International Animal Rescue marks Earth Day 2025 with Stories of Hope and Harmony

Tuesday 22 April, 2025

International Animal Rescue (IAR) marks Earth Day 2025 by sharing Stories of Hope and Harmony. This demonstrates the remarkable ways in which they have successfully worked with local communities with empathy and understanding to support humans and wildlife living together in harmony.

These powerful images show the real-life experiences of people forming unexpected deep connections with nature and animals, which proves that coexistence happens globally today beyond being just an ideal concept.

International Animal Rescue CEO Gavin Bruce explains: *"Earth Day brings us face-to-face with our connection to nature and the need to work alongside communities to deliver long-term conservation solutions which benefit both the community and the environment. We can't just take away income streams; we need to provide alternatives to achieve long-term conservation goals, and that's what we've been delivering. From Indonesia's rainforests to Armenia's hills, we have shown that we can succeed when we educate and support communities in new ways, which improves their prosperity and wellbeing, while also delivering a positive impact for nature."*

Working in partnership with International Animal Rescue, YIARI in Indonesia has planted over 130,000 trees. The wider forest landscape protection work has safeguarded 300,000 hectares of forest, much of which is important habitat for iconic species like orangutans and prevented potential emissions of approximately 70 million tonnes of CO2e from entering the atmosphere. The survival of countless rare and endangered species depends on forest conservation.

Here are some of IAR's community projects:

- The Incredible Power of Mama, the first-ever 96-strong female firefighting team in Borneo.
- Empowering communities in the heart of Borneo, communities living on the forest edge through education and providing alternative income streams.
- Scholarship Programme - YIARI's scholarship programme enables young people to access high school education. Children from very remote areas are often unable to travel to and from secondary school. Through the scholarship programme each student is provided with a bike and for children who are further isolated, our programme covers boarding costs to ensure that no one is left behind. The programme is currently covering education costs for 28 young people, with 11 graduates. These graduates now plan to either go on to pursue further education (many now aspiring to become doctors, midwives or teachers) or will be signed up to support the education programme to give every young person the opportunity to end the cycle of illegal activities in their community.
- Access to Literacy – This project aims to engage with children who are not in school. The work engages schools in very remote villages in order to keep the children busy through a number of organised activities that promote learning and literacy skills. In addition to going in and working with these communities and children directly, YIARI has set up libraries in a few remote villages and has donated laptops to encourage and enable an atmosphere for learning and skill development. This is vitally important because if children are not inspired to get an education, they will be illiterate and much more likely to engage in illegal activities such as logging and hunting. This project also works to provide literacy education to women who did not have the opportunity to learn when they were growing up.
- Learning Centre: The Sir Michael Uren Learning Centre run by our partners YIARI, in Ketapang (Western Borneo) is a hub of education, learning, community development, celebration and spirit. The vision for the centre is to bring together local communities, the private sector, academic research institutions, as well as government and non-government organisations, to build a better future for people and nature. The mission for the centre is to build awareness, knowledge and ability through research and education to protect the environment and enable sustainable growth in Ketapang Regency. The centre opened in 2019 and is already a hub of activity and passion and a cornerstone of our orangutan conservation efforts.
- Agricultural Support Programmes - Supporting villagers living in areas where illegal mining has caused massive social and economic problems (in addition to being a huge threat to orangutans) is a key area of focus. These villages have no access to agricultural technology or educational facilities. YIARI provides access to these benefits, as well as teaching organic farming and sustainable agriculture techniques.

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- Rescue and release, with more than 770 animals released across Indonesia, 565 animal species protected in the Batutegi forest.
- Conservation and habitat: Over 300,000 hectares of forest habitats are protected through the Landscape Conservation programme and planting.
- Through the protection of deep peat swamp forest habitats, 70m tonnes CO2e of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented.

"For example, the journey of The Power of Mama shows the power of grassroots initiatives and collective action in wildlife conservation. These remarkable women are safeguarding forests, educating the next generation, challenging gender norms, inspiring change, and building resilient communities. Their connection to nature and dedication is a testament to local engagement's crucial role in achieving lasting conservation outcomes."

You can read more about International Animal Rescue's projects at www.internationalanimalrescue.org

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