

VKM assessment:

Non-detriment finding for Bornean orangutang (*Pogo pygmaeus*)

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Scientific name: *Pongo pygmaeus* (Linnaeus, 1760)

Common name: Bornean orangutan

Norwegian name: Borneo orangutang

Type of permit: CITES Appendix I (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list A)

Country of export: Norway

Country of import: France

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the export of one live male Bornean orangutan from Kristiansand Dyrepark AS to Zoo du Bassin d'Arcachon in France, purpose code Z. The orangutang and both parents are bred in captivity, source code C.

Appendix I species bred in captivity are traded as if they were Appendix II species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list B) with the requirement to establish that exports are not detrimental to the survival of wild populations, in compliance with CITES Article IV.

VKM has adopted the **definition of detriment**, jf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority (<https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/archive/workshop-american-ginseng-cites-non-detriment-findings.pdf>), which defines it as:

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harm the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

Conclusion:

VKM concludes that the export of one live Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) bred in captivity, is **not detrimental** to the survival of the species.

The conclusion is based on the following argument:

- The orangutan and both his parents are bred in captivity and the import will not have any harmful effect on the conservation status of the species.

1. Biological Information

Distribution

The Bornean orangutan is endemic to the island of Borneo, with a patchy distribution throughout the island (Ancrenaz et al., 2016). The species generally inhabit lowland forests below 500 masl. Distribution is restricted by large rivers that are impassable to orangutangs (Ancrenaz et al., 2016).

Life history

Orangutangs live a mostly semi-solitary life, with males being the dispersing sex, leaving to establish a territory when they reach sexual maturity at 10-12 years old. Females have smaller territories than males. The species is a slow breeder, producing one offspring every 6 to 8 years. Females reach maturity at 10-15 years old (Ancrenaz et al., 2016 and references therein).

Role in the ecosystem

Orangutangs are frugivores, functioning as seed predators and seed dispersers in their ecosystem (Blackburn et al., 2021).

2. Population status and trend

The total number of Bornean orangutans is not known. According to the IUCN assessment, the most recent estimate for the species is 55,000 (Wich et al., 2008 cited in Ancrenaz et al., 2016). Using modelling and the latest available field data for Borneo resulted in an estimate of 104,700 individuals, representing a decline from the 1973-estimate of 288,500 individuals (Wich et al., 2012 cited in Ancrenaz et al., 2016).

3. Conservation status

Critically Endangered (IUCN assessment, Ancrenaz et al., 2016).

4. Threats/causes of extinction

The Bornean orangutangs are threatened by habitat loss, degradation, and hunting (Ancrenaz et al., 2016). Between 1973 and 2010, 39% of the Bornean forests were lost. It has further been estimated that as much as 37% of orangutang habitat will be lost between 2010 and 2025, thus the total loss between 1973 and 2025 is estimated at 61.5% (Ancrenaz et al., 2016 and references therein).

5. Conservation and management measures

International legislation

P. pygmaeus has been listed in CITES Appendix I since 1975 and under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations Annex A since 1997.

Conservation measures

While the species itself is fully protected in both Malaysia and Indonesia, most of its habitat is not (Wich et al., 2021; Ancrenaz et al., 2016).

6. Trade/use

Legal

As the species is listed in CITES Appendix I, there is no legal international trade. Most of the records in the CITES trade database are of captive individuals being imported/exported from/to zoological parks (purpose code Z). There are also some transactions of scientific samples, originating from captive bred and wild individuals (Trade.cites.org).

Illegal

Several thousand individuals of *P. pygmaeus* are illegally killed every year, mainly for meat consumption but also as a way to mitigate conflict (Davis et al., 2013). These killings are a major cause of decline (Ancrenaz et al., 2016).

References

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Blackburn, A., Susanto, T. W., & Knott, C. D. (2021). Bornean orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*) patterns of frugivory and the relation to seed dispersal and seed predation. *American journal of physical anthropology* 174 (71s).

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