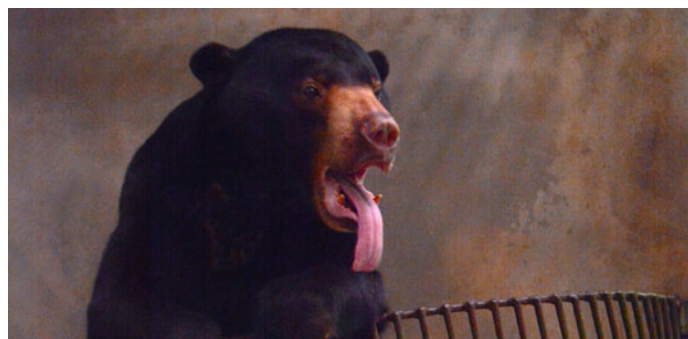


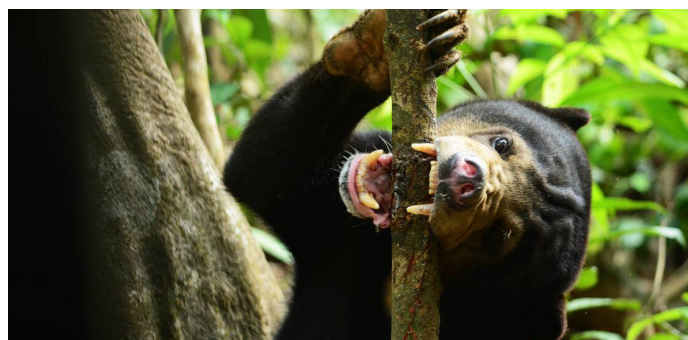


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## Bear Story

### Linggam's New Adventure

#### *The 'Rose' Amongst The 'Thorns'*

Linggam, a male Bornean Sun Bear, is a longterm resident at the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC). 2020 will mark exactly 10 years since he arrived at BSBCC. Linggam is about to turn 16 years of age but unfortunately he has lived a majority of his life in captivity. He was handed over to Sabah Wildlife Department back in 2004 when he was a just a little cub. He was found at a logging camp at Kampung Pinangah and was brought over to Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in the beginning. As he was growing older into a matured bear, he was then relocated to Lok Kawi Wildlife Park before returning back to Sepilok to be cared for under BSBCC.

Under BSBCC's care, Linggam was released into the forest enclosure in 2011 after he went through his fence training. His release into the forest enclosure wasn't a straightforward process as most might expect it to be. Initially, he was afraid and wary of the naturalistic world ahead of him and required plenty of 'baiting' to coax him into venturing into the forest enclosure and being further away from the Bear House. This clearly shows that he was probably habituated to captive surroundings; within bars and on concrete floors and never really knowing that he belongs in the forest.

With the addition of Forest Enclosure 2 in 2015, the sun bears in BSBCC were shifted around between Bear House 1,; which connects to Forest Enclosure 1, and Bear House 2, which connects to Forest Enclosure 2. Since Linggam was always released into Forest Enclosure 1 in solitary, he was shifted to Bear House 2 to give an opportunity to other sun bears who got along in a social grouping to be released into Forest Enclosure 1. Since his relocation, he had not been into the forest enclosure. Linggam's situation had developed due to the increased quantity of sun bears that had fallen under BSBCC's responsibility, and being a mature male, he couldn't go out with the other males, as Linggam was considered by his former 'owners' to be combative. Therefore, the more sociable individuals were being released into forest enclosures while the

unsociable males had to take turns going out.

Fast forwarding to 2019, an initiative was started to introduce Linggam into the forest enclosure once again. Linggam had been sitting in Bear House 2 adjacent to 5 female bears; Susie, Kuamut, Manis, Cera, and Jelita, a stable social group of female sun bears that occupies a section of Forest Enclosure 2. It was decided that Linggam would be integrated into this social group because Linggam never showed aggression towards this group of females through the bars that separated them and if all went well, Linggam would be able to enter the forest enclosure again but this time it would be in a social group setting.



**Image:** Linggam entering into the pen in Bear House 1 back in 2010.



**Image:** Linggam leaving his hind limbs in the Bear House as it is a place he feels safe when he was introduced into the forest enclosure in 2011.





**Image:** Linggam showing off his long tongue

This new adventure of Linggam's started off with a physical interaction with only Susie in the Bear House. At first, with the slightest, sudden glimpse of Linggam, Susie barked, but after getting a good amount a sniffing through a little gap, they had an positive social interaction. After a couple of days, a good friend of Susie's, Kuamut, was introduced to Linggam. This integration was more exciting as Kuamut was equally enthusiastic about meeting Linggam. Then, Manis, the oldest female in the group, was chosen to meet Linggam. Linggam appeared to be most interested with playing around with Manis compared to the other two individuals and Manis was pretty submissive to Linggam's advances. With such approving integration results with Susie, Kuamut and Manis, another progressive step towards releasing Linggam into the forest enclosure was taken. All three of the female bears were incorporated with Linggam in the Bear House, a risky step as the quantity of bears had increased within a much smaller space than an actual forest space. **HOWEVER**, Linggam was not overwhelmed with the quantity of bears that appeared in front of him and the three females were not 'battling' out for Linggam's attention.

After a number of integrations between Linggam

and the three females, Jelita was decided to be his new social engagement. On the day that Jelita was supposed to meet Linggam, Cerah, her good friend decided to not leave Jelita alone in the Bear House. Cerah refused to enter into the forest enclosure to accompany Jelita, who was segregated into an adjacent pen. When both Linggam and Jelita were integrated, the process went on smoothly. However, Cerah on the other hand was not too happy with the setup as she could no longer see Jelita beside her. Cerah started vocalizing and crying out for Jelita. This behavior of Cerah's then made us decide to bring Linggam and Jelita to the pen adjacent to Cerah for her to see the integration between Linggam and Jelita. Cerah did not move away from viewing her good friend and she kept calling out for Jelita. When Jelita climbed up to the hammock, Linggam pursued Jelita as well by climbing the bars. At that moment, while the bars were separating Linggam and Cerah, both of the sun bears got to sniff each other and there was no aggression exhibited. It was then, that Linggam's supposedly first interaction with only Jelita, turned into integration with Cerah as well. **ON THE FIRST DAY!** During the integration, Jelita was observed trying to protect the other as Linggam would play fight with Cerah but ultimately, the integration displayed no aggression

between the sun bears and was successful.

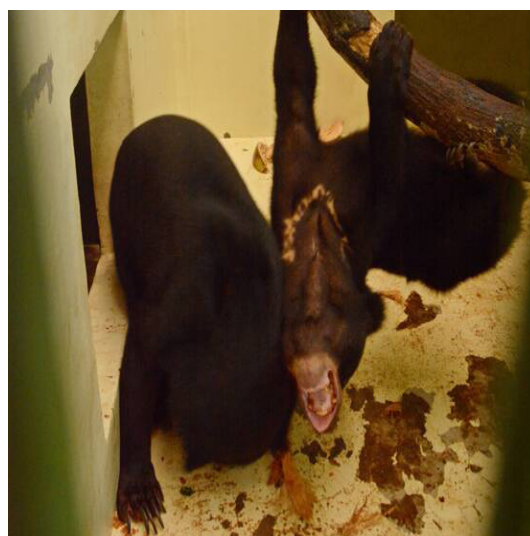
Then, Linggam's integration with the female sun bears was continued with days where Linggam would be integrating either with just two or three female sun bears. After some time, another big step was taken by getting Linggam to interact with all five female sun bears concurrently in the Bear House. The female bears had no issues being put together in the forest enclosure but they would get feisty when placed together in the Bear House. We feared that any form of aggression between the female individuals would trigger aggression in Linggam and cause the entire initiative to go south. Thankfully, the 1<sup>st</sup> integration of all six individuals worked out perfectly. Linggam was able to play fight with any individual while the other individuals who were not actively interacting with Linggam could just continue with any activity in the Bear House. It was such a heartwarming process to see Linggam's social skills with the groups of female sun bears. His behaviour was **NOTHING LIKE** mentioned before. No aggression, just pure playfulness from him and he was good at reading their body language.

Today, Linggam is being sent out to the training pen for him to familiarize himself with a miniature enclosure with electric fence. Upon the completion of this training, he will finally be released back into the forest enclosure with Susie, Kuamut, Manis, Cerah, and Jelita. Hopefully with the help of the female sun bears, he will not fear venturing into the forest enclosure like before. Besides that, Linggam is also afraid to climb into the high structures in the Bear House. Maybe being in a social group, he will slowly be encouraged by the other sun bears to climb up a tree someday. The thought of seeing Linggam finally behaving like his wild counterparts is what BSBCC is all about, **REHABILITATING OUR BORNEAN SUN BEARS!**

*Story by Pradeep Gunasegaran*



**Image:** Linggam (Right) interacting with Cerah (Left) and Jelita (Middle)



**Image:** Linggam (Left) enjoying his integration session with Jelita (Right)



# Bear Story

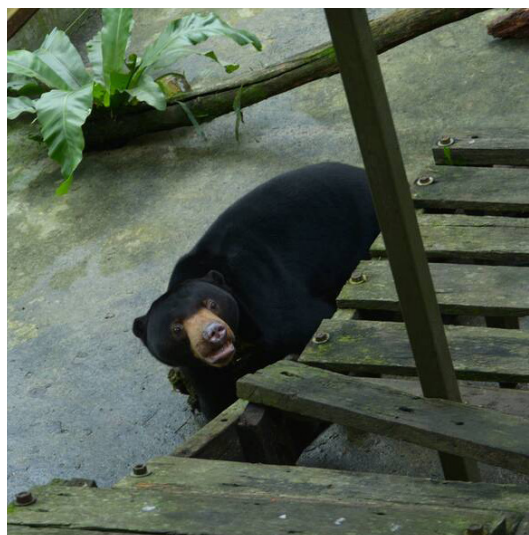
## A Beary Happy New Year from Linggam

There is more exciting news about Linggam this month! After a successful integration session with Susie, Kuamut, Manis, Cerah and Jelita, the next steps to releasing Linggam with the five females into the forest enclosure were taken. Linggam and the female sun bears were rotated into Bear House 2 in order for Linggam to undergo his fence training once again after eight years.

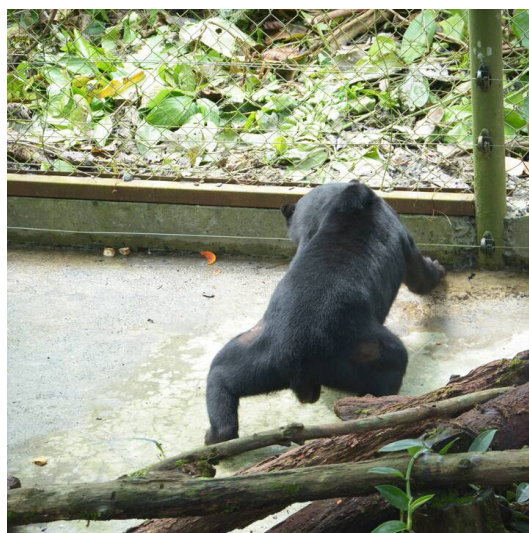
On Christmas Eve of 2019, Linggam was introduced into the training pen to be introduced to the hotwire. On the first day, Linggam only looked outside into the training pen and refused to step into it. He only took the baits that were placed closest to him and consumed the bait in the bear house. He continued to behave the same way for the next two days of his release into the training pen. However, he was a little bit braver each day as he would venture slightly further from the bear house BUT his back legs would still be touching the door of Bear House 2 while he stretched out to take his baits and looked into the training pen. At times he looked into the training pen, he also looked at the food that was 'out of his reach'.

On Day 4, Linggam completely exited into the training pen without his back legs remaining in Bear House 2. The few days of looking at the other bait that was left far from his reach probably pushed him to venture into the training pen. By being in the training pen, he was also able to see Manis, Cerah and Jelita who were around and that probably calmed him down as he slowly explored the area in the training pen that was closest to the bear house.

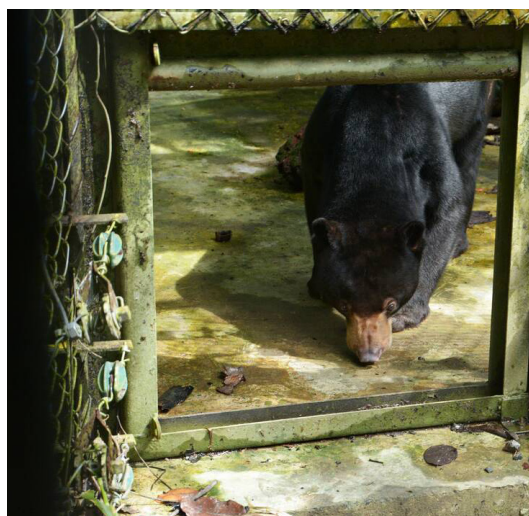
The following day, Linggam was showing more of his bravery and he slowly moved further into the training pen. However, his training process on this day was tougher as there were many other stimulations around the training pen. The sound of the chain saw being used by the staff and the wild pig tailed macaque troop definitely startled him a few times as he kept running



**Image:** Linggam exploring the training pen after he gained the confidence to leave the Bear House



**Image:** Linggam showing his dexterity at grabbing food that was placed underneath the electric wire



**Image:** Linggam investigating and being cautious at the guillotine door that has opened into the forest enclosure



**Image:** *Linggam exploring his new forest enclosure*

back into the bear house. Although he appeared scared multiple times, Linggam showed resilience by sniffing the air in the training pen and slowly making his way out again. By the end of the day, Linggam was ready to remain overnight in the training pen and did not come back into the bear house.

Seeing that he has familiarized with training, the next phase of this training exercise was to get Linggam to touch the electric wire. This activity is important as Linggam would need to recognize the electric wire that would be present in the forest enclosure. Recognizing the electric wire would ensure that Linggam would not attempt to escape from the forest enclosure. Thus, in order to make him touch the electric fence, food was placed closer to the wire. Linggam approached the food but he did not touch the wire. The following day, the food was then placed directly under the electric wire. Shockingly, Linggam showed that he actually remembered the electric fence. Linggam would sniff the food that was placed underneath the electric wire, move a few steps behind, lower his body to the ground and then reach out for the food with one of his legs.

**AFTER EIGHT YEARS**, he still recognized the electric fence. **ASTONISHING!!** The majority of us would believe that animals, especially wild ones, would not have a good enough memory to remember something like this. There and then, Linggam passed his fence training and was given free access from the bear house

into the training pen for him to become comfortable and confident with moving around the two types of pens. By being in the training pen, he was also able to see the forest that he would soon enter to join the five female sun bears.

After twelve days since releasing Linggam into the training pen, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, it was time for Linggam to be released into the forest enclosure. The guillotine door from the training pen to the forest enclosure was initially opened to observe Linggam's reaction. He was immediately curious as he left the bear house into the training pen. Even though he was curious, he was still unsure about stepping into the forest enclosure. All he did was sniff the air at the door and walk along the fence. Seeing that he was really curious, banana coated with honey was thrown at the front of the guillotine door to motivate Linggam to enter the forest enclosure. He was most definitely aware of the treat that was just within his grasp, but due to his fear he was not able to enjoy it. The frustration built up and Linggam began pushing the furniture in the training pen. After a few minutes of throwing a tantrum, Linggam quickly dashed out into the forest enclosure and quickly gobbled up his reward.

The first bear that noticed his success was Cerah. From a distance, she had a good look at Linggam and she slowly tried to approach him. However, she was unsure



about approaching this new individual in the forest enclosure; she moved away and vocalized towards Jelita. As soon as Cerah vocalized, Jelita came and both of them approached Linggam together. As they met, Linggam, Cerah and Jelita clucked at each other. Immediately after interacting, Linggam started moving along the fence of the forest enclosure to explore the environment. Cerah and Jelita just followed behind as Linggam showed that he was not afraid of the forest enclosure. **UNBELIEVABLE!** Eight years ago, when he first entered the forest enclosure, it had taken him a long time to start exploring the environment. Now Linggam was entering the pool of water, sniffing the plants, sniffing the trees, and even sniffing the electric wire. As he was exploring, he then met Susie and they started interacting the same way as they had done in the bear house. After interacting a while, he continued exploring and foraging for food as well. Soon enough, it was Kuamat who came searching for him and they interacted together for a long time. Once he was done, he continued with his exploration of the forest enclosure. Day 1 of being released into the forest enclosure and Linggam behaved liked he truly belonged there, being all confident. Could it be due to the female sun bears that made him relax and enjoy the natural surroundings? Is it possible that an animal that lives in solitary in the wild could be taught to live like a wild bear in captivity by joining a social group? The outcome was astonishing and today, Linggam is enjoying his days being in the elements of nature and being a sun bear with Susie, Kuamat, Manis, Cerah, and Jelita.

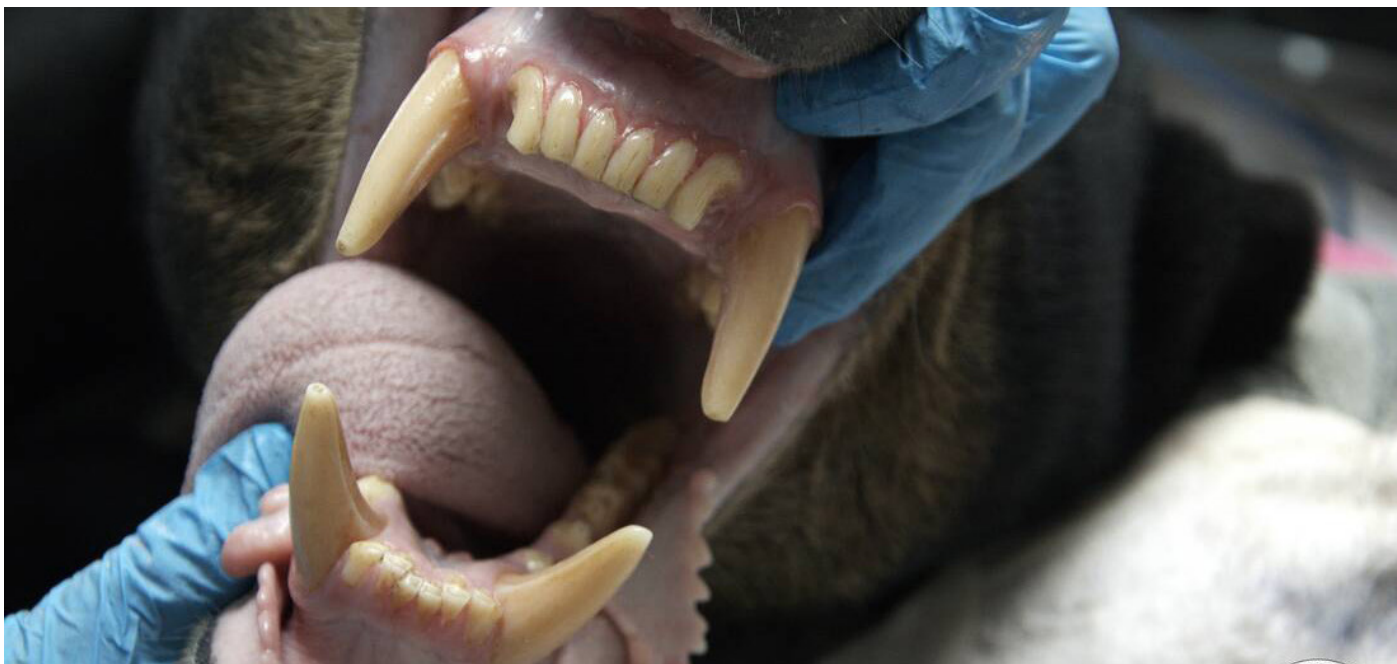
*Story by Pradeep Gunasegaran*



**Image:** Susie (Left) and Linggam (Second from the left) playing with each other as Cerah and Jelita (Right) are sniffing Linggam



**Image:** Kuamat (Left) greeting Linggam (Right) into the female sun bear's forest enclosure



## BSBCC Corner:

### Dental health care for Bornean Sun Bear at BSBCC

2019 was a challenging year where we initiated a new line of health care for our bears. Dental health in captive wildlife is a common but easily overlooked health issue. Last year we equipped ourselves with the basic equipment required for dental work.

In the past year, we have conducted a detailed dental examination, scaling and polishing for all resident sun bears. We noticed some positive behavioural changes in bears that received dental treatment. The bears are now confidently eating, smiling and playing with a healthier set of teeth.

You must be wondering why they have such **terrible oral health**.

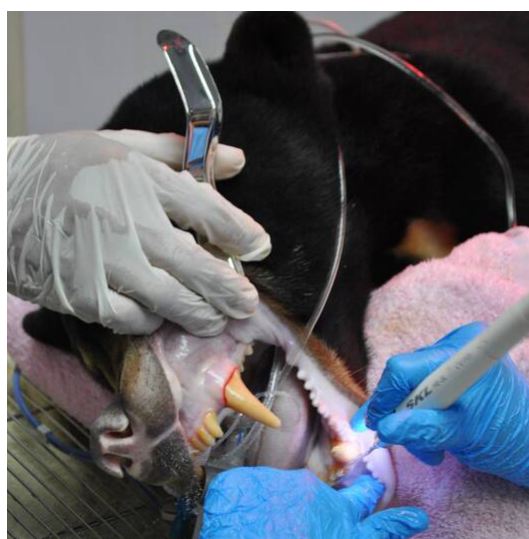
- **Inappropriate captive diet**

Sun bears, also referred to as honey bears, are well known for their sweet teeth. Most owners feed them rice porridge, fruits and lots of sweet treats. Sugar and carbohydrates is the perfect partner in crime to attack teeth, resulting in calculus deposition and caries.

It is ridiculous to assume that human food is suitable to feed wildlife.



**Image:** Our veterinarian performs dental checks on the bears.



**Image:** Ongoing dental issues need special treatment.



"If Bruno could talk, it would surely say the food I gave was delicious. He ate chocolate,"

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/06/10/i-only-wanted-to-save-the-bear/>

- **Bar biting behaviour in cage**

What would you do if you were locked in an extremely small and barren cage? Bar biting is one of the stereotypical behaviours developed in some of our bears prior to being rescued. This behaviour has weakened their teeth, and eventually has resulted in a tooth fracture. The damage caused on teeth is permanent with the treatment likely to be extraction. Without a functional canine tooth, eating a normal diet is greatly affected.

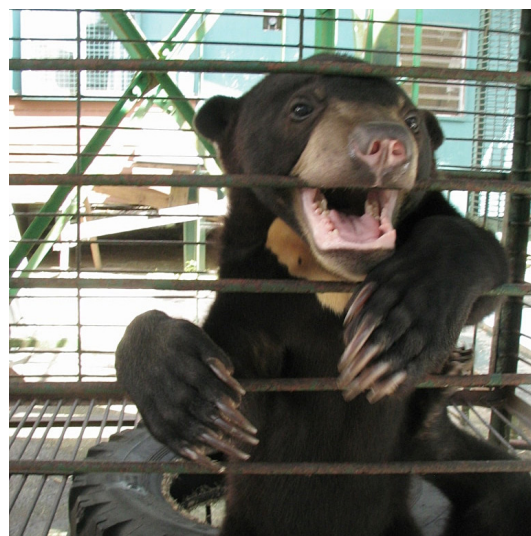
We are pleased that we began looking into these issues last year, pin- pointed the problems and scheduled the treatments. The work is ongoing and many dental treatments still require expertise from our vet dentist.

Please support our work. Your donation will be channelled towards purchasing more suitable dental equipment, treatment costs for the bears, and funds to seek expertise assistance.

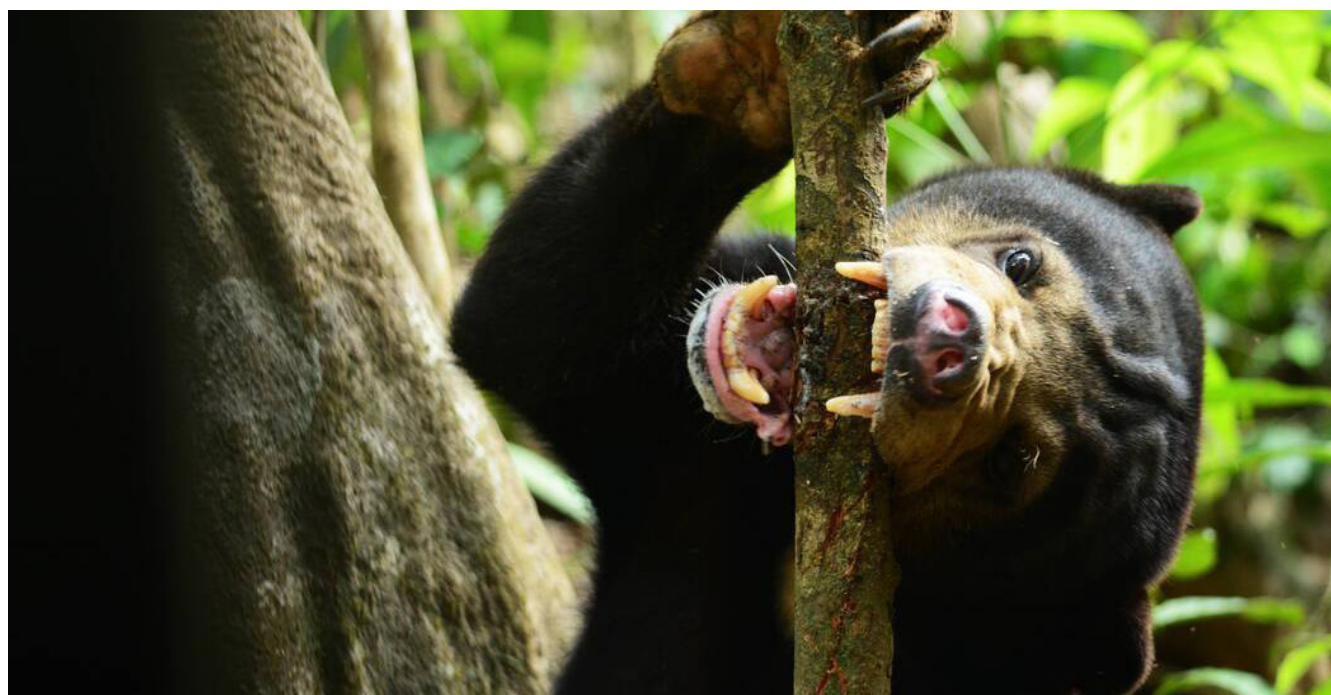
*Text by Dr Yeoh Boon Nie*



**Image:** Sun bear being fed a poor diet over years in captivity.



**Image:** Bar biting behaviour in captive bears



**Image:** Canine teeth are specialized for tearing at trees to get honey or insects

## Educational Activities Exhibitions

### *KeTAMU 4 Pangolins, Kota Kinabalu*

Happy Ninth Annual World Pangolin Day!

We at BSBCC would like to thank Land Empowerment Animal People (LEAP Spiral) for the invitation to their social initiative KeTAMU 4 Pangolins. This event was held in collaboration with the Sabah Art Gallery and the Sabah Wildlife Department over the weekend of World Pangolin Day 2020, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of February. The event featured multiple ways to celebrate this amazing wildlife and to secure their future as part of the Sabahan heritage; and by being organized in an open space so everyone and anyone can bring their wares and fares, sharing their creativity and curiosity. It was fun for BSBCC to be a part of this wildlife awareness initiative and thanks to all who said hi at our booth!

## Group Visits

### *First school group visit of 2020!*

BSBCC welcomed the first school group visit from Sekolah Menengah Integrasi Tahfiz Darul Hasanah (SMIDAH) to our centre today, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The group, which consisted of 49 students ranging in age from 13 to 17, with 3 accompanying teachers were given a briefing about Sun Bears and the centre before being guided to our observation platforms to see our bears in action. The sudden heavy rain in the afternoon didn't affect the visit as the students and teachers were really enjoying their time surrounded by the forested enclosures. It was a pleasure to have all of you here and thanks for the visit, SM Integrasi Tahfiz Darul Hasanah!

## List of schools/organizations visited BSBCC January and February 2020.

Schools/ Organizations	No. Pax	Date
Hospital Duchess of Kent, Sandakan	22	5 <sup>th</sup> Jan
Sekolah Menengah Integrasi Tahfiz Darul Hasanah (SMIDAH), Sandakan	52	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan



**Image:** Ms Elisa Panjang from Danau Girang Field Centre gave a presentation about pangolins to the participating students.



**Image:** BSBCC booth set up during KeTAMU 4 Pangolins, Kota Kinabalu.



**Image:** One of the students of SMIDAH observed the stingless bees around their nest through our spotting scope.



**Image:** Group photo with the students and teachers of SMIDAH, Sandakan.



## Volunteers & Internships

BSBCC currently houses 43 rescued Sun Bears in our two Bear Houses and a quarantine facility. Each day, the once captive Sun Bears are provided with ample food and activities to stimulate healthy bear behaviour. Volunteers and interns help our keepers to achieve our goals in looking after the welfare of these bears and helping them in their rehabilitation process.

### BSBCC Volunteer Programme

BSBCC continues to receive help from volunteers across the world. The BSBCC volunteer programme, conducted in collaboration with APE Malaysia, has been active throughout January and February 2020. Volunteers in this programme were supervised by BSBCC staffs with much-appreciated assistance from the APE Malaysia team. Besides helping the keepers in caring for the bears at the Centre, volunteers also helped to spread awareness on the plights of Sun Bears through the education booth at our visitor Centre.

### Internship at BSBCC

BSBCC welcomes students from any local and international institutions for their internship at the Centre. Interns will have the opportunity to learn about the rehabilitation of once captive Sun Bears. Interns will also study the importance of bear enrichment and of cleanliness of the facility. They will also have a rare opportunity to learn about the behaviours of this little known species up close.

### BATs group

The BATs group programme at BSBCC will learn about Sun Bear ecology, helping in basic building techniques and develop their teamwork and leadership skills in the challenging environment.

If you would like to make a difference and enjoy the experience of a lifetime, please join us. Learn about our volunteer programme on our website [www.bsbcc.org.my/volunteer.html](http://www.bsbcc.org.my/volunteer.html) or email us at [info.bsbcc@gmail.com](mailto:info.bsbcc@gmail.com) for further enquiries.

Name	Role	Country	Duration
Ludwig Grassner (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 7 <sup>th</sup> February
Kiara Rose Jasmin Villacrez (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 7 <sup>th</sup> February
Eva Wictoria Wikström (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 7 <sup>th</sup> February
Josefine S. (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 7 <sup>th</sup> February
Tindra Spennare Jacobssen (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 7 <sup>th</sup> February
Astrid Mofjell (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 20 <sup>th</sup> February
Cameron Watson (APE Malaysia)	Volunteer	UK	6 <sup>th</sup> January - 17 <sup>th</sup> February
Mae Elliessa Shaifubahrim	Volunteer	Malaysia	8 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup> January
Eileen Nyeow	Volunteer	Malaysia	9 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> January
Ezi Nurayu binti Abd. Wahab (UMS)	Intern	Malaysia	9 <sup>th</sup> February- 30 <sup>th</sup> May
Gillian Gabriel (UMS)	Intern	Malaysia	9 <sup>th</sup> February- 30 <sup>th</sup> May
Vincent Chin Yung Fook (UMS)	Intern	Malaysia	9 <sup>th</sup> February- 30 <sup>th</sup> May



Million **thanks** to Noor Aiman Badaruddin Bin Norazli Juni who just finished his internship placement with BSBCC.

## Volunteer Stories

### Back for the Bears

by Amanda Wilson

Being a fresh school graduate, waiting for the next step in life can be pretty daunting. Since I had plenty of time, I finally decided to go on with my plans of coming back to BSBCC that has been long overdue. Initially, I planned on staying for two weeks but later figured if 10 weeks was not enough, 2 surely won't do, so it came to be a month. However, while I was there, I extended my stay again, TWICE! I can never get enough of this place. I'm Amanda, 23, and I'm a return volunteer. It's my second time around since my internship back in 2018. Although I always visit the centre when I'm in Sandakan, being a volunteer gives me much more privilege to be involved and to help out with the rehabilitation process at the bear house. Born in KK and raised here in Sandakan, this place is like my second home with extended family of friends, both people and bears!

My main goal of coming back is to grow, to learn as much as I can, be more exposed to this field and do things I did not get to do the last time. And of course, to see the bears again up close! I've missed those fluffball cuties! It has been a little over a year since I've been here but lots of things have changed, especially at the bear house.

When I was doing my internship, heavy rain knocked down a huge tree that destroyed the second platform. I could literally remember how hectic it was with us volunteers and David, our senior keeper, at the bear house and everyone else including other staffs from the Orangutan centre and Wildlife Rescue Unit trying to get Wawa back into the bear house. I panicked trying to guard the front door of the Bear House from Wilmar, the orangutan, who was 'blowing a raspberry' at me for catching her trying to sneak in while the rest of us were busy feeding the bears. We waited for Kuamut, Fulung and Wawa to come back while it poured heavily outside. Only when it was dark out could we finally go home with relief as all bears were alright though the platform and fencing was completely destroyed. Everybody was cold and exhausted. This time, we get to enjoy a bigger, spacious and beautifully designed second visitor platform. Every time I had the time, I would go up to the visitor platform and look at the



Image: Practicing my bear skills!

bears enjoying the outdoors as well as talk to the visitors who got just as enthusiastic as I was talking about the bears!

We bid farewell to some and welcomed new additions to the family of staff at the centre, with a new veterinarian, new bear care coordinator, 4 new junior keepers and 2 new ticketing staff. I was very excited on my first day. This time around, my buddy is Danny, a new junior keeper, who's playful and never a bore when we work together. Since he's quite new to the centre and I haven't been here for a year, we both took our time to learn the changes together. When I first arrived, I was afraid of not being able to distinguish between the bears, but after a few days, I realized I actually still remember them! Well, apart from those who moved cages and those that had outgrown themselves of course, like little Logan who's not so little anymore! I used to peep through the bear house windows watching little Logan and Romolina pass by when they go for walks with the keepers. In the first week, I got to meet 2 other lovely return volunteers as well, cheeky Alicia and friendly Nithisha! Hoping I get to meet them again someday! With other volunteers, they made my days much brighter at the centre~

During the first few days, it was pretty obvious that 5 months at home had made me lethargic since I have not been working out, but cleaning the dens sure



made up for it! Every task here made me stronger and helped train my muscles again. From carrying heavy basins of food, drilling, hammering and sawing, bolting and unbolting, I'm thankful the keepers never underestimated me but rather looked out and guided me through when carrying out 'ungirly' tasks! With more new staffs and a new working schedule, the tasks at the bear house are now divided more systematically and volunteers like us have it much easier. Although I miss hiking twice a day carrying heavy basins of food around the forest enclosure to feed them and carrying coconut husk-filled sacks!

With our very own new veterinarian, Dr Boon, the bears' diet has become a lot more complicated and can be pretty intimidating for a first timer. Their food quantity has increased and now they are being fed with a clean and much more healthy, natural diet! I was worried about mixing up the servings and getting the whole food preparation wrong but thanks to all the staffs, it was much easier than I thought! Feeding the bears is my favourite task! Whether it's in the bear house or especially outside in the perimeter of the forest enclosures, I like to observe how each of the bears receive and gobble up their food ! It makes you go 'aawww'~

In the morning, the keepers would also be assigned to do fecal check and body score to be compiled into a graph of the bear's annual or monthly growth. I also got the privilege to assist Dr Boon to do parasite analysis by fecal floatation on the bear's faeces sample. I got to help with Amaco, Panda and Chin's as well as Linggam with the bachelorette group (Manis, Susie, Kuamut, Cerah and Jelita).

Due to some bears digging their way into other enclosures and fighting with other bears, we had to take the initiative to stop them from creating more holes in between the fence of adjacent enclosures. Hence, we cut some iron rods and hammered them 6 inches apart into the soil next to the fence. We're keeping our fingers crossed that Montom will not dig them all out!

Sometimes I would join the keepers to go for fence checks and that's when my clumsiness shines through, slipping on my bum especially in this rainy season when the soil gets muddy. On my last day, it was slightly drizzling in the morning, but the overnight rain flooded some of the enclosures. Wawa, the wild

explorer, escaped into Pen D overnight was thankfully still there in the morning when we found out. She gave me yet another surprised bark when she spotted me wrapped up in my raincoat shielding from the rain during fence check. With the bears depositing poop around some smaller forest enclosures, I got to join and help in scattering chalk powder to neutralize the acidity of the soil in some of the enclosures.

The last time around, I got to make 2 structural enrichments, a ramp and a platform. This time, I got to design and make a structural enrichment for Phin and Wan-Wan thanks to Mizuno with help from Danny, Pradeep and Bithrenley! Besides that, whenever I had the time I would try to make small enrichments with help from my buddy keeper, Danny and other keepers. Some of the enrichments I got to make this time are happy sacks, fire hose, Aussie Dog Ball, nest balls, ginger leaves and egg carton enrichments ! I also helped Nithisha and Alicia with their ice blocks and got to help Mizuno prepare coconut treats for Mamatai, Wan-Wan and Amaco. I got to learn to make a honeycomb as well as putting treats into some of the enrichments like the log feeder in Amaco's den. Whenever I had the time, I would fill the cleaned honeycombs and Aussie Dog ball and give them to the bears that stay in the bear house for the day, hoping these little enrichments would help keep them busy and engage their sensory skills !

I was assigned a project to observe all 43 bears in the bear house and quarantine area and I could not be happier! Observing the bears is the best part about working here, each bear with their own personality and quirks. Honestly, I've grown to love each bear more each day though Sigalung never ceases to grab my attention. On my last day, he wouldn't move cages when the keeper called him to until I tried, and he did! Got me a little touched~ I even got to join Ronnie boy's release attempt into Pen G and both adult males, Bermuda and Om, cage by cage integration in training pen G and H. I feel so honoured to be given the chance to help with the observation for the cage by cage as well as body contact integration of Phin and Wan-Wan, Mamatai and Phin, Linggam and the 5 bachelorettes as well as Chin with Logan and Romolina.

However, Bermuda's tongue got ripped slightly during an observation process. Although I did not get to join the surgery to suture his tongue, I got to join in a health check of a special case bear, Diana, who has a

hole puncture on her snout due to a past brawl with another male bear, on my last day of volunteering. It was my first ever health check that I got to join and my first ever experience being this close to the bears that I ever love so dearly. I am so thankful to Lin May and Dr Boon for guiding me, giving me exposure to clinical stuff and helping assist in the health check. I took a few moments to myself, feeling overwhelmed, at the opportunity that some may not appreciate. Looking at Diana, observing her every feature, her ears, snout, her paws and her claws, her chestmark and her fur. It got me thinking about how precious these creatures are and how people can be misled by the exotic pet trade black market. I will remember this and fight for my dreams to become a wildlife warrior as well, like all these people at the centre. Sun bears deserve to live in the wild and to embrace the riches of the land, untouched!

I even got to sit for Dr Boon's dental health talk with the other volunteers and staffs as well as Bithrenley's talk and interesting demonstration on the dangers of forest fires. I gained new knowledge in a fun learning environment with all the bear house team who never cease to slip in a few jokes to keep the mood up! I truly applaud this initiative as the keepers get to practice their communication skills and learn to engage with the public or future volunteers.

Dr Wong was pretty busy the whole time I was here, but I expected this from our 'Papa bear' who's working hard! Nevertheless, when he was at the centre, he would come down to check on the operations at the bear house and I was thankful he was willing to give his time and sit through a one-on-one session with me where I could talk about my plans for future in this field! He gave me great advice and invited me warmly to come back to the center whenever I felt like it.

Every lunch time, I would spend my time mingling around with the education team at the visitor centre or in the office and sometimes sneak a nap in the staff room when it was raining outside. It's very heart-warming and lovely to be around like-minded people, they give my quiet personality a boost in mood filled with laughter and silly jokes!

Each day of working at the centre reminds me to be

grateful to Mother Earth and our creator for all the treasures of the forest. There are always little miracles to be thankful for and little surprises that made my stay much more interesting and memorable. From macaques chasing after me and the visitors coming back from lunch at the Gelugob bridge up till the visitor centre, to them greeting us with loud stomps on the bear house's roof trying to steal food, even disturbing our observation process of Ronnie boy's release attempt into Pen G and eating apples and bananas off of me and Alicia's honeycomb enrichment. Sometimes orangutans would sit close to the railings near the roof and make puppy eyes at us or peep into the bear house kitchen watching our every move as we prepared food for the bears. Since it's supposedly monsoon season here in Borneo, we expect lots of snakes around the forest enclosure. There was one time, David spotted a blood python near the quarantine area while it was drizzling out. I will miss the sounds of hornbill calls greeting us in the morning and when the day's work is done, spotting pill millipedes with Alicia, playing with Nithisha's friend, the tractor millipede, and helping Andy with his mission to save the fish that got into our drain system! Gonna miss checking on the bears every evening when its feeding time to see who did not return to the bear house. The usual suspects are Kala, Cerah and Jelita ! I will miss each and every bear at the centre, they deserve the very best life that people have stolen from them up to now!

I am beyond thankful to Lin May and Thye Lim who made me feel welcome, sharing stories, guiding, looking after me and giving me advice. Thank you Dr Boon for teaching me new things and guiding me. To Pradeep, thank you for your advice and for teaching me new things every day at the bear house. To all the bear keepers and the maintenance staffs, you guys are the best and working at the bear house will be less fun without you all! Thank you for guiding, helping, teaching and looking after volunteers like me! To the educational staff, I feel so welcome because of you guys, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the shared laughter and conversations! I will miss everything about the centre but will surely come back in future!



## A Beary Precious Experience

*by Angeline Ngu Hong Huong*

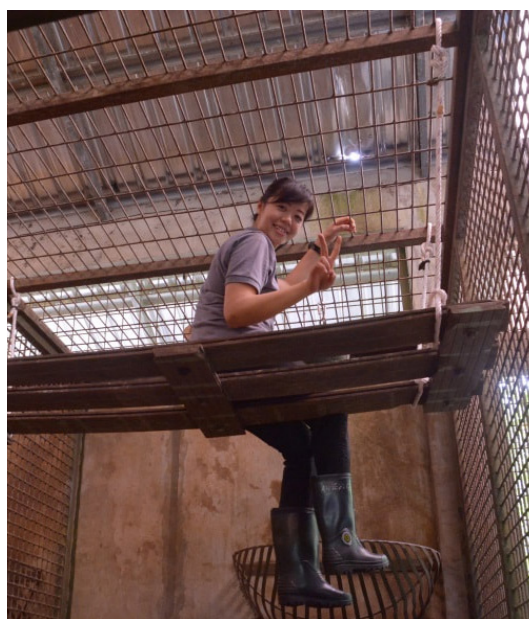
Hey everyone! This is Angeline Ngu from Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. I am a primary school teacher and also a hardcore bear fan. I am really astonished by the adorable sun bears in the forest enclosure during my first visit to BSBCC. Watching the bear sunbathing on top of the tree through the telescope almost melted my heart. No doubt it was love at first sight. Coincidentally, I met Dr. Boon who is a bear doctor in BSBCC and she told us all kinds of stories about the sun bears and the details about the volunteer programme. That's when I made up my mind to spend my Christmas holiday volunteering in BSBCC.

Despite knowing it would be tough working with wild animals, with lots of trekking in the jungle, I actually hesitated a little just before departing. But since I am really looking forward to seeing the sun bears, here I am, about to end my two weeks volunteering with a really heavy heart, especially to say goodbyes to all the sun bears when I have just started to recognize them by their characteristics =( And not forgetting the friendly staffs in BSBCC whom I call the bear family.

For me, it was a bittersweet experience working in BSBCC. Let's first talk about the sw-eeeeett part. It's a big bear family here in BSBCC where the keepers are like the parents to all the sun bears. You must witness how worried the keepers are when the bears are not feeling well. They would try everything to make sure the bears take their medication. Throughout the volunteering days I laughed so much with the keepers and all the friendly staffs in BSBCC as we shared everything from our families to the bear stories. Not forgetting the Christmas party in Bjorn Hala, the keepers are capable of doing everything from fixing electric fences to cooking. The food they prepared is finger-lickin good! The sweetest part, the keepers constantly checking us volunteers out to make sure that we can handle our tasks and are always there to help whenever we need. We laughed so much inside and outside BSBCC. Here comes the bitter part. I would say it is really tough taking care of



**Image:** Setting up puzzle feeder for one of the bears



**Image:** Trying out the new hanging platform

wild animals as it requires a lot of heavy work. It is a great challenge for me to trek through the muddy and slippery ground in the forest especially during rainy season to check the electric fence. A big thank you to my buddy keeper, Mr. Pradeep who always tolerated me and my snail pace when hiking up and down the hill. Carrying heavy objects like food and wood is inevitable in the bear house but the keepers are always ready to help. Overall, all the hard work is worthwhile as long as the bears are happy and healthy.

Volunteering in BSBCC is truly an eye opener. I am privileged to have been able to join the medical checkup session on the oldest bear in BSBCC, Amaco who is currently 27 years old, with Dr. Boon and Dr. Reza. I was tremendously nervous before that as everyone was worried that he might not pull through the process due to his age. Fortunately, he did and he is recovering well! During the process, I learnt how to measure a bear's heartbeat, respiration and body temperature. All this sounds pretty easy until I was inside the clinic and was really panicking because I could not hear the heartbeat even with a stethoscope. Meanwhile, Dr. Reza patiently taught me to first feel the heartbeat, then hearing it would be easier. It works like magic! I was also given the opportunity to help Dr. Boon in recording dental details of Amaco and to trim his nails with a mini saw! That is something new! I enjoyed everything throughout the process as I know I would never have the opportunity to experience all these in my life. Not a single day passed by that I did not learn something new while working with the sun bears. Yeap! That is me trying to complete the entire "mission impossible" and I am proud to say MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

I am incredibly glad that I made the decision to join the volunteer programme in BSBCC. I have gained not only experience, knowledge, skills but also friendship with each and every one in BSBCC. I would like to especially thank Dr. Wong for this amazing opportunity in contributing to nature. Together, let's work to provide care and rehabilitation to rescued sun bears! We need you! Till we meet again, BSBCC.



**Image:** With my buddy keeper, Mr. Pradeep in making enrichment



**Image:** Structured enrichment in the making



## Bearing Through It All

by Grace Cheong Wei Yen

Time flies when you have a good time, and it seems that all too soon, I have reached the end of my three week long volunteering period. It was not always smooth sailing, but the staff were always there to assist me in whatever ways possible whenever I needed any help. From preparing food for the bears while keeping in mind the ever-changing releases to carrying out enrichment or even cleaning the smelly cages, I have learned so much more about these vulnerable and valuable bears. They are a part of our future, no matter how unrelated they may seem.

Personally, I feel that this experience has opened my eyes to how much work it actually requires to take care of human beings, and how much more these bears need! Coming from an Asian background, the concept of filial piety is constantly reinforced, and now I truly realize how much effort my parents have put into raising me. Besides that, I have been privileged to have a first-hand experience of taking care of the sun bears which are endemic to Borneo only, a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Furthermore, there is no more satisfaction than witnessing a bear finally succeed in doing something that you had a part in!

Of course, one cannot forget about the close bonds formed with the other keepers, volunteers and staff. We have shared so much laughter and many stories, whether it is over a steaming hot local meal or while working. With them, there has never been a dull moment at the bear house. They also provided me with the encouragement to keep on going, no matter how tired I am. Somehow, we all manage to find common threads within our stories even though we originate from different places, making the laughter that is shared and memories that are created even more precious. They have become my “family” throughout

this whole time, never failing to ensure that I’m constantly doing well, bringing me out for grocery shopping and sharing tips as well as extra facts about bear care. It doesn’t matter what activity we carry out, whether it is a health check or even enrichment, good teamwork has been proven to make a tiring task into an exciting activity.

So if you are seeking to escape the busy city life or to explore your interest in wildlife, or even carry out an internship as part of your program, then this is the place to be! Never mind all the bugs, this is a rare chance to catch a glimpse of other animal species endemic to Borneo like the sacred kingfisher and rhinoceros hornbill, or even Asian pygmy elephants! If I had the chance or time to come back a second time, I definitely would not hesitate.



**Image:** Honeycomb project for the bears in progress

## A Week of Bears

by Eileen Nyeow @ Yau Yee Ling

Hello... my name is Eileen Nyeow. I am 42 years old and currently residing in Peninsular Malaysia. Participating in Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) Volunteer Programme was part of my mission, during my sabbatical, towards doing my little bit to help save animals. The main reason I chose BSBCC was because of the Founder, Dr. Wong Siew Te. I have read about his passion and relentless effort towards helping and preserving the Sun Bears; and was inspired to come see and experience for myself what BSBCC is all about.

This was the first volunteer programme where I had to be interviewed (before being accepted) & to obtain a full health check before flying over. Upon arriving, I went through an induction session where I was briefed with more rules of conduct. I realized and understood the need for that measure after. BSBCC is situated right smack in the middle of the rain forest in Sepilok; surrounded by other wild animals (i.e. orangutans, elephants, snakes, squirrels). Health check was necessary so that we do not pass on any diseases to the animals. Volunteering here involves much physical work so one has to be somewhat prepared. Lastly, the bears within the Centre are all waiting for a second chance in the wild and it is of grave importance that the bears do not get overly habituated with people.

My buddy keeper during my Programme was Bithrenly (a.k.a Bit). Although fairly new with the Centre, he managed to share many of his experiences and stories about the bears with me. Among the many tasks with him, my daily routine usually revolves around preparing food for the bears (4 feedings in a day), cleaning poop and scrubbing enclosures, checking the perimeters of the enclosure fence, making enrichment projects for the bears to play and sharpen their skills. I also had many valuable instances, such as group Q&A session with the "Bear Man" himself, Dr. Wong, assisting the vet (Dr. Boon) during a routine medical check for Julaini. I mean there are not many non-field related people who can say they have used a

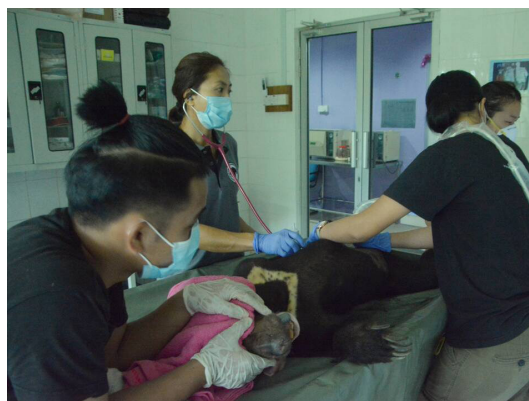
thermometer on a bear. Hahaha! I even learnt and got to inspect bear poop for parasites! ><

In summary, I am thankful for this valuable experience and I feel privileged to have been there, with everyone. Being amazed with efforts of BSBCC in preserving the Sun Bears is one thing, learning hands-on about the smallest bear in the world is another. On top of it, I was also truly amazed by the dedicated members of BSBCC (office staff and bear keepers). One can feel their enthusiasm and love for the bears emanating from them.

There are many people to thank for making my journey an unforgettable one. Instead of naming and possibly missing out names, I would like to just extend a huge shout out of appreciation to the BSBCC FAMILY! I hope to see all of you very soon.



**Image:** Trying out the finished hammock before installing it for the bears



**Image:** Helping out Dr Boon during health check is one of the highlights during my volunteering in BSBCC



## Adoption Programme

Welcome a Sun Bear into your family, class, club or corporation by adopting a Sun Bear or buying a gift of Sun Bear medicine, food, or toys to show you care and support the valuable work of BSBCC.

Adopting a bear is a great way to learn about Sun Bears while helping BSBCC meet the costs of rehabilitation. Funds raised by the adoption program are used to better the lives of all bears.

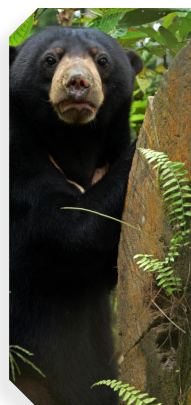
### Gifts with meaning



Find out how to adopt a Sun Bear from our website:

<http://www.bsbcc.org.my/adopt-a-bear.html>

### January/February's adopters 2020



#### Certificate of Adoption

This certificate is awarded to  
**Andrey Chernov & Natalia Rassokhina**

in recognition of adopting

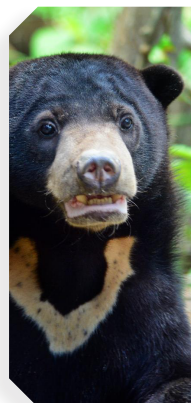
**Nano**

of Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre

from **05<sup>th</sup> January 2020** to **04<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Thank you for taking a sun bear into your heart.

Nano was purchased by a lady who wants to rescue him from a miserable life in 2016. Small and malnourished, he slowly paced forward to develop himself in BSBCC. Now, with his bear pal Noah, he is having a good life in BSBCC forest enclosures with other bears.



#### Certificate of Adoption

This certificate is awarded to

**Rachel Servilican**

in recognition of adopting

**Wawa**

of Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre

from **07<sup>th</sup> January 2020** to **06<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

Thank you for taking a sun bear into your heart.

Found alone and appearing weak in a Forest Management Unit in Pinangah, Sabah, Wawa was sent to BSBCC in 2016. A very sweet and energetic bear, she was introduced to her best buddy, Dodop and currently living her life together happily with other bears in the forest enclosures.

- Kimberly Wright
- Sebastian Shahul Hamid
- Siew Suan Khor
- Andrey Chernov & Natalia Rassokhina
- Tracey Backhurst
- Michael Kucharski
- Borneo & Beyond
- Rachel Servilican (UPROAR)
- Yan Moo
- Akmal Huzaifah Mohd Isa
- Rebecca Hall
- Jaclyn Park
- Elena Garavelli
- Amanda Morrison
- Sylvanus Callander (Andrew Holmes)
- David Cullington (Daisy Hayes)
- Allison Butterworth
- Nick & Ayla Rowton
- Kim Taehyung (Eliza Nabilah, BTS Army)
- Wong Bing Haw
- Louise Newthry
- Corry L Bazley
- Sally Hunter (Gail Hecmanzuk)
- Simon Hanson
- Marc Ransley
- Emma & David Pickup
- Maya Mackechnie (Delia Mackechnie)
- Issac & William Bradford-Stute (Cindy Bradford)
- Enid (Willis Vanessa)
- Julie Soh
- Megan Vicaty
- Winifred Cattermole
- Sue Holliday
- Ellie (Elizabeth Saul)
- Erdal Genc
- Erni Wahyuni Trimo
- Jennifer Boyle
- Beth Johnson (Pamela Russell & Stephen)
- Diong Sweet Gaik
- Justine Evans
- Ingrid Kvale
- Niki Chan Niki

## BSBCC in the news

BSBCC was also featured in the following online news and newspapers:

- **A closer look at getting the bear facts.**  
Spotlights on Research 2020 (Vol.4) by Sunway University. [https://issuu.com/sunway3/docs/spotlight\\_on\\_research\\_2020?fr=sNzI5YzY1MTYzNg](https://issuu.com/sunway3/docs/spotlight_on_research_2020?fr=sNzI5YzY1MTYzNg)
- **Primary Students meet Action Heroes.**  
Wild Kids Ink. 12<sup>th</sup> January 2020. [http://www.wildkidsink.com/primary-students-meet-action-heroes/?fbclid=IwAR16Ib1OMVw5KduWWT53M-8otQgPnOGseFu00m\\_2\\_rt8cp0PXaTmDiTbMoQ](http://www.wildkidsink.com/primary-students-meet-action-heroes/?fbclid=IwAR16Ib1OMVw5KduWWT53M-8otQgPnOGseFu00m_2_rt8cp0PXaTmDiTbMoQ)
- **Singer fined RM20,000 for keeping baby sun bear without permit.** New Straits Times. 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/crime-courts/2020/01/556683/singer-fined-rm20000-keeping-baby-sun-bear-without-permit?fbclid=IwAR1Xqi4dnzSQTsdGgzGo6NdHOHwUs28BM77REGw2EunCk-91mtx1O7F-3nw>
- **Singer fined RM27,000 for keeping, confining sun bear in apartment.** Malaymail. 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020. [https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/01/15/singer-fined-rm27000-for-keeping-confining-sun-bear-in-apartment/1828207?fbclid=IwAR1QkxU1reg9aYnK5bfsMlhrTo9imsqX1JB\\_ZoVuS0TR1UseELT-9it4mg](https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/01/15/singer-fined-rm27000-for-keeping-confining-sun-bear-in-apartment/1828207?fbclid=IwAR1QkxU1reg9aYnK5bfsMlhrTo9imsqX1JB_ZoVuS0TR1UseELT-9it4mg)
- **Tougher laws needed to deal with online wildlife trade, says NGO.** Free Malaysia Today. 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020. [https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/01/19/tougher-laws-needed-to-deal-with-online-wildlife-trade-says-ngo/?fbclid=IwAR28aU2MLiVveoKpwHd68HWaaBPQMVLnCSFZGqQppn8WpeBpc5HyZU\\_vRac](https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/01/19/tougher-laws-needed-to-deal-with-online-wildlife-trade-says-ngo/?fbclid=IwAR28aU2MLiVveoKpwHd68HWaaBPQMVLnCSFZGqQppn8WpeBpc5HyZU_vRac)
- **Pangolin statue erected to raise awareness.** The Sun Daily. 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020. <https://www.thesundaily.my/local/pangolin-statue-erected-to-raise-awareness-JN1917830>

## NEW STRAITS TIMES

### Singer fined RM20,000 for keeping baby sun bear without permit

By Rahmat Khairulrijal  
January 15, 2020 @ 12:39pm

KUALA LUMPUR: Singer Zarith Sofia Mohd Yasin, who allegedly kept a sun bear cub that she thought was a dog in her condominium last year was fined RM27,000 by the Sessions Court.

Judge Manirah Mohd Nor meted out the judgement after the 29-year-old accused changed her plea to guilty when her case was up for mention today.

She was fined RM20,000 for keeping the animal without a permit and RM7,000 for confining the baby sun bear in premises uncondusive to the comfort and health of the wildlife.



She was fined RM20,000 for keeping the animal without a permit and RM7,000 for confining the baby sun bear in premises uncondusive to the comfort and health of the wildlife. NSTP/MUHD ZAABA ZAKERIA

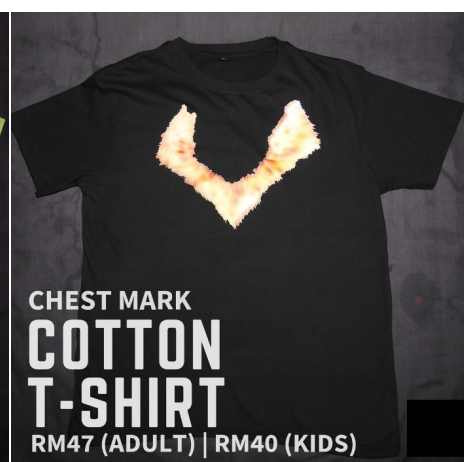
**Singer fined RM20,000 for keeping baby sun bear without permit.** New Straits Times. 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

- **Tourism players urged to play role in wildlife crime fight.** Daily Express. 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020. [http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news/146594/tourism-players-urged-to-play-role-in-fight-against-wildlife-crime/?fbclid=IwAR0\\_cQpXErSj05fqYe7MAUAqi1hE18n2A7T\\_pQje-i-DDw9eZ5nsHfvILCk#.Xif4CmpkeUo.facebook](http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news/146594/tourism-players-urged-to-play-role-in-fight-against-wildlife-crime/?fbclid=IwAR0_cQpXErSj05fqYe7MAUAqi1hE18n2A7T_pQje-i-DDw9eZ5nsHfvILCk#.Xif4CmpkeUo.facebook)
- **Pleading the case of Malaysia's Sun Bears.** Malaysia Kini. 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/509436>



## Bear Shop

Whether it is for you or a gift for your loved ones, all purchases help us to protect, save and enrich the lives of the endangered Sun Bears.



Please click or scan on the QR code for the order form if you are interested in purchasing our merchandises.

Terms and conditions:

1. No cancellation upon confirmation of purchase.
  2. Price shown are inclusive of GST 0%.
- Additional charges for shipping will be incurred.





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- Glenda Dixon

If you would like to make a direct donation to BSBCC, you can do so with one of these methods:

### • **Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC)**

- Donate any amount directly to BSBCC through our paypal account by clicking the donate button on our website: [www.bsbcc.org.my](http://www.bsbcc.org.my)

### • **Wong Siew Te**

- Send an email to our CEO and Founder, Dr. Wong Siew Te, for further inquiries on donating directly to us at [wongsiew@hotmail.com](mailto:wongsiew@hotmail.com)



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[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bsbcc)



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