



Borneo
Nature
Foundation



SEBANGAU

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME



WHAT IS **BORNEO NATURE FOUNDATION?**

Borneo Nature Foundation (BNF) is a not-for-profit conservation and research organisation. We were established in 1999 in Central Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) to study, protect and restore some of the most important tropical rainforests in Borneo, to safeguard the biodiversity found there and the important cultural values the forest has for indigenous people.

Our longest running programme is in the Sebangau Forest, a 600,000-hectare area of tropical peat-swamp forest that is one of the most critical ecosystems in Borneo. Working together with UPT LLG-CIMTROP (Centre for International Cooperation in Sustainable Management of Tropical Peatland), BNF has been supporting and empowering

community-led initiatives including anti-logging patrols, anti-poaching monitoring and fire-fighting teams. As a direct result of these efforts, illegal logging was stopped here over a decade ago. Our highly skilled field research teams have monitored the distribution, population status, behaviour and ecology of Borneo's two flagship primate species for generations – the Critically Endangered Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*) - Sebangau hosts the largest lowland Bornean orangutan population in the world - and the Bornean white-bearded gibbon (*Hylobates albibarbis*). Volunteers have contributed to BNF's projects since 2001 and continue to make a difference by supporting our ongoing conservation efforts in Sebangau.



WHY VOLUNTEER WITH US?

Are you ready to jump into the wild? Are you passionate about wildlife conservation? And are you ready to live in the jungle with basic camp facilities? If you are, then we need you for our Sebangau Volunteer Programme! This is a physically demanding Programme in a humid, equatorial environment, but a great opportunity if you want to get your hands dirty while helping to save the rainforest. In return for your enthusiasm and willingness to support our work, we offer a challenging, yet rewarding experience which will help to secure a future for the last remaining forests in Borneo.

As a volunteer, you will have the opportunity to develop new skills by learning about about tropical wildlife and peat-swamp forest Conservation and contribute to BNF's education activities.

No prior experience in the field is necessary. The only requirements are to be 18 years old or above, to be physically and mentally fit and ready to deal with a demanding environment.

"I went back home with the beautiful feeling that I helped the biodiversity."

Erwin, volunteer 2019

"The time I spent in the middle of the forest was the most beautiful learning I've ever had and built memories I will keep for a very long time!"

Johanna, volunteer 2019





WHAT WILL YOU EXPERIENCE?

During the Programme, volunteers will be introduced to the Sebangau forest and learn about BNF's long- and short-term projects assisting with a variety of tasks allocated according to the needs of the project and weather conditions at the time. These may include, but not be limited to:

- Supporting long-term conservation activities, such as seedling replanting and seedling nursery maintenance.
- Getting involved in our environmental education by helping the education team teaching local children about biodiversity and conservation or building a forest classroom at camp for future local school field trips.
- Joining expeditions to remote camp sites to learn how to monitor habitat and biodiversity changes over time to better

inform our conservation initiatives.

- Assisting with maintenance of camp infrastructure and facilities including painting, repairs, rubbish collection.
- Supporting and learning from the local field team in the forest

During your time in Sebangau, you will hopefully have a chance to observe some of the magnificent wildlife that calls this forest home, including orangutans, white-bearded gibbons, sun bears, bearded pigs, clouded leopards, water monitors, over 200 species of bird including the rhinoceros hornbill, Wallace's hawk eagle and the endemic Bornean bristlehead, and a large and diverse invertebrate community. One advice: use all your senses and don't forget to check out the small stuff!



WHERE WILL YOU BE BASED?

You will be based in BNF/CIMTROP's Laboratorium Alam Hutan Gambut (LAHG) research camp which is located just inside the forest edge. Camp is approximately one hour by car, boat and - uniquely - small train, from the provincial capital of Palangka Raya.

Facilities in camp are basic but comfortable, including:

- accommodation in shared single-sex rooms with 2 bunk-beds per room
- shower, toilet and clothes washing facilities
- communal study and relaxation areas
- kitchen and dining room where our amazing cooks produce food that can cater to varied dietary requirements (gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian...) as long as we have the information prior to the visit
- drinking water, tea, coffee
- Solar-powered electricity between 17:00 and 22:00 each day (supplemented by a generator if needed)



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

Indonesia is situated on the equator, and therefore has a tropical climate consisting of a wet and dry season. In Borneo, the wet season is approximately from October to May, and the dry season from June to September. The dry season is usually (but not exclusively) a little hotter. Both the wet and dry seasons can last longer than expected. Sudden downpours and tropical storms are to be expected throughout the year, and fires and smoke pollution can be a problem during long dry seasons.

As Sebangau is a peat-swamp forest, it is very different to a dryland rainforest. Expect to find walking extremely hard work in the wet season when the forest is flooded and standing water can be waist deep in places. Falling over and getting muddy are rites of passage.

Typical daytime shade temperatures are 32°C at base camp or in the towns and 27°C in the jungle. Even if most nights are still quite hot, the temperature might drop by up to 7°C in the forest, so it can feel quite cool compared to town.

Hazards in the forest range from mosquitoes and slippery tree stilt roots through to poisonous snakes, spiders and scorpions. Before you start assisting with our projects, you will be given an introduction to the forest and its risks. All our training sessions will be carried out in English, so a good understanding of the English language is required for health and safety purposes.





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