

Adoption Newsletter

July 2017 — October 2017



BINTANG

Being the smallest bear in the world, sun bear cubs are definitely cute! The problem is that people think that cute bears make good pets. The sun bears at BSBCC are all ex-pets. These bears are here to regain their forest skills so that they can go back to the wild where they belong. Sun bears are important forest animals that belong to the wild. They should never be kept as pets.

Bintang's adventure continues

Over the past years, Bintang has been in rehab where she spent most of her time roaming in the beautiful large forest enclosure to build up the strength and skills she would need to survive in the wild. It looks like she really enjoys exploring the forest area.

Sun bears eat hundred types of fruits found in the forest such as figs, acorns, wild durians and many more. Many of the fruits are available during fruiting seasons or fruiting years. In between fruiting seasons or fruiting years, when seasonal fruits are scarce, figs plays an important role in a sun bear's diet because fig trees produce fruit all year long. Loki can be seen sniffing the ground because she is foraging for the naturally occurring fruits and insects available in the forest enclosure. She might also be foraging for

fruits and vegetables given by our bear keepers.

Bintang is intelligent in recognizing wild food such as termites, grubs, and honey. From their activity of foraging, sun bears help to keep the forest healthy by controlling termite populations and keeping trees alive as they will dig into termite nests and consume them. Termites are social insects that live in large colonies. They feed on live trees and dead trees alike. There are some termite species that build their nests within a tree host which eventually kill the tree. So, by eating termites on tree, sun bears help the tree to stay healthy!

At BSBCC, we have random feeding time and random feeding site; scattering the food. This is to encourage the bears to forage on their own. As sun bears travel, they disperse the partially digested fruit seeds throughout the forest. Sun bears help to ensure the growth of these seeds by dropping them far away from the parent tree. The further away the seed is planted from the parent tree, the higher the survival rate will be.

In the wild, sun bears live alone due to a limited food supply in the forest. They are together only when mother is with her cub, or during mating seasons. Here at BSBCC, we keep sun bears in groups to conserve space and encourage healthy bear behavior and this is part of the rehabilitation process. Currently, Bintang is grouped together with two male and four female sun bears. Besides foraging for food, one of Bintang favourite things to do is relaxing on the tree branches. She usually takes two to three hours on the tree canopy just for chilling, resting or sleeping.

Sun bear facts

i) Sun bears defence

Sun bears have all the tools necessary to defend themselves from predators. Their sharp claws and canines are handy weapons when they are in a fight. When its predators latch on during a fight, a sun bear can turn around within its loose skin to bite its attacker. Their loose skin also acts as an effective armor to prevent serious injuries from fights. Their sharp claws also help them to quickly escape from predators by climbing trees.

Although sun bears live in the tropics, their short and sleek coat is unusually thick and dense to repel heavy rain. Sun bears are also a quick mover, compared to other bears like giant pandas.

ii) Sun bear communication and vocalization

Bears generally convey information in different ways using body language, visual, scent, and vocalization. Sun bears vocalize in various ways. The clucking sound made by adult bears is a typical contact call signalling friendly intent. As for cubs, they hum or produce a motoring sound while nursing and will squawk or cry to get their mother's attention.

Sun bears bark, growl and roar to show aggression. When a bear encounters another bear in the forest and if aggression builds up between two bears, they will usually growl and show off to each other. If the aggression intensifies, they would fight physically.



Bintang is quiet independent in finding her own food.



a) - c) Even considered as the world smallest bear species, Bornean sun bears can weigh between 30kg to 60kg and reach about 1.2 meters to 1.5 meters tall when standing upright.

For us, the challenges that we face are indeed huge, and yet with a dedicated team we know we can continue to give all the rescued sun bears the very best quality of care for their survival. We would like to thank our supporter, **Borneo Eco Tours Sdn Bhd** for adopting Bintang for one year and being a part of her life. You would be able to see the difference you would make to help this orphan sun bear's life.

If you wish to adopt Bintang or other sun bears through the **Share Bear** or **My Bear** adoption programme, you can email to **info.bsbcc@gmail.com**. Once again, thank you for helping us save the sun bear and their home.