

ORANGUTANS

COMPREHENSION
CRUSHERS

Average height: 1.2-1.8m

Average weight: 30-50 kg (female)
and 50-100 kg (male)

Any library would proudly display their books about orangutans, because the world's largest tree-dwelling mammals are one of the most fascinating and popular! But, did you know they are in trouble? Read on to find out about our cousins, the Bornean, Sumatran and Tapanuli orangutans, what makes them special and how you can help them.

Appearance

Non-chronological report

These rust-coloured creatures are perfectly adapted for their habitat and their ape-like shape has made them easy to recognise.

Their lips and mouths are very useful. They can carry food, feel rough textures, crunch extremely hard vegetation and make faces at each other!

An orangutan's long arms can reach 2m high and help them to swing through the branches - what fantastic exercise! Famously, they use their incredible strength to break the branches in their way, as they are 7 times stronger than humans!

They have thumbs and big toes that can move in different directions so that they can grasp well!

Did you know?

These incredible great apes have 96.4% of the same genes as us!
Perhaps that's why they've won our hearts!

Diet

As omnivores, orangutans eat over 400 types of foods, but their favourite is a ripe durian fruit. They are thought to be vital to helping move seeds around the rainforest, by spitting them in different locations! Food is hard to find, so they have to spend 60% of their day foraging. When they can't find any, they have to eat less nutritious meals of bark or leaves.

Behaviour

Usually, orangutans like to live separately, yet a mother may live with her children and carry them until they are 5 years old! They build and sleep in a new nest high in the trees every night, but this only takes them 10 minutes to make as they have such great knowledge of their forests. They have been seen using tools (like sticks) to reach insects and honey. an experiment proved that they could learn to use stones like a hammer and even sign language!



Did you know?

Orangutans even wear large leaves on their heads during the rain like an umbrella!

Habitats and conservation

All three species of orangutan have always lived on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. These interesting creatures can live up to 50 years old in the wild, yet they are endangered. Unfortunately, a staggering quarter of Bornean orangutans are critically endangered. This is because humans hunt and steal them or destroy their natural habitats. Humans have cut down these creatures' palm tree homes to make roads, paper or palm oil, which is then used in various foods and household items. Scientists believe that if this deforestation increases, they may disappear forever. Therefore, it is important to avoid the use of palm oil.



Orangutan species and numbers in the wild:

Bornean – Around 100,000

Sumatran – Fewer than 800

Tapanuli – Around 17,500

