

In Memory of Kris Tindige, founder of the PBC

Kris Tindige was born on the 4th of February 1966 on one of the Talaud Islands to the north of Sulawesi. He grew up in a small town, near the entrance to the well-known Tangkoko Nature Reserve in North Sulawesi.

This beautiful park is the home of 'black apes' (macaques), tarsiers, and many endemic birds. Thanks to a father who believed in the importance of English as a means of increasing career opportunities, Kris studied at the local Foreign Languages Academy. He graduated in 1990 with a diploma thesis on tourism and after attempting a career in Jakarta, he moved to Papua to follow his dream of observing Birds of Paradise in the wild. He was soon conducting nature and cultural tours throughout Papua and founded the PBC in 1996.

Kris' newfound knowledge of the Papuan avifauna earned him contracts with international television companies. The most notable of these was with the BBC Natural History Unit in 1995, when he worked with Sir David Attenborough on the acclaimed documentary '*Attenborough in Paradise*'. This features many species of Birds of Paradise and Bowerbirds displaying on film for the first time. Kris led or contributed significantly to several ornithological expeditions in Papua, including the WILCON expedition that led to the rediscovery of Waigeo Brush-turkey or Bruijn's Brush-turkey, *Aepyodius bruijnii*.

Kris was a co-founder of the Netherlands-based Papua and Maluku Wildlife Eco-guide Fund (WILCON). He was sponsored by them to travel to Europe in 2002, to give guest lectures and to obtain further training in wildlife education and welfare. He was elected to the Advisory Board of the US-based Project Bird Watch and the Indonesian Parrot Project. He was also appointed as a Board Member of the Indonesian Ornithologists' Union (IdOU), in recognition of his important contributions to Papuan ornithology.

The news that Kris was suffering from cancer in early 2005 prompted immediate action from friends and colleagues in 15 countries across the world, to raise funds for his medical treatment. After a rigorous 6 month programme of medical treatment in Brisbane, Australia, Kris returned to Papua to resume bird tours and to continue PBC's community work. His remission from cancer in 2006 allowed him and his partner Shita to lead several trips.

Then, after 5 months of treatment in Brisbane, Kris returned to his home in Manokwari, West Papua, where he passed away on 20 August 2007, at the early age of 41 years.

With his tragic passing, Papua lost one of its greatest champions of nature conservation and indigenous education.

During his life his work as a conservationist, guide, educator and community champion has been recognized in many ways. A few months before Kris died his WILCON friends delivered the news to him that the name *Dolichopus tindigei* was given to a hitherto unknown species of marine mollusc on Bali.

Fortunately, the important work of PBC continues today thanks to the dedication of Kris' loving partner Shita Prativi.

Shita supported Kris tirelessly through his long periods of suffering. She and other members of PBC give their heartfelt thanks to all those who so generously donated medical expertise, money, time, and compassion.

Our greatest gratitude, however, must go to Kris – a very special person whose determination and courage will continue to inspire us all.