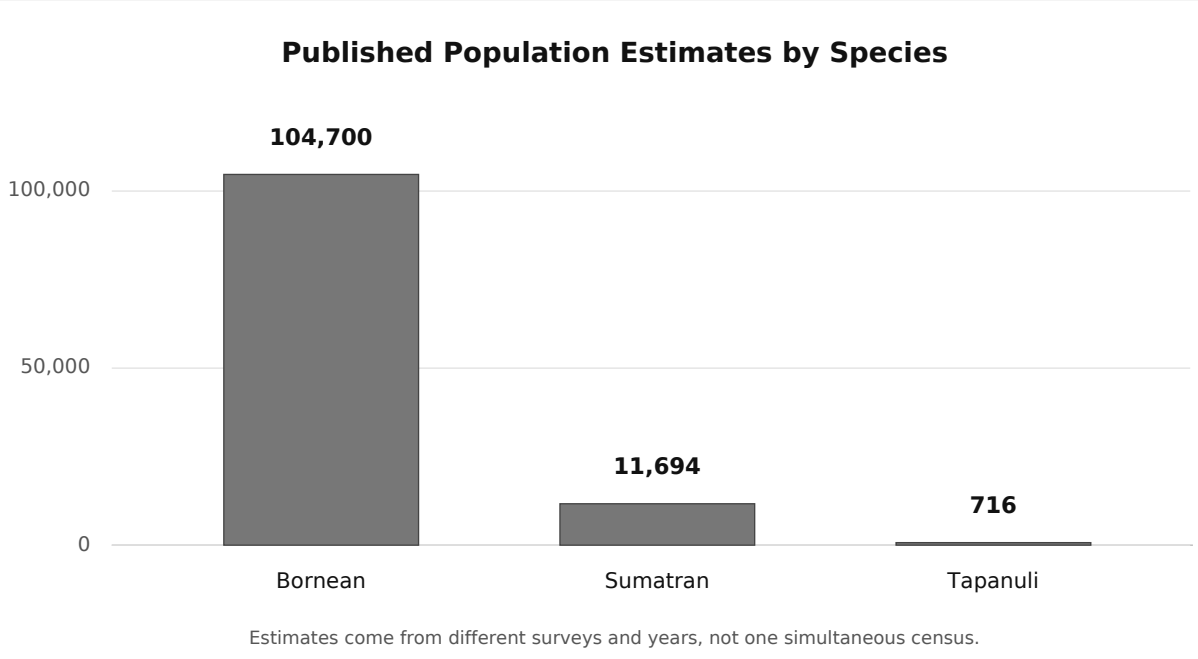
ORANGUTAN SPECIES

Meet the Bornean, Sumatran and Tapanuli Orangutans

This guide introduces the three living orangutan species, how they differ in appearance and where they live. All three are Critically Endangered.

HOW MANY ORANGUTANS ARE LEFT?

Published estimates put wild populations at about 104,700 Bornean, 11,694 Sumatran and 716 Tapanuli orangutans. These estimates come from different surveys and years.



Species comparison

Bornean orangutan	Generally stockier, broader-faced and darker-haired. Lives on Borneo.
Sumatran orangutan	Generally slimmer, with longer, often paler hair. Lives in northern Sumatra.
Tapanuli orangutan	Often frizzier-haired, with distinctive male facial features. Restricted to Batang Toru.

SPECIES PROFILE

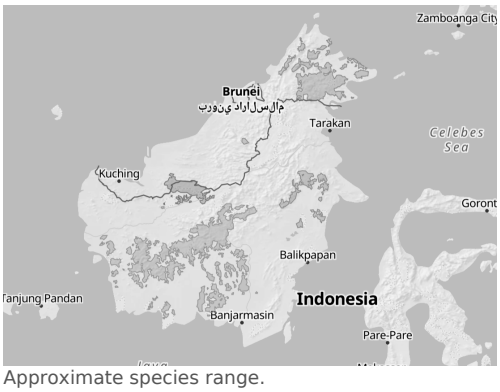
Bornean Orangutan

Pongo pygmaeus



Bornean orangutans occupy forest across parts of Borneo. They are generally stockier and mature flanged males often develop broad, rounded cheek pads.

The 2016 IUCN assessment estimated about 104,700 Bornean orangutans. This is a historical estimate rather than a current census.



Approximate species range.

SPECIES PROFILE

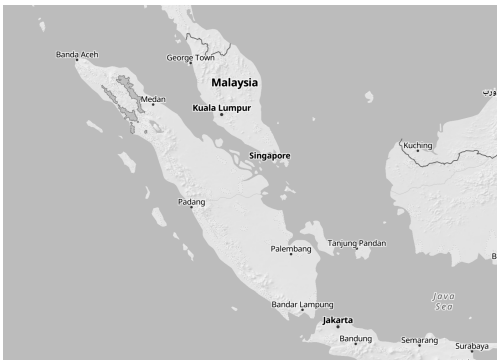
Sumatran Orangutan

Pongo abelii



Sumatran orangutans survive mainly in northern Sumatra, particularly the Leuser Ecosystem. They are generally slimmer, with longer, often paler hair and narrower male cheek pads.

A 2021 to 2023 range-wide survey estimated about 11,694 individuals. They remain threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation.



Approximate species range.

SPECIES PROFILE

Tapanuli Orangutan

Pongo tapanuliensis



Tapanuli orangutans survive only in the Batang Toru landscape of North Sumatra. Mature males may have flatter cheek pads, prominent moustaches and beards.

The 2021 to 2023 survey estimated 716 individuals (95% confidence interval: 645 to 792). Such a small population has little buffer against additional mortality.



Approximate species range.

BORNEAN ORANGUTAN

The three Bornean subspecies

Three geographically distinct subspecies occur across Borneo.

Pongo pygmaeus pygmaeus	Northwest Bornean orangutan. Found in Sarawak and northern West Kalimantan, including lowland and hill forests.
Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii	Central Bornean orangutan. Found in southern West Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan. Tanjung Puting and Camp Leakey lie within this subspecies' range.
Pongo pygmaeus morio	Northeast Bornean orangutan. Found in East Kalimantan, North Kalimantan and Sabah.

These geographic distinctions matter because habitat loss and fragmentation affect the subspecies in different landscapes.

Sources and further reading

OCI Bornean Orangutan | OCI Sumatran Orangutan | OCI Tapanuli Orangutan

IUCN Red List | Nater et al. 2017