

# Jungle Times

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*Photo of the Month Credit:  
Myra Mansell*

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# What's Going On?



## HOSTED STEVE BACKSHALL FOR DEADLY 60

Steve and his film crew were here for a very speedy visit to capture footage for a special South East Asia Deadly 60 episode on CBBC, after this they were off to Bali. They went searching in plantations for centipedes and also worked alongside Rich to catch a python we've been tracking along the river bank. Steve also spent a night in the tree in a hammock that Koko and an expert rigger helped put up, they used a drone to catch footage of the sunrise. Hopefully his team will be able to show off some of the great conservation work here, and get young scientists of the future excited about these special animals!



# What's Going On?



“I am a naturalist and a broadcaster, working mostly for the BBC, Discovery and National Geographic. I have been here to Borneo many times over the last 30 years and it is an incredibly exciting place to visit. So much of the wildlife that occurs here is totally unique. It occurs here and nowhere else on the planet. What I think is special about this centre is that it is like a stronghold, like a bastion for wildlife on the Kinabatangan river. I have had the great opportunity to spend the night up in an emergent tree that sticks up above all the other trees and the canopy. I get to wake up first thing in the morning with the gibbons calling in the distance and the hornbills soaring over the top of the canopy and just this incredible cacophony of sounds from the birds, the frogs and the monkeys in the distance. It lets you know how important this piece of forest is because it is home to so much wildlife.” – *Interview by Miriam Kunde*

# Visitor Fact File



**Name:** Charles M. Francis

**Where is he from?:** Canada

**Why is he here?:** After attending a convention in Thailand Charles decided to return to Borneo with fellow bat expert Rodrigo Medellin who had arranged to visit DGFC. Charles wrote one of our most used library books; *Mammals of Borneo*, so it was a pleasure to host him in the jungle.

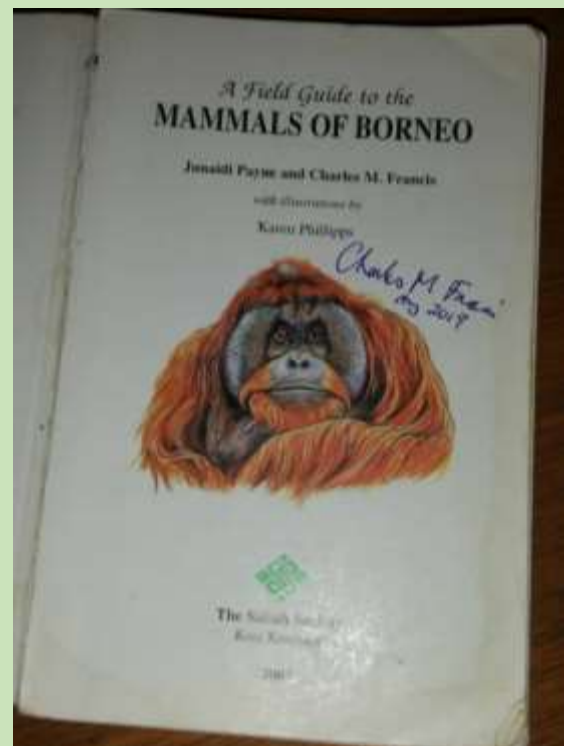
**His Work:** He's previously worked in Sabah during the 80's for the Sabah Wildlife Department.



**Quote:** "I've enjoyed being out in the jungle again and seeing all the work that people have been doing"

**What he got up to:** Set up mist nets to study the different bat species that can be seen here at DGFC – including *Megaderma spasma* (Lesser False Vampire).

**Highlight:** Seeing a pygmy flying squirrel (*Petaurillus*).





# Visitor Fact File

## Rodrigo Medellin



It was such an honor to receive Professor Rodrigo Medellin at DGFC. Rodrigo Medellin is Senior Professor of Ecology at the Institute of Ecology, University of Mexico (UNAM). He has worked on the ecology and conservation in Mexico and elsewhere for over 40 years and has authored over 190 publications. He was the President of the Society for Conservation Biology, is the founder of the Program for the Conservation of Bats of Mexico and is the founding Director of the Latin American Network for Bat Conservation. He is also Co-Chair of the Bat Specialist Group of IUCN.

Rodrigo has received the 2004 Gerrit S. Miller Award of NASBR, the Whitley Fund for Nature Gold Award, The Rolex Award for Enterprise 2008, among others. He was recently featured in a BBC documentary, *The Bat Man of Mexico*, narrated by Sir David Attenborough. While at DGFC Rodrigo gave an amazing talk about his work and was using mist netting to catch bats along with Charles and his PhD students, Rodrigo also spent 4 days at the field centre, visited our friends at Gaya Island Resort and gave a brilliant talk at University College Sabah Foundation - UCSF

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RMedellinbats>



# Visitor Fact File



**Name:** Antonio de la Torre (Left)

**Where is he from?:** Mexico

**Why is he here?:** Antonio was a previous PhD student of Rodrigo and decided to join him on his trip to DGFC.

**His Work:** Antonio spent his PhD studying jaguars in southern Mexico and is now currently working in Peninsula Malaysia studying elephant movement and evaluating the main conservation policy. You can check out Antonio's work at the management and ecology of Malaysian elephants.

*Instagram Handle:*

*@tapiresdelasierra*

**Name:** Marina Rivero (Centre)

**Where is she from?:**

Mexico

**Why is she here?:** She wanted to see the diversity that DGFC had to offer in terms of mammals especially bats and to build some connections between DGFC and Mexico

**Her work:** Working with tapirs, trying to diminish the threats that tapirs face in south Mexico.

**Highlight of the trip:** enjoyed capturing the flying pygmy squirrel and meeting all the people at DGFC and seeing how they work.



# Visitor Fact File



**Name:** Mr Pascal Gregoire, Belgium Ambassador

**Where are they from?:** He is originally from Belgium but he is currently stationed in Kuala Lumpur

**Why are they here?:** Our director Benoit is from Belgium so it was the ideal opportunity to connect with the ambassador whilst he is placed in Malaysia.

**Their work:** Here at the embassy in KL for 3 years.

**Quote:** “it was a great opportunity to discover the wealth of biodiversity around”

**What they got up to:** Saw how well the centre is set up for students and PhDs and visitors to work together. Also went on the boat twice, and managed to go for one trek in the forest as he was only here for a short stay!

**Highlight:** Everything was a highlight! It was good to see all the amazing species, and the work that Benoit has done with the local authorities to really make something unique here.

Take home message: This field centre truly is something to cherish, protect and develop. – *Interview by Erin Johnston*

# Visitor Fact File



**Names:** Dr Alfonso Lopez Aguilar and Paola Unda, and their two children.

**Where they are from?:** The family is originally from Mexico but has been in Singapore for the last 8 years.

**Their work:** Alfonso is currently the chief vet for the Sea Aquarium in Singapore. Paola is the founder of Marine Life Animal Management Advisors.

**Why they are here:** They have always wanted to visit Borneo and heard about DGFC from Milena.

**Highlights of the trip:** Seeing the proboscis monkeys and seeing the python on the night boat.

You can find out more about Paola's work at:  
<https://www.marinelife.asia/>





# Visitor Fact File

**Name:** Lawrence Alan Bansa BSc MSc

**Work:** Lecturer in the Faculty of Natural Science and Sustainability, University College Sabah Foundation

**Interesting Background:** I come from a rural district in Sarawak and natural sciences were something peculiar to me. In 2012, I went to Japan for the Training for Young Researchers by Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) core-to-core Program: International Network for Tropical Biodiversity Conservation Focusing on Studies of Large Mammals. From there I discovered my passion for research in natural sciences and further developed relevant goals and capacities in order to make it a profession. I started from a humble beginning and I can say that taking calculated risks would be necessary to achieve something bigger than ourselves.

## What brought you to DGFC?

This is my first time to DGFC and I heard a lot about it from my best friend Elisa Panjang and I watched the mini-series Borneo Jungle Diaries that was produced by Scubazoo. Since then I was really looking forward to visit the field centre. Then I received an invitation from Dr Sergio Guerro Sanchez and I am thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with DGFC. Together with Professor Rodrigo Medellin, I have been invited to share my experience and get involved with the bat survey in the vicinity of DGFC.

**Highlight:** I am mesmerized by the wildlife that I found in DGFC and along the Kinabatangan River such as crocodiles, proboscis monkeys, and pygmy Malayan flying squirrel. I also love the friendly people of DGFC as they created the positive and professional working environment. - *Interview*

*by Jane Wong*





# Visitor Fact File

**Name:** Anthony Giordano, founder and executive director of S.P.E.C.I.E.S., a US based NGO concerned with the conservation of carnivore communities and their ecosystems.

**Where are they from?:** USA

**Why are they here?:** He has been in Sabah on this current trip for a few weeks now, although he is very familiar with Sarawak as well from visiting over many years. He came to visit to see all the wildlife in the sanctuary.

**Their Work:** He has done research into leopards, and many other mammals, and has an interest in the political side of ecology.



*Promotional Links:*

*Website -*

<https://carnivores.org/people/>

*Facebook -*

<https://www.facebook.com/SavingCarnivores/>



**What they got up to:** Anthony went on the boat with Rich on his first evening to try and catch some snakes, and then on his second afternoon he came on the primate boat, on which we spotted several raptors and proboscis monkeys.



# Visitor Fact File



**Name:** Charlotte Gurney-Read

**Where are they from?:** Surrey, UK

**Why are they here?:** Travelling after graduation from Cardiff University's School of Biosciences

**Highlight:** "The night walks were my favourite, even though we didn't sight a pangolin!"

**What they got up to:** Both girls were here to get a taste of what it is like to work in a wildlife sanctuary. Over the few weeks they stayed they helped with various camera trap projects, and tracking civets! Each of the girls also had the chance to go on the boat at night with Rich to find snakes to be tagged for his PhD.



**Name:** Amanda Wilson

**Where are they from?:** Universiti Malaysia, Sarawak

**Why are they here?:** Short term volunteering between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of degree



# Visitor Fact File



FREDA GUO

She only visited us for one short week, and so she threw herself right into activities, going for a jungle walk to take pictures on the afternoon she arrived. On her second day she had an opportunity to go on the boat in the evening with Rich to look for snakes! Freda is currently studying at Princeton University, she has completed both undergraduate and masters degrees related to environmental science and biodiversity, and her next step is planning to do a PhD, which is why she came here to see what options are possible. Unfortunately after this she has no time to stick around in Sabah as school starts up again soon in the states!



# PTY Arrivals

## KIRSTY LEACH & TYLER CUDDY

Kirsty and Tyler are here on placement from Swansea University for a whole year! They are our final two PTY arrivals for this academic year, and they have already thrown themselves straight into field work. On their first morning they went out to track Harold, one of the civets. In his spare time Tyler is a keen musician, and Kirsty is very into art, so we have a creative pair this year! Kirsty is very keen to work with the bearded pigs, and Tyler loves reptiles! Out of this year they both hope to gain more experience in the world of Zoology, as this is a novel opportunity set up by their university they are ready to get hands on with everything, and when they leave they'll have a clearer idea of where they want to go next in science.



“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to see animals in their natural habitat, I have worked in a zoo before but this is a whole new experience!” - *Kirsty*

“Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro last year has inspired me to travel the world and this is a great way to incorporate my interest in animals as well” - *Tyler*



# Gaya Island PTY Arrival

EMMA REMOTTI



She is one of the PTYs stationed at Gaya Island Resort. She lives in Italy surrounded by mountains but spends most of her time in Cardiff studying. After completing a field course in Tobago, she has become the resident fish identification expert. Despite her marine knowledge, she has opted for the terrestrial project. The hope is to use camera traps to determine the effect of tourism of jungle fauna dispersal.

**Hidden Talent:** Saving Katie from spiders

**Fears:** Spiders

**Special Attack:** Yelling Italian at macaques (“smell away”)

**Highlight so far:** The dinner buffet. Oh, and also helping with the rescued green turtle is a close second

**Greatest accomplishment so far:** Drinking an entire milo pint in under 10 seconds

**Goal for the year:** To catch a pangolin on the cameras

**Most wants to spot:** A reticulated python

**Catchphrase:** “Daymmmm”



# Gaya Island PTY Arrival



KATIE WEBB

She will also spend her placement year at Gaya Island Resort. She grew up in London, studies in Cardiff and applied for this placement to get away from the rainy UK weather. She has a love for sea turtles and her project, which will focus on replanting the seagrass that had once covered the shallow waters outside the last resort, will hopefully help attract these grazers back to the area.

**Hidden Talent:** Giving cute names to wildlife

**Fears:** Those horrific flying monsters (AKA butterflies)

**Special Attack:** Highest pitch hiccups

**Highlight so far:** Help treat the rescued sea turtle and anything turtle related

**Greatest accomplishment so far:** Actually getting a “tan”

**Goal for the year:** Learn how to roll her Rs

**Most wants to spot:** More turtles

**Catchphrase:** “Shnacks”



# Volunteer Arrival

**Who:** Mairin Murphy

**Where from?:** San Francisco

**Why here?:** 3 months volunteering post graduation from University of Miami for field experience. She heard about DG from her semester at Cardiff Uni.

**Interesting Fact:** She has competed at a professional level in horse riding, and already has a love for animals.



**Where next?:** Vietnam

**Quote:** “I love reptiles, in particular snakes so it was an honour for Rich to place me in charge of a fragile egg from the nest that was hatching – his name will be Monty!”

**What will she be doing?:** Mairin will be helping with all the current projects running at the field centre, she hopes to be able to get involved with practising using R studio software, and in general expand her skill set to help her decide which direction she would like her career to take after travelling, as she is not yet set on a masters programme.





# PTY Departure



JESS SHUTTLEWORTH

Jess is the final student to leave after being here for her Professional Training Year! Her interesting project on civet sleeping sites will go towards Meg Evans PhD. Jess loved spending time in the field, but her favourite activity by far is the primate boat, and going along the river to the Khoya tributary. Jess will go back to the UK and spend the rest of the summer at home with her family, before returning to Cardiff to complete her final year of her biological science degree. She hopes that all the skills related to scientific writing that she has gained this year will aid her in carrying out and writing up her dissertation research project. Her sunny disposition will be greatly missed, along with her spectacular baking skills, that she perfected over the year, on many rainy evenings that definitely needed cake to brighten them!



# Volunteer Departure



ERIN JOHNSTON

Erin will be returning to Glasgow University to complete her final year of her Veterinary Bioscience undergraduate degree. She hopes to continue in education and take part in a masters programme studying infectious disease. On her way home she will be stopping in Hong Kong. As you can see from this picture her main love were the camera traps! She helped process loads of data and used R to construct some graphs showing flat-headed cat activity. Her favourite activity to get on board with was going up to the Batangan wildlife corridor, and looking out over the jungle from the view point. We will miss her crazy Scottish ways and the mad dancing she taught us all!



# Volunteer Departures

## ELLA HEARNE AND GEORGIE DAYKIN

After nearly 3 months Ella and Georgie sadly have to leave us, as they move onto Maliau Basin for a 2 week field course with their university. However, before they start there, they have a few days in between to stay in KK, Ella is going to climb Mount Kinabalu, and Georgie is popping over to Singapore. After that both the girls will return to Cambridge to complete the final year of their natural science degree, hopefully this summer has given them some insight into what they want to do after graduation! Whilst here they got involved with all activities and were a great morale boost whilst civet tracking. They also set up their own mini camera trap project to help Miriam work out which trigger settings worked best in different situations.





# Volunteer Departure



JANE WONG

Jane Wong, has been here for a 10 week internship over her summer break from her bioscience degree at Universiti Malaysia, Sarawak. Whilst she was here she took part in all the daily activities and particularly enjoyed the night walks, as she had a keen eye for photography. One of her main interests was frogs and she captured several close shots of them. It was so lovely to have Jane here, and using her insane language skills she hopes to further explore the world, and has said this will not be the end of her journey into conservation!



# Notable Publications

**Using natural marks in a spatially explicit capture-recapture framework to estimate preliminary population density of cryptic endangered wild cattle in Borneo.**

*Penny C. Gardner, Ian P. Vaughan, Lucy P. Liew, Benoit Goossens.*

[https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S235198941930294X?fbclid=IwAR29QIHqcevUh0prWjOFGXtNDRfjaD7w3EeOKJzAep5\\_J\\_EDAG8\\_IpactZk](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S235198941930294X?fbclid=IwAR29QIHqcevUh0prWjOFGXtNDRfjaD7w3EeOKJzAep5_J_EDAG8_IpactZk)

This paper is the most recent work to be published by DG in Global Ecology and Conservation journal. The Bornean banteng is an endangered animal, with a declining trend, and a need for a conservation plan. However, as of yet, it has been hard to quantify these population numbers due to the nature of the unique coat colour and patterns which often hinders detection. This research involved 3 methods; capture-recapture, camera trapping and signs. The latter 2 have previously failed, and so the new method density estimates were statistically tested. Hopefully the results from this work can be used to protect them against hunting, and provides a basis for long term monitoring.





### Danau Girang Field Centre

*Danau Girang Field Centre was opened in July 2008. It is located in the Lower Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, Sabah, Malaysia.*

*Danau Girang is owned by the Sabah Wildlife Departments and supported by Cardiff University. Its purpose is to further scientific research with the aim of contributing to long-term conservation projects in the area, and develop a better understanding of our environment and the living things we share it with.*

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