

Palm oil demand puts orangutans at risk

August 15 2007

The growing demand for bio-diesel fuel threatens the survival of the orangutans of Borneo, the largest surviving population of the primate in the wild.

Lone Nielsen, head of Borneo Orangutan Survival, said as more forest is converted to palm plantations for palm oil the primates lose their habitat and, in many cases, are beaten by workers. A rehabilitation center run by the group is caring for 600 orangutans, most of them young orphans.

"There are broken bones, cracked skulls, burns, internal injuries," Nielsen said. "The plantation workers beat them because they want to catch them and the only way you can catch an orangutan is to knock it unconscious."

In 2003, the Indonesian government announced plans to make the country the world's largest producer of palm oil, which is essential for bio-diesel. A plan released the next year called for conversion of 40,000 square miles of Borneo to plantations by the end of the decade.

Copyright 2007 by United Press International

Citation: Palm oil demand puts orangutans at risk (2007, August 15) retrieved 1 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-08-palm-oil-demand-orangutans.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.