



# THE FUTURE OF THE BORNEAN ORANGUTAN

Impacts of change in land cover and climate





## Colophon

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# THE FUTURE OF THE BORNEAN ORANGUTAN

## Impacts of change in land cover and climate

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Andreas Wilting, Stephanie Kramer-Schadt and Erik Meijaard



United Nations Environment Programme 2015

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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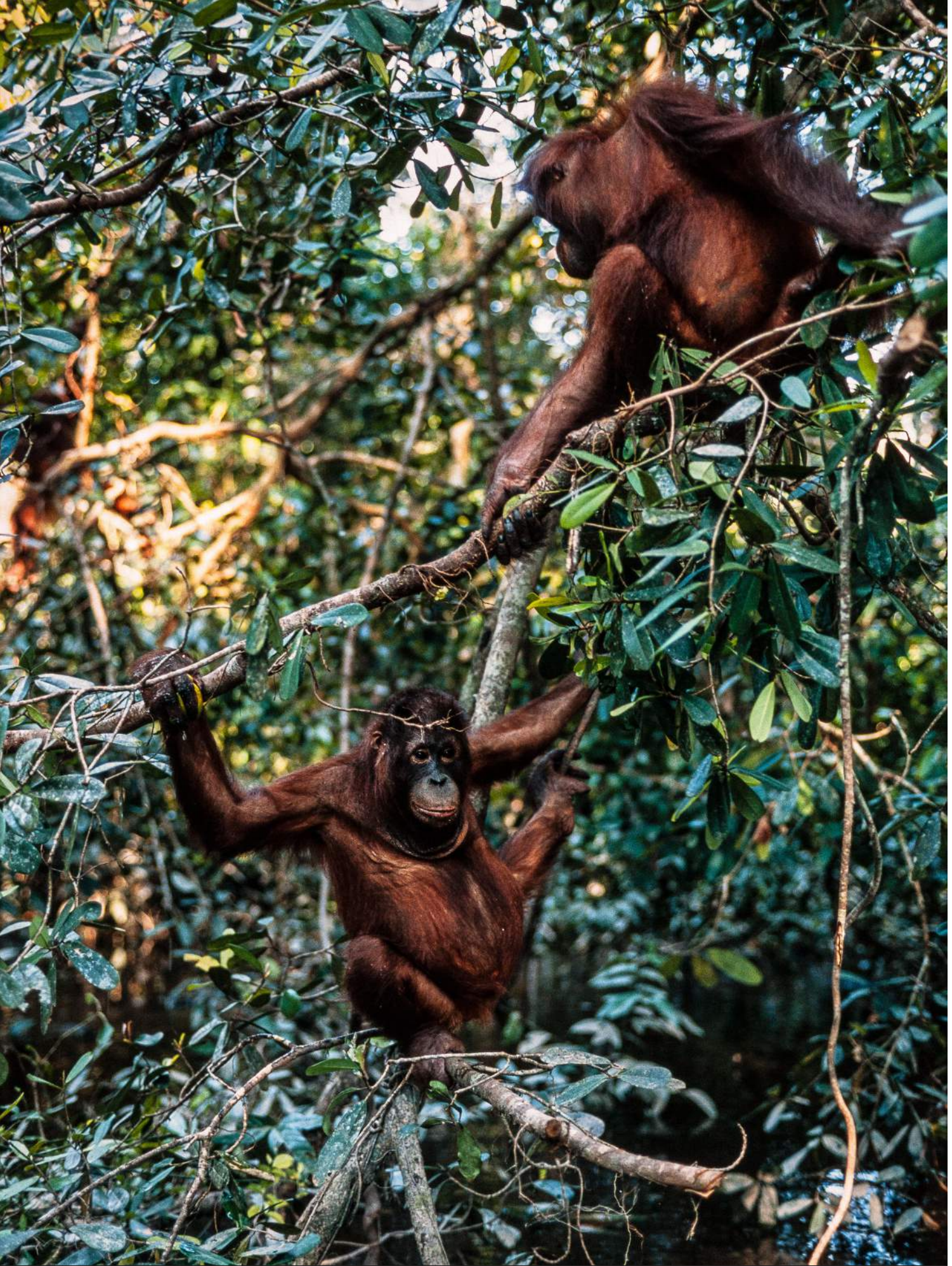
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Rehabilitation at Pulau Kaja, Sungai Rungan, Central Kalimantan.

Photo Perry van Duijnhoven



## FOREWORD



Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Photo UNEP

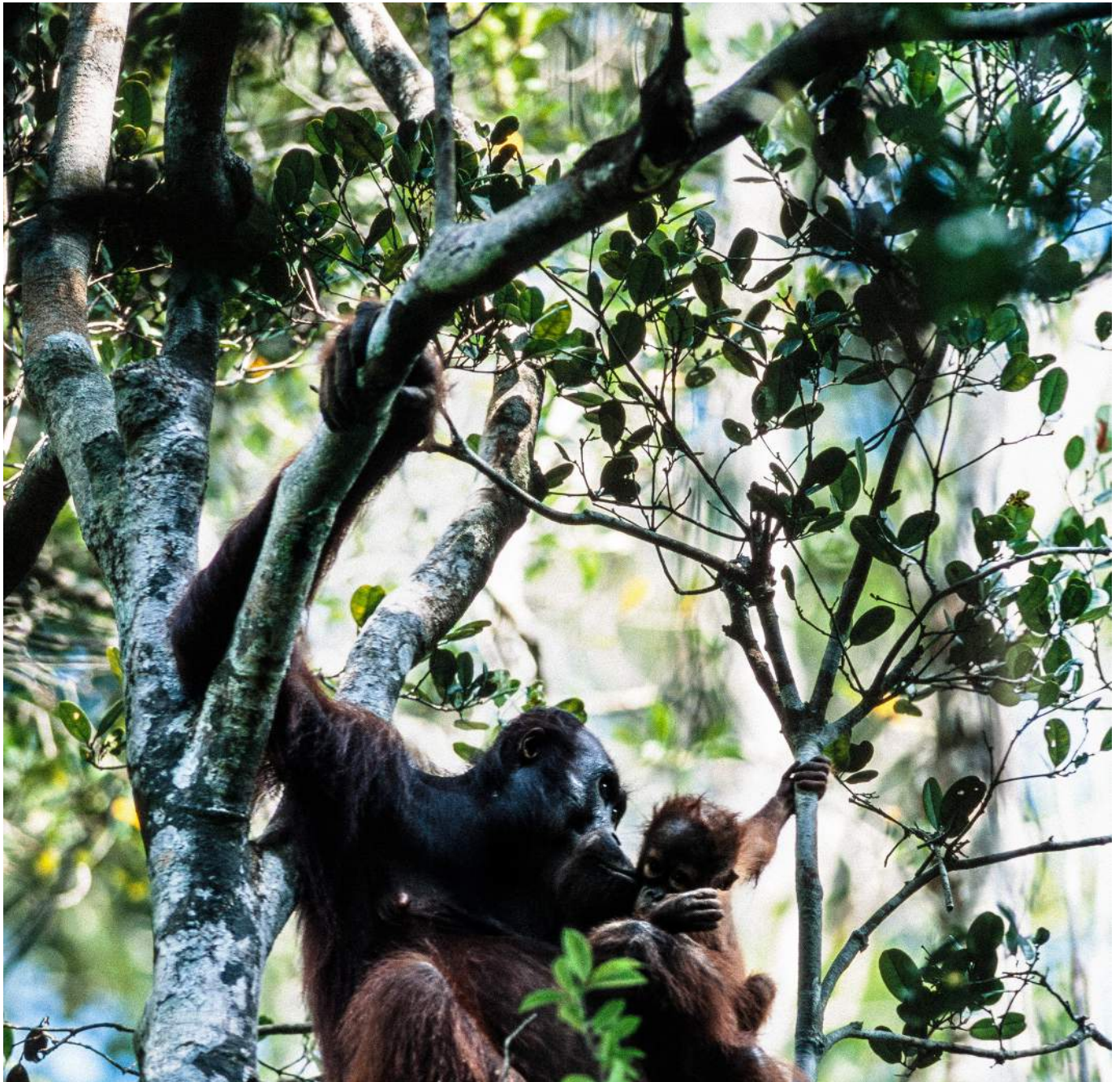
Over the past century, orangutan populations in Southeast Asia have seen a very steep decline, driven to the brink of extinction by a host of man-made threats. Deforestation, illegal logging, the expansion of agro-industrial plantations and hunting – these forces combined to isolate orangutans into precarious pockets of forest on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra.

Now, a new threat has emerged: climate change. This report from the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) and the Liverpool John Moores University assesses the impacts of land cover change and climate change on Borneo's endangered orangutans. The report also examines the major driver of deforestation – the expansion of oil palm – and analyses how various land-use scenarios might impact the region through different climate change projections. The report concludes, sadly, that a combined model of climate change and landuse change could result in a further three quarter loss of orangutan habitat from the present day.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) actively seeks solutions to reverse this trend. The 2014 UNEP report, *Building the Natural Capital*, indicates that if systematically pursued, REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) could both address climate change and preserve some of the world's tropical forests, while also protecting biodiversity. Key findings show that REDD+ can also correct markets, policy, and institutional failures that undervalue the more serious climate change mitigation services provided by ecosystems.

GRASP also addressed this opportunity in the 2011 report, *Orangutans and the Economics of Sustainable Forest Management in Sumatra*, which called for “vigorous efforts” to reverse the impact of climate change, and stated, “the development of a Green Economy can lead to a win-win situation where orangutan habitat is conserved, ecosystem services maintained and economic growth continued.”

UNEP supports global initiatives such as the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and the Natural Capital Declaration, each of which provides new tools to measure the value of ecosystem services to our well-being. Now, it is time to utilize these approaches and divert from an unsustainable pathway to development. *The Future of the Bornean Orangutan: Impacts of Change in Land Cover and Climate* makes it clear that a future without sustainable development will be a future with a different climate and, eventually, without orangutans, one of our closest relatives.



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