
GPOCP October 2025 - Training Tomorrow's Environmental Stewards & New Baby Orangutan Discovered by Drone



Dear Friends and Supporters,

This month we have some wonderful news to share! We are very proud to report that we have received government approval for our newest and largest village forest - Selinsing Raya. This brings our total hectares of community forest protection to over 15,000 ha. Protecting these forests for the future requires engagement and commitment of the youngest generation. Our Youth Volunteer groups are designed to do just that and in this month's first article, Education Manager, Widiya Octa Selfiany, tells us about a training held to both educate and inspire young people from the region to get involved in orangutan and habitat protection.

Our second big news is that Bibi has given birth! Last summer one of our most famous orangutans, Bibi, suffered a late stage miscarriage and so we have been very anxiously following her most recent pregnancy. We are thrilled to welcome this new little one into the population of orangutans that allow us to follow them and uncover their life stories. In our second article field assistant Herman explains how he and Sahril found Bibi using our thermal drone. This discovery highlights how using new technologies is transforming our ability to find and follow this most secretive of the great apes. We decided to name the baby Barita, after our long time board member, Dr. Barita Mullang. Pak Barita is a passionate conservationist and advocate for Indonesian primatology. The

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Training Tomorrow's
Environmental Stewards**

**Discovered by Drone: Birth of a
New Forest Guardian**



*Jane Goodall at International
Primatological Society
Congress, Chicago, 2016, with*

name Barita also comes from *berita*, or news in Indonesian, and so symbolizes the good news that this new birth brings.

Finally, this month the world has lost one of the strongest voices for nature with the passing of Jane Goodall at age 91. Jane was the world's most prominent spokesperson for the protection of the great apes. Her ground breaking studies of wild chimpanzees in Gombe National Park, Tanzania, laid the foundation for all future wild great ape studies. She showed the world the secrets that could be revealed from studying humans' closest relatives in their natural habitats. After many years of studying wild chimpanzees, Jane became a tireless advocate for ape conservation, traveling the world to promote protection and understanding. She challenged the citizens of all countries to become guardians of the Earth and its creatures. I will forever be grateful for the inspiration and the kindness that Jane showed me on many occasions when we met at conferences, talks and panel discussions. She will be greatly missed, but the light that she has lit for ape conservation will continue to illuminate the work of those who continue her mission.

Have a happy and thanks-filled November!

Sincerely,



Cheryl Knott, PhD
Executive Director

[Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program \(GPOCP\)](#)

Gunung Palung orangutan researchers (pictured left to right Andrea Blackburn, Cheryl Knott, Jane Goodall, Caitlin O'Connell, Katherine Scott, Amy Scott).

Check out the latest publication from our team on a case of an orangutan adoption [here](#).

Join Save Wild
Orangutans

DONATE

Training Tomorrow's Environmental Stewards

By Widiya Octa Selfiany, Environmental Education Manager

On October 21, 2025, the courtyard of the South Ketapang Forest Management Unit (KPH) was alive with the energy of nearly one hundred high school students from across Ketapang. They had gathered for the Conservation Plot Training event organized by GPOCP/Yayasan Palung's Environmental Education Program in collaboration with the South Ketapang Forest Management Unit. Accompanied by their teachers, the students arrived eager to learn and take part in hands-on conservation activities.

Pak Kuswadi, SP, M.Hut, head of the South Ketapang Forest Management Unit officially opened the training and emphasized the importance of collaboration between education and forestry institutions to foster environmental stewardship. "Forest preservation cannot be done by one group alone," he said. "It requires the involvement of everyone—especially the younger generation who will become the future guardians of our forests."



Students and teachers visiting the agroforestry demonstration plot.

This training is part of GPOCP/Yayasan Palung's ongoing effort to strengthen young people's awareness and understanding of nature conservation. The program combines both theory and practice—inviting participants to apply sustainable natural resource management techniques through hands-on activities in a conservation demonstration plot. It also serves as a recruitment opportunity for RK-TAJAM, a youth volunteer group supported by GPOCP/Yayasan Palung that actively promotes environmental protection in schools and communities.

The training specifically aimed to deepen young people's understanding of how protecting nature can go hand-in-hand with sustainable livelihoods. Participants first learned about Mini Agroforestry Plots, an integrated system combining forestry and agriculture that supports both conservation and local livelihoods. Students learned that protecting nature doesn't mean sacrificing economic needs—in fact, it can create mutually beneficial solutions for people and the planet.



Participants learn how to make Wood Vinegar, an eco-friendly fertilizer and natural pesticide.

The next session covered Silvopasture, a system that integrates trees and livestock in the same area in ways that benefit both. Participants discovered how trees and animals can coexist sustainably, enhancing ecological balance. This was followed by a discussion on Silvofishery, an environmentally friendly aquaculture approach that combines fish farming with mangrove planting to maintain water quality and protect fish habitats.

Students learned about Permanent Nurseries and were able to practice techniques for cultivating tree seedlings used in forest restoration. Another popular session introduced Wood Vinegar, an innovative, eco-friendly product made through oxygen-free wood burning. It can be used as a natural pesticide and organic fertilizer—something that fascinated the participants. The group even took part in a Fire Prevention and Suppression Simulation where they learned basic forest fire prevention and firefighting techniques, including the use of simple tools and field safety procedures.



Students visit the seedling nursery.

In the afternoon, students put their new knowledge into action. Divided into small groups, they planted seedlings, set up agroforestry plots, and observed wood vinegar production firsthand. The atmosphere was one of teamwork and excitement, as teachers and facilitators encouraged the students to learn by doing.

By the end of the day, 30 students proudly volunteered to join RK-TAJAM – GPOCP/Yayasan Palung's youth conservation network. Remarkably, 29 of the new recruits were young women, a hopeful sign of growing environmental leadership among female students in Ketapang. These new volunteers will continue their training through GPOCP/Yayasan Palung's programs, including environmental campaigns, tree planting, and education initiatives in their schools.



Students practice using a hose designed to extinguish fires.

As the day drew to a close, participants shared reflections on their experiences. Many expressed how meaningful and inspiring the training had been. “I never knew protecting the environment could be this fun,” said one student. “I want to join RK-TAJAM so I can keep learning and contribute more.”

The day’s activities were a powerful reminder that conservation is about more than planting trees—it’s about planting values of care and responsibility in the hearts of the next generation. These students are the future protectors of Ketapang’s forests, ready to carry the torch of sustainability forward. With continued collaboration, initiatives like this will keep inspiring and empowering a new generation of environmental stewards.



Participants in the Conservation Plot Training event celebrate their day of learning new skills to protect the regions forests.

Discovered by Drone: The Birth of a New Forest Guardian

By Herman, Orangutan Field Assistant

The morning air was biting cold. Dew soaked through our clothes, making our skin shiver. The clock showed 4:50 a.m. when we—Sahril and I—set off from the Cabang Panti Research Station to go search for orangutans using the thermal drone. Only the faint glow of our flashlights lit the path ahead as we followed the forest trail, the thick fog hanging between the trees and limiting our view.



Orangutan field assistants Herman (left) and Sahril (middle) with Laboratory Assistant Ziya Hoiroh (right).

When we reached MB15, one of the clearings suitable for drone flying, we paused. The fog was still heavy, and the sky not yet bright enough to begin our observations. A few minutes later, as the mist began to lift, Sahril prepared the drone while I helped assemble it and install the battery. Once everything was ready and calibrated, the drone's propellers began to spin—the rush of air across our faces signaling the start of our morning search.

The drone rose slowly, reaching a height of about 100 meters, scanning the forest canopy with its infrared sensor for the heat signatures of animals. The first flight headed east toward the sea but found only groups of macaques and gibbons. As the battery ran low, we brought the drone back.



Herman flying one of our drones.

On the second flight, I took over the controls. I directed the drone northwest, then slowly swept south, no more than 400 meters from our starting point. Suddenly, a bright heat spot appeared on the screen—its temperature resembling that of an orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*). We lowered the drone to confirm. Amid the lush green canopy, a nest came into view, and inside it, the silhouette of an adult orangutan still resting.

As we zoomed in, we noticed a tiny hand. Moments later, the small head of an infant orangutan appeared. At that moment, both of us were certain—we had found Bibi, a female orangutan we've long been observing, and she now had a newborn. We quickly marked the coordinates as a waypoint, and once the drone returned, we hiked toward the location to confirm our identification from the ground.

About an hour later, the orangutan emerged from her nest. We could finally see her clearly—it was indeed Bibi and her new baby. It's hard to describe the joy we felt at that moment. After months of waiting since hearing she was pregnant, she had finally given birth.



Bibi with her newborn baby, Barita.

Our Project Director, Cheryl Knott, suggested we name the baby Barita – and we all agreed. This name has two special meanings for us. First, we wanted to honor our long-time board member, orangutan researcher and Indonesian conservationist Dr. Barita Oloan Manullang. Second, Barita's name comes from the Indonesian word *berita*, meaning “news.” The birth of Barita is wonderful news for orangutan conservation—and we hope that this good news heralds many more births in the future.

Barita now joins the growing wild orangutan population of Gunung Palung. Barita's birth is not only a cause for celebration for those of us in the field, but also a small symbol of hope—for the next generation of forest guardians who, in turn, help plant the seeds for a balanced and thriving Earth.



Pak Barita, Yayasan Palung Board Member and orangutan conservationist, on GP40 trip to the Cabang Panti Research Station, June 2025.

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 Faculty of Biology at Universitas Nasional (UNAS) and Boston University.

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” — Dr. Jane Goodall



Our Contact Information

Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation
Program
P.O. Box G
1661 Massachusetts Ave
Lexington, MA 02420
1-908-963-4137
<https://www.savegorangutans.org/>

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage email preferences](#)

Yayasan Palung



*Jl. Kol. Sugiono, no. 28, RT 013/RW 05 Sampit,
Kec. Delta Pawan, Kabupaten Ketapang,
Kalimantan Barat 78811, Indonesia*
www.yayasanpalung.com

All photographs © Tim Laman, © Wahyu Susanto or © GPOCP