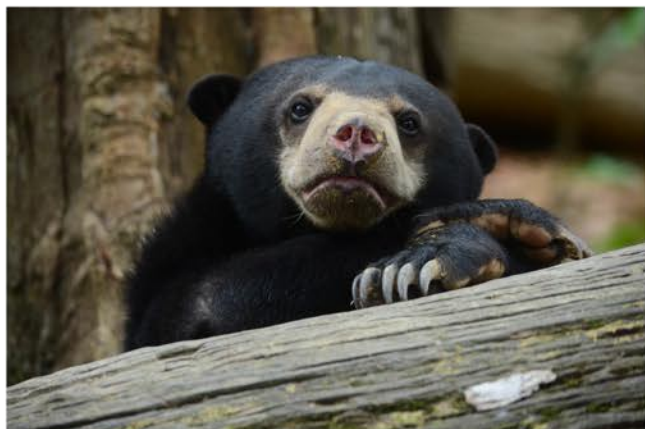


# Adoption Newsletter

October 2016 — February 2017



## BINTANG

The Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre (BSBCC) promotes and practices the conservation of Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*) by incorporating a holistic approach to animal welfare, education, research and rehabilitation. BSBCC is a non-government organization established in 2008 through collaboration with the Sabah Wildlife Department, Sabah Forestry Department and Land Empowerment Animals People (LEAP). To date, a total of 44 rescued sun bears are under the care of BSBCC.

### Background History

Bintang was a five-month old female cub when she was sent to BSBCC on the 15th of July 2014. Her background history is still unknown but we believe that her mother was killed by poachers, where they took her in and kept as a pet. When Bintang arrived at our Centre, she weighed only 7.9kg and took the spot as the youngest bear at the Centre. Now, she weighs 27.3kg.

### Rehabilitation Process

#### **i) Integration With Other Bears**

The rescued sun bear cubs that stayed at BSBCC have to learn on how to live together.

The interactions between sun bear cubs can help them to develop and learn skills needed in the wild. On the 25th of August 2014, our bear care team introduced Bintang to other sun bear cubs, Sunbearo and Loki one at a time.

Previously, when little Bintang was moved to the quarantine area during her first arrival at BSBCC, she was not very welcomed by Sunbearo as Sunbearo kept growling repetitively at her. Therefore, during the first integration between Bintang and Sunbearo, our team observed them with extra caution and were prepared for any sudden aggressive fight between these two sun bear cubs. Luckily, after opening the sliding gate between their dens, Sunbearo was the first to initiate the play and it was Bintang first contact with another bear. Both of them spent most of their time playing at the small platform and basket.



Arrival of Bintang at BSBCC. She was quite traumatized being kept as a pet in a small iron cage.

On the next day, Bintang was integrated with another sun bear cub, Loki. Loki was very curious towards Bintang and barked at her during their first meeting. When the two bears met, both of them played and wrestled immediately. After four days of integration with Sunbearo and Loki one at a time, it is time for Bintang to mix together with these two bears in one pen at the same time. These three sun bear cubs explored, played, wrestled, climbed, foraged and rested together in the big exercise pen. Bintang seems to become more playful and active in the presence of Sunbearo and Loki.

## ii) Fence Training Process

After moved Bintang and her two bear friends to the indoor bear house, they have to undergo several fence training process before they can leave the indoor bear house to the outdoor forest enclosure. This stage is very important because our forest enclosures are surrounded by electric fences that prevent bears from escaping. In the bear house, there is a large training pen surrounded by electrical wires in the inside. Our team used honey, porridge and fruits to encourage Bintang to come near the hot wire fence. On the first day, Bintang accidentally touched the hot wire while licking the honey. The intense pain and loud spark caused by

the hot wire scared her so much that she immediately run back to her own cage. The next day the same thing happened. It took a whole week and few more 'zappings' before Bintang could understand how to avoid being electrocuted while getting her food and to walk confident in the training pen.

## iii) Going into The Forest Enclosure

In December 2015, it was a very special month because the guillotine doors of the bear house were opened for the group of Bintang, Loki, Susie 2 and the males: Montom and Sunbearo to out to the natural forest enclosure in Pen D. The bear care team carefully observed the bears near the guillotine door but after a few minutes, Bintang finally went out and started foraging for food. Sunbearo then followed her and went even further. As he was walking along the enclosure fence, he accidentally zapped on the hot wire. Sunbearo immediately pulled back and went deep in the forest to find a hiding place. Thankfully, Bintang and her bear friends are growing stronger and progressing well. From being rescued, quarantined for several months, forming relationship with each other to stepping out into the forest enclosure has given Bintang a new journey in life.



*Loki (left), Sunbearo (middle) and Bintang (left) resting on a comfortable hammock in the quarantine building.*





a) Bintang enjoying her time on a hammock. b) It is a play time for Sunbearo (left), Loki (middle) and Bintang (right). c) These three little bears peek out from the indoor bear house. d) Finally, Bintang stepped out into the forest enclosure. e) Bintang (bottom right) and another two bears observing their surrounding environment.





*f) Bintang taking nap on a tree branch in the BSBCC forest enclosure.*

### **Bear Progress**

Bintang is growing well and now she is a three-year-old. She is enjoying her new home and her second chance of freedom, which reminding us that this is the life that every sun bear truly deserve. The forest enclosure Bintang lives in provides a wide variety of activities to stimulate growth and development, so that one day she can live happily in the wild. Based on the fact that sun bears are good tree climbers and thought to sleep in trees, that goes for Bintang as well. In the forest enclosure, Bintang climbs like a wild sun bear. It is interesting to see Bintang climbing up the trees from the viewing platform. She usually spend most of her day sleeping and sunbathing on the tree. Over the past few months, Bintang has mastered a wide variety of survival skills and has made a tremendous amount of progress during her time at BSBCC.

Despite her younger age, Bintang knows on how to search for insects and fruits in the forest enclosure which made her is an excellent forager. BSBCC is a perfect place where rescued sun bears can roam freely in the forest enclosure. It is exhilarating to observe Bintang ventures and acclimate to life in the forest.

Watching Bintang growing healthy and adapting well in the forest is undoubtedly one of our greatest pleasure. We would like to thank our supporter, **Borneo Eco Tours Sdn Bhd** for adopting Bintang. Through your support, we were able to take care of this orphaned sun bear and give her the life that she deserves.