



Press Release

Return of John and Sawitri to the Wild

Dharmasraya, 12 September 2019 - After long periods of rehabilitation at Dharmasraya Sumatran Tiger Rehabilitation Center (PR-HSD), finally two sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) named John and Sawitri returned to the wild, specifically to Prof. Soemitro Djojohadikusumo Conservation Area (AK-PSD).

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) through the BKSDA West Sumatra office in collaboration with ARSARI Djojohadikusumo Foundation (YAD) through PR-HSD and other related parties, have carried out a series of rehabilitation process for John and Sawitri until they are ready to be released into their natural habitat. PR-HSD Operational Manager, Drh. Saruedi Simamora said that John and Sawitri underwent rehabilitation at the PR-HSD from 8 November 2017 to 12 September 2019. The two sun bears were handed over from local people to BKSDA West Sumatra and then entrusted to the PR-HSD to begin their rehabilitation period.

"John and Sawitri have been in PR-HSD for 1 year, 10 months, and 4 days. While in PR-HSD, these two sun bears shared a cage. This was done because John still had wild instincts, whereas Sawitri was already used to humans. We hoped that John could help Sawitri to restore her wild instincts," said Saruedi.

In addition, he continued, placing these two sun bears in one cage is also aimed at social enrichment that can reduce their stress levels.

On the same occasion, another member of the PR-HSD medical team Drh. Kartika Amarilis or Tika for short, said that through the course of the rehabilitation, the medical team slowly introduced natural, wild foods to John and Sawitri.

"We at PR-HSD provide food found in nature for John and Sawitri, such as small insects, ant nests, honeycombs, and others," said Tika.

Tika added that in addition to procuring food from the wild, the intensity of human intervention was also minimized. This is intended to further stimulate John and Sawitri's wild instincts.

It was also in this occasion that the Head of BKSDA West Sumatra, Erly Sukrismanto, welcomed this wildlife release and gave his appreciation to all those who participated in the process alongside PR-HSD, namely PT Tidar Kerinci Agung (TKA) where the PR-HSD was located, as well as a team from Prof. Sumitro Djojohadikusumo Conservation Area (AK-PSD) along with Wanadhyaksa (forest rangers from AK-PSD).

"The release of John and Sawitri on 12 September 2019 is a collaboration of various parties. And the process will not stop with the release. Because after being released, John and Sawitri will continue to be observed by monitoring around the release area," said Erly.

In addition to monitoring, he continued, BKSDA West Sumatra office and PR-HSD will continue to supply food for John and Sawitri around the release area because their release is classified as soft release, where food supply will still be given but gradually reduced.

The release of John and Sawitri back into the wild is expected to contribute to the conservation of Indonesian endemic animals, especially sun bears, and increase fauna diversity in Prof. Soemitro Djojohadikusumo Conservation Area

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