

Adoption Newsletter

February 2018 — June 2018



BINTANG

Sun bear is a protected species in Malaysia. Any killing, keeping, consuming and using bear parts is totally prohibited by law. There are three different laws protecting sun bear and other protected species in Malaysia: Protection of Wildlife Act 1972 in Peninsular Malaysia, Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997 in Sabah and Wildlife Protection Ordinance 1998 in Sarawak. At the international front, Malaysia is a signatory of Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) and a member of Asean Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN).

Bear progress

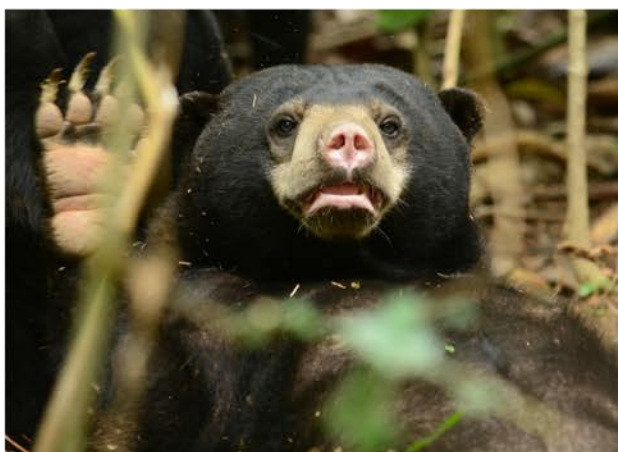
Sun bears are a forest dependent species. They are found in various forest types across Southeast Asia. Sun bears have also been found in secondary forests that have some primary forest traits. In Borneo, male sun bears need at least 15km² of forest habitat to find enough food to survive.

Here at BSBCC, one of the vital aspect of the rehabilitation process is integrating compatible bears, to enable them to live together in small groups. This socialization allows them to learn skills from each other and go out as a group into the enclosures.

Sun bears are not always sociable animals and introductions have to be done one by one, under careful observations.

Bintang group consist of five adult bears. Kala and Montom were found sniffing on the ground in search of worms and beetles, Loki went deep in the forest to find a hiding place where Bintang appears contented leaning back against a shady tree, holding onto her hind paws. Occasionally she swats the flies buzzing around her face. Bintang spends a lot of time grooming herself. She generally focus on her paws because they are important tools for climbing, digging and eating.

Although sun bears are members of the order Carnivora (carnivores or meat eaters), their feeding habits are omnivorous. They eat a wide range of food in the forest including fruits, insects, invertebrates, small animals and honey. These are yummy snacks and an important protein source for sun bears in the rainforest. Besides that, Bintang can use her powerful claws to crack coconuts wide open. Sun bear feeding activities in the wild actually benefit the forest ecosystem, since they disperse the fruit seeds and control termite populations, thus highlighting the importance of their conservation.



Sun bear paws are very soft, just like the palms of our hands. This helps them walk quietly on the forest ground.

Sun bear facts

i) Defense

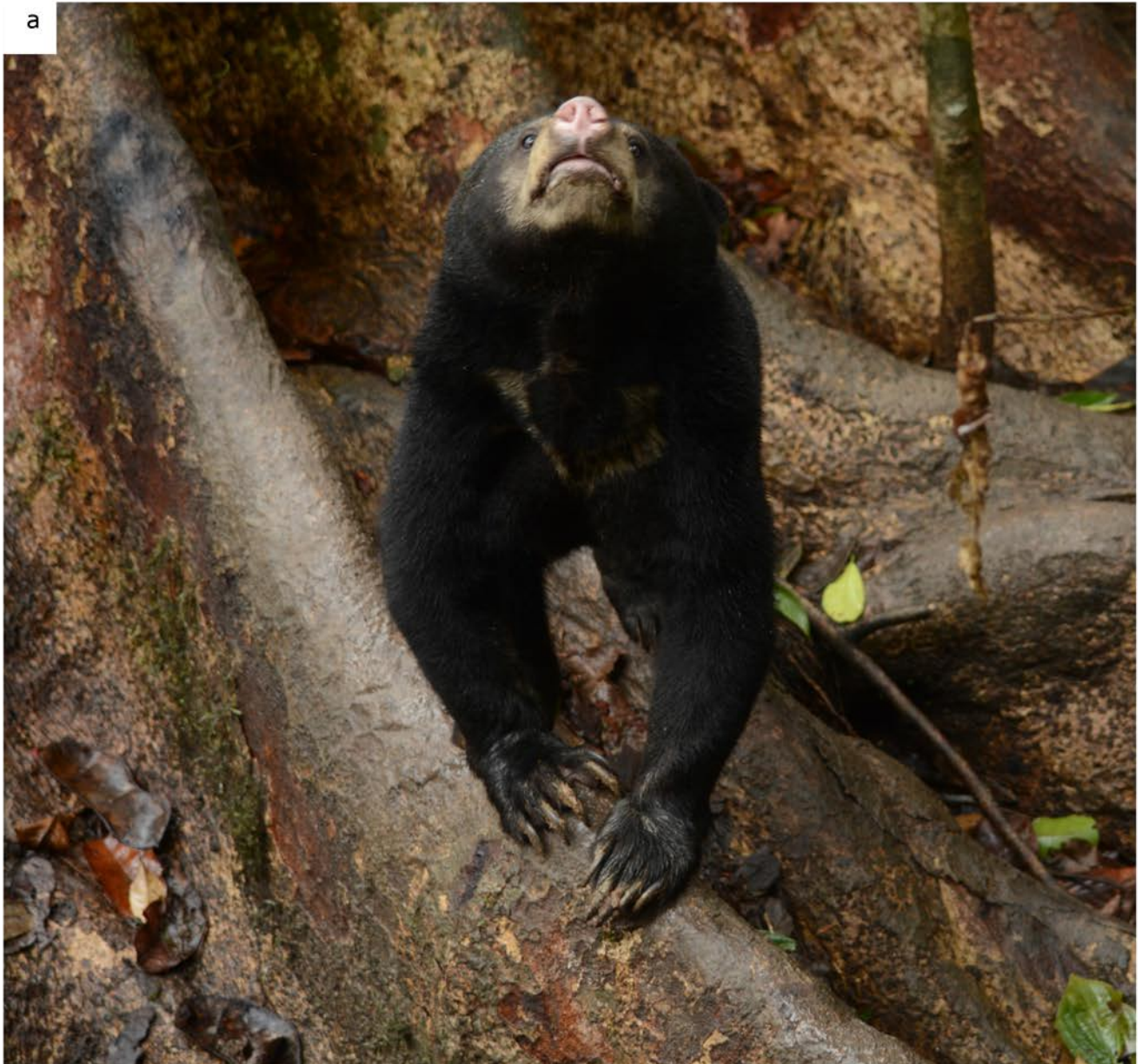
The life span of a sun bear in captivity is longer with sufficient food and care. They can live up to 38 years old. As for sun bears in the wild, their life span is much shorter which is from 12-15 years old. This is due to low food abundant, competition with other bears, natural predators and natural disasters such as forest fire, fruit failure, and extreme weather events. In action, they are also threatened by human activities such as habitat destruction, land conversion and poaching activities.

ii) Breeding behaviour

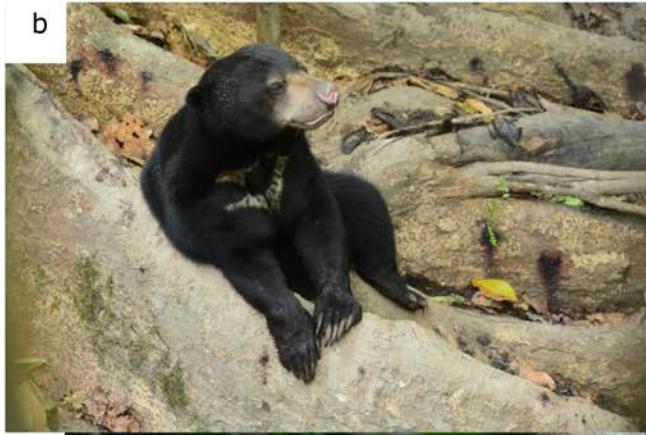
Sun bears do not have a particular breeding season, it occurs throughout the year. The average gestation period of a female sun bear is 93 days. Sun bears give birth to a single cub at a time and rarely have twins. Adult female bears usually use big tree hollows and hollow logs as their den sites for breeding preparation.

When giving birth, mother sun bears stay in their dens for about a month. She may move her cubs to a place where she can forage. The little cubs become more agile at the age of 2-3 months old where they start to be able to climb trees.

a



a) Like other bears, sun bears have an incredible sense of smell.



b) - d) Bintang spends much time in the tree canopy, as well as on the forest floor.

iii) Conservation status

Sun bear has been classified by IUCN as 'vulnerable', because of the 'data deficient' as so little is known with regards to the biology and ecology of sun bear. There are still no valid population estimates anywhere within their range, though numerous threats to the animals as such that the species is thought to be under threat, despite the lack of official figures. It is estimates that their numbers have declined by 30% in the past 30 years, and will continue to decline at this rate.

Bear Progress

BSBCC hopes that through the continuous efforts from our bear care staff and volunteers, Bintang and all the bears get the best care to grow up healthy at the BSBCC and have their chance to go back to their natural habitat. We would like to thank our supporter, **Borneo Eco Tours Sdn Bhd** for the support and donation which will greatly help this Centre to improve the welfare of individual orphaned bears especially in their rehabilitation process to return to the wild.