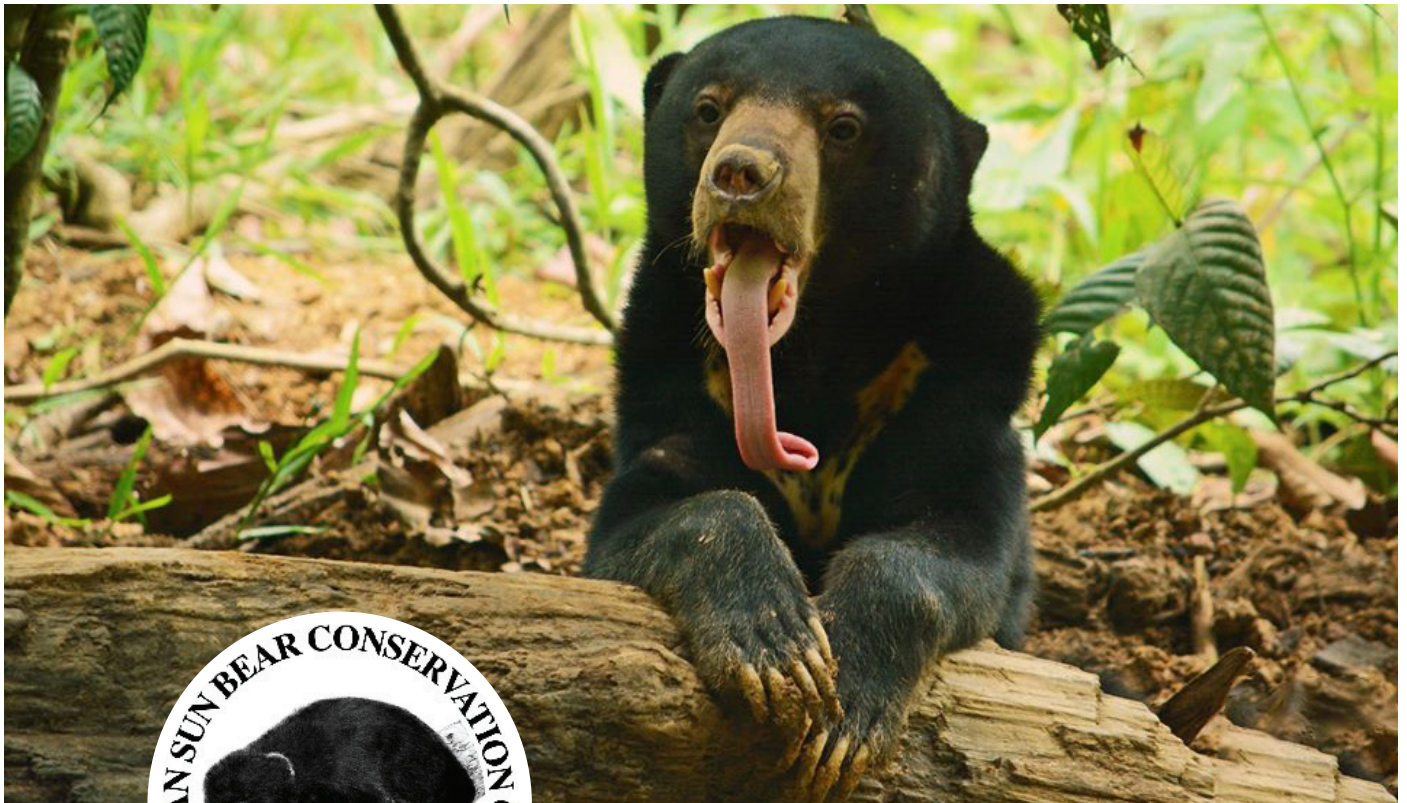


The Sun Bear Voice

September-October 2020 Vol.7, No.5

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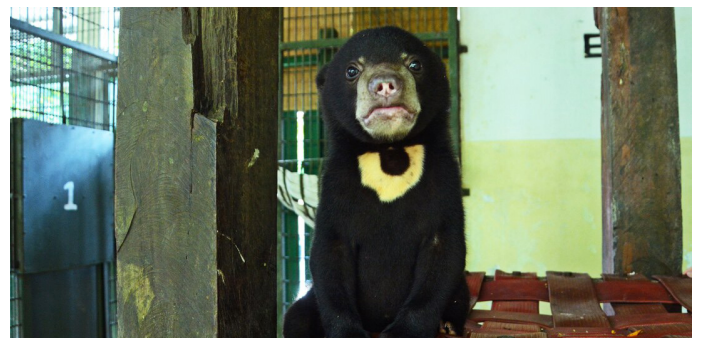


In this issue:

Bear Story	2
BSBCC Corner	8
Educational Activities	10
Volunteers & Interns	11
Volunteer Stories	12
Adoption Programme	18
BSBCC in the News	19
Bear Shop	21
Donors and Contributors	23



PAGE 2: *Wildness is Life!*



PAGE 4: *Meet Kipaku - the Busy Bee*

Bear Story

Wildness is Life!

Wildness is life for all wild animals. However, the pet trade is one of the factors that has been constantly threatening their lives, with animals being captured from the wild illegally to supply the demand for exotic pets. Most of the bears in BSBCC had been kept as house pets before being sent here. They were kept in cold, empty and hard cages from a young age. This is before they even had a chance to realize that it was not a natural habitat for them. They never knew their natural habitat to be the forest if they were kept in a cage. Therefore, the mission of BSBCC is to rehabilitate and to reintroduce them into the forest environment.

We successfully released Kitud , Boboi and Tan-Tan in April 2019 and now one year later, BSBCC team is delighted to share with you that we released Montom, a six-year-old adult male bear into the wild on the 10th of July 2020! Montom is a beautiful name that means black in the local language, Dusun. Montom was rescued from Kampung Melangkap, Kota Marudu on the 18th of January 2015 and came to BSBCC on the 21st of January 2015.

Little Background story of Montom

Montom's story began when a dog chased a mother bear, forcing her to leave her cub behind in order to survive. The cub, Montom, was then taken by humans and kept as a pet in a chicken wire mesh cage and fed with human food for a year. After five years of rehabilitation, Montom has developed excellent forest survival skills. Montom is an explorer. He enjoys every moment in the forest. He loves to dig. His shiny black fur is usually a dull brown colour after a whole day of digging. Climbing is one of his favourite forest activities as well. He loves to rest in trees and let the sunlight shine upon him. He never gets bored in the forest! Montom always surprises us with his potential. He has proven that he was ready to be reintroduced into the wild!



Image: After the team made all the final preparations and site inspections, they carry Montom to the release spot.



Image: On the 10th of July 2020, at 6.18 in the morning, Montom is finally free! He is finally home!



Image: The 8th sun bear release operation succeed! We would like to Thank You everyone who has given us support and assistance. Love from Montom.

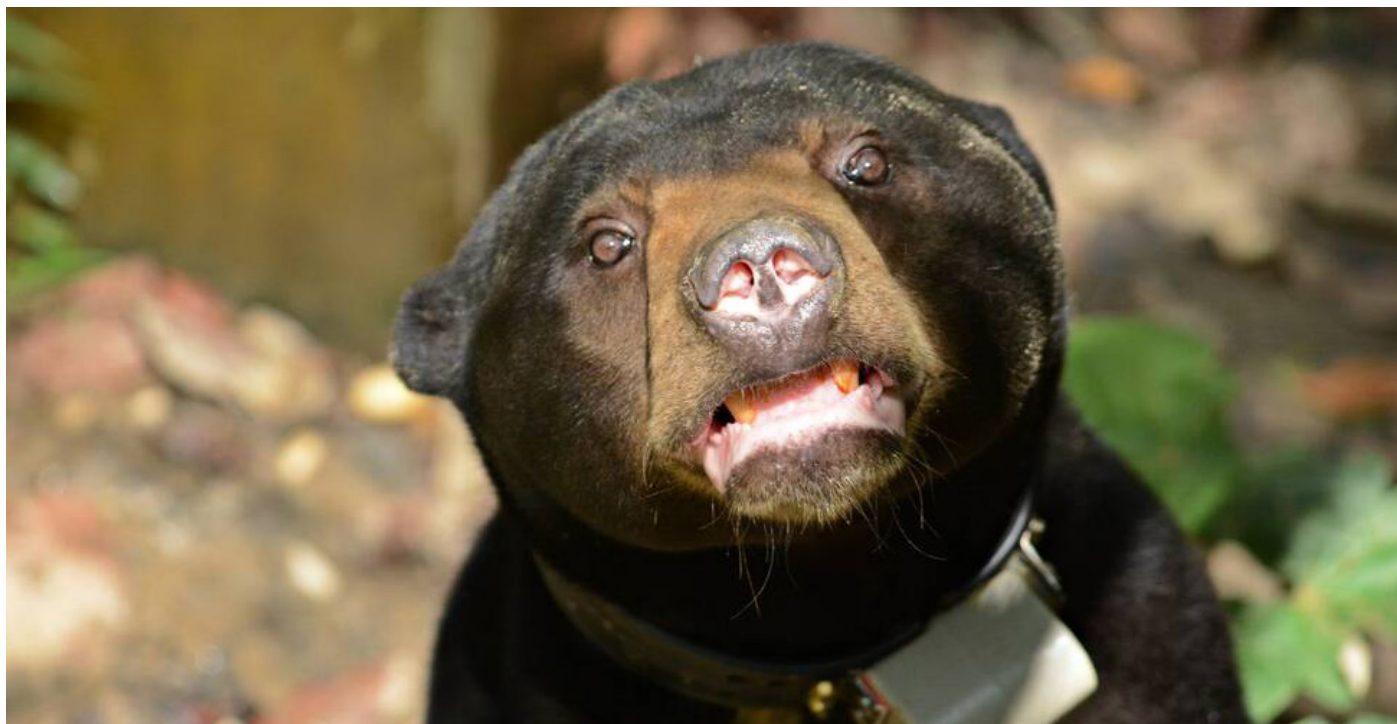


Image: Montom and his satellite collar

Journey of Montom back to the wild

On the 9th of July 2020, our veterinarian, Dr. Yeoh Boon Nie, conducted a final check-up on Montom, followed by his transfer to a translocation cage. Keepers closely monitored him during his recovery from the sedation.

At 4.55 in the evening, the team was getting ready for loading up the translocation cage. This time, we decided to release Montom in the forest at the northern part of Sabah. The planted forest is supervised by Forest Solutions Malaysia (FSM) of Asian Forestry Company Sabah (AFCS). And hence, we appreciated the help of FSM in this operation. At 5.05 pm, the bear release team and Montom departed for an eight-hour road journey. It was a long night!

After eight hours, the team and Montom arrived at the northern part of Sabah and met with the team from FSM. As one of our cars was not deemed suitable to drive on off-roads, we transferred the cage to another vehicle. Then, our release team and FSM team departed together to the release site with a four-hour off-road journey. This release operation was more challenging than any of other release operations ever! The FR is mostly hilly with steep slopes and ridges. However, this was perfect terrain for granting Montom a second chance at freedom. When we arrived at the site, the sky was still dark. Montom looked relatively

calm in the cage. Maybe he knew today was the day he would be free in the forest! He had been waiting for this moment for too long!

The sky slowly turned blue. The weather was good. Before opening the door, the team made all the final preparations and site inspections. Montom would soon enjoy the freedom of his true home where you were originally from. Once the door opened at 6.18 am, he ran straight into the forest and disappeared in the woods. We shed our happy tears for him. Montom is finally free! He is finally home! We hope he finds his happiness and enjoys his adventure in the wild. His movements will be monitored by the BSBCC team. Be wild and be happy, Montom.

The BSBCC team would like to say thank you to the Sabah Forestry Department, the Sabah Wildlife Department, the FSM team and everyone who has given us support and assistance. If you would like to provide us with your support, please visit our website to get more information. Your help will allow us to sustain our efforts in making a difference for the sun bears' wellbeing. Sun bears belong in the forest! Please save the sun bears and let them be happily wild in the wild. Wildness is life!

Story by Seng Yen Wah

Bear Story

Meet Kipaku *the Busy Bee*

Meet little Kipaku, an active 5-month-old male sun bear cub. He was being kept as a house pet by a local villager family in Kampung Kipaku, Tambunan, Sabah. The story reported to the rescue team was that they found him 'wandering alone' in the forest fire area.

The family then decided to hand the cub over to the Sabah Wildlife Department on July 16th, 2020. Kipaku's story is similar to those of the other rescued sun bears. Sun bears are losing their homes to forest fires and facing extinction in the wild if uncontrolled poaching, logging and palm oil plantation activities are allowed to continue. Sadly, it is believed that his mother undoubtedly was killed intentionally or perished in the fires. He arrived at BSBCC on July 18th, 2020. His coat was dull and dry.

Following his arrival, Kipaku was placed into quarantine. He adapted to his new life of freedom. He receives round-the-clock care from his surrogate mother, with help and encouragement to gain his confidence back and build up his strength – to be WILD. He has shown tremendous growth and improvement in the last few days. He now weighs 7.2kg.

He is a grub lover and is very messy with his food!! His favourite foods are mealworms, ants and milk. He has a peculiar way of foraging his food by using his tiny sharp claws to tear it up (in a gentle way). Never mess with him when he is eating!

Kipaku wants to bark a "Huge thanks" to our lovely sponsorship, Fido Premium Milk Powder from TTL Distributions Sdn. Bhd. (<http://www.ttl.com.my/>) for being part of his journey. His health is now in a stable condition. He has been fed a milk formula five times a day for his growth.

Sun bear cubs remain dependent on their mothers for the first two to three years of age. Poor care and the psychological trauma of losing his mother greatly affected Little Kipaku. He had been kept in captivity,

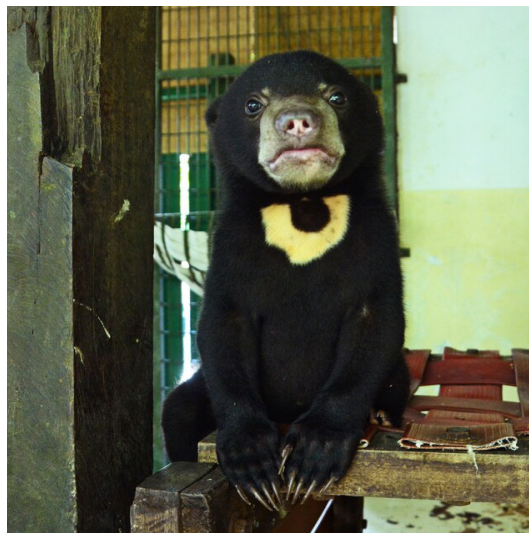


Image: Little Kipaku has stolen our hearts with his beautiful chest mark



Image: Thanks to the Sabah Wildlife Department's Wildlife Rescue Unit who saved Kipaku's life

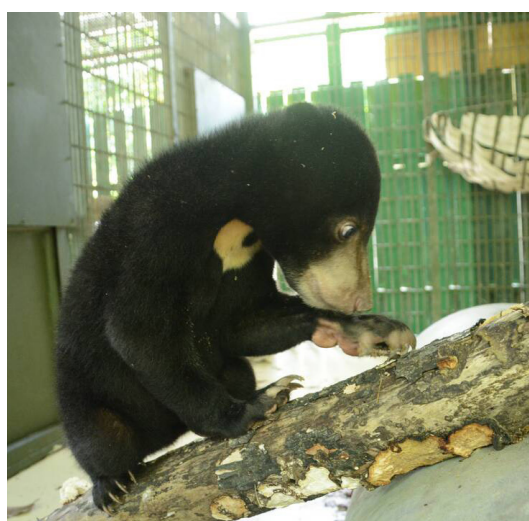


Image: Little Kipaku loves the chance of learning natural behaviours

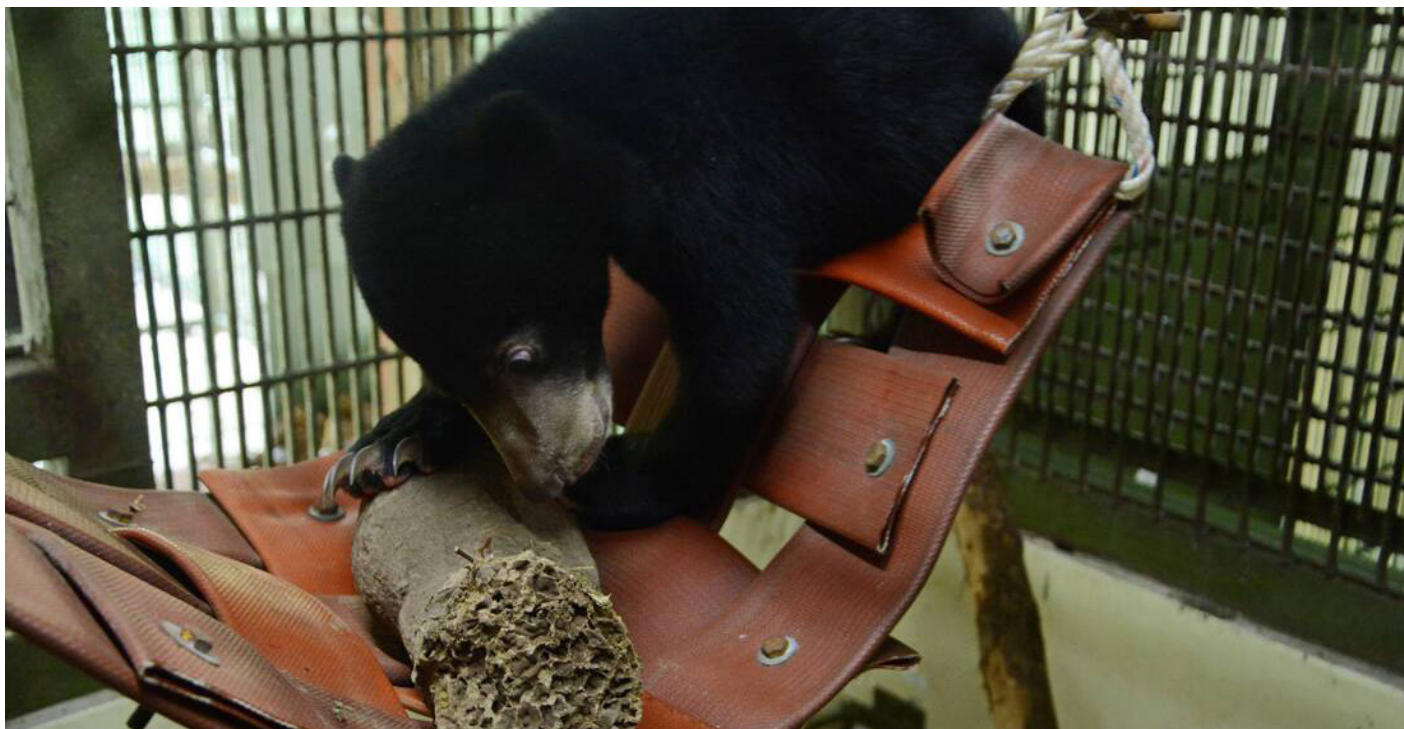


Image: With sharp claws and long tongue, Kipaku dig into termite mounds to get his favourite termites

growing up alone and becoming inured to the presence of humans. All Kipaku knew was being scared and stressed. He would growl and bawl when no one was beside him. Acquiring a lack of fear of humans, the bear became ill equipped to survive and therefore vulnerable to hunters in the wild. Throughout his rehabilitation process, we are minimizing the number of caretakers to reduce the habituation to human contact, encouraging his wild behaviours and slowly supporting his increasing independence.

He is an agile and unique bear. Kipaku can be a challenge to keep mentally occupied – having been stolen from the wild and never having the chance to learn survival skills from his mother. We provide a variety of environmental enrichments, such as different types of young leaves, termite mounds, dead wood, logs, and branches to promote physical activity and prepare him for life back in the wild.

It is heart-warming to discover that Kipaku has strong wild instincts - foraging, climbing and defense skills. He has a deep love for digging and tearing! He can spend hours digging and tearing dead logs for ants or termites, and for FUN too! Through enrichment, Kipaku can have a great day, every day! He is smart and full of curiosity. He will examine, dig, play and destroy whatever he encounters. He shows great climbing skills and is learning to be a very skilled bear! He uses all of

his senses to explore different tastes of freedom. He is a baby and will vocalize his feelings. He always keeps himself busy BUT starts to become grumpy when he feels uncomfortable with something! He is excited about everything that is offered to him - these little things are simple but are making a bear world of difference to his life!

Kipaku will undergo rehabilitation at BSBCC in order to one day be returned to the wild. He will begin the long rehabilitation process of learning and developing the survival skills and behaviours needed to one day survive in the wild. After recovering and passing quarantine, we will start taking him out for walks in the forest in order to prepare him for a new life in the rainforest.

Sun bears are classified by the IUCN as "Vulnerable" to "Endangered". Human activity continues to threaten sun bear numbers and is pushing them to extinction. Please do not keep sun bears as pets, but rather leave them in the forest to live their real lives.

Thinking about how you can send your LOVE to little Kipaku? Adopting is a great way to give him the life he deserves. Please adopt Kipaku today! He will make your heart melt!

Story by Chiew Lin May

Bear Story

Know about *Itam*

Itam, is a lovely bear with a slightly round body. She is seven months old, the youngest female bear in BSBCC.

Itam was originally from Kg Maimatom, Kemabong. But, she was found at Kg. Kuala Sabinait, Pagalungan, Nabawan. The owner of an orchard heard his dogs barking. When he went to have a look he found Itam alone. At that time, Itam appeared weak and had some dog bite wounds. The owner kept her for 3 weeks and then decided to surrender Itam to Sabah Wildlife Department, where she was kept at the Lok Kawi Wildlife Park. On the 27th of July 2020, Itam came to BSBCC.

On her arrival, her weight was 11kg. She had a shiny coat and a unique chest mark. Unfortunately, we found, whilst conducting her general body checkup, that she had a severe dental problem. We believed that it may have been caused by her stress-related behaviour - cage biting. Itam is not picky about food. She will try every new food that is offered to her. Her top three favourite foods are milk, egg, and fruits. Today, she weighs 12.35kg.

Most of the time, Itam is shy. She spends most of her time resting. The basket is one of her favourite places to hide. She can almost always be seen peeking from the basket. Other than that, she enjoys swinging on the hammock and resting with her belly up. If she wants to have a better view, she prefers to stay on the hanging platform. When she is resting, nothing bothers her. She chills and relaxes!

However, Itam is very alert to the environment. She always keeps her eyes wide open to observe her surroundings. Her movements are always careful and quiet. When you look into her eyes, they look alert with fear. A story lies in her eyes. She always stays in a corner or stays up high. Once she feels threatened, she charges and gives a warning bark. Then, she hides. We do not know what happened to her before. But, we

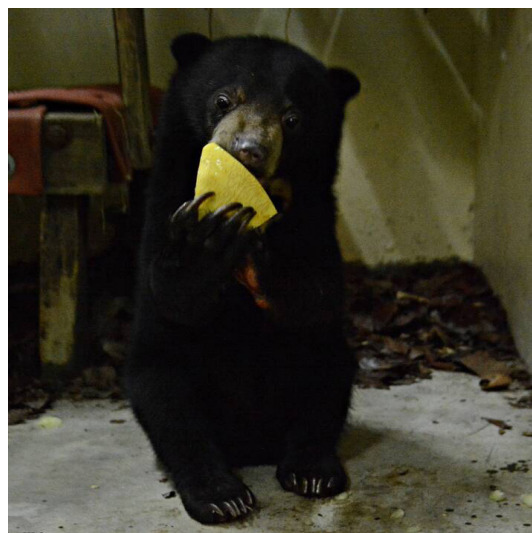


Image: Indulging the sweet and tasty honeydew fruit

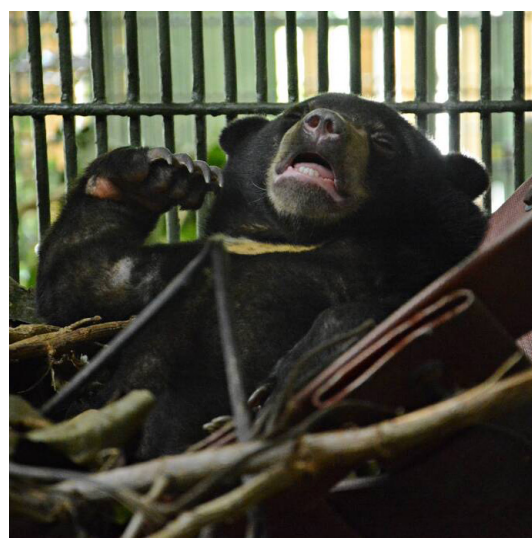


Image: Getting comfy in the nest basket



Image: Tearing up the termite mounts for some delicious snacks



Image: Exhausted after spending the whole day exploring the bear den

believe that she has suffered a lot and this has caused her to be traumatized.

Sun bears are excellent climbers. However, Itam is clumsy in climbing. Instead of using her claws, she uses her paws and teeth to support her during climbing. In the wild, cubs will be attached to their mother until two to three years old and, during this period, the cubs will learn from their mothers. However, Itam is now alone. Itam always looks up and looks as though she has many thoughts in her head. Maybe she is missing her mother and her natural home.

We can help her now by encouraging her more natural behaviours. We provide different types of enrichment for her so she will be able to learn to be a real bear.

In BSBCC, she will receive intensive care. It will take her time and patience to forget her trauma. We believe that she will grow into a confident young sun bear ready for her second chance at life at the BSBCC.

Story by Seng Yen Wah

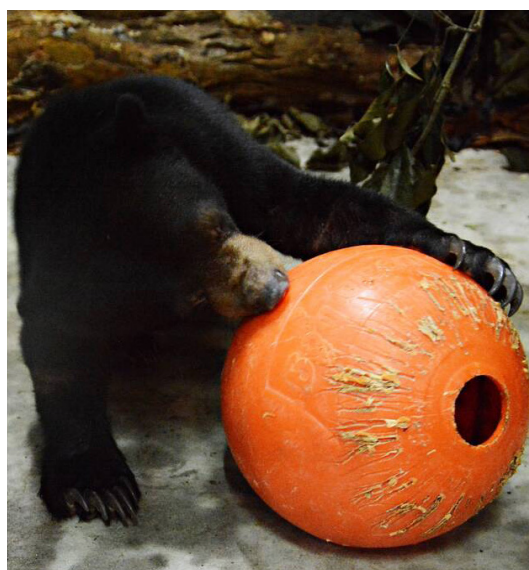


Image: Being playful with Aussie Dog ball



BSBCC Corner:

July in BSBCC

One sunny day, we were excited to receive the very first satellite signal emitted from Montom's GPS collar, indicating that the released bear was exploring his new home, and had passed by the adjacent forest reserve (Montom is an adult male bear that was returned to the wild on 10th July). And then, our heart sank when we heard that yet another sun bear cub had been rescued by Sabah Wildlife Department and was on his way to BSBCC.

In the early morning of 18th July, a sun bear cub around four months old arrived at BSBCC. He came from Kampung Kipaku, Tambunan. So we named him Kipaku – straight forward, huh? While the cub care team was still observing and learning Kipaku's behavior, we received more bad news that one more rescued bear cub was being sent to BSBCC. During the late night of 27th July, Itam, an approximately 7 month-old female cub arrived at the center.

BSBCC is established with the primary mission to rehabilitate rescued sun bears. We are saddened by the fact that sun bears are still being rampantly poached. And the cubs, their cuteness is a curse, sought-after as pets. The morale in our team was very low at that moment.

Both Kipaku and Itam shared a similar background, but the two have distinctly different personalities, with much insecurity. They were both kept as household pets after being found alone in the forest. What happened to their mothers? Mama bear would not abandon her cubs unless she was threatened or killed.

Kipaku is a sweet chubby bear that has become attached to humans. He cries when there is no keeper around to keep him company. He was "trained" to eat fried fish with rice, and hence he dislikes fruits and vegetables.

Itam, on the other hand, is a timid bear, constantly wary of her surroundings. Any noise will startle her. She barked and charged her keepers every morning. She would walk on her tip toes to explore the cage. She relaxed when no humans were around.

Dear Kipaku and Itam, we feel so sorry that you both lost your mothers and have experienced terrifying events at your infant ages. We will take care of you now. Your wild instincts and lessons taught by your mother will guide you through this rehabilitation journey. Five years from now, hopefully, we will return you to your natural home, like Montom!

We will never give up.

Text by Dr Yeoh Boon Nie



SUN BEAR

VIRTUAL RUN

2020 THE WILD JOURNEY BEGINS

REGISTER NOW!



SBVR Finisher Medal



SBVR E-cert



SBVR E-Bib



Sun Bear Chestmark Dri-fit T-shirt

Stand a chance for a complimentary SUN BEAR VIRTUAL TOUR



ALL Registered Participants* will stand a chance for a complimentary Sun Bear Virtual Tour with Dr Wong (worth MYR 40/pax)!

*only 100 slots available for the virtual tour

Entitlements

BSBCC Corner: Sun Bear Virtual Run

The Sun Bear Virtual Run 2020 aims to raise awareness on the plights of sun bears, as well as to raise funds to sustain the rehabilitation costs of sun bears at BSBCC.

As of today, sun bears continue to be kept as pets, and coping with the numerous expenses in rehabilitating rescued sun bears at our Centre has been challenging since the COVID-19 outbreak.

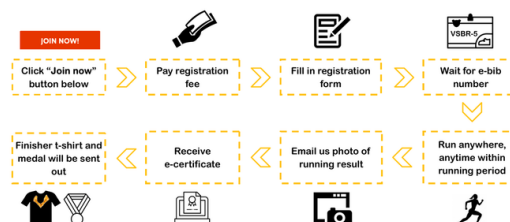
BSBCC currently houses 45 ex-captive sun bears that deserve a second chance to be wild bears again. Therefore, proper rehabilitation activities are crucial and must continue.

Want to make a difference? Join the Sun Bear Virtual Run 2020 and let these bears begin their journey back to the wild!

Find out more at:
<https://www.bsbcc.org.my/sun-bear-virtual-run.html>



How to join?



Educational Activities

Exhibitions

Wildlife Conflict Management and World Elephant Day

BSBCC has been invited to attend a Wildlife Conflict Management Programme in conjunction with the World Elephant Day 2020 at Earthworm Foundation Field Hub, off Mile 45, Sandakan-Telupid Road on 18th of August 2020. The main objective of the programme is to provide awareness to the communities and surrounding plantation companies regarding current issues in the wildlife conflict around Ulu Muanad, Beluran, and Telupid. Apart from that, the programme was conducted to form a group of communities that would gain basic knowledge of elephant behaviours and to render the community a role model in handling wildlife conflicts.

The programme was co-organised by Sabah Wildlife Department, Seratu Aatai, and Earthworm Foundation, attended by The 7's Team and Community Elephant Ranger Team and some local residents, with an emphasis on management's potential efforts regarding wildlife conflicts, especially elephants. Thanks for the invitation!



Image: Session on the basic knowledge of elephants by the founder of Seratu Aatai, Dr Farina Othman



Image: Dr. Wong interacts with the local handicraft making community of Kampung Ulu Muanad

Exhibitions

Celebrating Merdeka @ Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sepilok

Merdeka! Merdeka! Merdeka! It was the 63rd Independence Day for Malaysia and this year, BSBCC was thrilled to be invited by Rainforest Discovery Centre to celebrate together with our close partner, Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in a small scale event. Tons of family-friendly activities can be done here, which includes Flying Squirrel Zipline, mask colouring, and puzzles.



Image: Mask colouring activity during the Merdeka Day celebration at Rainforest Discovery Centre

Volunteers & Internships

BSBCC currently houses 45 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 up to the mid-March 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic has put a hold on the programme until end of August 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 or email us at info.bsbcc@gmail.com for further enquiries.

Name	Role	Country	Duration
Nurul Haslinda binti Abdul Kahar	Volunteer	Malaysia	30 th June - 13 th July
Rebecca Kimlaw Jerome	Volunteer	Malaysia	14 th June - 27 th July
Visperas Esteva	Volunteer	Malaysia	4 th - 17 th August



A huge **thanks** to our wonderful staff Jerome Visperas Esteva who dedicate your time, love, and talents to the rescued sun bears. We are grateful for your help in enriching the bear dens and assist in making the cub translocation box. A loud "Cheer Bark" for all your efforts!

Volunteer Stories

Most Rewarding Internship Ever!

by Ezi Nurayu binti Abd. Wahab

Hi readers!

I am Ezi Nurayu binti Abd. Wahab. I am currently studying at University Malaysia Sabah in a Conservation Biology course.

I have so many wonderful stories from my internship period. Actually, together with Gillian and Vincent, we had to fulfill our 12 weeks internship period, but unfortunately we could only do it for around 6 weeks in total at the Bear House. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic that was happening during these days.

On February 8th, we reached Sandakan Airport and were fetched by Thye Lim. During this time, we were still awkward with Thye Lim. He talked a lot in the van, but we just shyly answered his questions. Haha. Sorry Thye Lim! Our talkative mood at that time was still off. Actually, he is a nice and funny guy indeed!

Thye Lim drove us to BSBCC at first because we needed to be briefed by Lin May on the volunteer rules and regulations, and she told us our buddy keeper's name too. So, I was told that my buddy keeper was Roger. After that, we went to Bear House Hijau Hut. We had to introduce ourselves to all the Bear House Team and APE volunteers (Cameron and Astrid). Then, we were brought by Thye Lim and Lin May to our very first accommodation which was Paganakan Dii Tropical Retreat Sepilok (before moving to Bjorn Hala). Thanks to them for helping us with our luggage, which was heavy like a bag of bricks. Haha! At night, Thye Lim and Lin May took us to get dinner at a restaurant before going to the grocery store.

Now, let me tell you about my embarrassing and interesting stories from my first day of doing the internship here.

I broke the flat rubber squeegee mop during my very first task to clean the kitchen floor. I was so unfamiliar with the thing actually. Haha. Silly me!



Image: Finished stick paradox



Image: My very first session with Dr. Wong together with Astrid, Cameron, Gillian and Vincent



Image: I did the nest ball and Roger did the honeycomb enrichment



Image: Adneen, Max, Roger and I while doing the gunny sacks

Then, the very proud thing I did during my first day was I climbed the Sika's group cage in Bear House 2 to hang the platform structure. Also, I had my very first experience in learning what the U-clamp is and how to use it. Thanks to Roger, Adneen, Pradeep and Lin May for encouraging me to do so at that time. I rarely did this kind of 'men' work, but here I did! I was so happy because no one underestimated me except myself. Haha! Oh yeah! I forgot to tell you guys that in here, there is no sexism allowed. Every person receives the same treatment. This is one of the unique things in BSBCC.

After all these things, I learnt how to feed the bears. I was so scared to feed the bears on my very first day because I was afraid to get grabbed by them. But then, when I applied the technique that Roger taught us during our safety induction, I was no longer scared. I just needed to be calm and steady. Big thanks to Roger!

Roger and Adneen always gave me tips on how to do work efficiently and faster. They taught me the correct way to brush the cages, sweep the cage floors, and prepare the food (this task I was still slow at because I cannot cut the fruit as fast as them, like a chef) in a faster, yet efficient way. I was very lucky to have Roger as my buddy because he always tried to find work after all the routine tasks had finished. He never gave me a chance to pace myself. I am a proud buddy!

Every week, we would have a session with Dr. Wong Siew Te. We would ask him some questions and he answered them directly. From the sessions that I attended, I know that he is a very passionate person about wildlife conservation, especially sun bears. I am so proud of his life achievements! I am really glad I got to meet him in person. Thanks Dr. Wong for accepting us to do our internship here and spending your time to have a session with us every week.

Here, I was taught how to do enrichments for the sun bears.

I did a lot of enrichments! Thanks to the bear keepers, especially Roger, Adneen, Mizuno, Danny and Jeniur who gave me the chance to do that.



Image: Spreading the peanut butter in the Aussie ball



Image: Roger and I observing Kina and BJ in the training pen



Image: Gillian, me and Vincent did a stick paradox at Bjorn Hala during MCO period



Image: My incomplete Bjorn Hala family (no Danny, Wawa and Boboy in the picture)

Roger always encouraged me to make wood-based enrichments. For that, we had to find wood in the forest. I liked to do this because I could build up my stamina and learn to saw, drill and chisel wood. I could build up my 'man' skills too.

For the fence training, Roger and I were asked by Lin May to observe BJ, Kina, Sika and Soo.

During my first day observing BJ, I was so nervous because I needed to write down BJ's behaviour every minute. So, I must be quick to observe and write it down then.

But, day after day, my skills of observing and writing at the same time improved, especially during the time when I needed to observe four of them at the same time. Proud me! Hehe.

There were times where we were given a task to go to the platform to talk to the visitors.

I really liked this task because this was one of my reasons for choosing BSBCC as my internship place. I wanted to build up my confidence level in communication skills. I got the chance to go to the platform twice. Thank God! For my first time, I was a bit passive, but then I improved and was brave enough to approach the visitors (international and local) at Platform 1. Thank you to Melynda (centre coordinator) for always helping me out during that time.

Here too, I had my first experience getting sucked by leeches! Congratulations to me! Hahaha.

This happened during the day where we (Roger, Danny and I) went to get a very big termite nest for BBC filming purposes. I got the chance to see many scorpions under the termite nest too. Thank God nothing happened to us. Oh yeah! I have learnt how to do fencing with Roger too. Thanks to Roger for allowing and trusting me to do that.

Let's move to the moment where we had to stay in Bjorn Hala (staffs house). I was so sad because we could not go to the Bear House to feed the bears, do cage cleaning and food preparation. I missed the Bear House so bad! This is due to the Movement Control



Image: Bear House staff and I on Max's last day working at Bear House

Order caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What we did during these critical days was our video project for funding purposes, a full report on research about Along's behavior. I made enrichments for the bears (e.g. nest ball, honeycomb, stick paradox and fire hose pocket), plus wrote a blog for the fence training for Sika's group, a bear blog (Along) and an internship blog. We just worked from home (WFH) as our university commanded to do so.

Now, time for Bjorn Hala's unforgettable memories.

Here we are like a family. Most of us are not Sandakan people, except Mizuno. So, by having them in Bjorn Hala, it made me feel like I was at home. They were my reason for smiling every day. We are always teasing each other like siblings always do. Teasing, laughing, being crazy yet funny and caring for each other are what I will miss the most about us. Never forget me guys!

Other than sun bears, what the best about BSBBC was is the people (staff and Dr. Wong). Maybe it is hard to find good people out there. But here, there are a ton of funny yet nice people that can be found. Trust me :-)

So for the guys out there, let's try at least once to volunteer at BSBCC.

Once you volunteer here, you will want more.

2 Weeks in the Bear House: Fun Work that makes a Difference

by Cameron Watson

When I started my volunteering at BSBCC, I had no idea quite how quickly these 2 weeks would fly by. It has been a great experience in all regards, from the beauty of the animals themselves to the camaraderie of the team and of course how rewarding the actual work is. If anyone is an animal lover or has a concern for conservation and an urge to do something about it, then I couldn't recommend this program more.

My only real concern before starting was that this would be a bit of a fad and that the volunteers would be given fairly petty cleaning jobs, while the keepers actually got on with the real work. This was far from the case! We were very much in the thick of the work from beginning to end which is exactly how it should be. You will work up a sweat on a daily basis. The day begins with more functional tasks such as preparing food and cleaning the bear house, before the afternoon which brings more creative enrichment work to encourage the bear's natural behaviours. This is a great day split as you really get a bit of both and the pace is never too slow.

The staff here are all very supportive and there was great banter. The keeper I was paired with – Danny – was amazing at showing me the ropes but also at explaining the reasoning behind the things they were doing, which was amazing. Being told the thinking behind each activity really highlights how what you are doing is making a difference in a bear's rehabilitation, whether it be the different meals prepared to fit the individual bear's diets, or the way the enrichment toys we make parallel what the bears would encounter in the wild.

This brings us on to the focal point and most rewarding thing at BSBCC – the bears themselves! There is no better feeling than watching a bear demolish an enrichment you have just put together and knowing that this is bringing them one step closer to release into the wild. During my time I was lucky enough to see and record Sika – a young 2 year old – taking her first steps out of the bear house and into the outside

world. Before being rescued and brought to BSBCC, she had been kept illegally in a cage in a house and watching her take her first steps outside is a moment that will stay with me forever. It felt truly special to be a part of. It is moments like these that will make your time at BSBCC truly worthwhile and beautifully emotional. You will leave, like me, with a better awareness and an urge to do more.

I would therefore recommend this program to anyone who's not afraid to put in good work that will actually make a difference. You will get attached to the bears and learn their names and personalities. Hearing that the centre plans to release 4 bears this year brings a smile to my face and makes all the work worth it. It's a great program for the volunteer, but a better one for the bears themselves.



Image: Making egg carton enrichment with Astrid and Danny

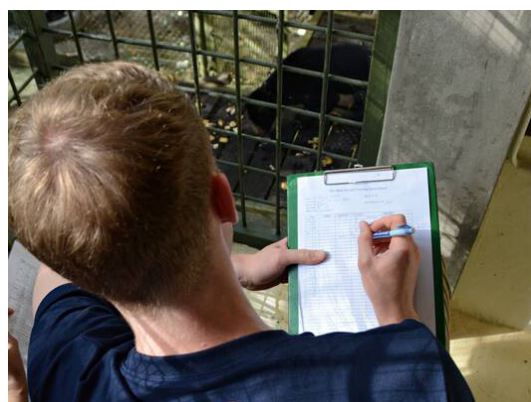


Image: Bear observation

Saving Sun Bears

by Astrid Mofjell

My name is Astrid Mofjell, I am 21 years old and I'm from Sweden. I've always had an interest in nature and wildlife. The last couple of years I have read so much about animals going extinct, animals in captivity etc. I really wanted to help but did not know how. After spending two weeks working at the BSBCC (Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Center), I really feel like I have made a change. I have had the privilege to help sun bears adapt to a better life and I really recommend more people come here and help the sun bears.

All the volunteers are staying at an accommodation called Paganakan Dii. It is really beautiful there and you have the opportunity to cook your own food if you want to. If you are quite lazy like me, you can buy food at the cafeteria. The food is really good, and you get a lot of food for a cheap price.

At 7:30 in the morning we leave the accommodation to go to the BSBCC and we start to work.

At 8:00 in the morning you either work in the kitchen preparing all the food for the bears or in one of the bear houses cleaning cages. When all the food is prepared and the cages are clean, we help to feed the bears too.

At 12:00 p.m. we have a lunch break for one and a half hours. After you have eaten your lunch you have a lot of time to go and look at the sun bears from the platforms if you want to. Here you can watch the bears play, eat, rest and even climb trees.

I think the funnest part of the day is after lunch because then it is time for enrichment. Then we get to be more creative which is really fun. Enrichment is a process which aims to encourage the bears' natural behaviours. Most often we create toys with food hidden inside so the bears really have to make an effort to get to the food.

We finish work at 5:00 p.m.



Image: Egg carton vegan sandwich for the bears!



Image: Feeding time!

Working alongside the staff here has taught me so much about sun bears and also a lot about myself. If I had the opportunity to stay for a longer period of time I would. The staff here are really nice and they always make sure that you feel safe. We have shared so much laughter and the mood is always good here. The staff are really kind and they are happy to answer any questions you have.

Each bear has a different story about how they ended up at the BSBCC. Almost every one of them have been kept illegally as a pet. Their stories really touched me and it made me realize how important the work they do here really is. Even though their stories are really sad, it was really nice to see the progress of the work they have done here.

It made me so happy when the staff told me that this May, four of the bears at the center are going to be released into the wild again. I am so inspired by the people working here, the things they do really works and hopefully even more bears can be released soon. It feels really good to be a part of the solution and I will remember this for the rest of my life.



Image: Pretty successful termite mound search



Image: Mini platform done by the staff, interns, and I!



Image: Making structure enrichment with Boboi, Joan, Vincent, and Gillian.

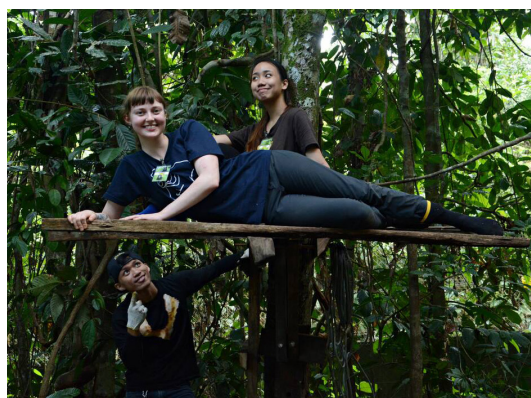


Image: Quality check by Bith, Gill, and I

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



July/August adopters 2020

1. Achim Fell
2. Aislinn Teo
3. Alicedean
4. Aneesh, Nadezhda & Rishav
5. Annette Harrison
6. Barbara Billington
7. Bernadette Chin
8. Bernard Ng Jia Han
9. Brenda Gurney
10. Brownen Young
11. Carolyn Curtis
12. Choi Seungcheol
13. Christy Chen Lee Siang
14. Chua Sha Fen
15. Conny & Horst Wamser
16. Cordianne Chau
17. Cynthia Lobato
18. Diong Swee Gaik
19. Emmy & Liam Binet
20. Gry Nymo
21. Guy Sizer
22. Helena Berg
23. Hill Family
24. Jacqueline Y. Vreeland
25. Katarina Carl Falk
26. Kathleen Abenoja
27. Kay Hallard
28. Kee Kai Loong
29. Kerry Song
30. Kirsty Southam
31. Koh Robin
32. Leonardo
33. Liz Hays
34. Lydia Kingsbury
35. Lynne Bowers
36. Michael Grünberger
37. Ngow Family Foundation
38. Peter Manuel
39. Phoebe, Emma & Charlotte Lawson
40. Richard Moore
41. Robert & Mary Saunders
42. Ruby, Louis & Joe
43. Steven Katsineris
44. Suzane Fulleman
45. Tirso Arranz Sastre
46. Tobi Clifton-Brown
47. Viviana Lazar
48. Wong Bing Haw
49. Zanariah Yahaya
50. Zaria & Kay Lee
51. Zi Heng & Matt
52. 張 人義

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

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



已學會謀生技能 • 馬來熊Montom回歸森林 (Rehabilitated Sun Bear - Montom released into wild). 詩華日報 See Hua Daily News, 12th July 2020.

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

- **Meet Malaysia's "Papa Bear", Dr. Wong Siew Te who's fighting to save the Malayan sun bear. A closer look at getting the bear facts.**

Going Places. July 2020. <https://goingplaces.malaysiaairlines.com/wong-siew-te-saving-sun-bears/>

- 已學會謀生技能 • 馬來熊Montom回歸森林 (Rehabilitated Sun Bear - Montom released into wild) 詩華日報 See Hua Daily News, 12th July 2020.

- 已學會謀生技能 • 馬來熊Montom回歸森林 (Rehabilitated Sun Bear - Montom released into wild) 東方 online Oriental Daily news, 12th July 2020. https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/east-malaysia/2020/07/12/351361?fbclid=IwAR1Zt0ESBhQIuLYMhQVn4-VavmeN7_lzfodDVX5QV3S5IPt_WquzqRqvY6Y

- **5年前被救送保育中心•马来熊回归大自然 (Rescued 5 years ago, sun bear finally released to the wild).** 光华网 kwongwah, 12th July 2020. <https://www.kwongwah.com.my/20200712/5%E5%B9%B4%E5%89%8D%E8%A2%AB%E6%95%91%E9%80%81%E4%BF%9D%E8%82%B2%E4%B8%AD%E5%BF%83-%E9%A9%AC%E6%9D%A5%E7%86%8A%E5%9B%9E%E5%BD%92%E5%A4%A7%E8%87%AA%E7%84%B6/>

- **Free as a bear: Rehabilitated sun bear 'Montom' released into wild.** New Straits Times. 12th July 2020. https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/07/607858/free-bear-rehabilitated-sun-bear-montom-released-wild?fbclid=IwAR3Mn_tpCvnSjITYEhIk3ELCmf4wGTMEM03LU7HmD-xJCCdyu_YFNEPWStE

- **Group releases eighth rehabilitated Sun Bear back into Sabah jungles.** The Star. 13th July 2020. https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/07/13/group-releases-eighth-rehabilitated-sun-bear-back-into-sabah-jungles?fbclid=IwAR2w_BYBiGcZiedpk_SIP4tZnuYU4JGwAF1VK0WoeOaaui4bRYFHCPkjaA

- **Eighth rehabilitated sun bear returns to the wild.** The Borneo Post. 14th July 2020. <https://www.theborneopost.com/2020/07/14/eighth-rehabilitated-sun-bear-returns-to-the-wild/>

- 「黃修德籲民舉報盜獵 • 威脅馬來熊野外生存」 (Wong Siew Te appeals to the public to report any poaching activities, that threatens the survival of wild sun bears). 詩華日報 See Hua Daily News, 14th July 2020.

- **Sun bear released into the wild after five-year rehab.** Daily Express. 14th July 2020.

- **Eighth Rehabilitated Sun Bear Returns To The Wild.** Brunei's No.1 News Website. 14th July 2020. <https://www.brudirect.com/news.php?id=97466>

- **Back into the wild for Montom.** The Star. 15th July 2020. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/07/15/back-into-the-wild-for-montom>

- **Back to the wild for sun bear Montom after 5 years at centre.** Free Malaysia Today. 16th July 2020. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2020/07/16/back-to-the-wild-for-sun-bear-montom-after-5-years-at-centre/?fbclid=IwAR3QUQhgy79GLMv2pptleDBJtRzIEbNNNoUZZ6bhlqup15YtvEzPAYQY0u3M>

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

THE BORNEO POST

Eighth rehabilitated sun bear returns to the wild

SANDAKAN: Montom, the eighth rehabilitated sun bear at Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) has been released back into the wild after five years of rehabilitation.

The release operation carried out on July 10 was a joint effort between Sabah Wildlife Department, BSBCC and Forest Solutions Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

Prior to the release of the six-year-old male sun bear, a final medical check-up was conducted by the BSBCC and Sabah Wildlife Department team at their facility in Sandakan.

The team arrived at the release site at the northern part of Sabah at 5am and successfully released Montom at 6.16am. Montom's movement will continue to be monitored on a regular basis through a GPS collar fitted on the bear.

Montom arrived at BSBCC from Kampung Melangkap, Kota Marudu on January 21, 2015. According to his ex-owner, his dog chased away Montom's mother and left baby Montom behind, which led him to keep Montom as a pet. Montom was then surrendered to the Sabah Wildlife Department's Wildlife Rescue Unit after keeping him for a year.

Throughout his rehabilitation process at BSBCC, Montom has been adapting well towards the natural forest surrounding offered at the centre. Apart from being excellent in climbing trees, he was also at his best at foraging around the forest enclosure.

Dr Wong Siew Te, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of BSBCC, who led this release operation, said the release was a success thanks to the help from Sabah Wildlife Department, Sabah Forestry Department, Forest Solutions Malaysia and good weather on the 12-hour road trip to the release site.

"We hope Montom can now live freely like a wild bear and propagate the sun bear population in Sabah," Wong hesitated to disclose the information on release site as poaching is still a big threat to the survival of sun bear in the wild.

"Sun bear has a very slow reproduction rate, they cannot withstand any level of poaching and other human caused mortality such as habitat loss and keeping sun bears as pets and use bear body parts as traditional medicine," he said.

After 12 years in operation, Sabah Wildlife Department and BSBCC have successfully eliminated sun bear being kept as illegal pets in Sabah. SWD urges the public to report to the department if they come across any illegal poaching, selling, consuming and keeping of Totally Protected Species like sun bears.

BSBCC's facility currently houses 43 rescued sun bears at the centre and is expecting to release several more sun bears in the near future. Thanks to great efforts from Sabah Wildlife Department in rescuing captive



The ground team for Montom release consisted of staff from BSBCC and Forest Solutions Malaysia Sdn Bhd. (Photo credit: BSBCC)



Montom was fitted with a satellite collar prior to the release at BSBCC. (Photo credit: BSBCC)

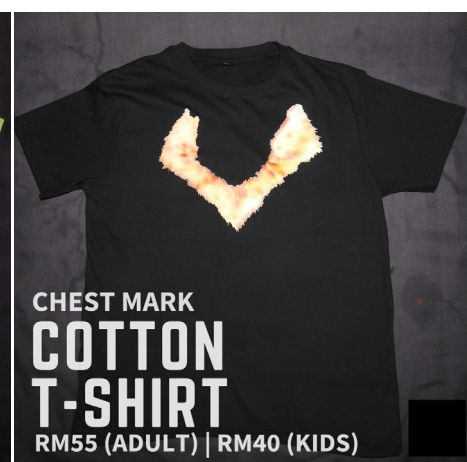
sun bears throughout Sabah, chance of life as sun bears in the wild.

Eighth rehabilitated sun bear returns to the wild. The Borneo Post. 14th July 2020.

- **[Podcast] 55 • Wong Siew Te • Saving Sun Bears.** Spotify: The Sustainable Jungle Podcast. 23rd July 2020. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5aMxFkBg8FtYEQW65twXTa?si=gtbNSypkQJiX96-Sxu6guA>
- **Preserve mangrove areas when building roads, say experts.** New Straits Times. 28th July 2020. https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/07/612247/preserve-mangrove-areas-when-building-roads-say-experts?fbclid=IwAR3mJQqH_ZySVxI2d5s21tRtk0fN9d2K3XNQ1umoKw6-PFAcezy95fFEZi#.XyDhQBtrPss.facebook
- **Avoid mangroves when building roads: Coalition.** Daily Express. 28th July 2020. <http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news/156319/avoid-mangroves-when-building-roads-coalition/?fbclid=IwAR1LaEjclOU6OH003tbSX85czX1sjrrWXQ4GThY4c2clFAT8er2x3-I7a2U#.XyDHiZxBT3Q.facebook>
- **'Stiffer penalties to curb poaching'.** New Straits Times. 21st August 2020. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/08/618192/stiffer-penalties-curb-poaching?fbclid=IwAR2K15buoVQiHIMPmUoi8RQWb3Fv5FrgXiLGkhu-4UVqqShOgfmBwL0epA>

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

Terms and conditions:

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BSBCC's work would never been possible without in-kind and financial support from various individuals and agencies. We acknowledge the continuous support from the following contributors:

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| | • Kavitha Aruljothi |

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• **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

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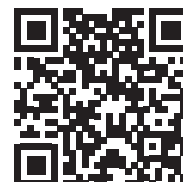
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Proofreading / English editors

Lori Bull, Teresa Fung Wing Ka

Compiled & edited by Melynda Cheok

All information is correct at the time of writing.

