Letter from the islands - Vol. 3

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE NORTH NATUNA SEA

June-October 2026 Program Updates
Anambas Foundation
Stories of Conservation, Community, and Change in Anambas

Letter from the Islands

The People Behind the North Natuna Sea

Dear Friends of Anambas,

The story of Anambas stretches back thousands of years, shaped by the changing landscapes of the ancient Sunda Shelf and the maritime trade routes that later connected Southeast Asia to the wider world. From the historic Maritime Silk Roads and Spice Routes to the present day, the sea has long connected Anambas with people, cultures and opportunities beyond its shores.

The sea is not merely what surrounds Anambas. It is part of what defines Anambas.

This enduring relationship with the sea has shaped the knowledge, traditions and resilience of island communities. Passed down through generations, local knowledge and a deep understanding of nature remain essential to protecting the ecosystems that sustain their lives.

Yet conservation is about more than protecting nature. It is about the people who make that protection possible.

In this edition of *Stories of Resilience*, we celebrate the fishers, community rangers, Local Heroes, women, teachers and countless others whose knowledge, dedication and everyday actions continue to shape the future of these islands.

Its past was shaped by the sea. Its future will be shaped by the people who protect it.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Anambas Foundation

What's Happening in Anambas?

June - October 2026

People across Anambas continued to take part in conservation and community initiatives. Their contributions took different forms, shaped by the places they live, the knowledge they bring and the roles they take on within their communities.

Local farmers continued to care for agroforestry sites on Siantan and Telaga islands, with support from Anambas Foundation. On Siantan island, members of the Karya Bersama Forest Farmer Group took part in integrated agriculture workshop and received around 600 fruit tree seedlings, including avocado, rambutan, longan and mango. Growing fruit trees alongside other crops helps farmers maintain tree cover while diversifying what they can grow and sell.

The waters of Anambas are familiar to the 12 men and five women from Telaga and Kiabu villages who serve as Guardians of the Anambas Seas. They bring what they know from life in fishing communities to the work of monitoring reefs across 32 stations. As they learn to identify coral species and analyse reef images, they're finding new ways to read the waters they know and track how the reefs are doing. With their support, 925 square metres of reef were rehabilitated.

On Durai Island, local rangers from Bayat village are taking an active role in protecting the nesting beach. With training from the Foundation, the rangers help safeguard the place where turtles come ashore to lay their eggs, putting local people at the heart of its day-to-day care. As part of our ongoing conservation work, 12 sea turtles were successfully fitted with satellite tags. Their movements are tracked to learn more about the waters.

Across Anambas, communities work together to manage their own waste. They organise regular village clean-ups, sort waste at the source and compost organic waste. Together, the nine waste banks and two mobile waste bank fleets supported by Anambas Foundation serve a total of 33 villages. Through these efforts, communities kept 252 tonnes of waste from reaching the ocean and removed 15 tonnes of marine debris from Anambas's shores.

Learning to care for the sea begins with understanding it. Through KELAUT, students explore marine conservation by learning about the beaches, reefs and waters they know from growing up in coastal communities. Anambas Foundation launched the Teacher Conservation Network to help teachers make these lessons a regular part of school life.

Generasi Merdeka Sampah (GMS) gives younger students a way to put that learning into practice. Working with 10 primary schools and the Anambas Regency Education, Youth and Sports Office, GMS helps children build the habit of sorting waste early, with teachers showing them how it's done. KELAUT helps students see how those habits connect to the health of the coast and sea. Over time, children can bring what they learn at school into their homes and villages.

The Digital English Club now reaches 140 secondary school students across Anambas. It gives students more opportunities to practise English and build skills they can use in further study or at work.

The people of Anambas and their efforts to protect the islands reached a wider audience, when National Geographic Indonesia released The Story of the Malay People Protecting Indonesia's Northern Frontier from Destruction. The documentary has since drawn more than 355,000 views.

In July, Anambas Foundation signed an agreement with Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji (UMRAH) to work together on education, research and community service. In October, we signed an agreement with the Anambas Regency Government to work together on conservation and community development. The signing meant as a moment for the government to recognise what the Foundation and local communities have built together over eight years, and a chance to carry that work forward with its support. The October signing also marked the launch of the Anambas Sustainability Forum, scheduled for 14–15 June 2027.

In villages across Anambas, people see what needs doing in their villages and organise to do it. Neighbours come together for gotong royong, farmers tend trees alongside their crops, and rangers look after turtle nesting beaches, women manage home gardens that put food on their families' tables and bring in income from local sales. In schools, teachers show children how to sort waste so they can put it into practice at home.

The work looks different from one island to the next because each community decides what matters most where they live. For the people doing it, caring for the forests, reefs and shores around them is part of looking after their village.

Impact Snapshot!

June - October 2026

Looking back on June to October 2026, these are the results we're most proud to share from our work alongside communities across Anambas:

Above - Forest Conservation

5 Community Members
involved in Forest Watch, supporting community-based forest monitoring

16 Households
adopted forest-based livelihood practices through agroforestry

207 ha
Of forest mapped to support community-based monitoring.

23 Households
participated in agroforestry

6 Forest Patrols
Conducted

600 Fruit Seedlings
including avocado, rambutan, ongan and mango, distributed.

Below - Marine Conservation

12 Satellite Tags
deployed to help understand sea turtle movements and population connectivity

925+ m²
of reef rehabilitated

32 Reef Stations
monitored across Anambas

17 Local Heroes
involved in marine conservation activities in Telaga and Kiabu

7 Teachers
were part of the Teacher Conservation Network.

Beyond - Community Development

140 Students
Actively participated in the Digital English Club

12 Womens
involved in Home Farming in Kiabu, harvesting a total of 770 kg of vegetables.

Rp 15.4 Million
generated from vegetable sales through the Home Farming initiative in Kiabu.

9,932 Kg
Of recyclable waste sold through the Candi waste management system between July and September.

18 Batik Pieces
Sold by the Telaga women's group, generating Rp8.1 million in sales.

The numbers show how far the work has reached. Look closer and you can see what's changing in people's day-to-day lives.

A resident learns to spot changes in the forest. A Local Hero learns to tell coral species apart. A teacher brings conservation into a lesson. A woman starts earning from a skill she's learned. Neighbours work out how to sort and collect waste in their village.

As people put these skills to use and pass them on, caring for the islands becomes part of everyday life in Anambas.

Field Story

The People Who Keep Showing Up

Every Wednesday and Friday, 66-year-old Pak Tarmizi can be found at Bank Sampah Desa Langir, sorting household waste. On Fridays, he also operates the waste press and helps load and unload recyclable materials before they are sold. It is routine work, often physically demanding, but he continues to show up.

Pak Tarmizi joined the waste bank in 2024 after becoming concerned about the amount of waste accumulating around the village where he grew up. Since then, he has continued to contribute to its daily operations, despite the physical demands of lifting and handling heavy materials. For him, the work is about more than managing waste. It is also about keeping his village clean and encouraging others to take greater responsibility for their surroundings.

Pak Tarmizi

"I hope the Langir Waste Bank can continue to run consistently and grow. I hope our collaboration with Anambas Foundation can continue so that our village stays clean, and more people are encouraged to care about their environment."

His hope reflects the commitment behind a community initiative that depends on people returning to the work, week after week. Sorting waste, operating equipment and preparing recyclable materials for sale may seem like ordinary tasks, but they are essential to keeping the waste bank running.

Pak Tarmizi's contribution also offers a closer look at what community-based conservation means in practice. Sometimes, it takes shape through the steady efforts of people who care about the places they call home and continue doing their part, even when the work is demanding and the results take time.
For Pak Tarmizi, keeping the waste bank going is one way of looking after the village where he grew up.

Stand with Anambas

February–May 2026 Progress

Help Keep the Work Moving

Across Anambas, local communities are involved in protecting marine ecosystems and developing initiatives that support learning and livelihoods. These efforts need continued support to keep activities running and create opportunities for more people to take part.

Your donation can help support two connected areas of work:

Protecting Marine Ecosystems

Support coral reef restoration, artificial reef sites and sea turtle conservation. Contributions can help sustain activities such as branching coral and coral biscuit restoration, the development of additional marine habitats, turtle nest protection, beach monitoring and research, including satellite tagging.

Supporting Community Opportunities

Help expand access to learning and strengthen local livelihoods. Contributions can support English learning opportunities for children in villages, skills development for women and small community enterprises that create new livelihood opportunities.

Every contribution helps support the work taking place across the islands and the people involved in carrying it forward.

How Partner Can Support?

Supporting conservation and community development across Anambas takes collaboration, resources and shared commitment. Anambas Foundation welcomes opportunities to work with organisations, businesses, academic institutions and other partners who share these goals.

Partnerships can take different forms, from providing funding, equipment and technical expertise for ongoing programmes to collaborating on research, training, campaigns and public events. We also welcome longer-term partnerships to develop and support initiatives that respond to the needs of Anambas and its communities.

Interested in working with us?

Get in touch with Anambas Foundation to explore opportunities for collaboration.

Stand with Anambas.

Scan the QR code to make a direct donation or get in touch to learn more about supporting these initiatives.

PARTNERSHIPS

As a Conservation Partner within the Anambas Conservation Area, Anambas Foundation works with Indonesia's Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and Loka/LPK Pekanbaru on conservation initiatives across the region. Our work is also shaped by collaboration and knowledge-sharing with organisations and initiatives such as Bawah Reserve, Konservasi Indonesia, WWF, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and National Geographic. Through different forms of engagement, these connections help link local conservation efforts with wider expertise, scientific knowledge, public awareness, and opportunities to share the stories of Anambas.

Across the islands, we work alongside communities, village governments, schools, local community groups, and private-sector stakeholders to ensure that conservation is not only planned, but practised, understood, and carried forward locally. This collaboration also supports broader sustainable development priorities under the Government of the Anambas Islands Regency Regional Medium-Term Development Plan, while helping align field activities with wider conservation priorities and keeping local communities at the centre of implementation.

Anambas Foundation's work is further strengthened by long-term support from partners who share a commitment to conservation and community resilience in small-island regions. Support from Amyas Valora Foundation helps sustain programmes across conservation, community development, education, and institutional operations, while X-Press Feeders supports turtle conservation efforts on Durai Island, including local ranger capacity and nesting-site protection. We are also grateful to individual donors and other partners whose continued trust helps sustain our work across the Anambas Islands.

Some progress can be measured in kilograms, square metres, hectares, products, schools, and participants. But some progress is harder to measure: trust, confidence, ownership, leadership, and the growing belief that small islands can shape their own future. Letter from the Islands will continue to share this journey, from the field, from the villages, and from the people of Anambas.

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Above • Below • Beyond