

April 2012 Update: Give BIG like the Maleo!

Mother Nature is a wise old bird.

After all, look at Sulawesi itself--the world's eleventh-largest island, full of the strangest and richest array of plants and animals you'll find just about anywhere, from giant civets to rainbow-barked eucalypts, insect-eating pitcher plants to great marsupial bear cuscuses. Each creature is perfectly suited to thrive in its special niche in the unique environment of Sulawesi.

And then of course, there's the maleo bird, *Macrocephalon maleo*. Like no other bird in the world, the endangered maleo lays its single, enormous egg near hot springs, or in the warm sands of a sunny Sulawesi beachside nesting ground. After laying, the maleo parents do not stick around to incubate their egg or raise their chick.



Maleo chick. Photo: Sandesh Kadur

Rather, **they make one huge, big-hearted investment in their single egg, place it well, and then return to their rainforest home, trusting that in Mother Nature's hands, the chick will eventually hatch, emerge, and learn to fend for itself.** And, as the Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AITo) has learned, when the nesting ground is protected, those chicks do hatch and thrive!



Maleos nesting. Photo: Kevin Schafer

In 2006, a small group of AITo supporters made their own big-hearted investment in Mother Nature, giving what donations they could to ensure that Sulawesi's premiere maleo nesting ground could be protected. Through AITo's facilitation, local people agreed to join with others to ensure that adult maleos and their eggs would be safe from poaching, and then everybody let Mother Nature do the rest.

More than five years and **thousands of maleo chicks later, the endangered but recovering maleo population of Tompotika is paying dividends on those big-hearted investments:** not only is the maleo recovering in Tompotika, but a new momentum is building to save the maleo all over Sulawesi... and through the iconic maleo, a new awareness of the preciousness of our natural heritage is growing.

Businesses and governments are coming together to find ways to save maleos in other locations. Billboards at airports are reminding travelers to shun maleo-egg souvenirs. AITo's collaborative conservation work recently was featured in a nationally-broadcast news story on Indonesian television. And ordinary Sulawesi citizens are showing up at the AITo office to turn in maleo eggs, or to volunteer.

On May 2, 2012, we all have an opportunity to deepen our big-hearted investment in Mother Nature, through The Seattle Foundation's 24-hour online giving event called GiveBIG. From 12:01 am to midnight on Wednesday, May 2nd, your online gift to AITo will be boosted by additional matching funds from GiveBIG sponsors--the larger the gifts, the greater the match. Just go to

<http://www.seattlefoundation.org/GivingCenter/GiveBIG/Pages/Default.aspx> and search for "ALTO," or scroll down to The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (it's under "T") to make your secure on-line gift.

Now's a great time for you, too, to make a well-placed investment: join with the maleos themselves, and with other humans from Tompotika and all over the world, in the AITo alliance. The maleos provide the eggs, we provide the safety, and Mother Nature will do the rest. And when you need an affirmation that you're working toward a greener, more collaborative, more living planet, just think of those maleo chicks. Without you, they wouldn't have existed.



Maleo egg.

Thanks so much for your support!

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