



Jaya your Sumatran orang-utan...

Quick Facts...

- **The Sumatran orang-tan is the most endangered of the 6 great ape family**
- **It is thought that this species could be extinct within 5 years, if circumstances do not change**
- **Sumatran orang-utans can only be found wild in Sumatra**
- **Orang-utans sleep in nests high in the canopy forest, and build a new one every night!**

Jaya...

Jaya made the headlines by being born by an emergency caesarean section on Thursday 13th May 2004. He weighed in at a healthy 1.86kg, and was given the name Jaya, which means famous or important person in the local dialect of Sumatara.

Head of Mammals Richard Johnstone-Scott became worried about Gina, Jaya's mother and alerted Durrell's own vet Javier Lopez who in turn called upon Dr Neil MacLachlan, Consultant Gynaecologist and Obstetrician at Jersey's General Hospital. When Dr MacLachlan arrived on the scene he advised that Gina be darted and examined immediately.

After being sedated, Gina was taken to the Zoo's Veterinary Centre where she was scanned, and found to be in labour but with a dangerous complication where the placenta was blocking the birth canal. She was losing amniotic fluid rapidly, and without an emergency caesarean, it was likely that both mother and baby would die. A full surgical team was soon on hand, including the hospital's consultant anaesthetist Gary Purcell-Jones, Durrell Wildlife's vet Javier Lopez, veterinary nurse Sarah Hole, a scrub nurse and assistants, and the caesarean section was performed at around mid-day by Dr MacLachlan.

It is only the second time that a caesarean section has been performed on a great ape at the Trust, the last time being in 1990 on a gorilla, and the procedure is very rare worldwide. This is Gina's sixth baby, and all her previous offspring have been born naturally following problem-free labours. Jaya spent his first night in an incubator, receiving regular feeds throughout the night from Durrell Wildlife's Steve Pilcher, who has looked after Gina for the past four years.

Newborn Sumatran orangutan Jaya was then successfully reunited with his mother, Gina. Ape staff at Durrell Wildlife had been monitoring 40-year-old Gina's recovery closely, following the operation they judged that she had recovered sufficiently to attempt a reunion with three-day-old Jaya.

Head of Mammals Richard Johnstone-Scott's confidence that Gina would accept her

In the wild ...

As their name implies, Sumatran orangutans are found only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Their range is extremely restricted to a small area of fragmented forest on the northern tip of the island. They live in the lowland and hilly tropical rainforests including peat-swamp forests. Orangutans are arboreal creatures; they feed, rest, play and sleep up in the tall trees. They build nests to sleep in – a new one every night – by folding down branches to make a platform, sometimes with extra vegetation added to make it more comfortable. They also build nests during the day, for a 'siesta' before the business of searching for food is resumed. These apes are the largest arboreal animals and are very well adapted for moving through the trees. They are immensely strong and have large hands and feet with a powerful grip. Travel through the forest is slow, maybe just a few hundred metres a day, but orangutans have an uncanny ability to locate fruiting trees. They have detailed knowledge of the forest and their diet varies according to what is in season. Over 400 different plant species have been recorded in their diet, their favourite being fruits. They also consume leaves, buds, stems, bark, insects and they have even been recorded raiding nests to get at the eggs, small mammals and birds. Their teeth and jaws are large and powerful for tearing open and grinding up coarse foods like spiny fruit casing, hard nuts and tree bark. Orangutans are highly intelligent and adept at problem solving. They make simple tools to help them get things that are otherwise out of reach, such as sticks to probe ant and termite nests to eat the insects.

Like many of the species at Durrell there are many factors that still threaten the existence of this critically endangered species. The Sumatran orangutan is the most threatened of the great ape species. It is the world's largest tree-dwelling animal and is superbly adapted for living in trees. Sadly though, if the uncontrolled destruction of their forest habitat continues, very soon there will be none of these shy and secretive apes left in the wild. Their forest home is being felled at an astounding rate, to accommodate and feed a growing human population and to provide hardwood and plywood for developed nations. The pet trade has resulted in the death of up to 30,000 orangutans! Mothers are killed for their babies and often, infant orangutans are too young or too shocked to survive without their mothers. For every infant that ends up in captivity there is a loss of about 50 from the wild population! They are supposed to be legally protected from hunting throughout their range, but these regulations are impossible to enforce.

In the future ...

The outlook for Sumatran orangutans is extremely bleak, and the devastating forest fires of 1997-8 made a desperate situation even worse. As with every environmental problem, here is no easy answer. The only certainty is that if the Sumatran forest continues to be cut down at its current rate, this 'Jungle VIP' could RIP within 5 years.

Please remember that by adopting Jaya you are contributing to his care and enabling us to learn more about his wild cousins...