

THE WORLD'S ORANGUTANS FACE EXTINCTION

Many centuries ago, the orangutan inhabited the serene environment of the Southeast-Asian islands: Borneo and Sumatra, and still lives here, but in minute numbers. Now, unfortunately, the dawn of extinction for the critically-endangered species, is coming to a close-for the victim of foreign markets is selling the endangered orangutan for exorbitant amounts of money. Loggers causing deforestation are consequently demolishing the jungle habitat of the innocent orangutan.

The orangutan is a distant relative of ours -amazingly sharing 97% of our DNA. They can be rarely seen swinging throughout the rainforest canopy. The orangutan can travel (on the floor) at 4 mph. The noticeable difference between the male and female is that the male has bulging cheek pads. The orangutan is covered in shaggy, reddish fur, with grasping arms and legs. Their powerful arms are stronger and longer than their legs and can reach 2 metres in length, long enough to touch their ankles when they stand.

However the awe-inspiring creature is decreasing in numbers. The orangutan has adapted to create three different variants: the Bornean, the Sumatran and the

Tapunuli. There are only 104,700 Bornean orangutans, and 7,500- critically endangered- Sumatran orangutans. There are only 800 Tapunuli orangutans. In total, there approximately 113,000 left. This on average, one six hundredth of the population of Great Britain. Thankfully, charities are supporting them such as the Orangutan Foundation and WWF. They are pushing themselves to the limits to raise public awareness, set up orphanages and campaign to eradicate the use of unsustainable palm-oil products and therefore the demise of the orangutan habitat.

The orangutan is particularly vulnerable to hunting because it reproduces only roughly every 8 years. Although they look alarming and sometimes threatening, on the inside they are plainly gentle giants.

“Even if it’s not your fault, it’s your responsibility,” commented Sir Terry Pratchett – an author and environmentalist.

If you’re fortunate enough to see an orangutan in captivity, you probably don’t know it has come from Borneo or Sumatra. In the foreseeable future, the only place to see an orangutan will be behind bars, in a zoo. Won’t that be sad?

When a section of the rainforest is destroyed, orangutans die with it, and consequently you are left with orphan babies. Charities such as: Orangutan Foundation and WWF are rescuing these orphans from the black market and death. I strongly suggest to write to your MP to make your city more like Chester (palm-oil free). YOU could really make a massive impact to save the orangutans!

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