

# KEEP US WILD

## Orangutan Educational Guide

Developed in conjunction with the IMAX feature documentary, *Born to be Wild*



Photo: Orangutan Foundation International



Orangutan Foundation  
INTERNATIONAL

# Learn About Orangutans

## Orangutan Facts

- In the Indonesian language, orang means “person” and utan is derived from hutan, which means “forest.” Thus, orangutan literally means “person of the forest.”
- Orangutans are only found in Indonesia and Malaysia on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra.
- Orangutans are an endangered species! The population of orangutans is so low, they are in danger of extinction.

## Unique Traits

- Orangutans are the largest arboreal (tree-dwelling) mammals in the world; adults range in size from 90 to 300 lbs. They have many physical adaptations that allow them to live in the forest canopy, such as an extended range of motion in their hip and shoulder joints.
- Unlike the African great apes (gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos), orangutans have long, reddish hair. Scientists are not sure why their hair is red.
- You can tell Sumatran orangutans apart from Bornean orangutans because they tend to have lighter hair and pale moustaches around their faces.
- Like humans, orangutans have opposable thumbs. Their big toes are also opposable. Unlike humans, approximately one third of all orangutans do not have nails on their big toes.

## Diet

Orangutans are mainly frugivorous: they eat mostly fruit. Depending on the place and season, they may add leaves, bark, flowers, honey, insects, and even eggs to their menu! Do you know they spend up to 60% of their waking hours searching for and eating food? Orangutan’s highly developed intelligence helps them remember where food, like fruit trees, is located and when it will be ripe and ready to eat.

## Habitat

Orangutans are dependent on the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra: they inhabit lowland rainforest ecosystems including peat swamp forests. Forests with big trees and lots of fruit have higher densities of orangutans.

## Endangered Species & Habitat Loss

- It is estimated that 100 years ago, there were approximately 500,000 orangutans in the world. Now, only 10% remain; approximately 42,000 in Borneo and 6,000 in Sumatra.
- All populations of orangutans are threatened with extinction, because their rainforest habitats are being cut down to make paper and to create room for giant palm oil farms.
- Palm oil is used in roughly half of manufactured goods sold at the supermarket: from cereal to lipstick to soap to candy bars.

## YOU CAN DO SOMETHING TO HELP STOP ORANGUTAN EXTINCTION & PROTECT RAINFORESTS!

- Now that you know orangutan homes are being cut down by companies to make paper and palm oil, YOU can ask those companies to protect orangutans and the forests they call home!
- You can also raise money at your school to adopt an orangutan and support Dr. Gadikas’s programs that protect rainforests. Your efforts can help local communities stop their land from being changed from a rainforest to a plantation for palm oil or turned into paper.



Photo: Drew Fellman / Warner Bros

➔ See Page 8 for all the ways YOU can be a Rainforest Hero!

# Indonesia's Lush Rainforests

- Indonesia is an island nation containing over 17,000 different islands! These islands are home to more diversity of life than almost anywhere else on the planet! Indonesia only takes up 1% of the earth's land but is home to 12% percent of all mammal species, 16% of reptile and amphibian species, and 17% of bird species.
- Almost 20 million people rely on these intact rainforests for their livelihood. Indonesia is home to over hundreds of Indigenous cultures and different languages.
- Borneo, one of Indonesia's biggest islands, has some of the richest biodiversity on earth, including more carnivorous plant species than any other place on the planet.

## Borneo: Biodiversity Hotspot: TANJUNG PUTING NATIONAL PARK

**Area:** 415,000 hectares. 415,000 hectares is equal to over a million acres.

**Location:** The island of Borneo, Indonesia

### Park History

- Originally, the park was established in 1930's by the Dutch Colonial government as a game reserve.
- In 1977 it became a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- In 1982 it received Indonesia's National Park status.

### Traditional Human Uses of the Area

Dry rice agriculture, hunting, rubber tapping, harvesting small numbers of trees for subsistence

### Habitat Types / Ecozones

tropical forest, peat swamp forest, coastal mangrove forest and mixed dipterocarp (large tropical hardwoods and emergent tree) forests.



### Flora

- The area where Tanjung Puting is located has one of the richest floras in the world, and has among the highest diversity of plants in the world.
- Unique plants, such as the carnivorous pitcher plants that feed on insects, and beautiful wild orchids are found in Tanjung Puting.
- Orangutans have been documented eating over 400 different species of wild foods in this area. Many of these are fruits people love to eat too!

### Fauna

- Tanjung Puting is home to many species of rare and unusual animals. Gibbons, Malay Sun bears, clouded leopards, proboscis monkeys, mouse deer, wild cats and bats all live in the large park.
- Invertebrates, including hundreds of butterfly species, stick and leaf insects, leeches and spiders also add to the biodiversity of the forest.

### Illegal Activities

- Despite being a protected National Park, approximately 65% of the park's primary forest has been damaged by illegal clearing of rainforests. Even today, and even inside park boundaries, the forest and its animal inhabitants are not completely safe.
- Palm oil plantation development, mining, and logging are always threats to the Park's borders.
- Some companies and loggers still attempt to illegally cut down trees found in the park to turn them into everything from furniture to paper
- These dangers for Tanjung Puting are same threats to all of Indonesia's remaining rainforests.

### Current Status

- Tanjung Puting is currently considered a national park. By law, all animals and plants in the park are protected and it is illegal to log or hunt within its borders.
- To ensure the safety of the park, Orangutan Foundation International (OFI) and the local government, particularly the Ministry of Forestry, work together to patrol the park, evict illegal loggers, and control wildfires.
- OFI works with World Education, a community development organization focused on improving quality of life for villagers in the area around the park. This organization is working to promote human-wildlife coexistence, in part by supporting the creation of jobs that are more sustainable than those in the logging and palm oil industries.

# How You Can Make a Difference!

## 1.

### Adopt an Orangutan

Babies as young as just a few days lose their mothers to illegal human activities, and need to be given a home and a second chance. The rehabilitation program cares for hundreds of orangutan orphans, feeding, teaching, and healing them.

Young orangutans are expensive! They eat tons of fruit (literally) and require the efforts of many caregivers, including veterinarians. No matter how many orangutans are living at the center, OFI never turns away an animal in need.

Adopting an orangutan is one of the best ways you can help them return to the wild. Your support will allow us to give them the care and teaching that they need to survive in the jungle.

Visit our [webpage](#) to meet our adorable residents and choose one to help.

## 2.

### Purchase and Protect Land Conservation Program

Tanjung Putting National Park, home of Camp Leakey, is one of the biggest parks in Indonesia, and home to the largest wild orangutan population. The park is a refuge for many plants and animals, but even this haven is not always safe.

business illegally, since the park is large and many areas are very remote and hard to monitor. OFI has over 15 guard posts around the park, staffed by trained rangers, whose job is to protect the forest and its inhabitants. You can donate money to help keep this [program](#) going!

Plantations, illegal loggers, and poachers frequently cross into park borders and carry out their

## 3.

### Protect Tanjung Putting National Park

For orangutans and wildlife to be wild and safe they need safe rainforests they can call home. Creating national parks is a long and often very difficult process. In the meantime, OFI works to purchase rainforest fragments that can be important refuges for the rich and endangered wildlife of lowland Borneo. If we do not save

these forests, they will certainly be bought and transformed into palm oil plantations, which are not suitable habitat for forest animals.

Learn more about our [conservation](#) program today!

### Camp Leakey and Orangutan Foundation International

Dr. Birute Mary Galdikas and Rod Brindamour established Camp Leakey as a research and rehabilitation station in 1971. They played an active role in safeguarding the park, working together with local government, villagers and the Forestry Department to stop illegal activities in the Park and protect its wild orangutan population.

➔ Visit [www.Orangutan.org](http://www.Orangutan.org) to learn more.



Photo: Drew Fellman / Warner Bros



# Be a Rainforest Hero!



Rainforest Action Network's educational site will help you learn about rainforests, why they are being cut down, and how you can get involved to help protect the rainforest and its creatures. Discover fun forest facts, lesson plans for teachers, featured Hero classes, and more. You can also sign up for our Heroes Updates monthly email to learn about one new way to protect rainforests each month!



[www.RainforestHeroes.com](http://www.RainforestHeroes.com)

## 1.

### Learn About Threats to Rainforests:

Believe it or not, one of the biggest threats to rainforests is the expansion of giant farms for a food ingredient called palm oil. Palm oil farms (called plantations) cut down lush, biodiverse rainforests, and replace them with a single type of crop -oil palm- leaving no home for rainforest animals like the orangutans in Born to Be Wild! Not only is the rapid growth of palm oil plantations threatening the world's remaining tropical forests, but it is

also contributing to mistreatment of local people who live nearby. Another leading threat to rainforests is logging. Trees are cut down and turned into everything from furniture to paper used to make kids books!

Visit [www.RainforestHeroes.com](http://www.RainforestHeroes.com) or [www.RAN.org](http://www.RAN.org) to learn more.



Photos: David Gilbert / RAN; Drew Fellman / Warner Bros

## 2.

### Write a Letter to Decision Makers at Cargill

Since Cargill buys more palm oil than any other company in the U.S., it can make a big difference by refusing to buy and sell palm oil that hurts rainforests, family farmers and our climate. Write a letter to Cargill telling it that you want a future that includes orangutans, rainforests and a cool climate. It's easy, Cargill just needs to agree to only buy and sell good palm oil that was grown responsibly, without cutting down rainforests, and with permission from local people. Then, when we go to the supermarket to buy cookies or soap, we can know the items in our shopping carts don't contribute forest destruction. Rainforest Action Network will collect your letters and deliver them with

letters from students like you, that have come in from around the world. Or, if you want to let Cargill know how you feel about the company's role in forest destruction you can send an email to Cargill right now at [www.ran.org/wild](http://www.ran.org/wild).



Please send all letters to:  
Cargill Letter Drive  
Rainforest Action Network  
221 Pine Street, Suite 500  
San Francisco, CA 94104

## 3.

### Support Rainforest Safe Kids Books

Palm oil is not the only threat to rainforests and orangutans. Many companies still cut down beautiful forests to make paper that ends up in American kids books. Visit our Rainforest-Safe Kids' Books Pocket Guide at [www.ran.org/bookguide](http://www.ran.org/bookguide). You can go one step further and ask all publishers to make the books they sell rainforest-safe.

### Resources:

- Visit: [orangutan.org](http://orangutan.org) and [ran.org/wild](http://ran.org/wild) to learn more including our sources for the facts that are in this booklet
- Visit: [www.RainforestHeroes.org](http://www.RainforestHeroes.org) for examples of letters to Cargill from kids around the world.
- Visit [www.imax.com/borntobewild/](http://www.imax.com/borntobewild/) to learn more about the movie or to set up a field trip for your class to see Born To Be Wild!



Photo: Drew Fellman / Warner Bros