

GOOD NATURED DANNY NANE



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A PODCAST SERIES FROM
CONSERVATION OPTIMISM

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INTRO

Sofia: Hello and welcome to Good Natured, a podcast that shines a light on conservation successes and challenges. I'm Sofia!

Julia: And I'm Julia! We're thrilled to be back for a second season of the Good Natured Podcast.

Sofia: This year, we are going to be doing things slightly differently and we're starting with four weekly mini-episodes called Nature Notes, which feature nature related stories.

Julia: And we will then release our normal length episodes from mid-August so just make sure to keep an eye on your feed to find the latest episodes!

Sofia: This week's Nature Note was recorded by Danny Nane who is currently studying for the post-graduate diploma in international wildlife conservation practice at the University of Oxford.

Julia: Danny is from Papua New Guinea in the south Pacific and he was the first local landowner from the Yupno, Urawa and Som Rivers Conservation to be accepted to the University of Papua New Guinea. There he completed a bachelor degree in environmental sciences and geography.

Sofia: Danny's fascination for nature started as an early age when he grew up in Dungket village and roamed around his father's forest and saw all the wildlife around him.

Julia: This episode is about how witnessing the establishment of the conservation area fuelled his interest in conservation. And this specific area was actually Papua New Guinea first and only protect the area to date. And that's a critical habitat for the endangered Matschie's tree kangaroo, which Danny is going to tell us all about in this episode.

Sofia: Let's hear from Danny!

MINI-EPIISODE

Danny: Have you ever heard of a kangaroo that lives and moves around in the trees? It is true – there is a species of kangaroo that calls trees its home. The Matschie's tree kangaroo is a rare endangered and elusive species. They make their home high up in the dense masked canopy of trees. They only come down to the forest floor to forage for food but then they return to the tree canopy for shelter.

The Matschie's tree kangaroo is only found in Papua New Guinea, a small island country North of Australia. It is endemic to the remote Huon Peninsula, on the North-eastern Portion of Papua New Guinea.

I first sighted a tree kangaroo in my father's forest back in 2000, when I was 10 years old. I accompanied my dad into the thick forest higher up in the mountains. At first, I thought it was a thick green and brownish forest moss clinging to the branch of the tree, but then I saw it moved and started eating the leaves. My dad told me NO, it is a 'KAPUL', as we call tree kangaroos in my local language. It was just perfectly camouflaged with long tail and resembles bear's facial appearances. In fact, they are so much cuter than any other forest animal I have ever seen!

Tree kangaroos, as the largest native forest mammal, are the most rewarding hunting targets for local indigenous hunters. People have hunted the tree kangaroos for meat and their fur for years aided by their dogs! Also, habitat destruction caused many tree kangaroos to lose their home. As the result, the population of tree kangaroos dropped drastically in the 1980s.

But in 1996 a conservation initiative was introduced after a study that was conducted on the population density and home range of the tree kangaroos. I was in the village and witnessed how hard it was for my father and other indigenous landowners to agree to pledge for conservation.

However, they were convinced that if you want to hunt tree kangaroos, you must begin by protecting them, otherwise you will not have any of them left to hunt. That was the turning point for most of the local landowners to pledge their land and protect tree kangaroos.

Now our conservation area, called the YUS conservation Area, is a leading example for conservation in Papua New Guinea and a model for other conservation initiatives. From growing up in my village and witnessing the establishment of YUS Conservation, and all the struggles and victories related to it, I have realized that local empowerment, and direct involvement of the communities will lead to the success of any conservation effort. It is key to protecting any particular species and its habitat, including Matschie's tree-kangaroos.

OUTRO

Julia: We hope you enjoyed listening to Danny's story. If you have any comments or you want to get in touch you can send us an email at podcast@conservationoptimism.org or reach us on Twitter at ConservOptimism. We'd love to hear from you!

Sofia: The music for this episode is by Blue Dot Sessions and is available on the Free Music Archive.

Julia: This mini episode was produced and edited by Sofia Castelló y Tickell and myself Julia Migné .

Sofia: Thanks to the Conservation Optimism micro interns, Elizabeth Brown, and Emma Felin for their help with the music. Our theme song was composed and produced by Matthew Kemp.

Julia: This season of Good Natured was funded by Synchronicity Earth, the Whitley Fund for Nature and the University of Oxford Departmental Public Engagement with Research Seed Fund.