



MEDIA RELEASE

‘WINDOW TO OUR ANCESTRY’ AT RISK OF EXTINCTION

31 March 2017 DENPASAR, Bali: The genetically rare and ancient pure Bali dog, a valuable scientific resource for revealing both dog and human evolution, today faces so many threats to its survival that the dog and the knowledge it offers could be lost to the world forever.

This was the key message of Bali Animal Welfare Association (BAWA) Founder and CEO Janice Girardi, a long-time protector and supporter of the Bali Heritage Dog, at today’s international seminar and workshop on the Bali dog.

“The Bali dog has been fundamental to Balinese culture for centuries,” she said. “With pure Bali dogs representing perhaps less than 20% of the estimated remaining 300,000 to 400,000 Bali dogs left on the island, we face a crisis.”

Girardi listed the following **main threats** to the survival of Bali’s indigenous dog:

- Indiscriminate and ineffective mass elimination in response to rabies in Bali
- The dog meat trade which claims tens of thousands of dogs per year for brutal slaughter and consumption
- Cross-breeding with imported dogs which is depleting the genetic integrity of the Bali dog

Girardi also flagged some **solutions**. BAWA, along with Udayana University, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Yaysan Kerti Praja (YKP) and other partners, last week officially launched a year-old program which is keeping communities free of rabies, a deadly zoonotic disease that has troubled Bali since 2008.

“Program Dharma is a world-first pilot program in 28 banjars (sub villages) within 3 semi-urban communities in Sanur, Bali, where it is reducing the threat of rabies in humans and dogs,” said Girardi. “It is a community outreach / One Health program to eradicate rabies. It is a solution deserving full consideration for expansion across all of Bali.” Mass elimination of dogs was not only a threat to the survival of the Bali dog but was counterproductive to rabies control, she said.

Program Dharma and BAWA's long-term community outreach work with IFAW had shown that community education, engagement and empowerment would restore people's traditional respect and care for their dogs that had diminished in recent times.

"A real One Health outcome here is that communities become healthier and safer for humans as well as their dogs," she said.

Girardi mentioned the rising international groundswell against the trade in and consumption of dog meat in Asia and noted that many of Indonesia's ASEAN partners were moving to ban dog meat.

"There are many opportunities to preserve the Bali dog and its genetic integrity and we need to fully embrace them before it is too late as that would be a tragedy."

Also addressing the seminar, BAWA Executive Manager I Gusti Ngurah Bagus explained that the Kintamani dog had evolved from the indigenous Bali dog that had lived virtually unaltered in Bali for 5000 years. "The Bali Dog has been part of daily life in every Balinese compound, Banjar [sub-village] and Desa [village] for thousands of years, free-roaming in co-existence with the Balinese people," he said.

"Smart, loyal and territorial, Bali dogs protect their families' temples, shops, livestock and farms, and play an important part in the environment by consuming organic waste and keeping rats and snakes away. Yet today the Bali dog is on the brink of extinction.

"Sadly it seems that many people who co-exist with the Bali dog are unaware of what could be lost to their culture and history and to world science. We can't let that happen."

Mr Bagus presented a video interview with Balinese Hindu High Priest Ida Pedanda Gede Jelantik Giri Puspa which highlighted the religious and cultural significance of the Bali Heritage Dog to Balinese society.

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 Doctor Ketut Suastika (SpPD-KEMD).

MEDIA CONTACT: info@bawabali.com

Links:

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/>

Vaccination not Elimination
<http://www.reportageonline.com/2016/05/rabies-over-reaction-could-drive-bali-dogs-to-extinction/>
<http://bawabali.com/bali-heritage-dog/>

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>

Balinese Children talk about their Bali dogs:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80kOFhoFmEw&feature=youtu.be>

Bali Dogs
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>