



australian
orangutan
project

ORANGUTAN FACTS

In Malay and Indonesian orang means “person” and utan is derived from hutan, which means “forest.” Thus, orangutan literally means “person of the forest.”

Orangutans are great apes, as opposed to monkeys, and are closely related to humans, having in common 97% of DNA.

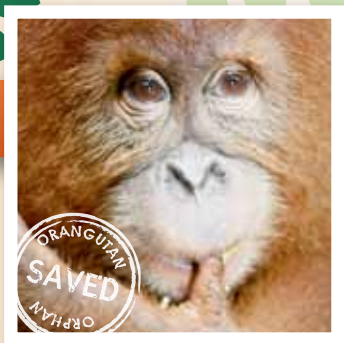
Orangutans are extremely patient and intelligent mammals. They are very observant and inquisitive, and there are many stories of orangutans escaping from zoos after having watched their keepers unlock and lock doors.

Unless we act now, extinction in the wild will be soon for Sumatran Orangutans and not long after that for Bornean Orangutans. The Sumatran species (*Pongo abelii*) is Critically Endangered and the Bornean species (*Pongo pygmaeus*) of orangutans is Endangered, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

The Sumatran and Bornean Orangutans’ rainforest habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate due to deforestation and clearing of the land for pulp paper and palm oil plantations, with the remaining forest degraded by drought and forest fires.

Orangutans face many other problems including: illegal logging, fires, palm oil plantations, poaching and hunting

FACT FILE



JAROT

HEALTH:

There is no medical record for Jarot's health in the period until February 2011.

HISTORY AND PERSONALITY:

Jarot is an orangutan child who was separated from his mother when he was still a baby. Fortunately he has the chance to return to the forest where he belongs.

Jarot is a clever orangutan with a good ability to swing and make nests from leaves for his bed. He is also passive, preferring to avoid fights with other orangutans and often plays by himself. If other orangutans disturb him he will usually choose to back down.

Jarot will still often cry especially when his toys are taken by other orangutans. In February 2011, it was decided he should go to the reintroduction station in Jambi in order to gain more experience about life in the forest. At the reintroduction station Jarot can be introduced to plants and fruits in the forest.

The journey to the Jambi reintroduction centre took approximately 36 hours. During the daytime part of the journey Jarot cried and seemed a little sad. The weather was hot so he was kept comfortable with fruit and drinks which he readily consumed.



FACT FILE



MIRIAM

HEALTH:

Miriam is a good eater who always finishes her food. If it is a fruit she particularly likes she will collect as much as she can and hoard it with both her hands and feet.

HISTORY AND PERSONALITY:

Miriam is an active orangutan with a bold personality. If she doesn't get what she wants, she will often cry. However, she is a kind orangutan and will never fight back or disturb other orangutans. She will share her food with her friends Hugo, Fren, Manohara, and Mambo. She likes to hang in the cage and likes playing on the rope.

The one drawback for Miriam is that she is very close to her keeper and will often try to hold hands with the staff who are working near her cage.

In February 2011 Miriam was listed as one of the orangutans to be relocated to the reintroduction station in Jambi. On February 24 2011 Miriam, Jarot, Penny and Mambo were separated to block 2/A isolation cage in preparation for moving to the transport cage the following day.

During the journey the condition of the orangutans was checked every 4 hours, and food and water was given. During the journey Miriam appeared calm and bright, and she slept very well that night.



FACT FILE



PINKY

HEALTH:

There is no medical record of Pinky's health in the period until February 2011.

HISTORY AND PERSONALITY:

Pinky is developing into a handsome young orangutan. He is physically healthy with a dense coat, and is developing a brave personality.

He loves to play with orangutans bigger than him such as Jeff Corwin, Dewabunien and Denis. However for all his bravado, he will still cry when he loses food to the other orangutans.

Pinky has a tendency to pester Fren, another orangutan in the socialisation cage. He will always try to steal Fren's fruit, and will also always approach staff when they are at the cage and try to pull on their clothes.

Pinky is one of the most active orangutans in the cage, and will often be seen playing with the wheel which hangs in the cage as enrichment. He loves to play with leaves which have a stem and will try to unravel the leaves using his mouth.

Pinky is also an accomplished nest builder using the leaves provided to him by a keeper in the evenings. He will take good care of his nest to ensure it is not taken by other orangutans in the cage.



FACT FILE

THE TWINS



HEALTH:

Both mother and father and the two infants are doing well. Gober is caring for both despite her blindness and as long as she maintains good nutrition there is every chance she will be able to raise them herself.

HISTORY:

On Friday 21st January 2011 at approximately 13.30 WIB, Sumatran orangutan (*Pongo abelii*) female "Gober" gave birth to healthy TWIN orangutans, a boy and a girl, provisionally named "Ganteng" (handsome) and "Ginting" (a common local family name).

This birth is also particularly notable in that BOTH parents are BLIND. The mother, Gober, is an elderly female, probably well over 40 years old, who was captured by SOCP vets and Indonesian Wildlife Service (BKSDA) in Nov 2008. The Father, named Leuser, was originally confiscated as an illegal pet in Aceh Tenggara in February 2004. Mother and father and the two new twins are all housed at the Batu Mbelin orangutan quarantine centre, near Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. This is the only such centre in the world for Sumatran orangutans.

In the long term it is hoped that both infants will eventually be released to a life in the wild, something that has been denied both their parents due to their blindness. Thus despite their handicap, both Gobers and Leuser's genes will be given a second chance to contribute to the conservation of their species in the wilds of Sumatra.



FACT FILE

UGO BLANCO



HEALTH:

In mid-January 2011, Ugo developed a cold. During this time, almost all the orangutans in the socialization cage had the flu. They were all treated by vet Dr. Yenny and given intensive care by the keepers. By early February 2011, the condition of all the orangutans including Ugo Blanco had returned to normal. The weather changes had been erratic, resulting in decreased body immunity for the orangutans, leaving them susceptible to disease.

HISTORY & PERSONALITY:

Ugo has been undertaking advanced stages of learning. In September 2010, he was introduced to a few adult orangutans and a bit of wild nature. This training was undertaken in order to ensure Ugo will learn from the adults important skills such as finding food, defending himself when confronted by other orangutans, nesting, and also skills such as climbing and using ropes and vines for movement. Ugo has gradually started to learn the skills he will require during his lifetime.

In early 2011, Ugo was separated from Miriam and Jarot, as Ugo tended to often rely on Miriam as his protector and was afraid to try things without Miriam's presence. At first Ugo appeared unhappy and was often seen alone, but over time he has begun to socialize with others such as Coty, Jeff Corwin, Tono, Yusniar and even some of the adults such as Dennis, Marconi and Dewabunien.



FACT FILE



WENDA

HEALTH:

December 2010 was a difficult month for Wenda. Several times she developed a cough and became weak. She had to be separated from her best friend Chaka as Chaka had developed a blood parasite infection. Unfortunately Chaka didn't make it and sadly died.

In early January 2011, Wenda developed a deep cough. On further observation, it was apparent that she had airsacculitis. Minor surgery has been performed to remove fluid from her airsac and since the surgery, Wenda has been healthy.

HISTORY & PERSONALITY:

Wenda was confiscated along with another orangutan, named Denis. Both had been living together in one cage in a garage in the yard of a former member of the local government. According to the owner, he had kept Wenda for just one month. Wenda was in a poor nutritional state when she first arrived at the centre. She had a very distended abdomen, very dry skin, and very sparse, thin hair.

Since Chaka's death Wenda has become timid, and tends to be scared when she is with the staff. She is no longer independent with the other orangutans like she was before. She has now been moved to a baby home with the other babies (Willy, Suri, Mamat and Suro) and seems dominant among them.



FACT FILE



MEKI

HISTORY & PERSONALITY:

Meki is originally from the area of Sampit, Central Kalimantan and was rescued from captivity by the Indonesian Wildlife Service (BKSDA).

She was the oldest orangutan in the Baby Group at the Nursery and was slow to socialize with the other orangutans, generally observing from a distance. She often submits to her fellow orangutans in matters of sharing food, pillows and blankets. Meki has made little progress in her socialization and assertiveness skills since arriving at Nyaru Menteng.

Unlike most of her fellow Nursery companions, whom are extremely active, Meki is very quiet and only becomes active when urged by her babysitter or by a fellow orangutan. She seems to be content just watching her companions in their daily romps, resulting in the caretakers referring to Meki as "The Observer". But even though she often watches her companions' activities, she seems to learn little from the observations in terms of behavior. Like most of the orangutan babies at Nyaru Menteng, Meki still enjoys being hugged and fussed over by her caretakers.

In order to reduce the need for human contact, the babysitters generally provide the babies with objects such as dolls or blankets which they can become attached to. A warm hug, however, seems to be the best medicine for the longings these babies feel for their lost mothers.



FACT FILE

ROSI

HISTORY & PERSONALITY:

Rosi had been in the hands of villagers for several months, after being found on the side of the road, alone, her mother nowhere to be found.

Rosi was initially placed in the Nyaru Menteng Nursery in the babies group, but has now moved to the large group, a move that was made as she grew stronger.

As a "newcomer", Rosi was, of course, spoiled by her babysitters and became very attached, wanting to be carried and hugged constantly. This was important for Rosi's development, considering that she had been separated from her mother at such an early age. As young orangutans stay attached to their mothers for an average of six years, it was important for Rosi, and all the rescued babies, to receive the warm hugs and attention of the babysitters.

Since being moved to the large group in the Nursery, Rosi has become exceptionally close to Putat, another newcomer to Nyaru Menteng. The two have become "soulmates" of a sort, always seeking each others' company and insisting on being together in all the group's activities. If you want to find Rosi, the caretakers say, look for Putat, and vice versa.

Rosi now has a future that matches her name - a real opportunity to return to the forest home that is her natural habitat. She now is learning to climb trees and swing from branch to branch, skills her mother would have taught her but now she must learn from her babysitters.



FACT FILE

WIGLY



HISTORY & PERSONALITY:

Wigly was born at Nyaru Menteng on January 23, 2010. His mother, Nadia, was very young and seemed incapable of nurturing and caring for Wigly and his physical condition began to deteriorate.

The decision was made by the Nyaru Menteng medical team to remove Wigly from his mother and place him in the Nursery to be looked after by the babysitters. The move immediately improved his physical condition and he is now healthy and growing strong.

When he first moved to the Nursery, Wigly became very attached to a ratty old blanket and would carry it everywhere he went. If anyone tried to take the blanket from him he would cry. Wigly still likes to suck his thumb as he falls off to sleep at night.

Like almost all of the young orangutans in the Nursery, Wigly is spoiled and totally devoted to his babysitter, from whom he receives all the love and care he needs.

In a few years, once Wigly has gone through the various stages of the Nyaru Menteng Forest School, he should possess all of the survival skills that his fellow orangutans in the wild possess. It is only through this lengthy, difficult process that Wigly can some day hope to live free in his natural habitat, away from the threats from humans that brought his mother, Nadia, to Nyaru Menteng originally.

