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# Elephas maximus borneensis

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Greystoke - October 12, 2024

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# Borneo Elephant Sanctuary



**Borneo Elephant Sanctuary Programme** got the support from stakeholders and agencies to demonstrate a sustainable approach to cater species conservation programme in Sabah.

BES Programme is Sabah's natural-habitat refuge developed specifically to meet the needs of endangered elephants. It is developed and designed specifically for sick or needy elephants that have been injured due to human and elephant conflict incidents. BES will also become the centre of the conservation plan, where all efforts to connect the habitats and manage the elephant population are to be centralised in BES Programme.

The idea of this development of the elephant sanctuary facilities began in early 2000 during the late Datuk Patrick @ Mahadi Andau's tenure as the Director of the Sabah Wildlife Department. The vision is further continued by Sabah Wildlife Department until this moment of time.

The first phase of the Bornean Elephant Sanctuary project was started on 01, October, 2012 by Borneo Conservation Trust with the financial support from Borneo Conservation Trust Japan's conservation partners such as Asahikawa City Municipal Government, Asahiyama Zoo, Saraya Corporation, Hunting World Japan, Tokio Marine Insurance Corporation, Kirin Beverage Corporation, Taisei Construction Corporation, Asta Corporation, IA Research Corporation, NTT Data Corporation, Teijin Corporation and Yusen Logistics Corporation. Phase 1 of BES project development covers one elephant handling paddock, one staff quarter and one storage building. The construction of this phase was completed on 28 June, 2013.

Sabah Wildlife Department would like to express our appreciation to MPOC and Borneo Conservation Trust, Borneo Conservation Trust Japan including their partners for their continuous trust and support, and for working hand in hand with Sabah Wildlife Department to save and ensure the survival of the Bornean Elephants in Sabah for our future generation.

The location of the Bornean Elephant Sanctuary (BES) is at Lot 8, Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary, gazetted under the Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997. The area is approximately 1,214 hectares, and the built-up area for BES is about 25 hectares. Lot 8 is located at least 2.5 km from the main Sandakan-Lahad Datu highway road.

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Lot 8 is once a key habitat and home for the Bornean elephants in Lower Kinabatangan, but due to rapid land development in early 80s, most of the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (From Lot 7 to Lot 10) is not accessible by the elephants.

Lot 8 is a strategic location for BES, since the area is located inside the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary and the forest is a lowland dipterocarp forest. BES also located at the centre of the elephant habitat where incidents of human and elephant conflict is high. Injured elephant could be easily rescued and translocated within the BES.

The long term of mission of BES is to promote and embrace all measures that compliment the conservation, preservation and protection of the Bornean Elephants, with main focus on elephant rescue programme, awareness programme, and improving the migration route of the wild elephants.

Helping save the lives of orphaned elephants and injured elephants through a Strategic Rescue and Release Programme is one of the key objectives of BES. In BES, the elephants will receive extremely specialised treatment. Proper training for the orphaned will be provided to assist and support the elephants to prepare themselves to be released in the nearby and connected forest area.

### *MASTER PLAN for BORNEO ELEPHANT SANCTUARY*

The overall master development plan of BES is already developed by Borneo Conservation Trust. The estimated cost for BES' infrastructure construction in 25 ha is about RM25-30 million, while the cost for the overall master plan for the Bornean Elephant Sanctuary including establishment of the ecological corridor between Segaliud Lokan Forest Reserve to Batu Putih is range between RM50-60 million.

### *Why we need BORNEO ELEPHANT SANCTUARY?*

The population and ranging behaviour of Bornean Elephant was carried out by Sabah Wildlife Department and its partners, since 10 years ago. Our finding suggest the need of ecological corridor to be restored or re-established is a MUST to ensure the survival of this species, including the need to have the Bornean Elephant Sanctuary. Other findings also provide:

? Provisional evidence that elephant herds in Sabah occupy a minimum home range between 250 km<sup>2</sup> to 400 km<sup>2</sup> in the non-fragmented forest, while in fragmented forest habitat, is estimated to be around 600 km<sup>2</sup>.

? Lowland Dipterocarp forest is important as a key habitat for the elephant.

? Home range and movement rate (including degree of conflict with human) for the elephants are influenced by the degree of habitat fragmentation.

? Once the key forest habitat for elephants is cleared, and the availability of the food plants and water sources altered, elephants are forced to expand their ranges into the plantations in search for resources to meet their needs.

? Therefore, these findings could serve as a guideline where any habitat that is less than 500 km square may not be suitable as a long-term territory for the Bornean elephant.

? Consequently any fragmented forest habitat (below 500 km square) should be connected to other continuous and large forest to secure a suitable area for the elephants to thrive, otherwise more conflict is expected to be occurred.

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? Most of the injured elephants are found in the fragmented habitat and strategic programme to rescue these injured elephants is essential, which will be carried out by the Bornean Elephant Sanctuary. In order to reduce these conflicts, SWD and BCT is now planning to embark the Sabah Mega Biodiversity Corridor Programme.

## **Accomplishments**

Four elephants get new home at elephant sanctuary in Sabah | The Star

Connection water supply at Phase 1 facility, Borneo Elephant Sanctuary (BES)



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