



## ***Linking great apes and poverty: the case of orangutans in Asia***

*Terry C.H. Sunderland, PhD*

*Masindi, Uganda, 15th November, 2010*

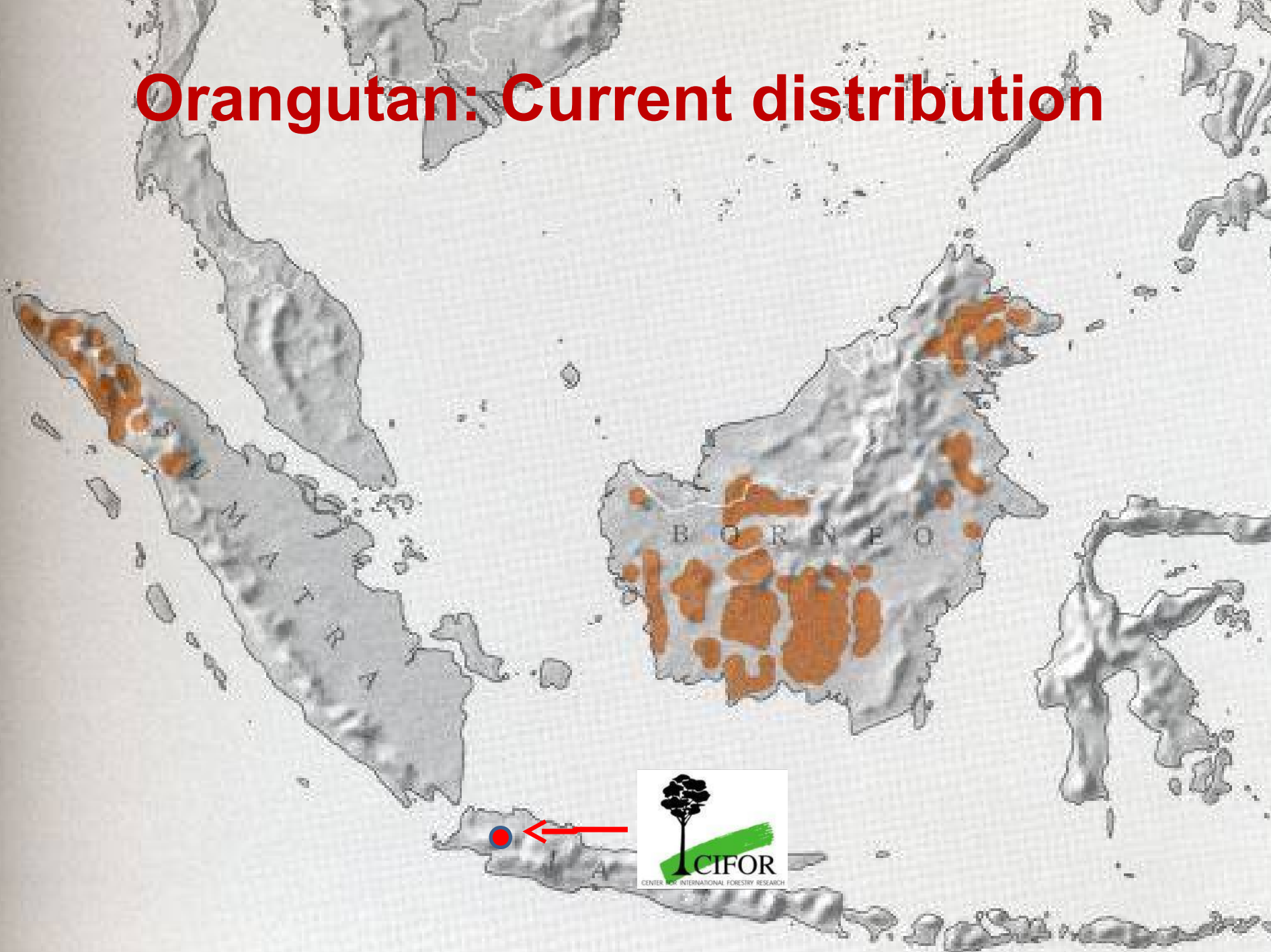
# Background



- The orangutan is the only great ape found in Asia
- Orangutan literally means “man of the forest”
- Fossil evidence suggests the orangutan once ranged throughout most of modern day Vietnam, northern India, southern China, to Java
- Today, the “red ape” is found on just two islands: Borneo (*Pongo pygmaeus*) and Sumatra (*Pongo abelii*)
- Behavioral traits very different to



# Orangutan: Current distribution



# Crisis, what crisis?

- Orangutan habitat has decreased by more than 80% in the last twenty years. The areas most appealing to humans are often also those that are prime orangutan habitat: lowland forests
- Conflict between conservation and production, thus orangutan sector is more “segregated” than “integrated”
- There are an estimated number of between 20-30,000 orangutans in the wild
- Probably 1,500-2,000 in sanctuaries and rehabilitation centres: huge distraction from *in situ* conservation

Region/Country	Estimated Numbers	Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysia)	3,000-5,000	197,605
Kalimantan (Indonesia)	12,000-15,000	539,460
Sumatra (Indonesia)	5,000-7,000	473,606







# Causes..



*“Transmigrasi”* policy (1981-1998) made millions of hectares of forest land available for small-holder agriculture

Logging and subsequent oil palm development

Burning of forest lands for plantation conversion

Rubber agroforests, small-holder timber

Hunting (although religion specific) and pet trade

# Reduction of orangutan habitat and range in Borneo

1930

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1999

Second level

- Third level

- Fourth level

- Fifth level

2004



# The scale of forest destruction

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Second level

Indonesia is the worlds third greatest emitter of Greenhouse Gases!!

• Fifth level

Sumatra

Borneo





# Legally protected??



“Critically Endangered”  
(IUCN)

CITES Appendix 1

Extensively protected by  
numerous laws in both  
Malaysian and Indonesian  
Forestry Statutes

Indonesia signatory to  
Kinshasa Declaration on  
Great Apes (2005)

Indonesia: HCV Forests =  
no development (in theory)

# Kinshasa declaration on Great Apes (2005)



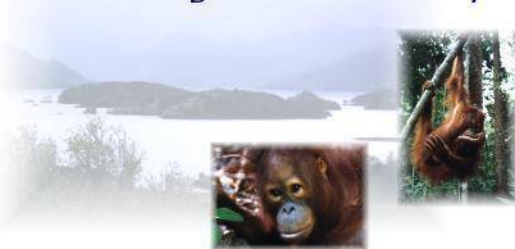
- “Encourage the provision of long-term ecologically sustainable direct and indirect **economic benefits to local communities**, for example, through the introduction or extension of carefully regulated sustainable ecotourism enterprises in areas of great ape habitat, and the creation of long-term research projects operating in or near these areas” (Target 7)
- “Developing ecologically sustainable local poverty-reduction strategies which recognize and **integrate the needs of local communities** sharing great ape habitats while



# Links to poverty reduction..?



The Orangutan Sanctuary

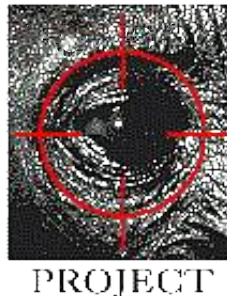


Many, many, many organisations working with orangutan conservation and all with stated development **and** poverty alleviation goals

Competition is rife (!), and often counter-productive

Often focus only on immediate threats and not external issues

National poverty strategies are **not** inclusive



THINKING beyond the canopy



# Ecotourism



Tourism major contributor to economies of both Indonesia and Malaysia

Yet there is little or no “high-value” ecotourism sector in either country related to orangutans

Presence of rehabilitation centres maybe the reason why

Thus outside of direct sector: very little economic contribution to local livelihoods

THINKING beyond the canopy





# REDD+...?



A unique opportunity to provide rewards for local people **not** to convert forests to plantations, thereby protecting orangutan habitat (*“conservation through compensation”*)

Indonesia recently received USD\$1 billion from Gov’t of Norway to protect forests through REDD+

Two year moratorium on forest clearing recently announced

# However...



REDD/PES and other compensation schemes have to be competitive with other land uses

For example, Butler *et al.* (2008) found that palm oil production will be more profitable yielding net present values per hectare of \$3,835–\$9,630 to land owners than preserving it for carbon credits (\$614–\$994)



# In summary



Very unclear linkages between orangutan conservation and poverty alleviation strategies

Government strategies for poverty alleviation are primarily deleterious to environmental protection

On-the-ground strategies to link the two are confused by competition and duplication of effort

REDD+ provides conservation incentives, but can issues of land use planning, governance etc. be surmounted?

