

### Birdlife100 World Congress

The Birdlife100 World Congress, with the tagline: "It's time," was a major milestone for the Birdlife International family. Celebrating its 100th anniversary, the Congress brought together 117 Birdlife partners in September 2022. At the Congress Opening, Birdlife International CEO Dr. Patricia Zurita reminded participants that time is running out and that the next decade was critical for the conservation of nature, birds and habitats throughout the world.

Birdlife Partners from across the world have been at the forefront of initiatives to protect birds and habitats. Two global examples are the Hutan Harapan initiative in Indonesia and the Gola Rain Forest in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Hutan Harapan is Indonesia's first ecosystem restoration (RE) initiative covering almost 100,000 ha. In Indonesia, there is now currently more than 600,000 ha of forest area that is being managed for ecosystem restoration.

The Birdlife100 Congress brought together its partners from around the world to exchange knowledge and best practices and plan for the future. In keeping with the theme of the Congress BirdLife launched its ambitious 10-year strategy to save nature. On the sidelines of the Congress, on September 13, 2022, RSPB CEO Dr. Beccy Speight, Burung Indonesia CEO, Dian Agista, and BirdLife International CEO Dr. Patricia Zurita signed a partnership agreement to support Hutan Harapan. "Hutan Harapan is a clear example of landscape conservation and restoration efforts in the world," said Dr. Becky in her speech. Meanwhile, Dian Agista explained that ecosystem restoration initiatives developed with and supported by the Indonesian government are focused on developing the multiple functions of forests via ecosystem services and restoring degraded forests. According to Dr. Patricia Zurita, Hutan Harapan is an example of an actual global partnership exercise, which provides ecological/conservation, social, and economic benefits, not only for Indonesia but also globally.

After the signing ceremony, the Chairperson of the Burung Indonesia board, Nuning S. Barwa, and the President Director of PT REKI, Mangarah Silalahi, thanked the three organizations and presented souvenirs from Hutan Harapan. (MAS)



Birdlife International CEO Dr. Patricia Zurita, CEO of RSPB Dr. Beccy Speight, CEO of Burung Indonesia Dian Agista poses for a photo with Chairman of Burung Indonesia Council Nuning S Barwa and President Director of PT REKI Mangarah Silalahi after signing the partnership for Hutan Harapan.



King Charles III holds a bulian tree planted in Hutan Harapan on November 2, 2008 (left). A 12-year-old bulian tree in Hutan Harapan (right).

### Looking Back at Prince Charles' Visit to Hutan Harapan

On Sunday afternoon, 2 November 2008, the then crown prince of the United Kingdom, Prince Charles Philip Arthur George, planted a bulian tree (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) near the Hutan Harapan base camp accompanied by the then Minister of Forestry MS Kaban and Jambi Governor Zulkifli Nurdin.

The crown prince who once set foot in Jambi has now become king with the title King Charles III replacing his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, who died on 8 September 2022. Besides being fond of gardening, King Charles III has been a long-time advocate for environmental protection, including the fighting against deforestation.

Nearly fourteen years have passed since the tree was planted by the King Charles. The original bulian tree, unfortunately, was damaged by foraging monkeys and had to be replaced by a new bulian seedling. The bulian tree has a slow growth rate and it is now about six meters in height. The tree, also known as ironwood, is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Redlist and is categorized as vulnerable to extinction.

King Charles III's visit to Indonesia, especially to Hutan Harapan, was pivotal in strengthening Indonesian-British cooperation in efforts to fight climate change and protect nature.



The President Director of PT REKI Mangarah Silalahi explained the initiatives, management and challenges of Hutan Harapan in front of hundreds of researchers from within and outside the country as well as a delegation from the Government of Indonesia in Gottingen, Germany on 3 July 2022. Doc. Hutan Harapan/Irfan Nurarifin.

## Hutan Harapan as a Centre for International Research

At least 200 domestic and foreign researchers who are members of the ARC990-EFForTS research consortium gathered in Rothernberg-Gottingen Germany from 3-6 July 2022. The CRC990-EFForTS consortium, funded by DFG Germany, is a collaboration between the Agricultural Institute Bogor (IPB), Jambi University (UNJA), and Tadulako University (UNTAD) with George – August University of Gottingen-Germany with the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Hutan Harapan and other companies in the Sumatra lowland landscape. The purpose of the research is to create knowledge about the dynamics of ecological and socio-economic landscapes and the transformation of land use in the lowlands of Jambi, namely forests, rubber plantations and oil palm plantations.

The Deputy Indonesian Ambassador to Germany Yul Edison and the president of the University of Gottingen attended the opening event. Deputy Ambassador Edison expressed his support for the collaboration and especially for the efforts to protect Hutan Harapan while increasing the productivity of the Jambi region landscapes. Also in attendance; the Chancellor of IPB, Prof. Dr. Satria Arif, Deputy Chancellor for cooperation Prof. Dr. Dodik Nurrochmat, Vice Chancellor of UNTAD and Vice Chancellor of UNJA. Apart from academics, representatives of the Indonesian government were also present, including the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, National Agency for Research and Innovation (BRIN), researchers from various universities as well as representatives from companies.

In his presentation, the President Director of PT REKI, Mangarah Silalahi described how Hutan Harapan has become the inspiration for similar types of initiatives both in Indonesia and abroad. Hutan Harapan, although formerly a logging concession, is still rich in biodiversity and home to many threatened wildlife species. It is also home to the Batin Sembilan indigenous people who have seen their forests disappear in face of the expansion of oil palm and other commodities. "PT REKI is implementing a socio-ecological landscape approach to save the forests that are of both national and international importance. If we can maintain this forest for the next 20 years then Hutan Harapan and its landscape will become a center for research for various fields of science and a legacy for future generations," concluded Mangarah.

At the closing ceremony, Prof. Stefan from University of Groningen thanked and welcomed the initiative to restore the Hutan Harapan and become a place for hundreds of post-graduate researchers from domestic and foreign universities. "We only research and publish, those working to save, restore and also manage are friends from Hutan Harapan. We hope that Hutan Harapan will continue to be a center for research on the lowland forests of Sumatra. We will support as much as we can," he concluded. (Irfan Nurarifin)

## Sungai Kapas as a Source of Protein for the Malay and Batin Sembilan Communities

At five o'clock in the afternoon, the Hutan Harapan Community Partnership and Communication team visited Bi Masna's hut located on the Kapas river in the Musi Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra in October. "I want to check the fishing net I set up yesterday. You want to come?" asked Bi Masna.

Without thinking twice, we nodded and eagerly accepted Bi Masna's offer. We boarded a small boat commonly known as a getek owned by Bi Masna. Her fishing net was set downstream, but she wanted to invite us, who were the first to ride getek on the Kapas River, to see the condition of the forest from the upstream direction. Our trip was fabulous because the river border was still overgrown with trees. The king prawn bird (Alcedo atthis) was seen several times as if it was welcoming our journey.

Along the way, Bi Masna recounted the tradition of catching fish for the Malay people who live along the river banks. "When we were young, we could cast nets every day," recalls Bi Masna. Bi Masna and her community now only cast their nets about twice a week catching no more than a kilo of fish as farming activities now occupy more of their time. Various types of fish, such as toman, seluang, baung, juar, kepras, sebarau, are part of their daily diet. Based on the research results of Dr. Tedjo Sukmono, a fish researcher at University of Jambi (UNJA), who is currently Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, identified 123 fish species in Hutan Harapan, and one of them is an endemic and new species. "As for side dishes, we don't have a shortage because there are still fish near us," said Bi Masna. She added that the caught fish were for home consumption and not for sale. Apart from Bi Masna, many other women fish to meet the protein needs of their families.

The Hutan Harapan team fished alongside Bi Masna. Their catch made for a delicious meal as it was cooked with rice, cassava leaves, and chili sauce. Bi Masna said that she had never seen the Kapas River dry up. This is because the condition of the forest around the river is still good, based on the story of Mat Serampang, Bi Masna's husband. "If the forest is not there, the river will recede and there will be no more fish for us to eat," he concluded. For Bi Masna and the Malay community living along Sungai Kapas, protecting Hutan Harapan is the same as protecting food sources and people's lives. (HOS)



Bi Masna collecting fish from her net on the Kapas River. Dok. Hutan Harapan/Saleksa