

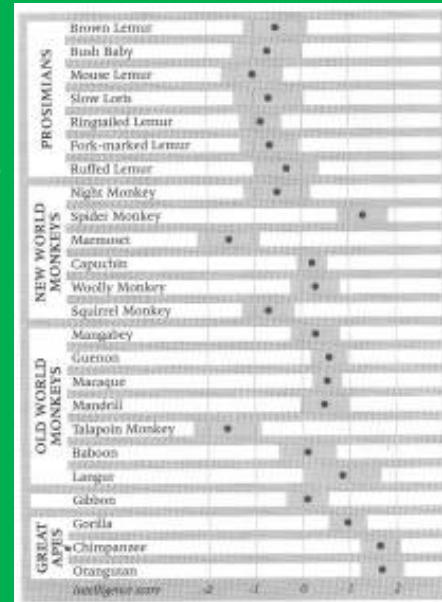


House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics

Food Standards Amendment
(Truth in Labelling - Palm Oil) Bill

Why Do they Matter?

1. After humans, orangutans are the most intelligent beings on earth (5/6 year old child).
2. Orangutans are self-aware.
3. They have developed the 'theory of mind'.
4. Like us they can be inflicted with immense emotional as well as physical suffering.
5. Australians have been confirmed to care through the Don't Palm us Off campaign.



Current Situation

1. They are the slowest reproducing species in the world (8 -9 years between individual infants).
2. The Sumatran orangutan is *Critically Endangered* (IUCN) with less than 6,300.
3. The Bornean orangutan is *Endangered* (IUCN) with less than 55,000, over 3 subspecies.



What is the Problem?

1. 80% live outside of protected areas in secondary (degraded) forest.
2. Approximately 1,000 Sumatran and 5,000 Bornean orangutans are killed annually.





Palm oil plantations destroy orangutan habitat leaving the survivors starving.



LACK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

It is against Indonesian law to harm orangutans yet workers at palm oil plantations have received payments to shoot, machete and burn orangutans as pests. There is no law enforcement preventing this.

Also - many palm oil plantations do not have Ministry of Forestry permission to clear forest, but this is also not enforced.



OVERPOPULATED CARE CENTRES

1. A few infants survive the slaughter and get taken to rescue centres.
2. There are over 2,000 young orangutans currently in rescue centres which are over populated causing disease (malaria, TB).
3. 100's more infants cannot be rescued and placed because of the lack of available space and are left to die of starvation.
4. There is now very little rainforest left for the release of rehabilitated infants and many die in care centres.



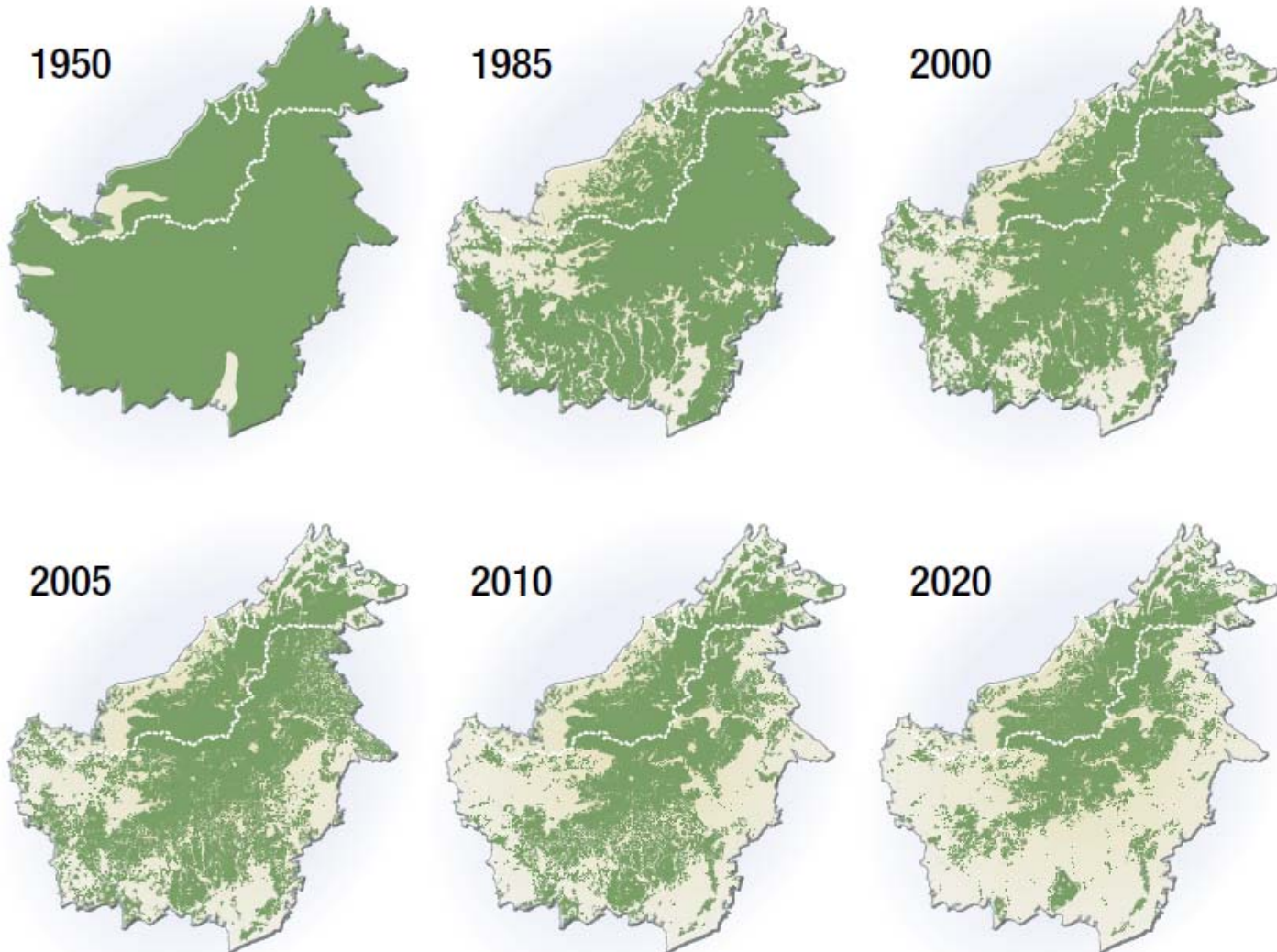
PALM OIL DRIVES DEFORESTATION

In the Cancun climate agreement it was agreed that as part of REDD, countries will address drivers of deforestation.

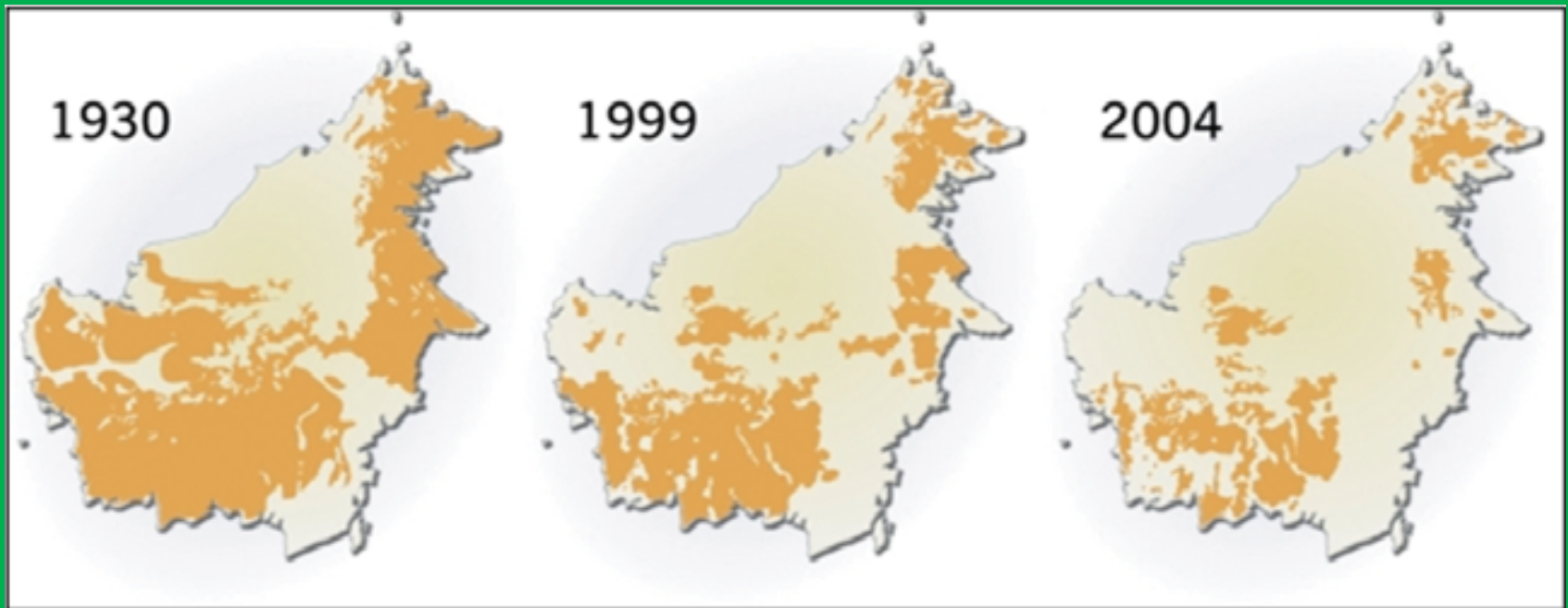
Australia is contributing significant tax payer funds to REDD in Indonesia.

Legislation on palm oil labelling will contribute to meeting Australia's obligations to address drivers of deforestation.

Deforestation in Borneo



Loss of Orangutan Habitat



NB Zoo orangutans populations are not sustainable and cannot help the species survive.

Other Problems



- Much of the cleared lands are peat swamps which release huge amounts of CO₂ when cleared.
- Deforestation on peat-lands is a major contributor to climate change.

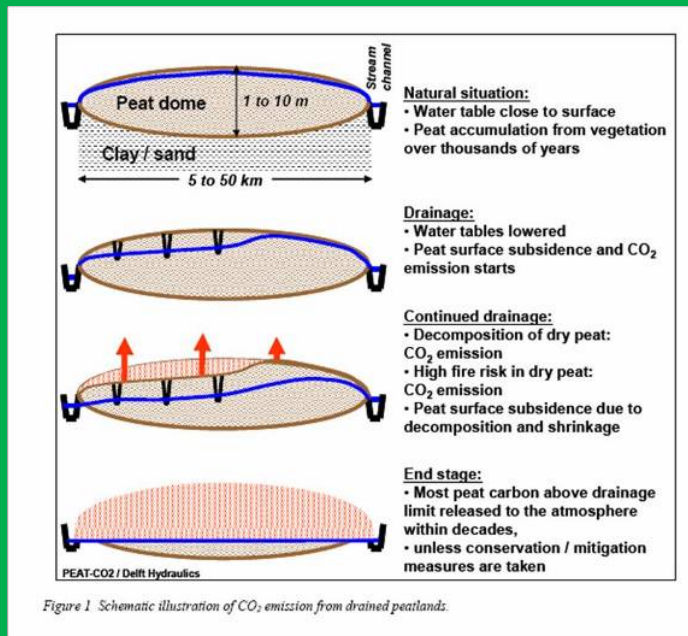
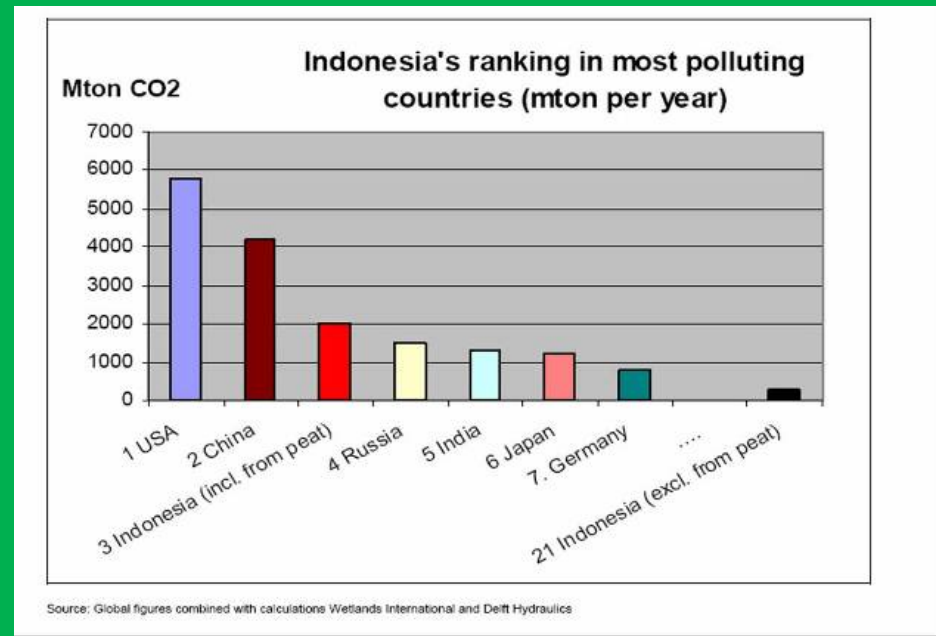


Figure 1 Schematic illustration of CO₂ emission from drained peatlands



Source: Global figures combined with calculations Wetlands International and Delft Hydraulics

Other Problems

- Oil palm is cultivated as a monoculture cash crop and is increasing for a massive biofuels market which drastically reduces the rich biological diversity of rainforest, e.g. tigers, elephants, sun bears, Sumatran rhinos, etc.
- A large amount of agro-chemicals are used in the cultivation and this causes long-term damage to the land which is rendered unusable for agriculture purposes after two crops of oil palm (40 to 50 years).



Other Problems (continued)

- Violation of Indigenous peoples' rights to land and conflicts over land are common in oil palm growing areas. There is little or no free prior informed consent of Indigenous communities.
- The cultivation and processing of oil palm requires a huge amount of water which is taken away from rivers needed by communities.
- Oil palm mill effluence is a major problem. It gets into natural waterways making them toxic and unsuitable for human consumption and use.



Other Problems (continued)

- Palm oil plantations offer less employment per hectare than traditional uses of forests by communities and has done nothing to help raise standards of living.



Conclusion

Palm oil has a significant impact on a flagship species in serious decline.

Labelling products identifying palm oil will contribute to the survival of orangutans.



Australians have a right to choose not to be involved with the genocide of orangutans.

