



Bornean Orang-utan

Pongo pygmaeus



Photo: WWF-Malaysia/Lee Shan Khee

Common Name: Orang-utan (English and Bahasa Malaysia)
Kogiu or Kisau (Sabah natives language)

Habitat: Mostly lowland and swamp forest

Status: Endangered

Population: About 11,000 in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo

Distribution & Population:

Orang-utans occur mainly in lowland tropical rain forests. On Borneo Island, they are in Malaysia (states of Sabah and Sarawak) and Indonesia (provinces of Central, West and East Kalimantan). In Sarawak, there are about 1,300 orang-utans almost all in the Lanjak-Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary and Batang Ai National Park in the south next to West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Meanwhile in Sabah, the orang-utan population size is approximately 11,000 individuals in year 2003. The world-famous orang-utan rehabilitation centre at Sepilok Forest Reserve has served since 1964, and continues to serve very important roles in saving individual orang-utans displaced by forest clearance elsewhere, and in educating about the need for wildlife conservation. However, the Reserve in itself is not enough for conserving the species in the long-term.

Significant areas for long-term conservation:

1. Ulu Segama-Malua forests (approx. 5,000)
2. Kinabatangan North area, including Deramakot (approx. 1,700)
3. Tabin Wildlife Reserve (approx. 1,400)
4. Lower Kinabatangan (approx. 1,100)
5. Kulamba Wildlife Reserve (approx. 500)

Borneo has 3 populations/subspecies:

- *Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus* (western populations)
- *Pongo pygmaeus morio* (northeast and east populations)
- *Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii* (southern populations)

General situation: Orang-utan is an endangered species in Borneo. In Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak), the species is best classed as vulnerable because the rate of orang-utan habitat loss has fallen off to a very low level in recent years, there is almost no hunting of this species, and most of the remaining populations occur in forests to be retained as protected areas or under natural forest management for timber production.

What do they feed on? Orang-utans primarily eat fruits, along with young leaves and bark, flowers, honey and insects. One of their preferred foods is the durian fruit.

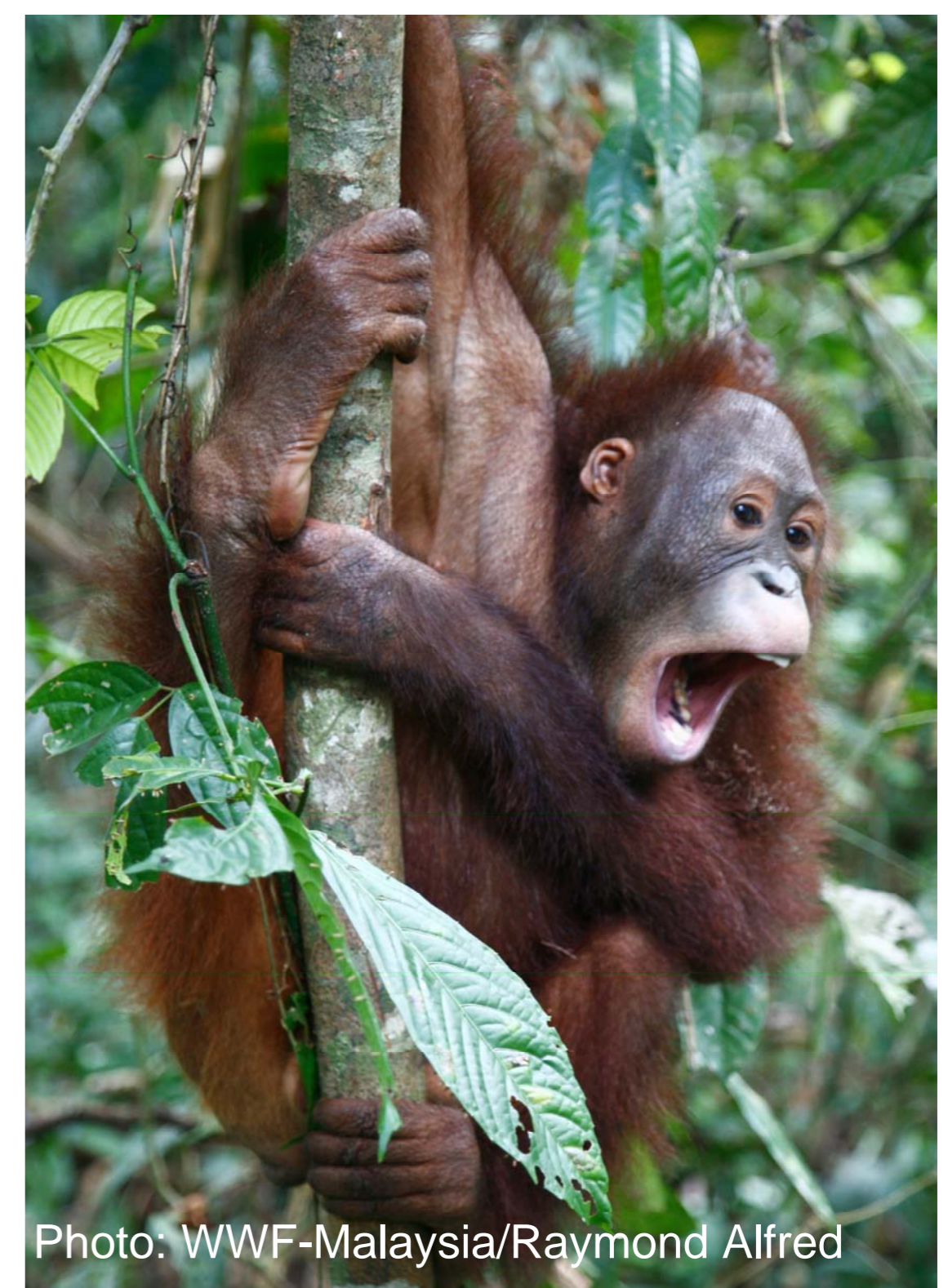


Photo: WWF-Malaysia/Raymond Alfred

Threats: An understanding of three main features of the biology of the orang-utan can quickly help us to see why the orang-utan has become endangered with extinction, and why even in the more stable conditions of Sabah and Sarawak, it remains vulnerable.

Firstly, orang-utans can survive only in extensive natural forests and only some forests – mainly in lowlands and swamps.

Secondly, orang-utans require high quality foods and a variety of fruits. In regions where natural fruiting is infrequent and seasonal, such as hill ranges, orang-utan populations may not be able to survive, even where there is no hunting or disease. Orang-utans can and do eat young leaves and bark plants, but these are not their main foods. They cannot survive for long without fruits.

Thirdly, orang-utans grow slowly and breed very slowly. It is thought that an average wild female orang-utan successfully bears only about three young during her lifetime, even under optimum circumstances. This means that any kind of pressure which slows natural breeding rate or raises death rate has an enormous impact on the survival of the population. Such pressures may be hunting or disease such as malaria, but the most severe pressure may be El Nino droughts.

For more information:

WWF-Malaysia
www.wwf.org.my

WWF-Malaysia>Species>Orang-utan
http://www.wwf.org.my/about_wwf/what_we_do/species_main/orang_utan/

Please contact:

Raymond ALFRED
Programme Manager
Borneo Species Programme
RALfred@wwf.org.my

Shan Khee LEE
Conservation Officer
Borneo Species Programme
SKLee@wwf.org.my

September 2009

WWF-Malaysia
Suite 1-6 W11
6th Floor, CPS Tower
Ctr Point Complex
No. 1, Jalan Centre Point
88800 Kota Kinabalu
Sabah, Malaysia
Tel: + 60 88 262 420
+ 60 88 258 531
Fax: + 60 88 242 531
contactus@wwf.org.my
www.wwf.org.my