

# The Plight Of The Orangutan

Orangutans, one of humans closest relatives. These amiable primates share 97% of human DNA. Tragically the gentle giants that once flourished and thrived are confronting extinction due to palm oil plantations in the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra. Their habitats are driven away by logging as well. Why do we deserve life and they don't? If we don't take action our hairy cousins will soon dwindle away from our planet's existence.

## What Is An Orangutan And Why Should You Care?

The gentle giants we now poach, hunt and keep as pets, assist the rainforest in many ways-one of them being they spread seeds. Yet these astounding relatives of ours only live on two islands with roughly 100,000 left in the wild. Believe it or not, baby orangutans are just like human babies, they can't fend for themselves until they're older and have to stay with their mothers. All orangutans even have feelings, just like us. Luckily, charities and projects create homes, where they can come and go freely. You can do something about it too, no matter where you are!

## What Is The Problem With Their Habitat?

Despite poaching and hunting, deforestation can be an even bigger threat to orangutans, as well as all other innocent animals of the rainforest. Trees are cut down for palm oil plantations, logging and, shockingly, agricultural expansion-surely a farmer should care about animals! Without safe, healthy forests the plight of the orangutan will become an urgent call to every one of us!

## What Is The Issue With Palm Oil And Palm Oil Plantations?

Palm oil, it is an extensive issue as it's not sustainable and as I have said many times, has a knock on effect for deforestation-meaning it gets much more dire. It also releases carbon dioxide into the air, which adds to climate change. Palm oil is used in everyday products too, such as toothpaste, crisps etc. but when it's not grown responsibly, it harms wildlife, and the environment. So next time you go shopping, try and replace one of your products with palm oil...to something without. Remember, every small change matters.

## What Is The Illegal Wildlife Trade And What Is Happening?

Sadly, an illegal project is occurring called the Wildlife Trade. The Illegal Wildlife Trade sends poachers into the jungles of Borneo and Sumatra, then pilfers the orangutan's babies in order to sell them as exotic pets. Even so, it's worse than that! They also snatch other wild animals from their habitats to sell them for a profit. This is truly heart breaking...

### What Can People Do To Help?

Shopping responsibly can help this extravagant problem fade from our planet. One less problem for the orangutans. Look for sustainable palm oil products to buy; certified products partnered with Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance. If you wish, you can help raise awareness on the upcoming orangutan day or support a charity such as the Orangutan Foundation, who look after orphaned orangutans in Borneo.

### What Little Things Can Be Done To Make A Difference?

We can all do our part to save the orangutans. Look for the RSPO label, raise awareness, or change one item in your shopping list. Even small actions can help change an innocent orangutan's life.

So what are YOU going to do about it?

-By Caelan Prestidge