

# Fact File: Orangutans

## Fast Facts:

**Diet:** Most of their diet consists of fruit and leaves gathered from rain forest trees. They also eat bark, insects and, on rare occasions, meat.

**Behaviour:** Orangutans are semi-solitary which is unique among primate species. The scarcity of food means orangutans spend up to 60% of their day foraging (looking for food). Competition for food leads to this solitary life.



**Scientific Name:** Pongo abelii, Pongo pygmaeus

**Weight:** up to 200 pounds

**Population:** about 104,700 (Bornean), 13,846 (Sumatran), 800 (Tapanuli)

**Status:** Critically Endangered

**Threats:** All species of Orangutan are critically endangered due to the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of their forest habitat. The threats are illegal logging, oil-palm plantations, forest fires, mining and small-scale shifting cultivation.

(Sources: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/orangutan>, <https://www.orangutan.org.uk/> and <https://www.orangutans-sos.org/>)

## Population Decline

All three types of Orangutan are critically endangered:

Tapanuli – fewer than 800

Sumatran Orangutan -13,846 individuals

Bornean Orangutan – 104,700 individuals, which is a decline from 288,500 in 1973

## Similarities to Humans

They are similar to humans in many ways, including that they share 97% of DNA with us. They have very human-like hands which they use for grasping branches and vines as they swing through the tree-tops in the rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo. Like us they are great apes and share the fact that we both have massive brains and have a complex ways to communicate. They like to imitate when learning new skills and behaviours. They are very smart and enjoy some DIY because they regularly build umbrellas from leaves and stalks. They also use tools such as stripped branches to help them reach honey and occasionally in treetop hives.