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CAN CARBON FINANCE MECHANISMS SAVE ORANGUTAN?

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Despite numerous efforts to protect orangutans in the wild, prospects for their survival look bleak. On Borneo, it is thought that less than 60,000 orang-utans are left, with around 80% of these in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo). The pressures on the species are numerous, but the greatest threat is habitat destruction and fragmentation through illegal and unsustainable logging and forest conversion to oilpalm plantations. The latter is being driven by the fast growing global demand for vegetable oils and bio-fuels, resulting in many local governments re-zoning forest lands for agriculture. From 2007 to 2009 FFI has identified remaining orangutan habitat in West Kalimantan as part of landscape-level high conservation value forest assessment with the aim to influence spatial planning decisions that designate orangutan habitat as conversion forest. In 2008 FFI started to develop carbon finance mechanism for incentives to avoid deforestation. FFI will share early lessons learned from REDD (Reduced emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests) pilot projects in partnerships with investment banks to protect orangutan habitat.

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