



“We are guardians of  
this planet. That’s  
why I support SOS.  
They give me hope.”

Brian Blessed  
SOS Patron

# THE LONG CALL

2024 EDITION

**SÖS** Sumatran  
Orangutan  
Society

Phone: 01235 530825  
Email: [info@orangutans-sos.org](mailto:info@orangutans-sos.org)  
Website: [www.orangutans-sos.org](http://www.orangutans-sos.org)  
Address: 6 Lombard Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 5BJ, UK

SOS is a Registered Charity in England and Wales, number 1158711

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Society



The long call is a series of loud, extended shouts that orangutans use to communicate with each other. We at SOS haven't mastered this art, but we thought it was a fitting name for our communication with you.

**What do you think?**

Let us know at  
[info@orangutans-sos.org](mailto:info@orangutans-sos.org)

If you would like to update your communication preferences with us, please email  
[info@orangutans-sos.org](mailto:info@orangutans-sos.org) or call 01235 530825

Photos: Zac Mills and Juang Solala. Design: Nicola Humphreys

## DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

At the Sumatran Orangutan Society, our mission is to protect wild orangutans, their forests and their future. Over the past year, we have made incredible strides in advancing this mission, and in the following pages, you'll see just how much we've been able to accomplish — thanks to your unwavering support.

One of my most profound experiences this year was spending time in the remote rainforests of West Toba. This region, teeming with life, is as vulnerable as it is vibrant. The work that SOS and our dedicated partners at TaHuKah are doing to protect, connect, and rewild the orangutans' forest home fills me with optimism daily.

We are making significant progress toward securing long-term protection for this unique landscape, particularly for the fragile forest corridors that are vital to a flourishing future for orangutans and countless other species living alongside them.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our incredible community of donors. Your generosity is empowering SOS and our partners to grow a strong network of nature guardians across Sumatra. From the rewilding teams bringing degraded lands back to life, to the forest-edge communities embracing conservation efforts, your support is creating lasting change. Together, we have achieved

so much this year, and I hope you take pride in the remarkable impact we've made together.

As we look to the future, I am filled with hope. We are building momentum, and I believe we are on the path to securing a brighter future for Sumatra's orangutans and the forests they call home.

Thank you for standing with us and for believing in a world where people and nature can thrive together.

With heartfelt thanks,

*Helen Buckland*



**Helen Buckland**  
CEO, Sumatran Orangutan Society



# BRIDGE OF HOPE

## BUILDING ARTIFICIAL CANOPY BRIDGES FOR SUMATRAN ORANGUTANS IN WEST TOBA



Deep in the lush, vibrant rainforests of West Toba, something incredible was happening along the crucial stretch of the Lagan-Pagindar road — an eight-day whirlwind of activity as teams from Vertical Rescue Indonesia and TaHuKah built an artificial canopy bridge.

It wasn't just any construction project; this was a lifeline, crafted to stitch back together the fragmented homes of the region's Sumatran orangutans. These majestic creatures, with their gentle eyes and thoughtful ways, now had a safe path over the dangers of roadways, reuniting them with patches of forest they'd been cut off from.

The folks working on this weren't just any crew—they were a dedicated bunch, many of whom were observing Ramadan. Imagine this: they fasted all day, no food, no water, from sunrise to sunset, yet their spirits never waned. They toiled under the relentless

heat of the sun, often caught off guard by sudden downpours, yet their determination never faltered. It was a true testament to the strength and heart it takes to stand up for our planet.

This new bridge is more than just a way for the orangutans to get from A to B. It's a crucial piece in the puzzle of their survival, letting them roam freely to mingle, mate, and munch across what used to be treacherous divides. It's about keeping the family tree diverse, which is key to keeping them thriving, not just surviving. They can now chase new horizons, find fresh fruit,



and maybe even a new love, all thanks to this aerial pathway. This story also involves the local community, whose knowledge of the forest and wildlife is key in designing and positioning the bridge to function effectively as a safe corridor for animals. However, there is more to it than just a story about installing ropes to build a bridge at the top of a tree.

It's about the human spirit, the strong will to protect and preserve that surpasses even the most severe physical and spiritual tests. This project wasn't just about technical prowess; it was a profound display of commitment to a cause much bigger than any individual.

The canopy bridges were made possible thanks to the generous support of **Size of Wales, Asian Species Action Partnership** and **Dierenpark Amersfoort Wildlife Fund**. We're so grateful to these funders for helping to ensure wild orangutan populations stay connected.

Now, with these canopy bridges completed, they stand as beacons of hope and as symbols of continuity for the Sumatran orangutans in West Toba. It's a striking reminder of what's possible when human creativity, respect for nature, and an unwavering resolve come together in the quest for conservation. This monumental project marks a significant step toward fostering a more harmonious coexistence between humans and the natural world, ensuring a safer, more connected future for Sumatra's wildlife.





# SOCIAL FORESTRY: CONSERVATION MEETS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Social forestry is an innovative approach to forest management. It involves local communities in the decision-making process, granting them rights to forest resources. This approach is gaining recognition as a powerful tool for long-term conservation programmes.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL FORESTRY?

At its core, social forestry is a partnership between government forest departments and local communities. It aims to transfer management rights of forest land to the communities living alongside these precious ecosystems, empowering them to utilise and conserve forest resources.

In Indonesia, the social forestry scheme plays a pivotal role in the nation's strategy to promote sustainable forest management and alleviate poverty. The scheme is an integral component of Indonesia's broader environmental and social development goals, aiming to balance ecological sustainability with community welfare.

## THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL FORESTRY

Social forestry licences can be issued in several ways, from allowing villages to manage state forest areas, to granting Indigenous communities rights to manage their ancestral forest lands.

- **Forest Conservation:** By involving local communities in forest management, the scheme aims to enhance forest conservation efforts, reducing illegal logging and deforestation.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** Providing communities with legal rights to manage forest areas helps improve their livelihoods through the sustainable use of forest resources.
- **Community Empowerment:** Strengthening the capacity of local communities to manage and benefit from forests promotes social equity and resilience.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Indonesia's social forestry scheme has shown promising results in both forest conservation and community development. Over 4.4 million hectares have been designated for social forestry, involving millions of people in sustainable management practices. However, challenges remain, which we – alongside our frontline partners – are helping communities to overcome:

- The licensing process can be very complex; we support communities to navigate this with guidance from Indonesian Social Forestry experts.
- During the licensing process, we support communities to create a robust sustainable forest management plan, and once the licence is secured, enact that plan.
- We help to ensure communities can develop sustainable livelihoods, such as through access to markets for their forest products.



## COMMUNITY-CENTRED CONSERVATION

At SOS, we support our partners on the ground in Sumatra to provide a secure future for orangutans, people, and their rainforest homes. At the heart of our approach is a steadfast commitment to Sumatra's rural communities.

We believe that forming open, genuine and long-lasting relationships with local communities is the key to protecting orangutans in the wild. We support community-centred conservation: an approach that listens to the needs of local communities and ensures they have a central role in programme planning and decision-making.

Social forestry presents a unique opportunity to create a win-win situation for people, wildlife and the environment. By investing in this approach, funders can enhance its impact, address challenges and scale up successful models. Ultimately, moving us ever closer to our vision of wild orangutans thriving in resilient forests.



# SOS AND THE DARWIN INITIATIVE: BUILDING EXPERTISE

**WE'RE GRATEFUL RECIPIENTS OF A GRANT FROM THE DARWIN INITIATIVE, WHICH IS A UK GOVERNMENT GRANTS SCHEME THAT HELPS CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY AND SUPPORT THE COMMUNITIES THAT LIVE ALONGSIDE IT THROUGH LOCALLY LED PROJECTS WORLDWIDE.**

This kind of 'nature and people' approach meets SOS's ethos; we know, through over two decades of groundbreaking work, that it's only through working alongside local communities that we can ensure a thriving future for orangutans, rainforests and people alike.

'Creating the conditions so local communities benefit from conservation outcomes is the most reliable, and the only realistic approach to conservation in orangutan landscapes.' – Koen Meyers, SOS Conservation Director.



It's important that we empower local communities and professionals to do this work. At SOS we're lucky to have developed strong working relationships with worldwide

experts in this kind of work, and we have worked closely for years with our partners in Indonesia to increase capacity to further protect orangutans and their rainforests.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, we hosted a series of workshops to build capacity within our frontline partners' teams in Indonesia. These workshops allow the teams at OIC and TaHuKah to:

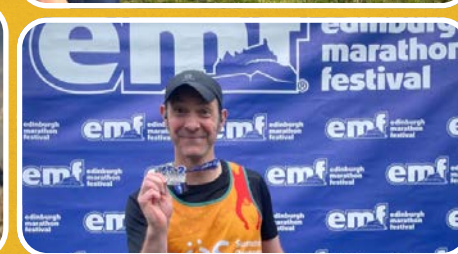
- Design and lead strategic conservation programmes to protect, connect and rewild critical orangutan landscapes.
- Effectively engage forest-edge communities in forest-friendly livelihoods which enhance biodiversity and reduce poverty.
- Set the direction and strategy for their own organisations.

This training has given the team members the tools to develop and deliver effective and resilient conservation plans that work with local communities. With this training, the teams will also be able to set their organisation's own goals, to train up new team members, and better expand their work.

## OUR WONDERFUL FUNDRAISERS

Climbing mountains, reading challenges, bake sales and running events across Europe! These are just some things you have recently done to support SOS. Together you have raised over £13,000 to protect wild orangutans and their rainforest homes.

# OVER £13K RAISED



**WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU GET UP TO NEXT!**





# BUSINESS FOR GOOD

Corporate partnerships play a pivotal role at the Sumatran Orangutan Society, significantly enhancing our ability to safeguard this critically endangered species and its habitat.



Together, we can plant the seeds of a brighter future. By joining forces with businesses, we're unlocking a world of possibilities. Their resources, expertise, and networks are the fuel that powers our conservation efforts. With their support, we're able to plant trees, connect fragmented landscapes, and empower communities to become guardians of the rainforest.



Imagine the impact we can make. Our corporate partners aren't just helping us; they're helping to shape a world where orangutans can thrive. Their voices amplify ours, reaching millions to inspire a global movement. Together, we're not just protecting orangutans; we're safeguarding the heart of the rainforest.

A special thanks to Edrington, Whole Earth, LUSH, and the countless others who stand with us. With your support, we're proving that even the smallest actions can create a lasting impact.



**BY PARTNERING WITH US, YOUR BUSINESS CAN MAKE A REAL AND LASTING DIFFERENCE. TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A WORLD WHERE ORANGUTANS THRIVE AND FORESTS FLOURISH.**

If your business would like to get involved, please contact our Partnerships Manager Emma at [emma@orangutans-sos.org](mailto:emma@orangutans-sos.org)



# TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

The work of the Sumatran Orangutan Society and our frontline partners has been supported by some incredibly generous grants and gifts from Trusts and Foundations this year, providing a stable and reliable source of funding that is often repeated year on year.

Trusts and foundations are an especially important source of funding for us because they reflect a diverse range of funding priorities that we can match to many different aspects of our work, from advocacy and capacity building for forest-edge communities, to forest restoration projects, and innovative approaches to tackling fragmentation of orangutan habitats. Trusts and foundations have been set up to financially support charities like SOS, and their funding is often flexible and adaptable to new challenges and opportunities.

We have been extremely fortunate to receive some unrestricted grants this year that have made it possible for us to plan and ensure we can remain a resilient organisation. This unrestricted support also enables us to respond quickly and where the need is greatest. For example, we were able to use unrestricted funding to top up the generous grants from Asian Species Action Partnership, Dierenpark Amersfoort Wildlife Fund and Size of Wales so that we could complete the new canopy bridges within the West Toba landscape within a short timeframe. We've been delighted to see that these bridges are already being tested out by curious gibbons and langur monkeys.

SOS supports deep and meaningful 'community-centred' programmes to secure a long-term future for Sumatra's orangutans and their forest home. This needs a long-term and flexible approach that is sometimes difficult to secure funding for

within existing grants structures. This year we invited our trust and foundation supporters to attend a webinar to explore how funding can be made more accessible for truly transformative projects. A funder toolkit is now in development that we hope will help environmental funders adapt their grants to support programmes that will produce lasting results and create sustainable benefits for biodiversity and local people.

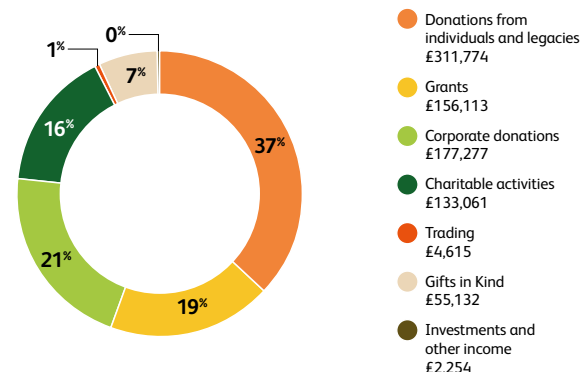
We are enormously grateful to all our Trust and Foundation supporters for their generosity. If your trust or foundation would like to get involved, please contact our Trusts and Foundations Manager Liz at [liz@orangutans-sos.org](mailto:liz@orangutans-sos.org)

## OUR THANKS GOES TO:

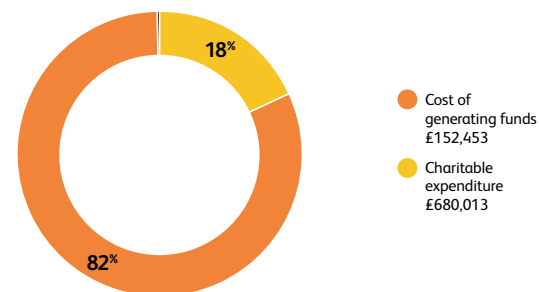
Size of Wales  
ERM Foundation  
The Big Give Trust  
Sharegift  
Paul Jennings and Jeanette Dunn  
Charitable Foundation  
Hippodienes Trust  
Berni Charitable Trust  
Dierenpark Amersfoort Wildlife Fund  
Asian Species Action Partnership  
Monica Rabagliatti Charitable Trust  
Rhododendron Trust  
Ma'at Environment Fund  
Harvey Family Foundation

# OUR FINANCIALS

**INCOME 2023-2024**  
**£840,226**



**EXPENDITURE 2023-2024**  
**£832,466**



**FOR EVERY £1 WE SPENT ON  
INCOME GENERATION IN 2023-24,  
WE RAISED £5.51**



# SOS AMBASSADOR



## ZAC MILLS

### MY NAME IS ZAC MILLS. FOR THE PAST DECADE, I'VE HAD THE INCREDIBLE PRIVILEGE OF PHOTOGRAPHING SUMATRAN ORANGUTANS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT.

I am honored to announce that I am an official ambassador for the Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS) – a role that fills me with pride and excitement. This partnership, built over years of collaboration and mutual dedication to the cause, now steps into a new chapter where I will strive to educate, inspire, and bring the awe-inspiring world of orangutans closer to all of you.

Orangutans are not just subjects of my photographs; they are a profound source of inspiration. Each journey to Sumatra deepens my admiration and love for these amazing great apes.

As an SOS Ambassador, my mission is threefold: to educate, inspire, and showcase the incredible world of orangutans.

**EDUCATE:** Understanding is the first step towards conservation. By providing insights into the lives of wild orangutans, I hope to foster a deeper appreciation and awareness among people of all ages.

**INSPIRE:** Photography has a unique power to move hearts and minds. These visual narratives serve as a reminder of what we stand to lose and, more importantly, what we can save.

**SHOWCASE:** I'll share behind-the-scenes glimpses of my adventures in the wild, highlight the tireless efforts of conservationists, and celebrate the small and big victories in our journey to protect these incredible creatures.

Thank you for joining me on this exciting journey. Together, we can make a difference and create a future where orangutans live freely and flourish.

### OUR MISSION

Protecting orangutans, their forests and their future.

### OUR VISION

Wild orangutans thriving in resilient forests.

### OUR AIMS

Working alongside our frontline partners, local authorities and forest-edge communities, by 2030 we aim to:

- Contribute to the protection of 1.8 million hectares of orangutan habitat
- Prioritise the long-term connection of vital orangutan landscapes
- Enable the rewilding of 10,000 hectares of critical land so orangutans, and so many other species, have space to flourish.