

Kukang Movie

Synopsis: A time-lapse documentary from the perspective of two documentarians who decided to capture the real story of nature conservation on the Indonesian island of Sumatra with an unmistakable Czech footprint. One of this story's most resonant topics is the current global decline in biodiversity and with it the need to protect wild animals and their environment from poaching and illegal trade. The film documents the activities, successes, and failures of a non-profit organization called The Kukang Rescue Program, focusing primarily on the protection of slow lorises, over the course of three years (2019-2021), partly also during the time affected by the global pandemic. The main characters of the documentary are conservationists František Příbrský (Zoo Ostrava) and Lucie Čižmářová (Zoo Olomouc), working in Indonesia with their teams. In contrast to the shots of the natural beauty of the exotic island and its unique fauna and flora, the film also gives the viewer a glimpse into the real daily life of the people of Sumatra - without exaggeration the "Wild West of Indonesia". And this includes its dark sides, such as the cruel treatment of animals, among others also in the context of trading them, or the barely comprehensible bureaucratic obstacles that foreign and local organizations have to face when trying to protect local nature. For years, The Kukang Rescue Program on the ground has been pursuing the possibility of rescuing slow lorises from the black market, rehabilitating them at its rescue centre, and releasing them back into the wild, but has encountered a lack of understanding and reluctance from Indonesian authorities to grant official permission to do so. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, now with the help of local people, such as farmers, teachers, and even former poachers of slow lorises and pangolins, the organization successfully protects entire populations of endangered animal species directly in their natural environment and educates a new generation of conservationists. The documentary does not lack views of hills covered with pristine forests as well as the chaos of noisy cities or shots of rare animals not only in the wild but also in crowded cages at animal markets, where filming is rarely possible. The serious topics and problems of Indonesia's nature are interspersed with the authors' often funny clashes with the country's peculiar culture and crazy filming experiences. Frustration from the endless fight with the Indonesian bureaucracy is replaced by the hope that thanks to the coordinated efforts of (not only) Czech conservationists and local people side by side with zoos and other institutions, the story of the Sumatran wilderness will continue to be written. Viewers can look forward to a truly authentic spectacle full of all kinds of emotions.

Team and Technicalities:

Time-lapse documentary

Director: Ondřej Smékal

Theme: Ondřej Smékal, Vít Kanyza

Editor: Tomáš Richtr

Main performers: František Příbrský, Lucie Čižmářová

Running time: 65 minutes

Original language version: Czech, Polish, Indonesian

Subtitles: English

Owner: The Kukang Rescue Program, z. s.

Co-producers: Ostrava Zoo, Olomouc Zoo, University of Silesia in Opava