



# Alliance for Tompotika Conservation Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika

NEWSLETTER

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## More New Species in Tompotika! Survey discovers 2-3 shrew species brand new to science

Shrews are curious creatures. Among the world's smallest mammals, shrews live fast and die young: their metabolisms run far faster than would be expected based on their small size alone. Some shrews, in fact, have heartbeats that may reach 1200 beats per minute. With their hearts on overdrive in this way, these shrews can die of fright simply from hearing a loud noise, such as thunder. (Storms are frequent in Tompotika, so it's fortunate that our shrews are not of this delicate constitution!) Shrews are generally carnivorous, eating insects, worms, and sometimes carrion, living under the leaf litter in forests and moist areas, and some have poisonous saliva--strong enough, at times, to sicken a human being if bitten. Many shrews also have a high-pitched squeaking call, which scientists believe may be used in communication or even in echolocating prey and other objects in their journeys through dark places. And, depending on the species, these journeys may be accomplished in the most charming of attitudes: baby shrews are known to form "caravans" behind their mothers, all in a line of 4 or 5, with each baby using its teeth to grasp ahold of the rear end of the one in front of it, mother at the head of the line.



Jake Esselstyn

Two as-yet-unnamed new shrew species, *Crocidura sp.*, known only from Tompotika.

Now, with the results of a survey completed in April on Mt. Tompotika, the world greets two or three brand new shrew species that were previously unknown to science. The survey, led by Dr. Jake Esselstyn of McMaster University and Dr. Anang Setiawan Achmadi of Indonesia's Museum of Zoology in Bogor, was sponsored by the National Science Foundation and also included a survey of the rat species found in Tompotika. Surveying in two locations on Mt. Tompotika (within the area of the Tompotika Forest Preserve), the team, which also included ALTO Conservation Officers Ipan Djano and Panji Kresno and several assistants from local villages, identified four rat species and 3-4 shrew species over about a week of surveying. Because of small sample sizes, it is not yet clear whether the fourth kind of shrew is a distinct separate species from the others or additional individuals of the same three species that simply look a bit different to the rest.



Panji Kresno

Dr. Anang Achmadi holds up one of the new Tompotika shrews.

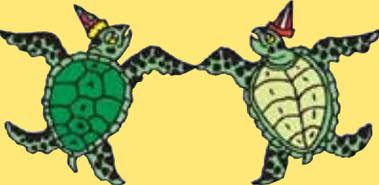
According to Dr. Achmadi, the four rat species found, *Maxomys hellwaldi*, *Maxomys musschenbroekii*, *Rattus marmosurus*, and *Paruromys dominator*, likely represent endemic Sulawesi species previously found in other locations, though lab work will be needed to confirm this. Among the shrews found, however, only one of (*continued on next page*)



**ALTO is Five Years Old!**

*...and we're celebrating! You are invited to join the festivities, which will feature authentic Indonesian food and music, all at the Javanese pavilion on the David Smith property of Vashon Island, Washington, U.S.A.*

**When:** Sunday, June 26, 2011, 3-5 pm  
**Where:** 14725 108th Ln SW, Vashon Island, Washington 98070  
**The party is free, but RSVP is required.** RSVP to party@tompotika.org. Our Alliance is possible because of you--please join in the celebration!



ISandra Noel

## New Tompotika Shrew Species, *continued from page 1*



Panji Kresno

Dr. Jake Esselstyn sets up a drift fence and pitfall traps for catching shrews and rats.

them, *Crocidura elongata*, has been previously described. Tompotika's *C. elongata*--which with further study of this group could eventually also be declared a separate, new species--has some obvious anatomical differences from *C. elongata* specimens found in other Sulawesi locations, but it's too early to call it a distinct separate species. *C. elongata* is one of only four shrew species worldwide that is thought to be scansorial--that is, it climbs into the low branches of trees as well as living on the ground.

The 2-3 other shrew species that the survey team found--all *Crocidura* or white-toothed shrews--are completely new to science. Shrews are said to be "morphologically conservative,"--that is, if you see a shrew in, say, Africa, it's going to look very similar to a shrew in North America or Asia, even though they're all different species. But according to Dr. Esselstyn, Sulawesi's shrews are remarkably diverse: one shrew in Sulawesi looks quite different to the next one, and the group as a whole is much more diverse in Sulawesi than in the neighboring islands of Borneo, Sumatra, and elsewhere. In the months ahead, further laboratory and genetic work by Dr. Esselstyn and colleagues will reveal exactly how many (at least two, and possibly as many as four) species these newly-collected Tompotika shrews represent, and how they are

related to other species.

In the meantime, however, one thing becomes clearer all the time: Tompotika is a remarkably rich and distinctive place for biodiversity. With this survey, the number of known species found only in Tompotika--and nowhere else on earth--climbs to 9-10, including the shrews, a snake, three frogs, and three geckoes. As the area gets more scientific attention, that number is sure to rise. AITo is privileged to be working to protect this little-



Jake Esselstyn

The survey team at their Tompotika camp.

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, innovative, 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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Butterfly by AITo Conservation Coordinator Anim Alyoihana

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Please let us know if you would prefer to receive it by e-mail.

## Conservation through Carbon Storage: Will REDD save forests and wildlife?

Noval Suling



Forest loss is the world's second largest source of carbon emissions. Recently, AITo was contacted by the owner of a logging concession in Mamuju, West Sulawesi for help. Rather than log his forest concession, he wanted to conserve it for wildlife

and carbon sequestration, aiming to win financing from the international "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" (REDD) program, which can provide an income stream for protecting forests as long as strict environmental and social criteria are met.

The concession owner sought AITo's help to answer a series of exploratory questions about the 30,000 ha (75,000 acres) forest concession: what is the conservation value of the area? what wildlife is present? who are the human stakeholders in the area, and what are their attitudes toward conservation? what specific opportunities and challenges are likely to face conservation efforts? AITo recruited experienced Sulawesi conservationist Duncan Neville, who in March led a field team to answer these and other questions.

Their conclusions? Successful REDD projects worldwide are few, but the approach carries both huge challenges and, potentially, great rewards for forest conservation. Should a REDD project be pioneered in Mamuju, AITo can provide some technical assistance. And, we'll be watching to learn: the time may come when REDD makes sense for Tompotika; through following this project, we'll hope to be ready.

## Why Art for Conservation?

Forests are being bulldozed for palm oil plantations. Children don't have all the immunizations they need. Coral reefs are being bombed to smithereens. New mining operations are destroying land and poisoning fresh water. When Tompotika faces such urgent and fearsome problems as these, why does AITo spend time and money teaching kids to draw animals, or paint big wall murals in villages?

First, when you're trying to build a constituency for conservation, a constituency for thinking and living in a new way on this earth, art can bring in new people to the effort. In 2009, for instance, fifteen Tompotikan high school artists took part in AITo's Calendar Project, and before it started, none of them would likely have described him or herself as caring particularly about conservation. But afterwards, one student seemed to speak for many when she told of how the project had inspired



Hawksbill turtle, watercolor, by Krisno Dohal, age 17.



Tonkean macaque, watercolor, by Sutrisman Aman Labuna, age 17.

her. The project was "one of the great things in my life... But for me, it is not enough yet. I hope I can do more for this planet."

In addition, art helps people love nature--and what we love, we want to protect. The student artists mentioned above came to know, intimately, the creatures of leaf, feather, and fur that they learned to draw--and many spoke of how they look on them now as dear, new friends. Similarly, for the viewer, a painting of a frog or a photograph of a forest can help us "see"--and fall in love with-- these things in a whole new way. The eye, as the ancients said, is a window to the soul.

And finally, at AITo, we believe that supporting the arts--whether it's painting, music, drama, or poetry--is about helping to develop the best of the human spirit, and harnessing it in the service of the world's crying needs. Yes, we want to save forests from becoming palm oil plantations, slow climate change, and see every kid immunized. We're doing what we can in other ways to support these things. But we also want those kids to grow up in an artful world. We need art--which Theodore Dreiser called "the stored honey of the human soul,"--to face the challenges ahead. And art, we believe, is absolutely essential to creating that quality of life--for all--that conservation is all about seeking.



George Yount

AIto traveler Jo Yount assists Tompotika kids with a 2007 Art for Conservation project.

### Walk the Talk: Join us for AITo's 2011 Art for Conservation trip to Tompotika.

On November 7-21, 2011, a small group will be traveling to Tompotika to assist village kids with creating the region's first two large mural paintings. Trip cost is \$2900 plus international airfare. Contact AITo for more information.

### Sea Turtle Nesting Season 2011: AIto and Villages Revamp our Programs

When it's spring in the northern hemisphere, the sea turtles of Tompotika spring into action. "Gravid," (that is, pregnant) female olive ridley, green, and hawksbill turtles hang around the coastal shorelines, waiting for nightfall, when they will haul themselves ashore to lay their eggs. (Males hang around too, waiting for the females!) Since 2008, AIto has been working with two villages, Teku and Taima, to protect mother turtles and their nests through a village-based patrolling system. Since beginning the program, we've protected hundreds of mother turtles and ensured that thousands of baby turtles would see the light of day rather than being taken and sold or consumed as eggs.

But this year, we decided to make some changes in our methods. The initial excitement villagers felt when our programs were new had begun to wear off. Poaching was on the rise. Our villager patrollers needed renewed inspiration for their nighttime labors. So, in consultation with each village, in 2011 we're trying some new approaches.

In Teku village, villagers have formed small groups or *kelompoks* of 1-10 people, and each *kelompok* is encouraged to seek out, register, and guard as many turtle nests as possible. When the hatchlings emerge after 45-60 days, a careful tally is kept of how many babies each *kelompok* successfully hatches. At the end of the season, in late July, the three *kelompoks* with the most hatchlings will win prizes.

In Taima village, villagers were not so keen on hatching eggs out themselves, but have built a communal guarding/hatching area in their village to which they are bringing eggs for a cash reward. With the assistance of AIto staff, villagers are guarding the protected eggs through to hatching.

In addition, AIto's Indonesian Board is exploring ways to improve regional enforcement of the laws protecting turtles; we hope to do more with this next year.



Olive ridley hatchlings head for the sea in Teku village.



## The Faces of ALTO: Five-Year Allies



*ALTO is now five years old!* Here are faces of a few of the folks who have been with us from the beginning, for all five years. Volunteers, participants, Board members, donors, staff, partners, advocates; these are some of the folks who have given of themselves, for five years running, to help bring the ALTO alliance to where we are today. To these and all the others who have become involved along the way, THANK YOU!



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