

A close-up photograph of an orangutan in a rainforest. The orangutan is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. It is holding a piece of green fruit in its mouth. The background is a dark, rainy forest with large green leaves. The overall mood is serene and natural.

# Annual Report 2020



save the  
orangutan

## The pandemic has made our work increasingly important

There is no doubt that 2020 was an unusual year. When the corona pandemic hit, we at Save the Orangutan had to move from physical arrangements to digital initiatives and adapt our activities in Borneo. Together with our local partners, we quickly launched new efforts to protect employees, orangutans, and the local communities in our work areas against COVID-19. Immediate safeguarding actions were also taken at the rehabilitation centres and in the field.

At the same time, the pandemic emphasised the importance of our work. Deforestation in Borneo is a disaster for biodiversity, the climate, and the local communities. Destruction of nature forces wild animals closer to humans, increasing the risk of new pandemics. The corona pandemic has given us a clear signal that nature conservation is important not only for biodiversity and the climate, but also for our own health. The greatest crises of our time must therefore be seen in a wider context if we are to solve them.

The corona crisis had a significant impact on our work, as orangutans are likely to be at risk of contracting the new corona virus. There is cause for concern, as it in the worst case could mean the end for the already critically endangered orangutans, if the disease would spread to wild populations.

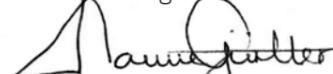
Therefore, we launched new initiatives in the spring to protect both wild orangutans and the orangutans at the rehabilitation centres, as well as local communities, including vulnerable indigenous peoples in Borneo. The results of the efforts have been successful as there has so far not been any registered cases among the orangutans at the centres or in the wild populations. The number of people infected decreased in the local communities and the worst impacts of the pandemic were mitigated.

Although 2020 turned out differently than expected, it was still a hectic year for us with new initiatives with positive outcomes. In 2020, a total of DKK 11.5 million was transferred to projects in Borneo. The funds have, among other things, been used for rehabilitation of orphaned orangutans at Nyaru Menteng, and different rainforest protection and restoration projects in close cooperation with the local communities.

In 2020, we initiated several new projects, focusing on making the rainforest climate resilient, increasing patrolling in forest areas to protect them against forest fires and illegal activities, as well as creating sustainable sources of income for the local communities. In addition to helping the local communities recover from the corona crisis, the efforts will prevent wild orangutans and many other species from losing their habitat.

All the achievements in 2020 would not have been possible without the invaluable support we receive from individuals, businesses, foundations, and institutional donors. It is this support that makes it possible to continue the important work for the orangutans, the tropical rainforest, and indigenous peoples in Borneo.

Kind regards,



Hanne Gürtler  
Executive Director



## Climate crisis, biodiversity crisis and pandemics: The three crises are intertwined

In 2020, the need for nature conservation became a major topic. We are currently in a time when destruction of nature is exacerbating three major coherent crises: the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis as well as the risk of new pandemics.

Borneo's rainforest is an important example of the connection between these crises. Borneo is a hotspot for biodiversity with large areas of carbon-rich peatland forests. This carbon is released as CO<sub>2</sub> when the forest is cleared and the peat is drained.

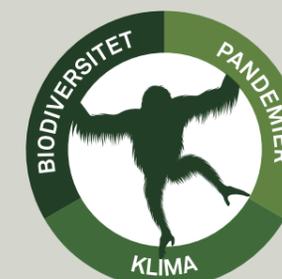
### Information about deforestation in Borneo

For our awareness raising efforts in 2020, we have focused on the consequences of deforestation in Borneo and the link between the climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity. We have shared information about this topic across our channels, through debate articles and by attending the Danish annual Nature meeting. Our awareness raising have included information about our projects in Borneo and how they contribute to long-term rainforest conservation for the benefit of biodiversity, the climate, and the local communities.

This also applies to new projects, focusing on the connection between the state of nature and human health. The efforts include teaching school children, developing "one health" plans in the communities, and providing information to the local communities and local authorities in Borneo.

### Climate resilient rainforests

The protection of the carbon-rich peatland forest is of great importance for both orangutans, people and for the climate. It is the essence of several of our projects in Borneo. In 2020, we started new projects with support from the Danish Civil Society Fund (CISU), that specifically focuses on increasing local forest communities' resilience to climate change and mitigating the consequences of climate change. Together with BOS Foundation, Yayasan Borneo Nature Indonesia and several local communities, large areas of peatland forests are being fireproofed and replanted.



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**About 80% of the world terrestrial species live in tropical forests – including the orangutan.**

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**Only in the last four decades, up to 80% of the orangutans' habitat has disappeared.**

•  
**Up to 20% of Co<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by humans are due to deforestation.**

•  
**Especially tropical peatland forests function as carbon sinks.**

•

## Efforts to protect orangutans and local communities against COVID-19

When the pandemic hit, the protection of the orangutans against COVID-19 was prioritised, as the new coronavirus poses a significant threat to them. Swiftly, Save the Orangutan initiated several efforts in Borneo to prevent and limit the spread of the virus in our work areas.

Through the support from individuals and foundations, Save the Orangutan was able to transfer more than DKK 800.000 to our local partners for various COVID-19 efforts in Borneo in 2020.

### Emergency preparedness at the rehabilitation centres

As soon as the pandemic hit Indonesia, the rehabilitation centres were closed to visitors and increased safety procedures were introduced as well as regular tests to reduce the risk of infection. Orangutan releases were put on hold in 2020, as were the relocations of orangutans to the pre-release islands that make up the last phase of the rehabilitation process. The rehabilitation efforts could, however, continue with restrictions.

In March, Save the Orangutan launched an emergency appeal to provide adequate protection and disinfectants for the centres' veterinarians and caretakers at a time when the prices for protection and medicine was exploding. More than DKK 120.000 was raised.

### Corona not to enter the centres

To be able to protect the orangutans and staff at the rehabilitation centres in the best way possible, it is extremely important that staff do not bring the virus with them to the centres.

Therefore, Save the Orangutan launched a major effort, with the support from the QATO Foundation and others, to mitigate the spread of the virus in the communities around the Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Centre. Information about infection risk,

access to tests and distribution of protective equipment and disinfection agents resulted in a notable decline in cases, and no infections among orangutans while the project was running. As the infection rates in Indonesia increased further at the end of 2020, efforts were again increased.

### Initiatives near wild orangutans

COVID-19 also poses a risk to wild orangutans. Many indigenous people, who are considered particularly vulnerable in the corona crisis, also live close to the rainforest.

Therefore, Save the Orangutan, together with BOS Foundation and Yayasan Borneo Nature Indonesia, initiated COVID-19 efforts in the areas where we work with nature conservation to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic. The effort is supported by the Danish Civil Society Fund (CISU), the Swedish Postcode Foundation and individual contributors. These efforts have also been successful. There have not been any signs of infection among wild orangutans, the cases in the communities were reduced and the worst consequences of the pandemic was mitigated.

### The long-term consequences of the crisis

Unfortunately, disease is not the only consequence of the pandemic. During lockdown in the spring of 2020, deforestation rates increased in Indonesia. The crisis has also led to food shortages and exacerbated poverty in parts of the country.

That is why we have initiated several new projects to mitigate the consequences of the economic recession, creating new sustainable sources of income for the communities such as kitchen gardens and fish ponds in the Mawas area. Meanwhile, the problems concerning increased deforestation is being dealt with through additional patrolling and by educating the local communities. This is done with the support of CISU in the areas of Mawas, Sebangau and Rungan, a common area home to more than 11,000 orangutans.



## #ORANGUTANFREEDOM

468 ORANGUTANS RELEASED BETWEEN 2012-2020

6 RELEASED IN 2020

ORANGUTANS AT NYARU MENTENG  
295 in rehabilitation  
6 new arrivals in 2020

ORANGUTANS AT SAMBOJA LESTARI  
122 in rehabilitation  
2 new arrivals in 2020

WILD-BORN BABIES:  
3



## COVID-19 and the critically endangered orangutan

There is extensive scientific evidence that orangutans and other great apes are vulnerable to the same virus and bacteria that cause respiratory illness and disease in humans. SARS-CoV-2, the new coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19 in humans, can by the same token pose a threat to orangutans. There are currently no documented cases of the disease in orangutans.



# Record number of projects to protect and replant the rainforest

One of the biggest threats to the orangutans is habitat loss. Deforestation is also a major threat to climate, biodiversity, and indigenous peoples. Therefore, Save the Orangutan works together with our partners and the local communities in Borneo to protect and restore the rainforest.

In 2020, we have focused largely on developing new forest conservation projects in Borneo. This means, that we have initiated projects in new areas, and that our efforts cover an increasing number of local community groups.

## Forest conservation on the ground and from above

In 2020, we enhanced our efforts to prevent forest fires and illegal activities in the forests. We expanded our areas of work to include Sebangau National Park in Central Kalimantan, which is home to more than 6,000 wild orangutans. Here, we work together with Yayasan Borneo Nature Indonesia (BNF), with the support from the Danish Civil Society Fund (CISU). Together with BOS Foundation, we also launched a collaboration in Mawas with DHI GRAS, who are experts in satellite data. The aim is to more efficiently use satellite data to monitor the forest and assess where the resources of the fire patrols are best used.

## Conflict mitigation near national park

Save the Orangutan works with BOS Foundation to mitigate conflicts between orangutans and people in the Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR). This resulted, among other things, in a training of 203 local community members in 2020. With the support from CISU, we also work to mitigate conflicts between the local communities' and the national park, so that people and orangutans can coexist in the forest. This has included efforts such

as capacity building for our local partner in the area, as well as a mapping of the local communities' traditional use of the forest, so that orangutans will not be released near these areas in the future.

## Support for collecting new knowledge

Save the Orangutan is collaborating with research institutions to gain new knowledge that can improve the work for the orangutans. In 2020, we initiated a new collaboration with the University of Copenhagen to develop an App to be used for collecting data from the local forest monitoring and fire-fighting patrols. In collaboration with BNF we are working to establish a research station in the Rungan area in Borneo, where biodiversity in the area will be studied. In 2020, we also continued our support to the Tuanan Research Station in Mawas, where the behaviour of wild orangutans is studied. Among other things, we contributed to the establishment of a boardwalk, to facilitate observations deep in the rainforest.

## The fight for the rights of indigenous peoples

In 2020, there was great progress in the work to strengthen the capacity of indigenous peoples to acquire the rights to their forest areas, which is often one of the most effective ways to protect and conserve forests. We are now working together with BOS Foundation to support 21 local communities in Borneo with this process - a significant increase in 2020. Meanwhile, we work with a total of 33 local communities to generate better living conditions for the locals. It is also a priority for us to spread awareness of indigenous peoples, including the unique culture of the Dayak Wehea tribe and their relationship to nature. In 2020, this resulted, among other things, in a video about the tribe which was supported by the Danish Agency for Culture.



### Areas where we support forest protection and conservation work:

Mawas Peatland Forest  
- **2500** wild orangutans

Rungan Area  
- **3000** wild orangutans

Sebangau Peatland Forest  
- **6000** wild orangutans

The Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park (TNBBBR)  
- **167** released orangutans

Kehje Sewen Forest  
- **121** released orangutans

Bukit Batikap National Park  
- **190** released orangutans

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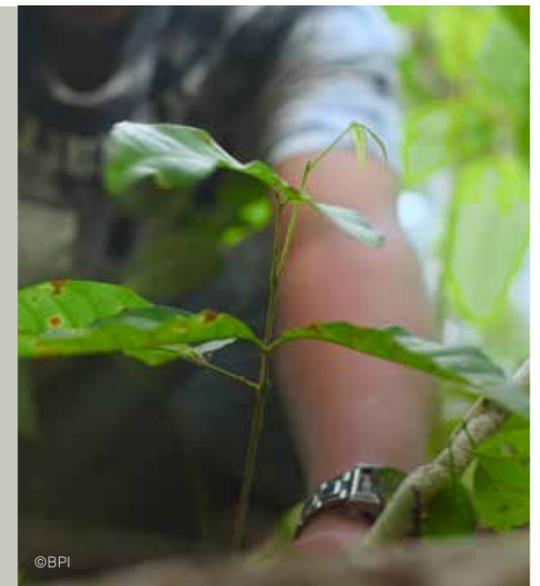


## Eco-restoration

Save the Orangutan works closely together with BOS Foundation to restore degraded peatland forest areas of Mawas.

### The results for 2020 were:

- 37,778 trees, equivalent to 34 hectares, replanted.
- 78,570 seedlings produced.
- 21 wells established and 9 drainage channels blocked to protect the new areas from forest fires.
- 186 locals were involved in the work, which is a notable increase that was made possible through the support from CISU.



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## Distribution of funds in 2020

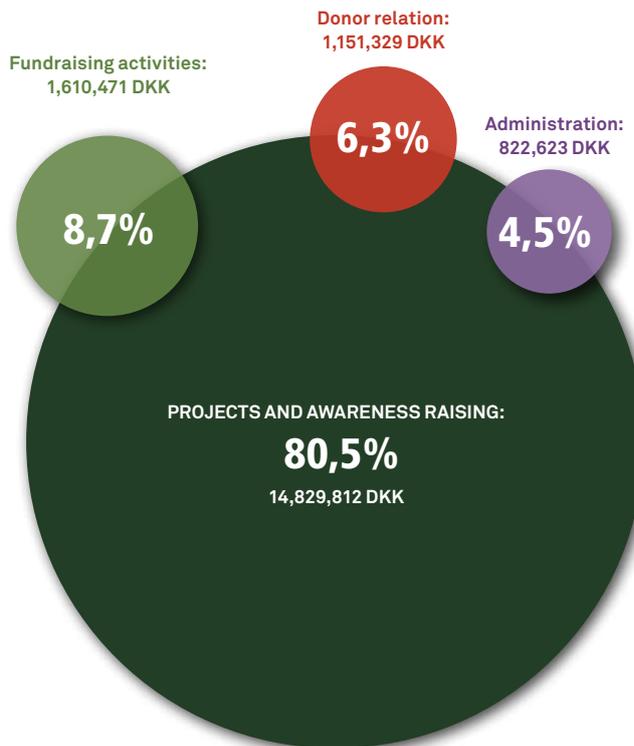
### Funds raised

Save the Orangutan raised DKK 18.3 million in 2020 from private donors, businesses, foundations, and institutional donors, of which DKK 16.7 million were raised in Denmark, DKK 1.5 million in Sweden and DKK 0.2 million in England and Wales.

### Distribution of funds

In 2020, Save the Orangutan distributed DKK 14.8 million to purposeful activities, corresponding to 81% of funds raised. DKK 11.5 million were transferred to our partners in Borneo.

Save the Orangutan spent a total of DKK 3.6 million, corresponding to 19.5 % of funds raised, on donor relation, administration, and fund-raising activities in 2020. The administrative expenses were 4.5% in 2020. The total equity was decreased by DKK 88 thousand in 2020.



## Thanks to

### Cooperative partners



### Donations

- QATO Fonden
- Brødrene Hartmanns fond
- Kulturministeriets pulje til almennyttige projekter
- Fru Ellen Bremerdals fond til hjælp for hjemløse katte og andre vildtlevende dyr
- Sam og Mia Jarris Legat

With special thanks to the many companies and thousands of individuals who support our work.



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