural values with conservation education, the festival serves as a platform for dialogue that brings together tradition, knowledge, and collaborative efforts to protect nature for future generations.

ABOUT
SINTANG ORANGUTAN CENTER

The Sintang Orangutan Center (SOC) is a local environmental NGO that colaborate 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.

Sintang Orangutan Center

Jl. M. Saad No.8-Sintang 78611
Kelurahan Tanjung Puri
West Kalimantan - Indonesia
Tel: **+62 565 2022968**
Fax: **+62 565 2022968**
Email: **sintangorangutancenter@gmail.com**
Website: **soc.or.id**

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