

## **SUMATRAN TIGER ,“BUJANG RIBUT”: RELEASED INTO THE WILD**

On 23 April 2019, the Dharmasraya Sumatran Tiger Rehabilitation Center (PR-HSD), a division of Arsari Djojohadikusumo Foundation (YAD) in charge of environmental conservation, collaborated with Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) of West Sumatra conducted another wildlife release for Sumatran tiger “Bujang Ribut” in the Barisan Wildlife Reserve, Padang Pariaman.

This is the third release initiated by YAD in cooperation with BKSDA West Sumatra, and the second one since the establishment of PR-HSD in 2017. PR-HSD is a YAD program focusing on conservation of endangered animals in the form of rescue, rehabilitation, and release of Sumatran tigers and other endemic animals of Sumatra. The first Sumatran tiger released was “Gadih Liku” on 31 August 2016, then “Sofi Rantang” on 1 July 2018 after spending roughly three months of rehabilitation.

After the successful release of “Bujang Ribut”, PR-HSD with BKSDA West Sumatra alongside Center of Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BBKSDA) Riau conducted another release scheduled on 29 July 2019. Unlike the previous releases, this time comprised of a pair of peatland Sumatran tigers, evacuated and rehabilitated by PR-HSD. Both tigers are from Riau Province, named “Bonita” for the female and “Atan Bintang” for the male. This is the first time in the world where a male-female pair of Sumatran tigers are released together into the wild.

The rehabilitation and release of Sumatran tigers is especially important considering that tigers are pure carnivores whose livelihood depend on availability of prey and thus the stability of their habitat. The population of Sumatran tigers is currently less than 400, a harrowing condition which should be our concern.

PR-HSD is the contribution of YAD in saving endangered animals such as Sumatran tigers and other endemic animals by rescuing, rehabilitating, and then releasing them back into the wild. PR-HSD was inaugurated on 29 July 2017, and Hashim Djojohadikusumo along with YAD was awarded with Satya Lencana Wirakarya, a prestigious award for achievement in natural conservation, by the Minister of Environment and Forestry on August 17, 2017. This facility is 11 Ha in size and located within 2.400 Ha Prof. Sumitro Djojohadikusumo Conservation Area (AK-PSD) owned by PT Tidar Kerinci Agung at Dharmasraya regency, West Sumatra. It is within the vicinity of South Solok and Dharmasraya districts in West Sumatra Province, and Bungo district in Jambi Province.

The establishment of YAD is an expansion of social activities by the philanthropists couple Mr. and Mrs. Hashim Djojohadikusumo, who have been helping and supporting socially disadvantaged Indonesians with limited access to education. These activities have already been going on for more than 20 years with the pioneering works of Mrs. Anie Hashim Djojohadikusumo even prior to the establishment of the aforementioned

foundation. The works of YAD currently include cultural as well as environmental conservation efforts. Aside from Sumatran tigers, YAD is also active in conservation efforts of rhinoceros, orangutan, and other endangered animals.

### **History of “Bujang Ribut”**

“Bujang Ribut” is a male Sumatran tiger evacuated on 28 August 2018 from a conflict with humans at Batu Gadang, Lubuk Kilangan, Padang, West Sumatra, where he preyed on livestock belonging to local residents. He was quarantined for 14 days and under 24 hours surveillance while his medical report is processed.

The tiger was relocated to PR-HSD shortly following his evacuation to undergo eight months of rehabilitation in the form of behaviour observation and certified laboratory check-up. And finally, on 23 October 2018, received recommendation from Directorate of Conservation and Biodiversity, Directorate General of Conservation, Natural Resources, and Ecosystem, The Ministry of Environment and Forestry for a wildlife release with under policy no. S.1160/KKH/AJ/KSA.2/10/2018.

### **The Release of “Bujang Ribut”**

On 22 April 2019, PR-HSD and YAD along with BKSDA teams started the necessary preparations for the release since early morning, which consisted of briefings from PR-HSD Site Manager, YAD Executive Director and BKSDA West Sumatra Section Head, prayers, then departure to Barisan Wildlife Reserve. The journey took the entire afternoon, stopping every two hours for check-up, with a brief visit at Resort Padang Office at around 22.30 to take care of administrative matters. Involved in this wildlife release were representatives and administrators from YAD, PR-HSD, BKSDA West Sumatra, as well as observers from Andalas University, Dr. Wilson Novarino and his two students.

The journey continued the following day at 02.00, five vehicles in fifteen minutes interval from one another, until finally arriving at Barisan Wildlife Reserve at 05.00 in the morning.

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“Bujang Ribut” was released at 06.20 in the morning on Tuesday, 23 April 2019 at Barisan Wildlife Reserve, Padang Pariaman, after undergoing one-hour habituation process to familiarize himself with his new home. The release lasted no more than one minute; and was observed from two different locations which was 100 meters behind the cage and from an observation post above a nearby hill. The entire process was completed once satellite signal from the GPS collar, fitted on his neck indicated that “Bujang Ribut” was already 500 meters deep in the forest and showed no sign of turning back. The tiger’s movements are continued to be monitored for the following week by a joint team of PR-HSD and BKSDA West Sumatra to ensure that the tiger will not make his return back to human settlements. Save our Sumatran Tigers !

(AL/WA/CPK)