

Half the world 'should be just for animals'



Rare

beast: There are now less than 100,000 orangutans living in Borneo.

How do we make the world safer for endangered species? This is the question experts must answer after a new study revealed a shocking drop in the number of orangutans living in Borneo.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Their flame-coloured fur and intelligent nature mark orangutans as one of the most distinctive **primates** — but a deadly combination of **deforestation**, hunting, and killing has pushed the Bornean orangutan close to **extinction**. There are half as many living in the wild today as there were 16 years ago.

FIND OUT MORE

The drop in numbers is a shock, with a professor running the study admitting, "I did not anticipate it would be this large." Based on these figures **Borneo** has lost around 25 orangutans per day - mostly because their **habitat** has been cut down to make space for **plantations**, but also because people hunt them, and kill them when they stray onto farmland.

Orangutans are not the only species under threat - Hawksbill turtles, Amur leopards and the Yangtze finless porpoise are some of the **WWF's critically endangered** species.

Conservationists are aiming to make 17% of the world's land and 10% of the oceans safe for wildlife by 2020. In light of studies like this, maybe we should do more.

Should we protect *half* the Earth for the sake of other species?

SOME SAY...

A drastic decline in wildlife demands drastic measures. Humans are one species — surely we can get by on half a planet and let the millions of other species run, swim or fly free on the other half? The damage is hard to undo once habitat has been destroyed. Let us aim high now, before it is too late and critically endangered species become extinct.

OTHERS THINK...

This is not a practical plan. How should we decide which areas take priority? Saving the whole of the Antarctic does nothing for a Sumatran tiger. It would also be impossible to stop human pollution from affecting those areas — or animals wandering out. Better to think up small and smart ideas, such as introducing more green areas into urban landscapes.

YOU DECIDE

1. Should we limit ourselves to living on half the earth?

ACTIVITIES

1. There are 19 critically endangered species listed on the WWF's website. Find out what they are, where they live and what it is that threatens their existence on the planet.

WORD WATCH

Primates Apes, monkeys, lemurs and humans all belong to this group.

Deforestation Cutting down forests.

Extinction When an animal goes extinct it means there are no more of them alive.

Borneo The largest island in Asia.

Habitat Where a species lives.

Plantations A very large farm — in Borneo forests are cut down for palm oil plantations.

WWF's critically endangered The WWF is the World Wide Fund for Nature (formerly known as World Wildlife Fund). Critically endangered means in danger of going extinct.

Conservationists People or groups who want to protect and preserve natural resources.