



BORNEO ORANGUTAN

PRIMATA
Family: Pongidae
Genus: *Pongo*
Species: *pygmaeus*



Female



Male

Range: endemic to the island of Borneo

Habitat: tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests in lowlands and up to 4,900 ft

Niche: almost exclusively arboreal in the canopy, diurnal, omnivorous - largely frugivorous

Wild diet: primarily frugivores (60% of diet), but also eat leaves, insects (termites and ants), bird eggs, flowers, honey

Zoo diet: fruits, vegetables, monkey chow

Life Span: Wild- 35 - 45 yrs, Captivity- up to 60 yrs

Sexual dimorphism: M almost 2x weight of F, M has large cheek pads (see photo top right)

Location in SF Zoo: GAP

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

Orangutans have thick reddish brown hair and are distinguished by their long, muscular arms and gripping hands and feet, which allow them to swing from branch to branch. The opposable thumbs and big toes are short to facilitate brachiation and hanging on to tree branches as well as picking fruits, the main part of their diet. Hip and shoulder joints are highly mobile allowing them to easily move from branch to branch and tree to tree. Orangutans have tremendous strength, which enables them to brachiate and hang upside-down from branches for long periods of time to retrieve fruit and eat young leaves. They do not knuckle-walk.

Males have secondary sexual characteristics of large cheek pads (flanges) composed of muscle and large amounts of fat. Males have relatively larger canines and premolars. Males have a more pronounced beard and mustache and also pendulous throat sacs. Male's arm span can be up to 8 feet. Female flanges are mostly muscle. There are two "types" of mature male orangutans: flanged and unflanged males. Both are sexually mature and able to father offspring; the flanged male is more desirable to the female.

Weight:	F 66 - 110 lbs
	M 110 - 220 lbs
Height:	F 3.3-3.9 ft
	M 3.9-4.6 feet
TL:	none

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Borneo Orangutans are Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and on Appendix I of CITES. They are decreasing due to deforestation, palm oil plantations, and the bushmeat trade. Climate change is another threat to Borneo orangutan conservation. Since fruits make up more than 60% of orangutan diet, orangutans play a vital role in seed dispersal, especially for the larger seeds, which cannot be dispersed by smaller animals. Over 500 plant species have been recorded in their diet.

A number of orangutan rescue and rehabilitation projects operate in Borneo. This includes Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation and the Orangutan Foundation International, founded by Dr Birutė Galdikas, WWF helped launch a sustainable honey business on the island of Borneo, where orangutans and people depend on the same forests. The prized, forest-grown product provides income and deters destruction of orangutan habitat.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Adult orangutans are solitary but mothers stay with their young for up to eight years—longer than any other great ape. Although orangutans are not territorial, adult males will display threatening behaviors upon meeting other males. Orangutans are the largest arboreal animals in the world, usually spending over 95% of their time in the trees' canopies; exceptionally large males spend more time traveling on the ground, walk on all fours, using their palms or fists. Nests are built with bent branches, sticks, and leaves and orangutans nap or sleep in them.

Male orangutans are capable of a "*long call*," exceptionally loud calls that carry through forests for up to 1 km. These calls help males claim territory, call to females, and keep out intruding male orangutans. Males have a large throat sac that amplifies this sound. They may also pull small trees and limbs down to add a crashing sound along with the call. Male-male competition for access to sexually receptive females is a major factor in orangutan adaptation.

Borneo orangutans have been observed using tools such as leaves to wipe off feces, a pad of leaves for holding spiny durian fruit, a leafy branch for a bee swatter, a bunch of leafy branches held together as an "umbrella" while traveling in the rain, a single stick as backscratcher, and a branch or tree trunk as a missile. In some regions, orangutans occasionally eat soil to get minerals that may neutralize the toxins and acids they consume in their primarily vegetarian diets.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

The primary mating tactic involves "harassment" of female by males. Most mating occurs in the heaviest fruiting months (December to May). After a female orangutan has given birth, her next 8 to 9 years are devoted to her offspring's survival; orangutans have the longest "infancy" of the great apes. Fathers play no direct role in the upbringing of their offspring. For the first two years, young stay in close contact with their mother; the first year infant clings to her abdomen as she moves through the forest canopy.

Estrous: Polyestrous, cycle 22 – 30 days

Gestation: 8.5 mos

of Mammae: 1 pr

of Young: 1 (twins rare)

Sexual Maturity: M ~ 8 - 15 years

F 6 - 11 years

Weaning Age: 4 yrs

Weight at birth: 3.5 lbs

MISCELLANEOUS

The name "orangutan" translates to "person of the forest" in the Malay language. They are the largest arboreal animal. The Borneo orangutan differs in appearance from the Sumatran orangutan, with a broader face and shorter beard and also slightly darker in color. Orangutans share 97% of their DNA with humans.

Sources:

Walker's Mammals of the World, 6th edition, Ronald M. Nowak, © 1999 Johns Hopkins University Press

The Natural History of the Primates, Napier, J.R. © 1985 The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/bornean-orangutan>

https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Pongo_pygmaeus/

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Created: 3/19