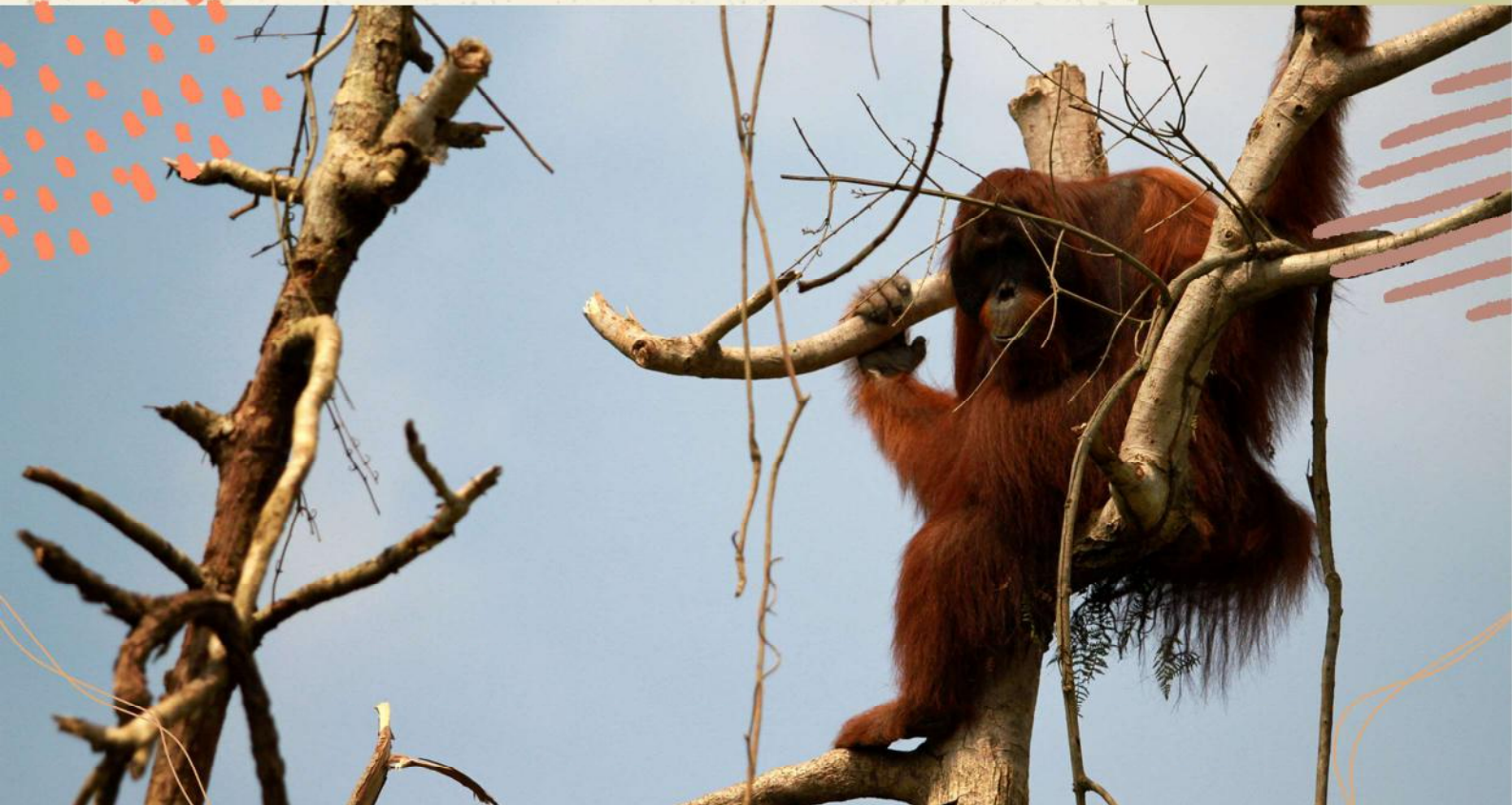




Orangutan Foundation  
International **Canada**

# Palm Oil Awareness Toolkit



ORANGUTAN FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL CANADA

## WHAT IS PALM OIL ?

Palm oil is made from the fruit of the West African Palm (*Elaeis Guineensis*), and is now the world's most widely produced vegetable oil. Palm oil represents 35% of all vegetable oil production.

Native originally to West Africa, this species of palm only grows in tropical rainforest climates. Increasing demand for palm oil has resulted in the transplantation of the plant species to rainforest ecosystems worldwide.



## WHERE IS PALM OIL GROWN?

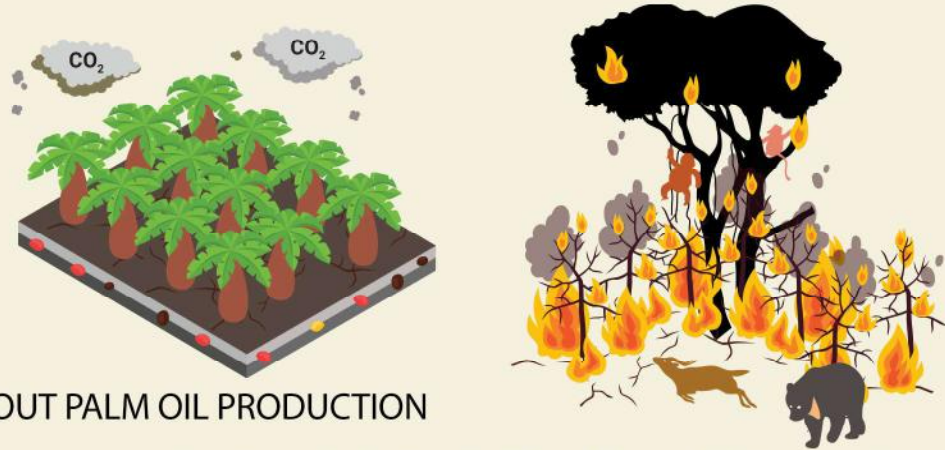




## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH PALM OIL?

Palm oil production devastates rainforest ecosystems. The conversion of rainforest to arable land has effects which go beyond rainforest and endemic species habitat loss. Specifically, carbon gasses are released into the atmosphere through the destruction of peat stored in the ground.

Currently, rainforest destruction in Indonesia accounts for the release of more than 700 million metric tons of carbon gasses from peat stored in soil. Moreover, monocrop culture destroys biodiversity and further expedites habitat loss for critically endangered orangutans and other species in Bornean and Sumatran rainforests. Indonesia and Malaysia represent a smaller land mass area than other equatorial rainforest regions, but this region accounts for 85% of crude palm oil product.

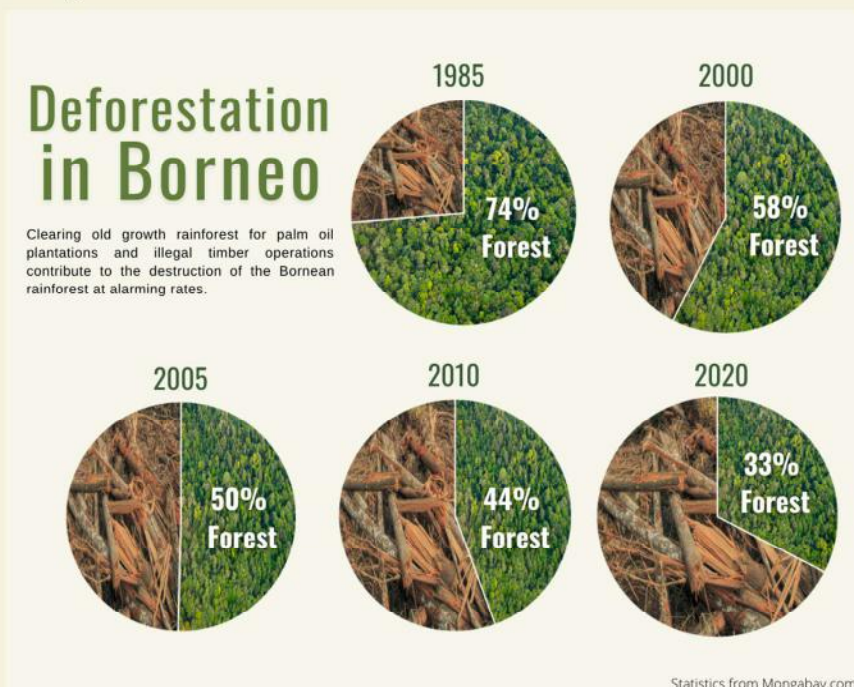


## FACTS ABOUT PALM OIL PRODUCTION

In addition to growing only in tropical climates, the West African Oil Palm grows best on “virgin” land. In agricultural terms, virgin land is land that has not been previously used for agriculture. This particular species of palm also requires large amounts of water and grows best near natural water sources.

The damage that palm oil plantations wreak is long lasting. Pesticides and fertilizers used to sustain the palms kill native plant species and create chemical runoffs which contaminate water sources used by wildlife and native people in the area.

Palm oil production is now considered a major contributor to climate change. Sadly, the production of palm oil has led Indonesia to become the third highest producer of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of this massive deforestation.



## PALM OIL SUPPLY CHAIN

# How Are YOU Connected to Orangutan Decline?



Rain forests are destroyed for palm oil plantations. Palm oil operations are responsible for approximately 1,000 to 5,000 orangutan deaths every year.



Orangutans are found only in the rain forests of Borneo and Sumatra - biodiversity hotspots that act as important carbon sinks.



The palm fruits are crushed and pressed to make Crude Palm Oil (CPO).



Crude palm oil (CPO) is shipped and processed at palm oil refineries.



Palm oil is one of the most consumed vegetable oils in the world. Leading importers are India, China, the E.U., and the U.S.



Crude Palm Oil is refined to a food-grade product



Refined palm oil is converted into biofuel, added to ready-to-eat meals, animal feed, personal care products to name a few.



50% of all processed food and household cleaning products sold in the West contain palm oil.





## EFFECTS ON ORANGUTANS

Rainforest destruction eliminates rainforest habitat for orangutans and other native species. Rapid deforestation displaces orangutans, leaving them without the shelter of the forest canopy and without access to natural food sources. This leaves many orangutans to die of starvation or become victims of human/wildlife conflict. Displaced orangutans often have no choice but to encroach onto palm oil plantations which have replaced their forests. Habitat loss also makes them vulnerable to poachers who sell infant orangutans in the illegal wildlife trade.

In the last ten years populations of wild orangutans have dropped 50%. Orangutans have lost 90% of their natural habitat while palm oil plantation development has doubled. Experts suggest that accelerated land development and forest conversion is responsible for the direct or indirect death of at least 5,000 orangutans annually. The current rate of expansion by the palm oil industry may cause the extinction of orangutan populations.



## EFFECTS ON PEOPLE

Expansion of palm oil plantations has also exacerbated conflict with local indigenous communities over tribal land ownership rights. In Indonesia, indigenous people have often been forcefully evicted from their ancestral land. These forceful evictions disenfranchise entire communities and often leave them without a means of self-support.

## EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The saturated fat content of palm oil is significantly higher than most non-tropical vegetable oils. Foods high in saturated fat content are known to contribute to negative health outcomes, including high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, atherosclerosis, and other medical conditions.

## WHAT PRODUCTS CONTAIN PALM OIL ?

Fifty percent of all consumer products found in supermarkets are known to contain palm oil and are commonly found in the following items:



### Personal Care Items

- Hair Shampoos & Conditioners
- Body Soaps & Lotions
- Cosmetics
- Dental Care Items



### Food including Processed Food

- Cooking Oils
- Margarine
- Snack Foods
- Chocolates & Candies
- Pastries



### Biofuels for motor vehicles, aircraft, and other transport vehicles

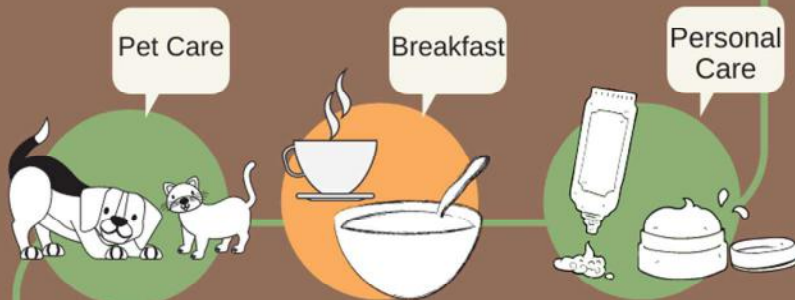


## WHAT YOU CAN DO

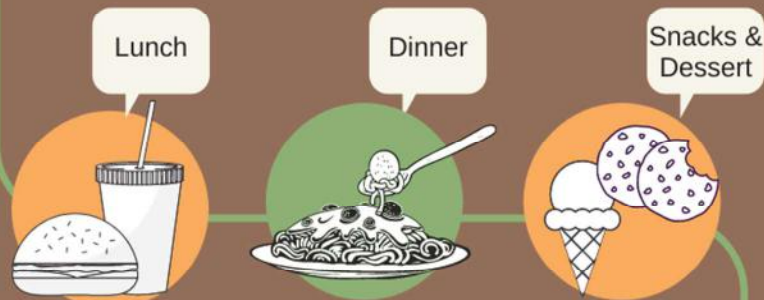
# Palm Oil in Your Everyday Life



Most shampoos, conditioners, soaps, personal and pet care products contain palm oil.



Oatmeal and breakfast cereals, breakfast bars, and donuts often contain palm oil.



Palm oil is found in a whole range of processed foods from sauces, salad dressings, chocolates, breads and ice creams.



Dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, and household cleaning products often contain palm oil.

# Our Position on “Sustainable” Palm Oil and RSPO

Orangutan Foundation International’s position on palm oil is clear – at this time we simply say “no.”

However, some agribusinesses have pushed the concept of “sustainable” or “responsibly grown” palm oil, which aims to supply palm oil in a way that does not contribute to the rapid deforestation of rainforest ecosystems. On this matter, we also ask at this time that you say “no.”

On its face, the concept is not without good intention. Under the initial framework, RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) producers will reduce conversion of rainforest to arable land and place protections to address run-off and soil erosion. But what about the millions of acres of forest already gone? What about the thousands of orangutans vanished from this earth?

Generally speaking, because transition to sustainable practice can directly affect bottom lines, companies are resistant to changing established business practices. Without intervention from authoritative and independent supervising bodies, and without international legislative enforcement and support among member countries it is usually impossible to distinguish the legitimate from the bad actors who evicted local and indigenous people (sometimes forcibly against their will) from their own land while wildlife was either slaughtered or driven out as forest habitat disappeared.

Now some of these industrial companies claim that they are “sustainable” because they no longer cut and clear rain forest. Yes, these companies may now be “responsible” but they are not sustainable. In order to be sustainable, they should make restitution to the local people they harmed (including those who were jailed for opposing land seizures), replant rain forest, and protect endangered wildlife in the most honest and basic ways. In the modern world of today restitution and restoration are acknowledged as valid policies. A few responsible palm oil companies have tried to start on this path but, unfortunately, the profit motive keeps getting in the way.

We know that it is a task of monumental proportions in Borneo to develop truly “sustainable” palm oil plantations. So much forest has been destroyed and wild orangutan populations have plummeted. However, we also know that working together with good will for one another, we can make the difference.





# Orangutan Foundation International **Canada**

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