

Critical needs for orangutan conservation

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Bornean, Sumatran and Tapanuli orangutans are all Critically Endangered. But there is still time to save these majestic animals - and you can help!

Recent research indicates new approaches are needed

- Orangutans are protected by law but killing and illegal possession are commonplace. These crimes are rarely prosecuted.
- Deforestation, human-orangutan conflict, and fires drive capture of wild orangutans for relocation (wild to wild translocation). The survival of wild-to-wild translocated individuals is not known, and may be very low.
- Orangutans survive and breed in small forest patches in agricultural landscapes if they are not killed. Translocating orangutans undermines their population dynamics, and likely harms welfare. It should not be the default solution to habitat conflicts or fragmentation.
- Large forests and forest fragments can be protected and connected to maintain wild orangutans where they currently live. New thinking is needed to facilitate peaceful coexistence of humans and orangutans instead of removing orangutans and losing forests.

What will help protect wild orangutans?

The decisions we all make – as donors, consumers, government, local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and businesses – will determine the fate of orangutans.

- Businesses and community land owners can protect remaining natural forests.
- Consumers can select certified sustainably grown palm oil (RSPO) and wood products (FSC). These certifications require plantations to maintain natural habitats for protected species. NGOs, businesses and the public can encourage improvement, implementation and enforcement of RSPO and FSC standards.
- Donors locally and internationally can support NGOs taking critical actions: protecting natural habitats; restoring native forests; conducting anti-poaching patrols; developing long term solutions for human-orangutan coexistence instead of translocation; and supporting community land rights and livelihoods that protect local forests and wildlife.
- Government can improve implementation of laws criminalizing killing, ownership and trade of orangutans, prevent further degradation of orangutan habitats, and support interventions to protect orangutans in place rather than remove them from forest fragments.

Sources: [Sherman et al. 2020a](#); [Sherman et al. 2020b](#); [Ancrenaz et al. 2020](#); [Meijaard et al. 2020](#)

