

Alarm over fate of world's orangutans

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A U.N. report details grave danger to the world's population of orangutans due to a booming palm oil industry in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Animal rights activists talked to The Guardian, saying they believe orangutans could become extinct in as little as five years.

The primary cause of the destruction of the orangutan, the Guardian reported, is deforestation as palm oil plantations have expanded in many parts of the world. On plantations, orangutans feed on crops and are looked at as agricultural pests. They are often shot or beaten to death by plantation owners.

But environmentalists are in a bind, as palm oil is used as biofuel and is known to cut down on harmful carbon dioxide emissions.

The Guardian reported that animal rights activist groups have been working with various companies on harvesting orangutan-friendly consumer products.

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