



ORANGUTAN GANG NEWSLETTER



Every Ape Counts

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 2-News, Spotlight & Challenge

Meet two dedicated members, catch up on our latest news, and check out a challenge!

Page 3-The Cumulative Impact

Read up on your influence and learn about a sustainable product this issue.

Page 4-Holly Draluck Interview

We interview Holly Draluck, rainforest activist and webhost of OrangAware.org.

Every one of us can contribute to saving the rainforest every day, whether it's choosing one product over another at the grocery store, donating a few dollars to rehabilitation efforts, sending an email to an irresponsible company, or explaining to a friend why you can't, in fact, pick up a certain brand of cookies. What's amazing, though, is how much of an impact one single person can make. Every year, each person, through direct and indirect palm oil consumption, destroys an area of rainforest the size of a twin-size bed- but that also means that that same person can save that much rainforest every year just by using less palm oil and spreading the word.

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RAINFOREST CHALLENGE #2

Over the next three months, there are many ways you alone can help promote sustainability and save the rainforest. We at the Orangutan Gang encourage you to help us take action through this issue's Rainforest Challenge.

Sometime in the next month, we challenge you to **send an unsustainable company a letter** about the palm oil issue, encouraging them to change their policies. You can even use our [company form letter](#)!

ORANGUTAN GANG NEWS

As you may have noticed in the Rainforest Challenge above, the Orangutan Gang has just released a company form letter which you can copy and send to an unsustainable company of your choice! Click [here](#) to see the new letter.

In addition, we at the Orangutan Gang are proud to announce several upcoming events throughout the next few months. Pangaea F will be giving a short talk and hosting an interactive conservation activity on Wednesday, August 14, at 3:00 pm MST, at Zoo Boise's Conservation Crew youth camp, ages seven through twelve. You can register for this camp [on the Zoo Boise website](#).

In addition, Monday, August 19, is International Orangutan Day! You can celebrate by raising awareness about the palm oil issue or even hosting your own talk or conservation booth. For more information about International Orangutan Day, visit the [World Orangutan Events page](#) and read up on how to take action! Other news and upcoming events will be announced on our website at www.orangutangang.org.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

by Veronica and Audrey R

"I'm Veronica R, and I found out about the palm oil issue through Orangutan Gang founder Pangaea F several years ago. Since then, I have become a member of the Orangutan Gang, bought Orangutan Gang merchandise (available [here](#)), and signed the Orangutan Gang petition and other similar petitions. Whenever I go grocery shopping, I scan for palm oil (and its many aliases) in the ingredients. I have also helped with outreach for the Orangutan Gang, including helping to run an information booth with Pangaea F at Zoo Boise in March 2017, spreading the word about this serious problem. I hope to raise awareness in the future as well. Thank you for saving the rainforest!"

"I'm Audrey R! After my sister Veronica learned about the Orangutan Gang, she told me all about it and I decided that I was going to help. I started by looking at the website that Pangaea made, and then my family started checking the labels on products. While doing that, I started to tell my friends about the Orangutan Gang. Most were interested and looked at the website. I have been letting my friends know about this since around 4th grade. Then Veronica and I helped Pangaea at the zoo. It was fun to teach others about palm oil. I also signed the Orangutan Gang petition and Rainforest Rescue petitions. Thanks for helping the orangutans!"

If you are an Orangutan Gang member looking to be featured in an upcoming Member Spotlight, contact us at orangutangang.org@gmail.com and you could end up in our newsletter!





THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT

Is one person influential enough to make a difference? This is a powerful question that impacts our everyday lives and how we think about our contributions to conservation. If you truly don't have enough influence, why should you do anything to help conserve at all? If you truly do, what could possibly be influential enough to promote conservation?

You might be thinking that you do have the power to avoid palm oil and to donate to activists, but your influence far exceeds that. No, you can't control what other people do, but there are plenty of people who would care deeply about the palm oil issue if they only knew about it. Your power, then, is that you can tell other people, companies, and consumers about how to save the rainforest and help our planet become a better place for future generations to enjoy. What is influential enough to promote conservation? Being an educated consumer and raising awareness.

And if there's one person influential enough to make a significant difference, that person is you.

FEATURED PRODUCT #2

ACURE

This issue, we feature ACURE, a personal care company with a commitment to sourcing only palm oil free, vegan, natural, and cruelty free ingredients. Substances that are usually derived from palm oil are derived from coconut instead to promote sustainability. ACURE products can be found online at <https://acure.com/> or at stores near you including Target and Fred Meyer.



HOLLY DRALUCK INTERVIEW

Holly Draluck volunteers at [Orangutan Outreach](#) and [World Orangutan Events](#) as well as managing [OrangAware.org](#). She coordinates and works with several events, including [Missing Orangutan Mothers](#) and [Orangutan Caring Week](#). Here, Holly is interviewed by Pangaea F, Orangutan Gang founder and director.

PF: How did you get involved with Orangutan Outreach and the palm oil issue?

HD: I began my interest and love of orangutans while volunteering as a docent at [Zoo Miami](#). As a docent at the zoo, I was passionate about fulfilling our mission to encourage an appreciation for the world's wildlife and to help conserve it for future generations and one of my favorite ways of doing this was to host special orangutan awareness event days with tables full of educational displays and fun interactives to help introduce our guests to the issues facing orangutans – with the destruction of rainforest for palm oil as their greatest threat. Through an online group I wound up developing a great connection with Richard Zimmerman, Founding Director of [Orangutan Outreach](#), at just about the time he had an idea for a Mother's Day event called [M.O.M., Missing Orangutan Mothers](#) to celebrate and pay tribute to orangutan mothers and bring attention to the hundreds of orphan orangutan babies. The first M.O.M. event was in 2008 and the event has been held annually ever since.

PF: What, in your experience, are some of the most effective ways to raise awareness about the palm oil issue?

HD: We have reached a lot of people over the years at many orangutan awareness events. Zoos, animal facilities, and conservation groups all over the world have participated in the annual [M.O.M.](#) and [Orangutan Caring Week](#) campaigns. When I first began talking to zoo visitors about the palm oil issue, many had never even heard of palm oil. Fortunately, the word is spreading... but, sadly, so are oil palm plantations. Sharing information with our friends, family, and through social media are good ways to reach people. Something as simple as wearing my "Say No to Palm Oil" T-shirt when shopping has sparked conversations in the grocery store.



All articles by Pangaea F unless otherwise stated
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PF: What are some of the ways that you can emphasize how an individual can impact the rainforest?

HD: I stress to people that it is a small world after all and what we do and how we live has a huge impact all over the world and one of the biggest impacts is through the products that we buy. Palm oil is not going away but we can encourage companies to source sustainable ingredients. We need to pressure governments to safeguard and enforce laws to protect the remaining precious rainforests. Write letters, sign petitions or create your own, support organizations working to save orangutans and their rainforests, and help spread awareness of the issues on social media.

PF: What are a couple palm oil free products that you love?

HD: Sticking to fresh foods, fruits, and vegetables and avoiding processed food is a good way to avoid it. If there are products you love that do contain palm oil, write to those companies and ask them to source sustainably or don't use palm oil at all. They can find other ways of making their products. We can't find other ways of making orangutans.

PF: How can you bring awareness to the fact that remaining orangutan populations are very small, and every orangutan saved matters?

HD: In just the last two human generations alone, we have lost over 50% of the planet's wildlife and a sixth mass extinction on Earth is under way. A quote by Alice Walker whispers in my ear... "Without free animal life we will lose the spiritual equivalent of oxygen." With every orangutan loss, with every tree felled, we lose a bit of that oxygen. There are hundreds of species that deserve our attention, but as the polar bear has become the poster child for climate change, the orangutan has become my symbol for the future of life on Earth. I always say that *if we can save orangutans, we can save the world!* By saving these beautiful red-haired apes it would mean that we can make the necessary changes to our global environmental impact in time to save not only orangutans, but all the species on earth, including humans.

PF: How do you think people can feel better about their individual power of change?

HD: The Dalai Lama said, "if we think we are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito." We all need to be that mosquito! Imagine ten or a hundred mosquitoes in your tent, or a thousand. This is the power we have as individuals all working together. Little changes or actions by a lot of individuals add up to big changes. Whether consuming less products that contain palm oil, reducing our consumption in general, eating less or no meat, using less plastic... there are so many ways we can all make even small changes that when combined will have a big impact.

PF: What was your first experience with an orangutan like?

HD: A friend forwarded me an email about a rescue by Patti Ragan and the [Center for Great Apes](#) of two orangutans and one chimpanzee who had been living in horrendous conditions for a decade inside small cages in a dark garage. With tears streaming, I read Patti's account of the first time one orangutan, Linus, went outside. When the sunlight hit his head, he stopped and looked straight up at the sky. When it rained, all the other apes ran inside but Linus ran outside, looked upwards and opened his mouth to catch the raindrops. As Patti wrote, "Can you imagine... a rainforest animal finally in the rain!" I was so moved by the story of Linus that it inspired me to find out more about these beautiful red apes. I went to the library and picked up "Reflections of Eden" by Biruté Galdikas where she introduced me to the soul, the essence of orangutan and it forever moved me to want to save these incredible, intelligent beings.

PF: In the face of such a big problem, how do you stay motivated?

HD: I am inspired by the incredible work being done by so many people and organizations who are working to save orangutans and their rainforest homes. We can't all have boots on the ground, but we can support those who do either financially or through helping to spread awareness. The problems sometimes do feel too big to solve but giving up is not an option. The stakes are too high, and we must at least try.

Are you an activist who works to help save orangutans and the rainforest? Contact us at orangutangang.org@gmail.com and we could interview you for this newsletter!

To learn more, view merchandise, sign petitions, and take the palm oil free pledge, please visit our website at www.orangutangang.org.