

What National Geographic Is Doing...

Committee for Research and Exploration: Fruit and Infants

National Geographic's Committee for Research and Exploration has made 21 grants for research on orangutans since 1971. Cheryl Knott's research in Gunung Palung National Park, funded by the committee beginning in 1994, focuses on how the boom-and-bust cycle of rain forest fruits affects orangutan birth intervals and lengths of juvenile dependency and male development. She also has collaborated with other scientists to piece together orangutan "culture" — customs passed from one generation to the next and often unique to particular populations.

Conservation and Education: Getting Out There

With a grant from National Geographic's Conservation Trust, Knott is leading an effort to raise awareness of orangutans among local populations in Borneo and to strengthen protection of the animals. The effort includes: a school program that takes students out of the classroom and into the forests to observe orangutans and help collect data; a twice-weekly radio show, theater, billboards, and other information campaigns that inform people about orangutans' value in the wild; a program to recover orangutans that have been orphaned by logging and poaching; and work with government officials to enforce orangutan protection laws, including support of local patrols.

National Geographic's Conservation Trust is supported by gifts from private funders. More information on the Conservation Trust is available at nationalgeographic.com/conservation.

More About Orangutans

National Geographic magazine has published major articles on orangutans in these issues: October 2003, August 1998, March 1992, and June 1980.

National Geographic Books covered orangutans in the 1993 book "Curious Kinship: Apes and Humans."

On the Web: nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0310

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