



MEDIA RELEASE

## INTERNATIONAL SPECIALISTS DEFEND BALI'S THREATENED HERITAGE DOG

**31 March 2017 DENPASAR, Bali:** International and local specialists in dog genetics, animal welfare and community health gathered in Bali's capital city today for a full-day seminar and workshop which highlighted the rare genetic structure of the Bali Heritage Dog and real threats to its survival.

The seminar focused on the significance of the threatened Bali dog to science, history and culture; and covered zoonoses in Bali: A zoonosis is a disease or infection that is naturally transmissible from vertebrate animals to humans and vice-versa.

All speakers concluded that the Bali Heritage dog is too valuable to lose to extinction and urged stakeholders in Bali to move quickly to protect the survival of the Bali dog.

Keynote speaker from the University of California, USA, Doctor Ben Sacks (BS, MS, PhD), gave a genetic perspective in his presentation named "Ancient Asian Dogs and the Genetics of the Bali Dog: Why is the Bali Dog Unique?"

Dr Sacks, Director of Mammalian Ecology and Conservation Unit, Veterinary Genetics Laboratory, UC Davis, said: "The Bali dog is a particularly valuable scientific resource and must be protected from swamping by imported dogs."

He presented DNA research that is helping scientists unravel dog evolution and which is contributing to our understanding of human evolution. "The Bali dog is far too important to this significant research and must be recognised and protected," he said.

BAWA Founder and CEO Janice Girardi, speaking on "Threats to the Bali Dog", said that although the dog was historically significant to Balinese culture, only 20% of the estimated 300,000 to 400,000 dogs in Bali today could be considered *pure Bali dogs*. Threats included mass elimination of dogs in response to rabies; the trade in dog meat; cross-breeding; and the impacts of modern development.

“Bali dogs are important to Balinese culture and to the world,” said Girardi. “They are our window to our ancestry; and local threats to their survival may result in the tragic loss of their genetic diversity forever.”

BAWA Executive Manager I Gusti Ngurah Bagus, MM explained the history and cultural and environment significance of the Bali dog which he said was “on the brink of extinction.” A video interview with Balinese Hindu High Priest Ida Pedanda Gede Jelantik Giri Puspa highlighted the religious and cultural significance of the Bali Heritage Dog to Balinese society.

Also participating from the USA, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) Program Director Companion Animals Kate Natrass Atema, MSc spoke on the Participate. Learn. Act (PLA) community outreach program conducted in Bali with BAWA since 2011. “This program proves that community engagement and empowerment is vital to developing respect and good care for the Bali dog,” she said.

From Udayana, DR drh IB Ngurah Swacita MP (Program Dharma Coordinator), spoke on the recently launched Program Dharma One Health initiative to reduce the threat of rabies in humans and dogs through an original and sustained community-supported effort. “This important partnership between Udayana, BAWA, IFAW and others is a viable solution to rabies control, better human and animal health, and preservation of the Bali dog,” he said.

Drh GN Surya Anaya MPH of Yayasan (Foundation) BaliFokus spoke of the Sekehe Asu (Bali Dog Lover Club movement) including Sekehe Asu Bali Utama. “The banjar (sub-village) initiated clubs are revitalising people’s traditional respect for, interaction with and protection of their Bali dogs,” he said.

The seminar was hosted at Udayana’s Denpasar campus by the university’s Public Health Department & One Health Centre and sponsored by BAWA. It was officially opened by Udayana Rector Professor Doctor Ketut Suastika (SpPD-KEMD).

MEDIA CONTACT: [info@bawabali.com](mailto:info@bawabali.com)

## Links

[www.who.int/zoonoses/en/](http://www.who.int/zoonoses/en/)

[www.bawabali.com/bali-heritage-dog/](http://www.bawabali.com/bali-heritage-dog/)

Genetic variation analysis of the Bali street dog using microsatellites  
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2156-6-6.pdf>

Designing Programs for Eliminating Canine Rabies from Islands: Bali, Indonesia as a Case Study: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3749988/>

Balinese Children talk about their Bali dogs:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80kOFhoFmEw&feature=youtu.be>

BAWA Meets Ida Pedanda (High Priest) Part 1:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mldn-xnW7u8&feature=youtu.be>

BAWA Meets Ida Pedanda (High Priest) Part II:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7tGnxkDEA4&feature=youtu.be>

Bali Dogs, Quest

Project: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ge6c7qC3U2M&feature=youtu.be>

BAWA's Village Dog Contest:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe7i3eEXunU&feature=youtu.be>

BAWA Little Stars for a Brighter Future: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ynSRicmxyQ>