

Make a Difference for Wild Orangutans

When you talk about Palm Oil...

Whether you are an animal keeper interpreting during an orangutan demonstration, a concerned consumer using your shopping guide app at the grocery store, or a conservationist chatting with your friends and family, a lot of us struggle to convey a brief, concise message about palm oil awareness. If the issue sounds too complicated, or the message dwells on “doom and gloom”, or you exceed their attention span, the audience often tunes out and walks away. Here are some ways you can summarize the issue, and if people want to know more you have opened the door for them to ask questions.

‘Elevator Speech’ Ideas

Version One:

The biggest threat to wild orangutans is deforestation due to agriculture. The main crop that is planted after the forest is cleared is palm oil. Palm oil is used in so many foods we eat and products we use every day, like cookies, crackers, toothpaste and lotion. Palm oil is a crop that is really important to the economy and people in Indonesia and Malaysia, but it can be produced in a responsible way without cutting down the rainforest –this is called sustainable palm oil. The easiest thing you can do to help wild orangutans is to support the companies in this shopping app –they are making the commitment to use sustainable palm oil. (~38 seconds)

Version Two:

I am about to tell you a really easy way you can help wild orangutans...do you want to know what it is? Use this shopping guide app next time you go to the store. The biggest threat to wild orangutans is deforestation due to agriculture, but you can make a big difference depending on what you buy at the store. So many things we use and eat contain palm oil but this crop can be grown without cutting down the rainforest...when it is produced responsibly it is called sustainable palm oil. By using this shopping guide app you are supporting sustainable palm oil and helping many species that live in the rainforests of Indonesia and Malaysia -like orangutans! (~37 seconds)

Points you can add:

- If your favorite companies or brands are not listed on the shopping guide app –write them an email and ask them to join the RSPO, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil.
- Here are a few examples of what makes a plantation sustainable. A sustainable plantation does not use HCV (high conservation value) land or forests. It also can't harm endangered animals that wander onto the property, they have to use pesticides more responsibly, and their workers get better treatment.
- The companies in this shopping guide app have made commitments to use 100% certified sustainable palm oil by a certain date, but they're not all using 100% sustainable palm oil yet. And we want them to! So we can write letters to encourage them to --and have a letter/petition printed, or direct them to <http://cmzoo.org/palmoil>

These are just suggestions to help you give a quick summary. Volunteers are great for handing out shopping guide app cards while you are talking. At the end of your talk it is good to say “I’ll be here for a few minutes if anyone has questions, thanks and have a great day!” And sometimes a few people will stick around and get engaged in more detailed palm oil conversation. Read your audience, don’t be pushy.

Answering Questions

- This link posts some Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers) about palm oil: <http://www.cmzoo.org/index.php/conservation-matters/palm-oil-crisis/palm-oil-faq/>
- Don’t be afraid to admit that you’re not sure and direct them to CMZoo’s website, or anyone can email palmoil@cmzoo.org with questions.

