

PALM OIL PERSPECTIVES – WILDLIFE – VIDEO

The unsustainable production of palm oil can have huge consequences to wildlife, that's why here at Chester Zoo, we support Sustainable Palm Oil production!

This video discusses the ways in which deforestation affects wildlife and why supporting our Sustainable Palm Oil campaign helps to protect important species such as orangutans, elephants and other animals.

It also goes into some of the ways in which Chester Zoo are acting for wildlife out in Borneo.

7-11 11-14

Curriculum links:

- Geography
- Science

Narration (Notes for class teacher):

Palm oil perspectives – Wildlife narration

Oil palm is from west Africa. Most of the places where it actually is used for commercial circumstances is in Indonesia and Malaysia. So animals like the Malayan sun bear, elephants, Orangutans, a range a very rare birds; many horn bill species (for example), amphibians and reptiles. There it is a really diverse area and with the success of oil palm production in Indonesia and Malaysia it is now going back to West Africa where there is even more drive to increase the number of plantations there. So there you have got chimpanzees, African elephants, lions, it's becoming a worldwide problem. So the ideal environment for most of the wildlife is what we would call primary rainforest which is where the forest has not ever been harvested for wood or it has not been cleared and allowed to regenerate and there is very little of that now left in either Indonesia or Malaysia. The ideal habitat for orangutans for example is an extensive forest home. They eat many hundreds of varieties of different fruits, vegetables, leaves, bark, flowers and insects. And that diversity of food that they rely on throughout the season of the year is drastically reduced with the palm oil plantations. When you see photographs before palm oil and before hard wood production we see this wonderful forest. The forest trees would close as a canopy over the river tributaries. So that means you would get a patch of land and then a little river and then another patch of land. The animals like the orangutans and the monkeys and the bears as well could transfer from one patch of land to the other. Since hardwood production and now palm oil has grown, in those areas trees are too short to be able to form that same bridge or you have palm oil plantation on one side making there no point in crossing the river. Oil palm plantations have to work as a mono culture, what that means is unlike many other plants they cannot have other plants around them as they are growing and fruiting which produces the palm nuts which is where we get the palm oil from. That means that when forest or land is cleared to produce palm oil nothing other than oil palm can go in that area so it drastically reduces the area available for wildlife. They are not able to utilise the area the palm oil is growing in. So for the majority of amphibians and reptiles species such as the Malayan sun bears

and then you have animals such as the Bornean elephants that are actually coming into conflict with the plantation owners. So it makes life a lot harder for them, but it doesn't have to be either or. That's where sustainable palm oil comes in. It allows for good production of palm oil while providing a more diverse environment so how does the definition of sustainable palm oil plantations involves the owners of the plantations making sure they are what we call forest corridors either adjacent to their land or sometimes even through their land so that animals can move from one patch of forest to the other. It also includes that they have to monitor the animals that are passing through and sometimes harvesting the palm oil in that area and also maximising the production of the palm oil in that area so that they don't have to continue to clear fell areas of forest. So all three of those things help maintain the biodiversity and maintain the numbers of species in the area that are supporting sustainable palm oil plantations. So at Chester Zoo we are assisting our colleagues working out in the field having create wildlife corridors. So for us to be able to make a sustainable difference in this particular area, sustainable palm oil is the way to go!

