

# The World's Orangutans Face Extinction

For many centuries, the orangutan has live a harmless life on the lonely islands of Indonesia, Sumatra and Borneo. Now, extinction is closing in like a pack of starving lions- the victim of foreign markets, who pay hunters to poach orangutans to keep in captivity; a terrible crime indeed.

The orangutan is a relative of the human race. Using its long, powerful arms, this mysterious creature hurtles through the canopy: swinging from tree to tree in the islands of Indonesia. The identifiable difference is that males are much larger than females and have huge cheek pads.

However, the numbers are decreasing dramatically. The numbers have dropped crazily to an alarming 70800 orangutans. These numbers vary occasionally but are much lower than a decade ago. As a relief, charities such as The Orangutan Foundation and WWF are working hard to save orphans/starving orangutans and protect forest eco-systems. They also help to raise public awareness.

The orangutan has had a particularly tough life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of several reasons:

- Orangutans have the slowest breeding rate of all primates
- Orangutans cannot live amongst new or fragile trees
- Orangutans are extremely gentle creatures

“ I have seen first-hand the wonderful work the foundation is doing, and I am sure that the situation today is better than it would have been without,” quoted Sir David Attenborough- an expert in plants and animals, and an extreme environmentalist.

Orangutans can be located on the compact islands of Indonesia, Sumatra and Borneo. If life on these islands die out, then zoos will be the only home for these gentle creatures – and that would be a tragedy.

When an orangutan's habitat is destroyed, these mammals can be left weak, starving and even dying on the forest floor. The General Public can help by:

- Supporting retailers planning to ban palm oil such as 'Iceland'
- Purchase merchandise from The Orangutan Foundation

- Become a fund-raiser
- Spread the word to the local community

YOU can make a difference!

Reported by Molly Llewellyn.