

WELCOME

The rainforest of Gunung Leuser National Park and the area where you will trek is home to the last remaining population of Sumatran orangutan. It is also home to extremely high levels of biodiversity and unique species that you can not see anywhere else in the world.

To help safeguard the future of the forest and its wildlife it is really important for you to understand the impact your presence can have and how you can help to minimise that impact.

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet.



Orangutan behaviour

Wild orangutans spend most of their time high in the forest canopy. They do not come to the ground very often and rarely come into contact with humans. BUT...the ex-captive orangutans in Bukit Lawang frequently walk on the ground and come into close contact with humans. This behaviour is not normal.

Their behavior and the behavior of human visitors is making them sick.

Why can orangutans get sick after contact with humans?

Orangutans are genetically very close to humans (97%) and can catch many of our diseases.



POOP

Shigella, Hepatitis A
Herpes, Scabies,
Worms.

The polio virus can survive for many months in soil.

COUGH / SNEEZE / SPIT

T.B. Pneumonia
Influenza, COVID

The measles virus can be carried great distances in open air.



What may be a simple cold or cough for us could be very dangerous for orangutans and there is a chance that humans could be affected by diseases that orangutans may carry.

What can be the effect of too much human contact?

Orangutans may look like they are OK around humans but their natural behaviours are disturbed. Any prolonged change to natural behaviours can cause very high levels of stress to their bodies.



STRESS can lead to serious health issues such as: heart failure, poor reproductive health, high infant mortality, depressed immune system (making it easier to get sick)

....and ultimately may result in premature death!

Rules for trekking, wildlife viewing and safety information.

These rules apply to ALL orangutans and wildlife (e.g. macaques, Thomas, leaf monkeys, siamang, gibbons, great argus pheasant etc) but specifics are given for orangutans.

RULE 1: The recommended maximum number of visitors per group is 7. This controls the risk of human impact and optimises your viewing experience

RULE 2: Visitors who are sick should not go trekking. Please report any sickness to your guide and your visit can be rescheduled. Your guide can refuse a visit to anyone showing obvious signs of illness. If you have a cough/cold you should wear a face mask.

RULE 3: Healthy visitors should not be closer than 10 metres from orangutans. Visitors who have a cough/cold should not be closer than 20 metres.

RULE 4: When you are close to orangutans you should behave properly:

- You should be at least 10 metres away from orangutans.
- Do not call the orangutans.
- Do not feed the orangutans or give them drinks.
- Do not smoke, eat, drink, cough, sneeze or spit.
- Always stay in a close group and never lose contact with your guide.
- You should sit when watching the orangutans.
- Be as silent as possible and use good body language (no shouting, no sudden movements, no making monkey sounds etc)
- Do not clear vegetation to get a better view.
- Do not stare at the orangutans or use binoculars/cameras/videos if they are disturbed. (kiss-squeak vocalisations and dropping branches are signs of stress and anger)
- Do not use flash photography. It will not be effective anyway.

IT IS STRONGLY FORBIDDEN TO HARM ORANGUTANS OR ANY OTHER WILDLIFE.

Including indirect harm: getting close, touching or feeding them.

Do not approach orangutans.

NEVER come between a mother and her baby.

- If an orangutan comes close and you can not move away calmly do not touch them.
- Do not stop to take photographs.
- Keep calm, try and sit down, do not make eye contact.
- If they take your bag DO NOT attempt to retrieve it. Your guide may be able to get it back later. You should only bring essentials to the forest.
- Your health and your safety is more important than your bag or a selfie!

RULE 5: Safe photography:

- Do not get closer than 10 metres.
- Do not use a selfie stick in an intrusive manner.
- If an orangutan or other wildlife approaches you or you have to go past them, please do not stop to take photos or ask your friends or guide to do so. Taking photos prolongs the encounter and delays appropriate action.
- Do not use flash photography.

RULE 6: When you are in the rainforest behave properly at all times:

- Follow these rules and the instructions of your guide.
- It is forbidden to enter the rainforest without a guide or a national park permit.
- Do not pressure your guide to get closer to animals or give them food so you can take photographs.
- If you feel a guide has behaved inappropriately inform the national park office or your guest house.
- **Do not leave any litter in the forest** or at campsites e.g. tissues, water bottles, cigarette ends, food scraps. Litter must be carried outside of the forest then disposed of. This includes fruit skins which may carry your germs.
- If you must defecate you should dig a hole at least 2 feet deep. You can borrow a parang/machete from your guide. All faecal material and tissue must be buried.
- Do not disturb or collect anything from the forest such as flowers, insects, seeds etc

Additional information

Examples of human visitor impact in Bukit Lawang

Feeding primates can change their normal behavior and can lead to competition for food and make them more aggressive in their groups and to visitors (Molyneux et al 2021).

Feeding the Great Argus pheasant can change its diet and territoriality and thus potentially impact its breeding patterns.

Examples of possible human impact in other locations

- Borneo: High orangutan infant mortality rate in rehabilitation centre (Kuze et al 2012).
- Thailand : Gibbons infected with human herpes virus. (Sakulwira et al 2002, Landolfi et al 2005)
- Africa: Chimpanzees die from human flu like virus. (Hanamura et al 2008, Scully et al 2018), Polio (Goodall 1986).

Example of inappropriate diet and health impact

Captive gorillas have high rates of heart disease. This has been linked to a change in gut bacteria possibly caused by their diet. (Krynak et al 2017)

It is logical to suggest that orangutans who are fed fruit (which is not part of their natural diet) may also have change in gut bacteria and potential health impacts. Great ape nutrition and health is a current area of research. (Less et al 2014, Murphy et al 2018)

How you can help #KEEPWILDLIFEWILD

This is easy...simply follow the rules.

Tell your guide you have read the rules and wish to follow them. You can also tell your friends and fellow trekkers. If you see anyone breaking the rules please inform your guide and report to the National Park office.

Use #selfieaware & #keepwildlifewild

Nature needs your photos and stories but also needs you to be responsible. Please only take and post photos on social media which show you at a safe distance from **ALL orangutans** and wildlife.

Practise "Safe photography" (see RULE 5).



Make sure you have an entry permit.



In order to go trekking in the National Park you must have a permit.

You can buy the permit at the National Park office (region V) in Bukit Lawang.

The law

UU no.5 Tahun 1990 regarding Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Ecosystem.

Article 21 paragraph 2 letter a)

Anyone is prohibited to catch, injure, kill, keep, possess, care for, transport, and trade-in protected animals in a live condition.

Giving food to orangutans and getting too close for exploitation purposes (photos / touching) can impact their health and comes under the definition of "injure/hurt" and is therefore illegal.

Anyone who violates the provisions of article 21 may face up to 5 years in prison and be fined 100,000,000 IDR.

The rules apply to **ALL** wildlife and by following them you will...

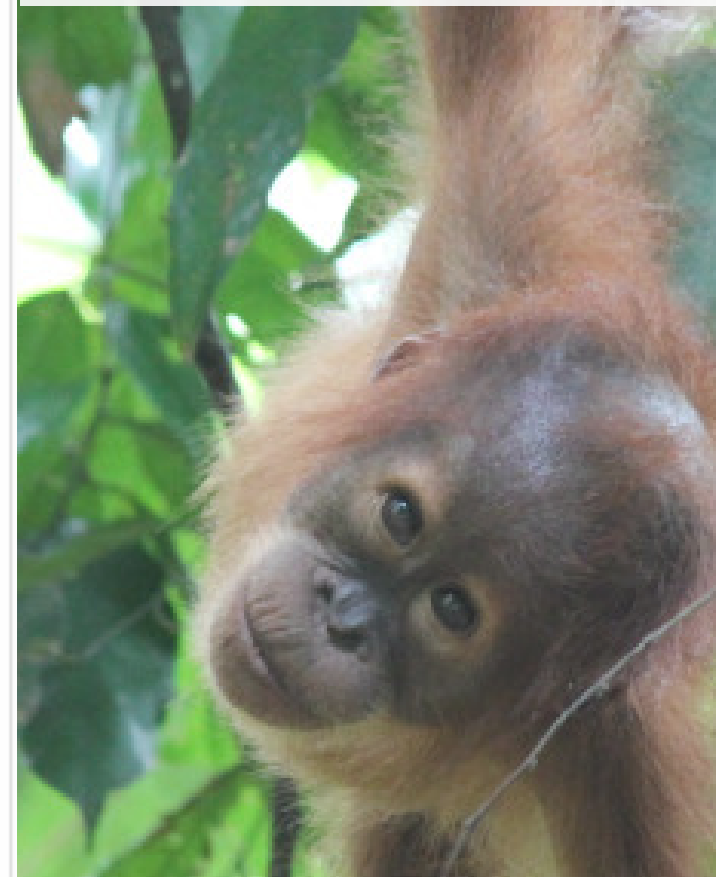
- Have a safe and natural experience.
- Minimise disturbance to the forest and **ALL** wildlife
- Help stop orangutans getting sick.
- Preserve the forest for future generations.



THANK YOU



<http://gunungleuser.or.id>



Wildlife viewing and safety information

for visitors to
Gunung Leuser National Park

