



Alliance for Tompotika Conservation Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika

NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL FESTIVAL EDITION

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Tompotika schools get involved: creativity for conservation

For several years now, ALTO has been active in the schools of Tompotika with our Conservation Awareness Campaign. In that program, ALTO staff bring interactive presentations on specific conservation issues--such as maleos, trash and marine plastic debris, or bat conservation--to about 1000 schoolchildren each month throughout the more than 100 primary, middle, and high schools of the Tompotika region. The program is very popular with both teachers and students--but it often raises a question: "You have opened our eyes to these conservation issues--but how can we get more deeply involved?"

Festival has just provided one gleeful answer to that question. During the last half of 2014, ALTO staff worked with area schools to publicize three contests: for elementary-aged kids, a short story contest featuring maleo birds or sea turtles; *(continued on p. 2)*



Keith Brofsky

At the Festival, 6th-grader Karima T. N. from Mayayap village reads her winning story about maleos and a sea turtle helping one another.



Keith Brofsky

FESTIVAL!

Celebrating conservation at the first Tompotika International Maleo and Sea Turtle Festival

Why a Festival? ALTO's field conservation programs have had remarkable success in reversing the decline of the endangered maleo bird in Tompotika, halting poaching of sea turtles and their eggs, and making other concrete strides for imperiled wildlife and their habitats. But these field successes will

amount to nothing in the long run unless a strong ethic of care for wildlife and the natural world grows among ordinary Tompotikans. That means supporting the conservation-minded Tompotikans that are already part of the ALTO alliance in nurturing that conservation ethic amongst their neighbors--and that means outreach to change people's hearts, minds, and behavior! ALTO already does a lot of outreach to kids in the Tompotika schools, but all members of a community need outreach; it is primarily adult men, for example, who violate wildlife laws--in many instances because they are simply unaware of them. And because the conservation world is inevitably well-stocked with "don'ts,"



Keith Brofsky

(don't kill sea turtles, don't cut forests illegally), there's a need for conservation messages that stress the "do's": *do love your wildlife. Do see how beautiful it is. Do have fun celebrating it together!* Festival is all about that positive conservation message--about bringing together the community to celebrate the natural world that we love and

are a part of, in ways that also celebrate the best of what we humans do together, like the Arts, and healthy physical play, and the sharing of what's on our hearts and minds.

Something conservation for everyone

So, ALTO created Festival, which was held for half a day, in *(continued on p. 3)*



Keith Brofsky

If you hold it, they will come: in each village, the soccer field was decorated with orange and green for Festival. In some places over a thousand kids and adults showed up to take part.

Creativity for Conservation (continued from p.1)

for middle schoolers, a contest to create art from recycled materials; and for high schoolers, an essay contest describing a youth's perspective on conservation. The winners for each contest would be announced at the Festival, and prizes awarded.

Even with some schools choosing to limit them, more than 200 kids submitted entries for the contests. Recycled art creations included bags, artificial flowers, and maleo sculptures made of plastic trash, baskets made of newspaper and lampshades made of plastic spoons. The short stories often contained a creative narrative--a maleo pair named Kiko and Sofi, for instance, or a wise sea turtle king who saved his subjects from capture. Some students termed the maleo a "perfect" bird because it lives only in Sulawesi, mates for life, and lays only one egg at a time. Several essay writers called for enforcement of laws protecting wildlife from "irresponsible" poachers thinking only of their own "private interests." Many students added drawings or photos to their writings. And almost all writers put forth strong conservation messages in their own words, such as "Don't let sea turtles go extinct!"; or simply "I ♥ Maleo."

Hundreds of students and teachers who had taken part in the contests were present at Festival to take part in the activities, and to enjoy the display and recognition of their hard work. But the benefits of the school contests went even beyond spreading the conservation message and helping to create a fun Festival. In the words of Suparman Tampuyak, a teacher who assisted with judging short stories and essays, "I want to thank AITo for sponsoring these contests. Spreading the conservation message is good. But more than that, these contests have given children the motivation to study, and to improve their writing. That is very special, and very important, because until now, the only way a student could get recognition was through being good at sports. AITo has changed that." ~



Keith Brofsky

Middle schoolers (foreground, sitting) demonstrate to judges SekCam Henti Asabi (top left, a high gov't official) and AITo staff Marcy Summers how to make sturdy shopping bags from used juice containers.

The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation/ Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika ("AITo") is dedicated to conserving the unparalleled natural and cultural heritage of the lands and waters surrounding Mt. Tompotika, Sulawesi, Indonesia. Effective, creative, and efficient, AITo protects endangered species, tropical rainforests, and coral reefs while promoting the dignity and self-sufficiency of local communities in a changing world. In Tompotika and everywhere, AITo believes that the quality of our human lives is bound up to the health of our natural environment and our relationships to it.

AITo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States and a registered Yayasan in Indonesia, made possible by your donations. Thank you for your support!

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Tompotika Tarsiers 2016: Join AITo for a scientific expedition

Have you been wanting to travel to Tompotika, but have been waiting for the right trip? Curious about a tiny primate that looks and acts like a cross between a frog and a squirrel, but squeaks like a bird? Want to help contribute to scientific knowledge of the natural world? Join us for the **2016 Tompotika Tarsier Survey**, to be held over about 18 days in **Jan-Feb 2016**. The scientific portion of the survey will be headed by top tarsier scientist Dr. Myron Shekelle (see www.tarsier.org), assisted by AITo staff. Sulawesi has

at least 8, and possibly as many as 16 or more distinct species of tarsiers; our goal for this survey will be to identify which of them Tompotika's tarsiers belong to. There is even a remote possibility that Tompotika's tarsiers could turn out to be a new species!

Details of the trip, including dates, cost, itinerary, etc. will be finalized soon. Interested? E-mail sheila@tompotika.org to be placed on the list to receive more information.



Sandesh Kadur

A distinctive call - tarsiers live in family groups and call to one another with a high-pitched call that's unique to their region.

Festival (continued from p. 1)

six different Tompotika locations in the last month, and consisted of daytime booths, stands, and scheduled activities followed by an evening of drama and entertainment. Everything was free, and shared the conservation theme, using maleo birds and sea turtles as ambassadors for all the other native creatures that share their lands and waters. During the day, festival-goers visited the information and display booths, got their faces painted, threw a maleo ring toss, made a lantern, listened to a student read his or her short story (see accompanying article) or learned juggling or hula hoop. Kids played large group games. Many of the men gravitated toward the percussion workshop; their orchestra of instruments made from plastic containers and old car parts provided an energetic soundtrack--that is, when we weren't listening to the *Selamatkan Maleo, Selamatkan Penyu* (Save the Maleo, Save Sea Turtles) song composed for the event. It was a big deal--nothing like Festival had ever been seen in these villages or in the region, and people came from neighboring areas; the event was covered by local and national newspapers.



Keith Brofsky

In one of the evening dramas, nasty bumbling villains juggle sea turtle eggs they have stolen.

Catching the spirit of Festival: it's all for love of wild things

The day's activities reached their climax in the evening. Under the direction of volunteer Australian and American artists Nick Fury, Ross Brown and Craig Jacobrown, sixteen Tompotika high school students performed two original dramas to enthusiastic crowds. Through these dramas, audiences learned about the lives of maleos and sea turtles, what threatens them, and how they can help. They cheered the heroes, laughed at the dastardly bad guys, and hooted at the budding sweethearts. In between the dramas, Tompotika dignitaries spoke about the importance of conserving maleos and sea turtles, and remarked on this "truly, truly terrific" Festival. Finally, the day's festivities closed with a dramatic lantern parade, led by a giant luminous sea turtle.

Before Festival opened, the youth actors had written, "We have come together... for the sake of preserving the flora and fauna of Tompotika." It was impossible, after such a day, to feel that that dream was out of reach. ~

Festival graphic by Sandra Noel. Photos by Noval Suling and Keith Brofsky



Tompotika International Maleo and Sea Turtle Festival
Celebrating Conservation of Sulawesi's Wildlife 21 Feb - 3 Mar 2015



The Faces of ALTO: Nick Fury, Clowning for Conservation



Keith Brofsky

Juggler, director, clown, musician and gamesmaster Nick Fury has brought new Arts to Tompotika: "It's been a thrill each day of the process... it doesn't get much better than this."

On a typical day, you might find Sydney, Australia-based performance artist Nick Fury leading corporate team-building, cracking jokes in a nursing home, or entertaining kids at the local shopping mall. But twice in the last two years, ALTO has been blessed to have Nick volunteering three weeks of his time to bring his high-spirited circus arts and drama skills to the service of conservation in Tompotika. On his first visit to Tompotika last year, Nick co-led the Youth Drama Road-Show; this year Nick played a key role in creating and leading this year's Tompotika International Maleo and Sea Turtle Festival. "Conservation has always been important to me. Since I was a teenager, I've always hiked, camped, taken part in protests, been attentive to issues like climate change, that sort of thing."

During the 1980's, Nick became involved in the community arts movement in Australia, and got very excited about the power of community arts and festivals to "bring people together, to inspire them, transform them, and give them a voice about issues that concern them." The ALTO projects he's been involved in, he says, have been "very ambitious, and hugely satisfying, being able to realize a big vision." In creating the Festival, Nick says, the team has "worked very hard, purposefully, and intelligently, creating a very successful Festival, both in process and product, and successfully 'branded' that Festival with the conservation message in clever and creative ways." Directing the 12 Tompotika high school kids in the Festival's central drama has been particularly rewarding for Nick. "The kids have to step into and through their fear. They grow. We keep asking more of them and they keep stretching themselves and stepping up. They're empowered. We saw that so clearly--they were just beaming." "The vibe, the joy that you create, the feeling of ensemble, the connection between people has been very powerful... I love the connection with the audiences. We make them laugh, we make them shut up, with the bad guys, the old woman. They were really sitting up and paying attention. They were very engaged."

Caring as he does about communities, kids, and conservation, Nick is glad to volunteer his skills with ALTO. "Tompotika is a microcosm of what's going on all over the world... This is a best practice instance. ALTO has chosen a small but very significant area and is embodying the concept of 'think globally, act locally.' ... It's heartening to know that there's a dynamic body of people here who are doing something special and thoughtful, modeling an approach to conservation that seems powerful and effective... There are isolated pockets of good processes and good outcomes all around the world. ALTO is one."

