

# 10 Orang-utan Facts



- 1** Orang-utan means "person of the forest" in Indonesian. Orang-utans live in the forests of Borneo and Sumatra, and they are the only great ape to live outside of Africa apart from humans.
- 2** They are one of our closest living relatives, sharing 96.4% of our DNA. They are highly intelligent and gentle Great Apes. The other Great Apes are gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and humans!
- 3** In the wild, orang-utans are semi-solitary, usually only coming together to breed or when rearing offspring. They can live to around 45 in the wild.
- 4** Offspring stay with their mothers for the longest time of any ape, apart from humans. They generally live with their mother until they are around 7 or 8 years old. Because they live on their own, it is important they learn all of their life skills from their mother, such as where to find food, build nests and how to move around.
- 5** Female orang-utans usually only have around 3 babies in their lifetime - which makes them very slow breeding, and so at higher risk of extinction.
- 6** Orang-utans are highly intelligent, gentle apes. They can use tools; using sticks to get to food, and leaves as umbrellas to shelter from the rain.
- 7** They are known as the "gardeners of the forest". They eat mainly fruit, but also young leaves, flowers, bark, insects and eggs. As the seeds pass through them, they deposit them through droppings in different parts of the forest, preserving plant life and spread of plants.
- 8** Male orang-utans look very different to females. They are much bigger, growing to 1.5m in height, and when mature they grow big cheek pads on both sides of their faces.
- 9** Orang-utans are the largest animals that live in trees. They are the only great ape to live primarily in the trees, moving through the forest by swinging from branch to branch, and making nests to sleep in at night.
- 10** Orang-utans are losing their habitat very fast, due to the forests being cut down for crops such as palm oil. Every day in Indonesia, a forest area equal to six football pitches is lost. This gives the orang-utan nowhere to live, and nothing to eat. Orang-utans are critically endangered in the wild, and if the population continues at the current rate, they will be extinct within the next 20 years.