

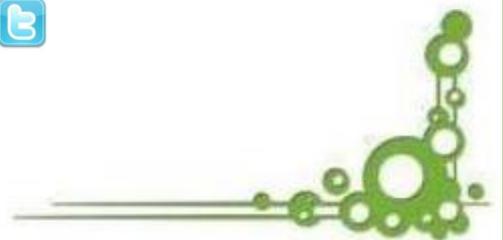


Selamatkan Yaki
Save Sulawesi macaques

NEWSLETTER

March 2013

 www.selamatkanyaki.com 





Dear sponsors, partners and friends,

We are glad to send you our March newsletter!

In this issue, we would like to present the most recent developments from the Selamatkan Yaki programme with our latest achievements and our future focuses. Here are just a few highlights:

- the addition of two new full time members of staff in April
- the preliminary conclusions of our Bacan Island Reconnaissance Expedition
- the beginning of activities for our two years project in the Tangkoko Nature Reserve
- the growth of our education and awareness raising strategy

Team updates



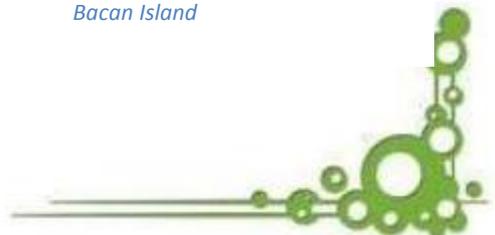
Thirza Loffeld, Education and Advocacy Coordinator

Next month, we will have the pleasure to welcome two “new” staff members in our team: Thirza Loffeld will join us as Education and Advocacy Coordinator and Junita Siwi will become a full time employee as Education Officer. You may have noticed the word new is written in quotation marks since they are actually not strictly speaking new! Junita, who specialised in ecotourism for her BSc thesis, has already teamed up with Selamatkan Yaki for different projects. She participated in the 2011 and 2012 Minahasa village survey studies, in our 2012 pilot environmental education project and was in the village survey team during the Bacan island reconnaissance expedition. As for Thirza, who graduated from Oxford Brookes University with a MSc in Primate Conservation, she previously volunteered with us from August to September last year and worked with Harry on our education and awareness raising programme. We are really looking forward to having both of them added to our team, which is made possible due to the combined support of all our sponsors.

While active conservation measures like our core Tangkoko Rejuvenation project are essential, we believe that awareness raising campaigns and education programmes are two key solutions to reduce the threats faced by critically endangered species. Having two full time new team members focusing on these conservation approaches will enable us to spread our message throughout the whole Minahasa region.



Junita Siwi, Education Officer, during a village survey on Bacan Island



Project updates

Bacan Reconnaissance Expedition

We have now completed the Bacan Reconnaissance Expedition as planned, thanks to the generous support of Chester Zoo via the conservation and research funding 2012 and our partners Taronga Conservation Society Australia and Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust (WWCT), UK for their in-kind support. We are glad to be able to present our preliminary results and observations.

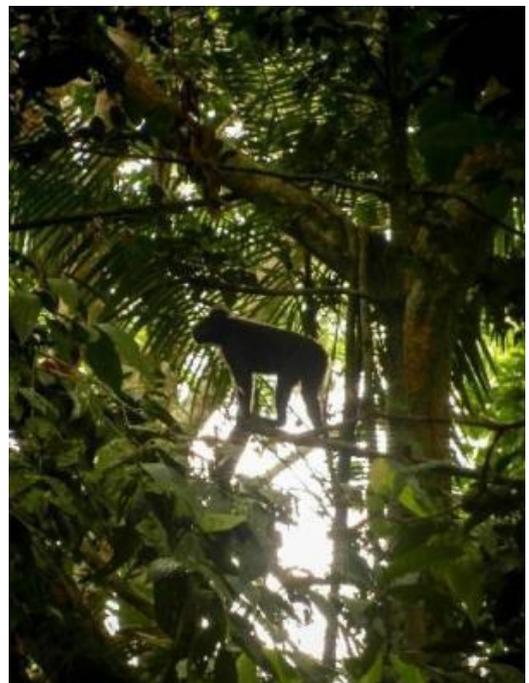


Our team: (left to right) Junita Siwi, Harry Hilser, Vicky Melfi, Ismail Agung, Andrew Bowkett, Gaëtan Masson

As part of an integrated conservation programme (Selamatkan Yaki), with the Pacific Institute for Sustainable Development (PI, Indonesia) and WWCT, a reconnaissance trip was proposed to answer long held questions regarding the *Macaca nigra* situation on Bacan Island. The aims of the research were first to assess if *M. nigra* were still extant on the island and then to estimate their abundance relative to the population in Minahasa, on Sulawesi. Simultaneously we planned to evaluate population-specific anthropogenic threats and to assess current levels of illegal resource use and local attitudes towards wildlife and conservation.

M. nigra abundance was measured via encounter rates during reconnaissance walks (or 'recces'), while the community assessments were implemented via surveys of villages surrounding Gunung Sibela Nature Reserve. The latter will be compared with surveys previously conducted in Minahasa, Sulawesi. Whilst helping us answering immediate questions, the expedition also provided the programme with the foundations for long-term research, including selection of potential field sites and basic infrastructure for continuation of survey work in the region.

In total, 18 recces were walked across Bacan Island (2 undertaken daily), largely focussed on the central region surrounding Gunung Sibela Nature Reserve. The presence of *M. nigra* was recorded at all sites, via auditory and visual observations, with abundance varying between sites. The largest amount of sightings was recorded on recces close to the village of Sawadai, travelling West and South West; on both transects 2 or more sightings were made along a 4km recce with estimates of up to 40 individuals in each group.



A male crested black macaque showing off on Bacan Island

Five villages were visited across Bacan Island and questionnaires completed by 40 respondents per village. Data from the village surveys have been entered and are awaiting analysis. However, anecdotally it appears that:



Pak Samsul, our local contact and field researcher, during a village survey

- Most villagers do not eat macaques, but some did report occasional consumption by themselves or others.
- Pet macaques, as well as many protected bird species, are kept in several villages.
- Most people demonstrated positive attitudes towards macaques and protection of the forest.
- It appears the main threat to the macaque population here on Bacan is encroachment into their habitat.
- Many villagers are not aware of the boundaries of the protected areas, and feel the government could do more.
- Evidence of logging was found within several areas of hutan lindung (protected forest) and cagar alam (nature reserve).
- Evidence of poaching was also found, including snare traps and wooden cage traps, supporting the village survey indications that conflict with crop-raiding macaques and hunting of wildlife are prevalent.



Crested black macaque typical heart shaped bottom

About 15 years ago, research conducted by Dr Barry Rosenbaum and his team reported a population of 170 individuals/km². From our preliminary recces we can also report a very high population abundance of *M. nigra* on Bacan Island. Despite lower rates of consumption and an apparent larger area of contiguous forest habitat than Minahasa, threats such as logging and hunting, for pets or as a result of persecution from crop-raiding are serious potential threats to their long term survival. As a result of our surveys, we have identified that Bacan macaques may constitute an important population of *M. nigra*. Further analyses of genetic material should aid in identifying the connection of the population to those in Minahasa, their native mainland habitat. As such we propose that further research is necessary including more comprehensive survey efforts and feasibility assessments for conservation activities in the region.

Tangkoko Rejuvenation

With the Bacan Reconnaissance Expedition successfully completed, our team will now be able to focus on one of our main projects: The Tangkoko Rejuvenation Programme. We already introduced this project, which has been made possible by the generous support of our sponsors the Mohamed bin Zayed species conservation fund and Save Our Species threatened species grant. Save Our Species is a joint initiative of IUCN, the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank. Its objective is to ensure the long-term survival of threatened species and their habitats). We would like now to present the first stages of the project in more detail.



A female Yaki relaxing on Tangkoko beach

During The first phase, our team will help local officials to execute a comprehensive management evaluation of the Tangkoko Dua-Saudara Batuangus Nature Reserve. All stakeholders involved in the protected area will be invited to participate and we want to make sure that no thoughts, ideas or opinions will be left aside in the process. This evaluation will use two different tools to identify current stakeholder perceptions of Tangkoko's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The first tool will be personal interviews of the reserve staff and other stakeholders involved, while the second tool will be a three day workshop. This workshop, facilitated by local government agencies, will bring together representatives of key stakeholders to enhance the protection of Tangkoko, whilst also developing our pivotal Species Conservation Action Plan, the document that will act as an evidence-based strategy to inform and guide future conservation activities for *M. nigra*.

Interviewing stakeholders to gain individual assessments will start this month (March) and will take place at the different stakeholders' place of work. They will use the Global Environment Fund Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), which will allow us to monitor management improvement later in the programme.

The workshop will benefit from the successful experience of independent key speakers invited to share knowledge and case studies over the three days. We will use the METT and SWOT analyses results as the basis to discuss potential conservation recommendations and a future framework for action to save *M. nigra*. At the conclusion of the workshop, we will invite participants to join a nature protection alliance, a collaborative partnership between all stakeholders sharing the same objectives for the protection of the unique biodiversity of North Sulawesi. Following the workshop, an event will be organised to present the outcomes and feedback, as well as the different actions that will be conducted to reduce the threats faced by Sulawesi crested black macaques. This will lead into the subsequent phases of the Tangkoko project, initiating the next steps to positive developments in and around the nature reserve.



A sub-adult yaki enjoying playing in the river next to Batu Putih village

We will of course be sure to keep you updated on all our different projects.

The whole Selamatkan Yaki team would like to thank again every one of our sponsors, partners and friends without whom nothing would be possible!

The Selamatkan Yaki Team



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