
GPOCP: August 2022 - Celebrating World Orangutan Day & A New Orangutan Pregnancy



Dear Friends and Supporters,

IN THIS ISSUE:


I'm back home after spending a fantastic summer in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. I feel so fortunate that we were able to return to Gunung Palung National Park after three long years away. It was wonderful to spend long days in the field with both the research and conservation staff and to see first-hand the great progress that has been made to protect, conserve and study wild orangutans.

Our first article this month was written by Haning Pertiwi, from our Environmental Education and Conservation Awareness team. Haning writes about World Orangutan Day, which just happened on August 19th, and the various activities that took place around the Ketapang and Kayong Utara regencies in order to celebrate this special day.

The second article comes from our Research Manager, Ahmad Rizal. Rizal writes about some very exciting news – Berani, a wild orangutan that we've followed for nearly 15 years, is pregnant with her first baby! Each new baby orangutan gives us hope that this population of wild orangutans will remain stable and protected within Gunung Palung National Park.

I wish you all a happy and healthy September!

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director
[Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program \(GPOCP\)](#)

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IN OTHER NEWS:



A long awaited return to Gunung Palung! [Follow us](#) on Instagram to keep up with the latest new photos from the rainforest.

Celebrating World Orangutan Day 2022

By Haning Pertiwi, Environmental Education & Conservation Awareness Officer

August 19th was World Orangutan Day (WOD)! Last year, in 2021, due to the pandemic, our activities for WOD were carried out in a simple way, and almost all online. But this year, since most daily activities

have returned to normal here in West Kalimantan, Yayasan Palung (GPOCP) celebrated World Orangutan Day with a variety of in-person activities throughout the region.

Our Environmental Education and Conservation Awareness Program held the World Orangutan Day 2022 events in collaboration with Yayasan Palung's conservation youth group volunteers (RK-TAJAM and REBONK). One of our major objectives in the Ketapang and Kayong Utara regencies is to invite people to care about and protect the environment together, and encourage the community to preserve one of the extraordinary species, orangutans. Campaign activities are often carried out during the commemoration of special days nationally and internationally.

World Orangutan Day 2022 in Ketapang

Yayasan Palung and RK-TAJAM conducted campaign activities for the community and young people in Ketapang by holding a special day with the theme "Orangutan Independence Movement" which was held on August 19th. The purpose of this activity was to raise awareness among young people in Ketapang Regency about the important role of orangutans in the rainforest ecosystem and their connection with humans. The activities carried out included a coloring contest, puppet show, puzzle contest, learning the *Si Pongo* song, an orangutan quiz, and a Guess the Picture game.



Young students pose with their prizes from the WOD coloring contest, alongside their teachers and RK-TAJAM volunteers.

World Orangutan Day 2022 in Kayong Utara

In the Kayong Utara Regency, activities to commemorate WOD 2022 were held in Padu Banjar Village in Simpang Hillir District, from August 20th-21st. All activities were carried out by Yayasan Palung, REBONK youth group volunteers, members of nature lovers clubs from two local high schools, and members of the Customary Forest Management Board (LPHD) of Banjar Lestari Customary Forest, Padu Banjar Village.



REBONK youth group volunteers pose in the Bajar Lestari forest with signs they created for WOD.

Padu Banjar (and the Banjar Lestari Customary Forest) is located within the Sungai Paduan Peat Protection Forest – an area of 6,788 hectares which we have helped to get designated as customary forest land. Padu Banjar Village manages 2,883 ha of this area, which is peat swamp forest and a comfortable habitat for orangutans to live in.

During this two-day event in Padu Banjar, we held many activities. On the first day, we had a community discussion about World Orangutan Day, covering topics such as why we want to commemorate this day, and the relationship between the community, the forest and this special day. Additionally, Pak Samsidar (head of the Banjar Lestari LPHD) presented educational material about peat swamp forests.

On the second day, we carried out a forest rehabilitation activity, planting 100 new seedlings in an area that was previously burned from forest fires. This tree planting activity helped to motivate volunteers and the community, and demonstrate that maintaining and preserving the forest is very important for future generations and the preservation of wildlife.

We hope you all had a happy World Orangutan Day this year!



Volunteers and Padu Banjar village members plant tree seedlings in an area of land previously subject to forest fires.

Announcing a New Orangutan Pregnancy

By Ahmad Rizal, Research Manager

Hello everyone! Do you still remember the good news that we shared in our [May newsletter](#) about the new baby orangutan that we followed? Finding new baby orangutans is one of the most exciting things that can happen at Cabang Panti Research Station (CPRS) and always makes us happy. This month, the orangutan research team is very excited to share some more good news! On August 14th, one of the wild orangutans, Berani, who we have followed since she was an infant, tested positive on a pregnancy test!

Our team first met Berani in 2008, when she was found with her mother Bibi, by Wahyu Susanto, who is now our Research Director. At that time, we estimated Berani to be about 3-4 years old. Berani was a very *galak* (fierce) young orangutan. She liked to throw twigs and branches, but never seemed afraid when assistants first started to follow her. This is how she got the name “Berani” which means “brave.”



"Berani" the orangutan in 2017.

The team continued to record data on Bibi and Berani for many years. By 2013, it seemed like Berani had become independent from her mother, and she was then considered an adolescent. Then, in 2015, Bibi was seen with a new baby who was later named Bayas! Even now, Berani is often seen “partying” with Bibi and Bayas and playing with her younger sibling. Due to recent genetic analysis, we also now know that Berani’s father is a flanged male named Codet. In recent years we have thought Berani would soon get pregnant as she is old enough and has been observed spending time and having consortships with adult male orangutans.



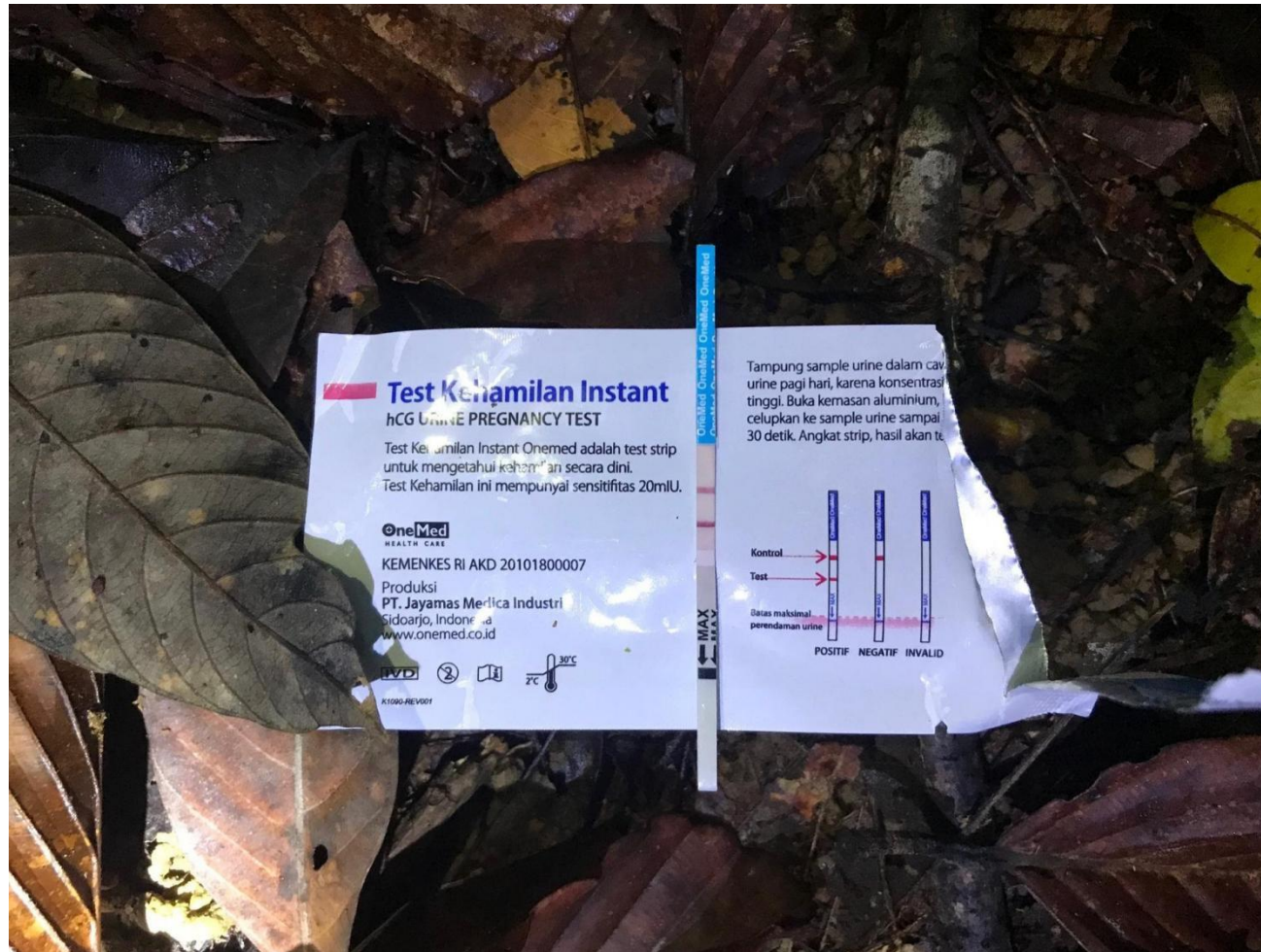
Berani (upper right) “parties” with Bosman, an unflanged male orangutan in 2018.

On June 10, 2022, one of our research assistants, Jaka (Jak) found Berani in the forest and followed her to her night nest. The next day I joined two field assistants, Hassan and Toto, along with a student from the National University (UNAS) to follow Berani for a full day. That morning we collected a urine sample and I was able to conduct a pregnancy test with that urine. However, the results we got were a little

vague (it wasn't clear how the lines were reading). I think this might be because some rainwater got mixed in with the urine since it was a rainy morning. Once the sun came up and we could see Berani more clearly, we tried to take photos and videos of the orangutan's genitals and nipples to confirm some morphological characteristics that are usually seen when orangutans are pregnant. However, that first day we were quite unlucky because she always travelled between tall trees and it was difficult to see her. The assistants and I thought maybe there was some swelling in Berani's genitals and nipples.

That evening, I had a discussion with all the assistants and explained that we needed to try to focus on collecting a urine sample and doing a pregnancy test each day, and see if Berani was showing any signs of pregnancy. We continued following Berani for five days, however it was very rainy each morning which made it difficult to collect urine. I joked that maybe Berani wanted to keep it a secret if she was really pregnant! On the fifth night, Berani made a nest up the mountain, along a trail quite far from our camp, so we let her go and stopped the follow series.

Fast forward to August 13th, Jak found Berani again! After two months since the last time we saw her, Jak followed her to the night nest. The next morning I went with Jak and Toto to Berani's nest, with a new pregnancy test in hand. We arrived at the nest early in the morning and waited for the orangutan to wake up. The weather was very clear that morning with no rain. Berani woke up around 6am and then immediately urinated. Jak was able to collect a urine sample and then we did another pregnancy test. Wow! The results were positive! We were all so happy.



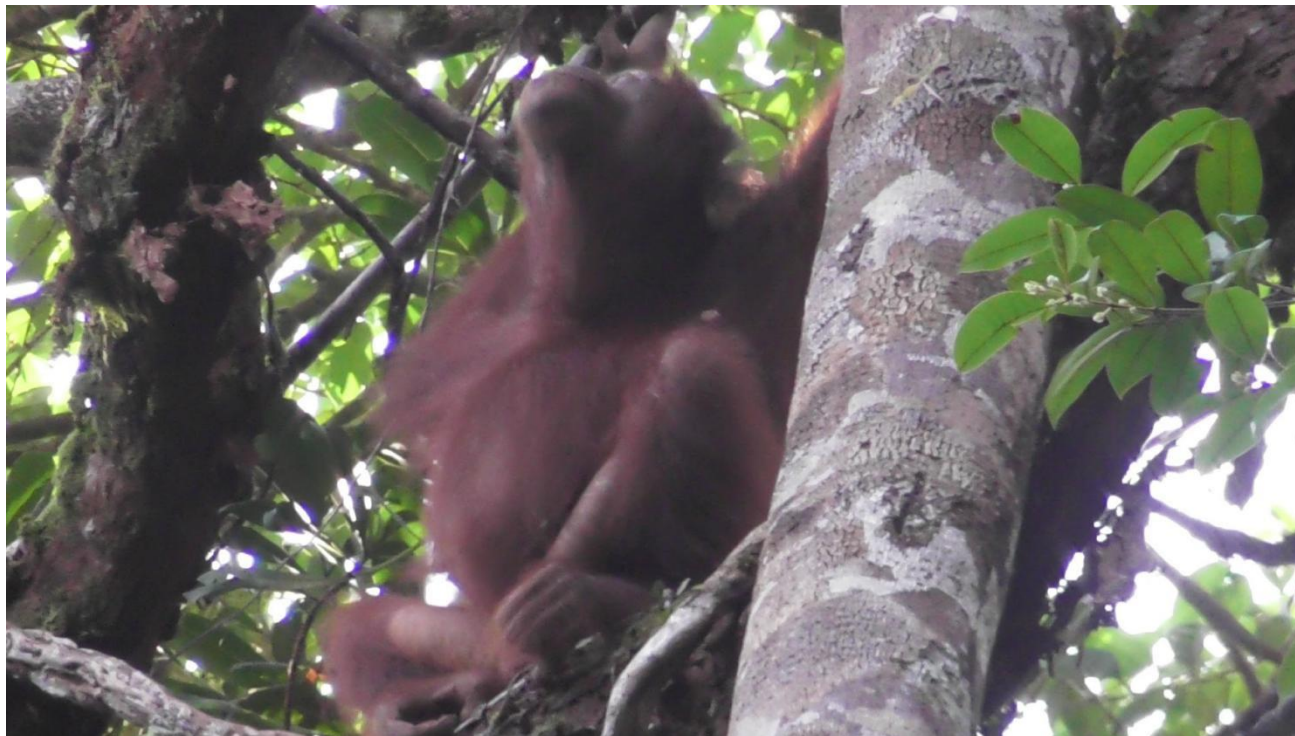
A pregnancy test taken on August 13th. The two pink lines confirm that Berani is pregnant! Regular pregnancy tests made for humans can be used on wild orangutans – it detects the same hormone, hCG, which is produced at the beginning of pregnancy in both humans and orangutans.

Later in the day we were able to take more photos and videos, and continued to check on Berani's physical features using binoculars. We could see that her stomach (which is usually big and round already) had grown quite large. We could also see that her genitals looked swollen and her nipples were enlarged, so we felt very confident that she was definitely pregnant. We did another test on her urine back at the camp lab, and again the next day, and the results continued to come back positive.

The field assistants also noticed a slight change in Berani's behavior. Everyone here knows that Berani is one of the orangutans who travels a lot. However, during these days she spent much more time resting than traveling. This reminded me of following an orangutan, Walimah, while I was here in 2019 to

conduct my senior thesis research. Walimah was very pregnant at the time and seemingly spent the entire day just resting and eating.

Unfortunately, after the second day of the follow, we lost Berani due to very strong winds which made it too difficult to see her in the forest. This was disappointing, but we were all very happy with the data we were able to collect for Berani. It is so special to be able to collect data on this orangutan from the time that she was a young juvenile until now, into adulthood, and then see that she is pregnant. We are happy to know that Berani will soon have a little baby that will join our “family” at Cabang Panti Research Station. Berani's pregnancy is also one of the motivations for us to continue doing research on orangutans, to protect and preserve orangutans and their habitat.



Berani in August 2022. Her abdomen is now even larger than normal!

We are very happy to share this good news with everyone who has continued to support our project. And what a great time to announce this news in August, the month of World Orangutan Day! We are so grateful to continue our partnership with the National University, in collaboration with the Gunung Palung National Park Bureau, in order to learn more about this special species of animal.

Management of Cabang Panti Research Station is conducted by the Gunung Palung National Park Office (BTN-GP) in collaboration with GPOCP/YP. Scientific research is carried out in conjunction with the Universitas Nasional (UNAS) and Boston University.

"He that plants trees loves others besides himself."

– Thomas Fuller



Our Contact Information

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation
Program

P.O. Box G

[1661 Massachusetts Ave](#)

[Lexington, MA 02420](#)

1-617-353-7723

<https://www.savegporangutans.org/>

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YAYASAN PALUNG



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