



Alliance for Tompotika Conservation **Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika**

December 2008 Newsletter

New Tompotika Forest Preserve – from Now to Forever

We've all heard about their wonders. Tropical rainforests are home to the richest terrestrial biodiversity on earth, overflowing with vibrant and colorful life of every kind. Dense green jungles of lush ferns, delicate orchids, and twisting vines. Huge trees with buttressed roots and a canopy so high and complex it's a world unto itself. And thronging every leaf and vale, a spectacular array of birds and beasts: creepers, fliers, climbers, leapers and stalkers of all manner and hue. **In Tompotika, about half of these creatures are found nowhere else in the world** outside of Sulawesi: noisy troops of Sulawesi macaques; strange curly-tusked babirusa deer-pigs; huge, stately hornbills; mysterious marsupial cuscuses; tiny big-eyed tarsiers; and the marvelous maleo bird whose nearby beachside nesting habitat ALTO has been helping to protect since 2006.



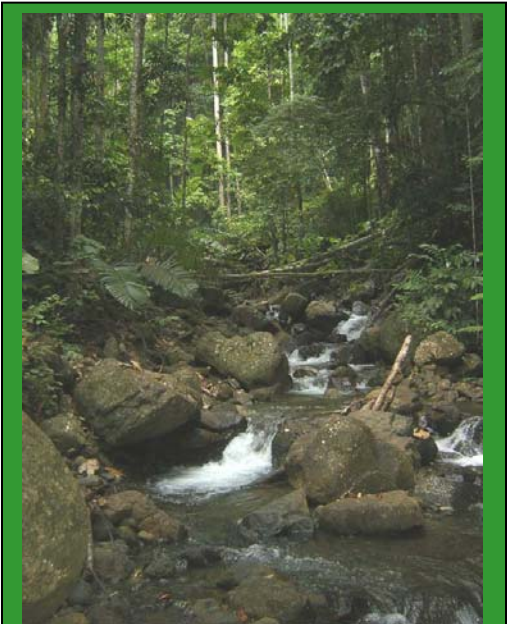
Tarsier. Photo: Steve Caldwell

In addition, as “the lungs of the earth,” these tropical forests produce the oxygen we breathe, they lock up tons of climate-altering carbon, and they provide “ecosystem services” such as clean water and flood control. In short, **the world needs tropical forests—but rainforests in Indonesia are being destroyed six times faster than those of the Amazon.** In

addition to uncontrolled logging, Tompotika now faces a new threat: new rainforest-destroying nickel mines are being planned to feed the ravenous worldwide consumer demand for steel and electronic gadgets.

Act now, protect forests forever. But in the face of these pressing threats, a glorious opportunity: ALTO has been awarded a generous grant to purchase thousands of acres of native tropical rainforest to establish Tompotika's first permanent protected forest preserve. Like everything ALTO does, the new forest preserve will be managed in close collaboration with local people, and will include a package of community benefits that will ensure the preserve's sustainability over the long term; namely: **training for local villagers in organic farming techniques** (this will ensure that they can grow plenty of food on existing agricultural lands

We need your help to raise the matching funds needed for the new preserve. For a donation of \$100, you can become a “shareholder” of the new Tompotika Forest Preserve, ensuring the protection of over 5 acres of forest and sustainable livelihoods for local people. This is a perfect opportunity to offset your own carbon footprint, or to give a lasting gift to a loved one and to the earth. Shareholders receive a certificate suitable for gift-giving; you can even visit “your” forest on one of our ALTO ecotours (see overleaf). Contact ALTO for details. It's an investment in the future... an investment in life itself.



Tompotika forest and stream. Near here in 2006, herpetologist and ALTO board member Dr. Djoko Iskandar discovered a previously unknown species of frog.



without having to clear additional forest); a **forest restoration project** that will protect and restore a buffer zone adjacent to the new preserve; and the construction of modest **ecotourism facilities** to accommodate visitors to the area and provide jobs for locals.

First Sea Turtle Season: A Fourth Species!

In 2008, AITo launched its new Sea Turtle Conservation Program. This project consists of both a field component working with villagers to protect adult turtles and eggs from poaching, and an outreach component in which AITo staff bring the turtle conservation message into villages and schools. Prior to our work in the villages of Teku

and Taima, virtually every detected sea turtle adult and nest was poached. Now, however, not only are turtles and nests being protected, but in their nightly beach patrols AITo staff have discovered an **additional sea turtle species not previously known to nest in the area: the Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)**. The Olive Ridley, along with Green, Hawksbill, and Leatherback turtles, makes Tompotika one of only a handful of places in the world in which **four of the world's seven sea turtle species are documented to nest**. AITo is now gearing up for the 2009 sea turtle season (roughly March–August), in which we hope to expand our sea turtle patrols and initiate several new protection strategies.



An Olive Ridley female digs her nest pit on Teku beach.

Summer 2009: Tompotika Ecotour and Butterfly Survey

Do you like to travel, but also want to make a positive difference in the places you visit? Do you enjoy watching wildlife and contributing to scientific knowledge? Like to hike in tropical rainforest, snorkel the world's richest coral reefs, and spend time with local villagers? AITo's 2009 Ecotravelers will have an opportunity to do all these things plus join one of Indonesia's foremost lepidopterists, Dr. Djunijanti Peggie, in the first-ever butterfly survey of the Tompotika area. Sulawesi is home to over 500 butterfly species, many of them noted for their giant size and unique characteristics, and we will spend time with Dr. Peggie capturing and identifying those that occur in Tompotika. Ecotour dates are July 18 – Aug 2, 2009, and group size is limited to 10 people. Cost for the 16-day tour is \$2950. Contact AITo or see our website for details.



Troides helena, female (L) and male (R). Photo by Steve Caldwell.

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AITo works to protect endangered species and habitats and to build an enduring conservation ethic in Tompotika, Sulawesi, Indonesia and beyond. Our work is made possible by your support—thank you! *If you would prefer to receive AITo news by e-mail, please let us know at tompotika@centurytel.net.* This newsletter is printed on 100% PCW recycled paper.



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