

Australian Orangutan Project (AOP)



The Orangutan

When an Orangutan is 1, it is as intelligent as a 1 yr old baby. When 3 - as intelligent as a 3 yr old toddler, and as an adult - as a 6 yr old child. This is factual.

With 97% of our DNA they then go on to learn the ways of the forest.

At Perth Zoo, founder of AOP and Primatologist – Leif Cocks is offered the hand of every newborn Orangutan by its mother, shortly after birth. She places the infants hand around his finger only once and this happens at every birth by every mother without exception, as a bond between the three of them.

The *unbelievable* stories we have been told *first hand* by those who have spent time in Orangutan sanctuaries have tugged at heartstrings and made us more determined to allocate time in our lives to inform others about their plight.

Sharing a cup of tea every morning; copying the use of a paintbrush; paddling a boat to race ahead and seize a prized bar of soap; remembering your face; watching (only) the football from a window; ripping pages out of a novel to gain attention - then becoming aware of it being put back together and ripping the numbers off the corners!

Palm Oil Plantations

Palm oil may constitute the "single most immediate threat to the greatest number of species" by driving the conversion of biologically rich ecosystems.

300 football fields are cleared every hour to make way for palm oil (PO) plantations
Indonesia's fires make it the Worlds 3rd largest co2 emitter, behind USA and China!
Sustainable PO plantations do not exist. The Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (a farce) is made up of Government officials and big Companies who use PO and have no interest in making less money! Indigenous communities are at the end of the road, helpless and in need of support.
Indonesian and Malaysian ecosystems are on the brink of extinction.

\$\$\$ = logging virgin hardwood for the west, setting fire to the leftovers, then planting African palm trees which leach the soil and make it unusable without being re- fertilised which is too expensive, and so is re-forestation.

PO workers are paid 50c per day

PO workers who machete the pest of a starving Orangutan are paid \$20

PO workers who seize a baby Orangutan for the black market make \$50

The male will take off but a female Orangutan will not leave her home, returning back even if it has been turned into a PO plantation. Inevitably this means her death.

Palm Oil in our Groceries

Usually labelled Vegetable Oil, the consumer is unable to make a choice.

A saturated fat means it is not good for your heart – it's even found in most baby formulas!

Supermarkets will only sell what we buy. They don't care what that is, as long as they make \$.

Wildlife Statistics

Borneo

It is also the centre of evolution and radiation of many endemic species of plants and animals. The remaining Borneo rainforest is the only natural habitat for the endangered Bornean Orangutan. It is also an important refuge for many endemic forest species, as the Asian Elephant, the Sumatran Rhinoceros, the Bornean Clouded Leopard, and the Dayak Fruit Bat. It is the most biodiverse place on earth.

Sumatra

The island has lost 48% of its natural forest cover since 1985, and most of the remaining species are endangered. The Sumatran Tiger, Sumatran Rhino, and Sumatran Orangutan are all Critically Endangered.

Protecting the orangutan also protects the surrounding ecosystem and myriad of endangered and exotic species. Saving the orangutan saves the forest.

Quick facts:

- We are losing 6% of the world's forests to palm oil every year
- Twenty five percent of palm oil plantations are in cleared peat forest
- Palm oil plantation only store 91 tons per hectare of carbon, compared to 300 ton / ha of carbon in the original peat forest
- Rainforests are being destroyed at the rate of 300 soccer fields per hour
- In Australia we consume 10kg of palm oil per person per year but we don't know it as it's labelled as 'vegetable oil'. It is used to make chips ice-cream and many other things we eat and use everyday, even shampoo
- Because of forest destruction Indonesia is the third largest producer of green house gases
- Although peat swamps are only 3% of the world's surface (10% of world's forests) they account for 50% of the carbon in forest. This is equivalent to 75% of the current carbon in the earth's atmosphere
- The conservation of peat swamps is the most cost effective way of reducing carbon emissions
- Peat forests are also the most space effective carbon stores, three to ten times more than other ecosystems
- Currently there is 3.5 billion tons of carbon being released into the atmosphere a year from peat swamp degradation. Also the draining of peat swamps increases the rate of decomposition and further increases carbon release.

Peat swamps are prime orangutan habitat!

The hope is carbon trading may be the savior of peat forests. However the World Bank Scheme is years away and the private market is in its infancy. There are also a lot of social/political hurdles to overcome and there will likely to be a lot of hiccups along the way. In the meantime, we are working with our conservation partners to support strategies to immediately reduce deforestation of the peat forests. Your support is greatly appreciated and needed!

Leif Cocks—AOP President

Please check out our website for more information on the projects and conservation work AOP are doing to help save these beautiful creatures