Ciliwung Herpetarium Facilites Renovation

In February 2021, we received a generous donation from PT. Garis Ring Sakti to renovate our off-show and quarantine unit, as part of their CSR Programme. This is very helpful for us, as it will help to increase animal welfare, efficiency of animal management, and safety of IHF staff.

The quarantine unit functions as a temporary holding space for new arrivals, usually comprising of snakes rescued from conflict with humans. The off-show unit houses animals that can no longer be released, and have to remain in captivity permanently. It will also house the animals used for ecological studies, as well as captive breeding colonies of the endangered Trilaksono’s bush frog.
Ciliwung Herpetarium off-show room 1 before renovation.

Ciliwung Herpetarium cleaning station/off-show unit before renovation.
One thing of note was that there was no ceiling between rooms and the roof. This makes it very hot, and poses as a risk of escape. Since we house some of Indonesia’s most venomous snakes, it would be much safer to have a ceiling as double protection in case escapes do occur.

Field technician Angga Risdiana filling in gaps in the wall.
Collections manager Harnum Nurazizah sorting items in the quarantine unit.

Construction of the new python quarantine cages.
Local engineer Ricky Arhandy has volunteered to build the metal frames for our new enclosures. This will increase both safety and animal welfare at the herpetarium.

Education coordinator Windi Liani and collections manager Harnum Nurazizah testing out the new king cobra enclosure at the off-show unit.

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While the facilities are being renovated, our animals are temporarily moved to the office, which doubles as living quarters for staff. The conditions are far from ideal, however we try to make things work as best we can. We expect the renovations to be complete by end of April, which will allow us to move the animals to their new enclosures, and continue our conflict management program.
Groundskeeper Mama Snake and director Nathan Rusli discuss a strategy for cleaning out the king cobra in temporary holding.

Moving the king cobra into a clean box while kept in the office temporarily. When the new enclosure is finished, we will use a shift and trap box method rather than manually handling the animal with a hook.

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A spitting cobra held in temporary holding with a basic style enclosure. This animal will be moved to the display area once renovations are complete.

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Enclosure Design Practice

While renovations are underway, we took the opportunity to increase the skills of our animal management team (all on-site staff basically), in regards to enclosure design. Using leftover materials, we built some small vivariums for practicing glass-cutting skills, as well as installing ventilation and sliding door rails. In the office, research coordinator Umar Fhadli Kennedi has designed and built a small enclosure for some tadpoles we found, which have now metamorphosed into small froglets of the Javan chorus frog (*Microhyla achatina*). Collections manager Harnum Nurazizah has also created a tank to house vampire crabs. We also managed to move our kukri snakes to a larger enclosure, with more enrichment to increase animal welfare.
Collections manager Harnum Nurazizah constructing a background for vampire crabs.
A partially complete vivarium for vampire crabs. We must wait for the silicone to dry, before adding substrate and plants.
Eight-lined kukri snakes in their new enclosure. Since being moved to a larger, more naturalistic tank, they have exhibited more activity and natural behaviours.

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Snake Rescue and Release

Due to our team having their hands full with the renovations and structuring new programs, we have temporarily paused our snake conflict management program with the Fire Service. Furthermore, as the quarantine area is being renovated, we are unable to receive too many animals at the moment. However, we occasionally get people deliver animals to the herpetarium, which have been rescued from conflict. Among these were a wolf snake in a stove, a kukri snake, reticulated python, Malayan racer, and painted bronzeback. One particularly interesting case was a Malayan krait that arrived in March, brought to us inside a plastic sack. Unfortunately, it had sustained severe injuries to the vertebrae, and after consultation with expert veterinarians, our animal management team decided that the most ethical course of action was to euthanise it.

The krait arrived in a plastic sack.
Groundskeeper Mama Snake and collections manager Harnum Nurazizah hydrate and examine the snake.

The animal sustained severe injury to its vertebrae, and had to be humanely euthanised.
**Education and Outreach**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has restricted us from conducting most of our education programs, especially those that involve travelling and interacting with large groups of people. However, we are making progress in this field. Education coordinator Windi Liani Bukit is in the process of designing a curriculum for the Cocoon Club (Laskar Kepompong), as well as an awareness program for Gelonggong Village, where we are based. Local children often come to the herpetarium for free tutoring and help with their homework and school tasks. Furthermore, we have also continued to raise awareness via social media, and created weekly posts, highlighting a different species each week. We have also been invited to speak at various online training events, radio, talkshows, and seminars, in order to raise awareness about herpetological conservation in Indonesia.
Education coordinator Windi Liani Bukit explaining some math homework.

Recent posts from the @ciliwungherpetarium account on Instagram, which aims to raise awareness on herpetology and conservation in Indonesia.

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Trilaksono’s Bush Frog

We are making progress in regards to these endangered frogs, which are endemic to West Java. However, we have not been able to achieve maximum results due to lack of funding. Over the past few months, our team has conducted several surveys throughout West Java, to collect as much information as possible about these frogs, particularly their ecology, distribution, and threats.

We hope to publish the results in a scientific journal at some point soon, as there is almost nothing known about this tiny, endemic, endangered amphibian. This will allow us to hopefully gain more support for our conservation project, in which the first step will be to gather baseline data. This must be robust and repeatable, in order to assess the results after we have conducted conservation efforts. Meanwhile, research coordinator Umar F. Kennedi is communicating with our partners from LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences), IPB University, and Yayasan KIARA, in order to design the study prior to applying for funding.
Some of the habitats in which the bush frogs were found. We suspect that pollution may be a threat to the species.

Field technician Angga Risdiana bathing in a river during a survey in Banten, West Java.
Due to minimal budget, our field team seeked shelter from kind farmers, who allowed them to sleep in a shack.

When farmer shacks were not available, our team can make do anywhere.
LIPI herpetologist Awal Riyanto carefully climbing a wall, to avoid going through the polluted sewage.

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A mangrove cat snake encountered during one of our field surveys.

Research coordinator Umar F. Kennedi sorting the distribution data after fieldwork.
Chessington Conservation Fund

In January 2021, we received a generous donation from the Chessington Conservation Fund, which will support our operational costs for research, conflict management, and staff wages. We are extremely grateful for this, as it has helped to increase the welfare of our staff, allowed us to continue conducting various research and conservation projects, as well as manage the herpetarium during this difficult time.

New Website Online!

Our website now has a fresh, new look! At www.herpetofaunaindonesia.org you can learn more about our programs, and download free resources as well as our newsletter. If you would like to support us, there is a donate button, patreon link, and merchandise link under the “Support Us” tab.
Sponsors and Partners

- Chessington Conservation Fund
- KIARA
- Wild Stuff
- LIPI
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