

About SOS

Sumatran orangutans are critically endangered and without urgent action could be the first Great Ape species to become extinct. SOS is dedicated to turning this situation around. We do this by:

Raising awareness about the importance of protecting orangutans and their rainforest home.

Supporting grassroots projects which empower local people to become guardians of the rainforests and restoring damaged orangutan habitat through tree planting programmes.

Campaigning on issues threatening the survival of orangutans in the wild.

Our projects in Sumatra operate through the Orangutan Information Centre (OIC), an organisation that we helped to establish in 2001 in collaboration with a group of dedicated Indonesian conservationists. Together we support the protection and restoration of the Leuser forests – the last stronghold for the Sumatran orangutan.

2011 update

This year, and indeed the last couple of months in particular, have been a really exciting time for SOS.

Working with local people, we have now planted more than **half a million tree seedlings** to restore degraded forests, including damaged areas of the Gunung Leuser National Park. Part of the park was illegally cut down and turned into an oil palm plantation – we have removed more than 6,000 oil palms, and replaced them with endemic rainforest tree species. Members of the local communities that we work with have formed a group called 'Protectors of Leuser', helping us to safeguard the area from any further destruction.



A wild male orangutan
at the Besitang restoration site



Endangered Sumatran elephants at our restoration site

This work is already showing some fantastic results – in October, a **wild male orangutan** was photographed in our main restoration site, in Besitang. Earlier this month, a **female orangutan** was filmed making use of the new habitat too. We have installed five camera traps at the site, which have shown lots of other species starting to return to the area as well – including endangered Sumatran elephants, pig-tailed macaques, and leopard cats.

The OIC team has also been involved in several **orangutan rescues**. Although we don't run a rescue centre, the strong relationships and trust we build with local communities mean that we often receive reports of orangutans being illegally kept as pets. In August, for example, our Human Orangutan Conflict Response Unit received a report of a young male orangutan being kept in a tiny cage in an oil palm plantation. Our team alerted the authorities and assisted in the rescue operation. The orangutan has now been taken to a rehabilitation and reintroduction centre. Fostering and maintaining links with local communities is crucial; if they had not reported this orangutan to us, he might still be living in that tiny box. Now he has a second chance at a life in the wild.



This orangutan was rescued thanks to a report to our team

This year we also launched our **pedal-powered cinema project**. Environmental film screenings are a regular part of our education and outreach work. As well as increasing awareness about the importance of protecting forests and biodiversity, we have found that films can inspire and motivate people to get involved in local conservation action. The bicycle-powered cinema has screened films to almost 900 people in its first four months on the road, and has been a big hit with the communities we have visited so far. Over the next year we will be travelling all over northern Sumatra.

There has been some exciting campaign news closer to home too. The **Clear Labels, Not Forests campaign** was launched in March, aiming to encourage food manufacturers and retailers to switch to certified sustainable sources of palm oil. The first stage of the campaign resulted in a new EU regulation, making it mandatory for specific vegetable oils, including palm oil, to be labelled on food packaging. This means that **palm oil can no longer be a hidden ingredient**, supporting increased demand for certified sustainable palm oil from Europe, and driving change in the way the industry operates on the ground. More than 3,000 people from 18 countries took part in the campaign actions and wrote to their MEPs about this issue - a fantastic response.

If you would like to find out more about supporting the Sumatran Orangutan Society, please contact Helen Buckland on 01865 403341 or Helen@orangutans-sos.org

www.orangutans-sos.org