

Orangutans: People of the Forest

- Orangutans are one of humans' closest relatives, sharing 97 percent of our DNA. They are one of four kinds of great apes, along with chimpanzees, gorillas and bonobos, and the only apes that come from Asia. Orangutans are considered the most critically endangered of the great apes.
- "Orangutan" means "people of the forest" and comes from the Malay words "orang" (people) and "hutan" (forest). Orangutans live in Malaysia and Indonesia.
- The orangutan is the world's largest tree-living mammal. Male orangutans can weigh more than 200 pounds.
- Much is yet to be learned about orangutans. For instance, no one knows exactly what their average life span is in the wild.
- Recent scientific research has shown orangutans to have "culture" — customs passed from one generation to the next and often unique to particular populations.
- By some estimates, more than 80 percent of all orangutan habitat has been destroyed, much of it logged for consumer products sold worldwide. These products include plywood (known as lauan or meranti), dowels (used in tool handles such as brooms and mops), rayon and palm oil. Products that come from well-managed forests may bear the stamp of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

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