

Table 1. Species recorded in the night safaris.

Species (Y=present)	Lung Fu Shan (6 Oct 05)	Lung Fu Shan (10 Oct 05)	Lung Fu Shan (30 May 06)
<i>Xenophrys brachykolos</i>	Y	Y	Tadpoles only
<i>Paa exilispinosa</i>	Y	Y	Y
<i>Amolops hongkongensis</i>	Y	Y	Y
<i>Rana livida</i>	Y	Y	Y
<i>Bufo melanostictus</i>		Y	Y
<i>Kaloula pulchra</i>		Y	
<i>Polyedates megacephalus</i>		Y	
<i>Gekko chinensis</i>	Y	Y	Y
<i>Hemidactylus</i> sp.		Y	
<i>Opisthotropis andersonii</i>	Y		
<i>Tropidophorus sinicus</i>		Y	
<i>Trimeresurus albolabris</i>			Y

“Man of the forest” – a visit to the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre

by Lily Ng

The Orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) occurs in Asia. It is the only great ape in Asia and is found only in tropical rain forests in northern Sumatra, Indonesia and Borneo. The Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre is located in Sabah, North Borneo, at a site of 43 km² of protected land at the edge of Kabili Sepilok Forest Reserve. It is the largest rehabilitation centre in the world for housing injured or orphaned Orangutans, providing medical care and teaching them how to survive before they are returned to the wild. Since many young Orangutans are victims of the illegal pet trade, they lose their climbing ability while they are in captivity. It usually takes several years of training before they are capable of living in the wild.

Orangutans share 94.6% of their genes with human beings. It is our third closest relative after chimpanzees and gorillas. They are the largest of all tree-dwelling mammals and can grow to 1.5 m tall and 90 kg in weight. They are vegetarians. It is interesting that they make up their fresh nests in the crown of the tree every night for sleeping (Fig. 1).



Fig.1. Fresh nests are made in the crown of tree every night (Photo: Lily Ng).

Each day, the centre provides two feeding times, at 10 am & 3 pm. If you want to catch the morning session, you have to take a domestic flight at 7 am from Kota Kinabalu, since there is no direct flight from Hong Kong, or you could stay at the centre the night before. There are several feeding platforms, but only platform A is open to visitors (Fig. 2). Milk & bananas are provided, but the food supply is reduced on other platforms deeper into the forest in order to encourage the animals to find food for themselves. I was glad to see so many Orangutans free in the wild, rather than in cages. Touching the animals is prohibited, but be sure to give them a smile. After visiting them at platform A, remember to stay in the centre to watch a video called "Man of the forest" to learn more about the work of the centre.

In Malay, Orangutan means "Man of the forest". The centre also includes public education on conservation and research with other endangered species, such as captive breeding of the rare and endangered Sumatran Rhinoceros. It has stimulated greater local and international awareness of the protective laws for endangered species. Since Orangutans are now listed as critically endangered species, we need to do something to avoid their extinction in the wild. The work of the centre is an important contribution to their conservation.

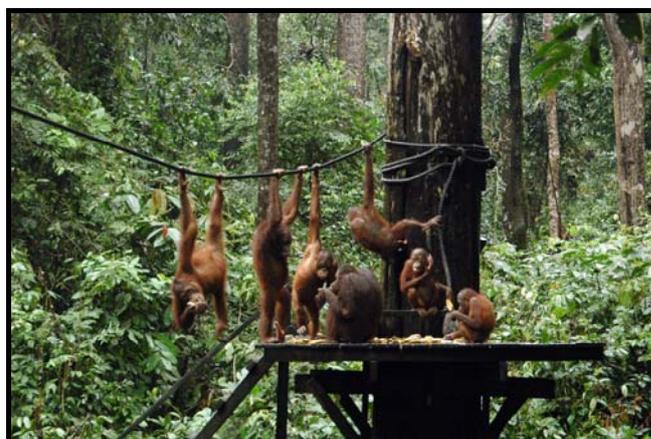


Fig.2. Milk & bananas are provided in platform A two times a day (Photo: Lily Ng).