



Care For Us

Orangutan (*Pongo ssp.*)

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be good, neutral or bad.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have good welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare throughout their entire life.



Understanding that animals have both sentient and cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry for all captive animals, to ensure good welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.





Orangutans are arboreal apes which live in the rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo.

There are three species of orangutan and all three are classified as critically endangered by the IUCN. They are threatened by habitat loss due to palm-oil plantation, logging, mining and the pet trade.

Orangutans spend their lives in the trees of the rainforest, they are the most arboreal of all the ape species.

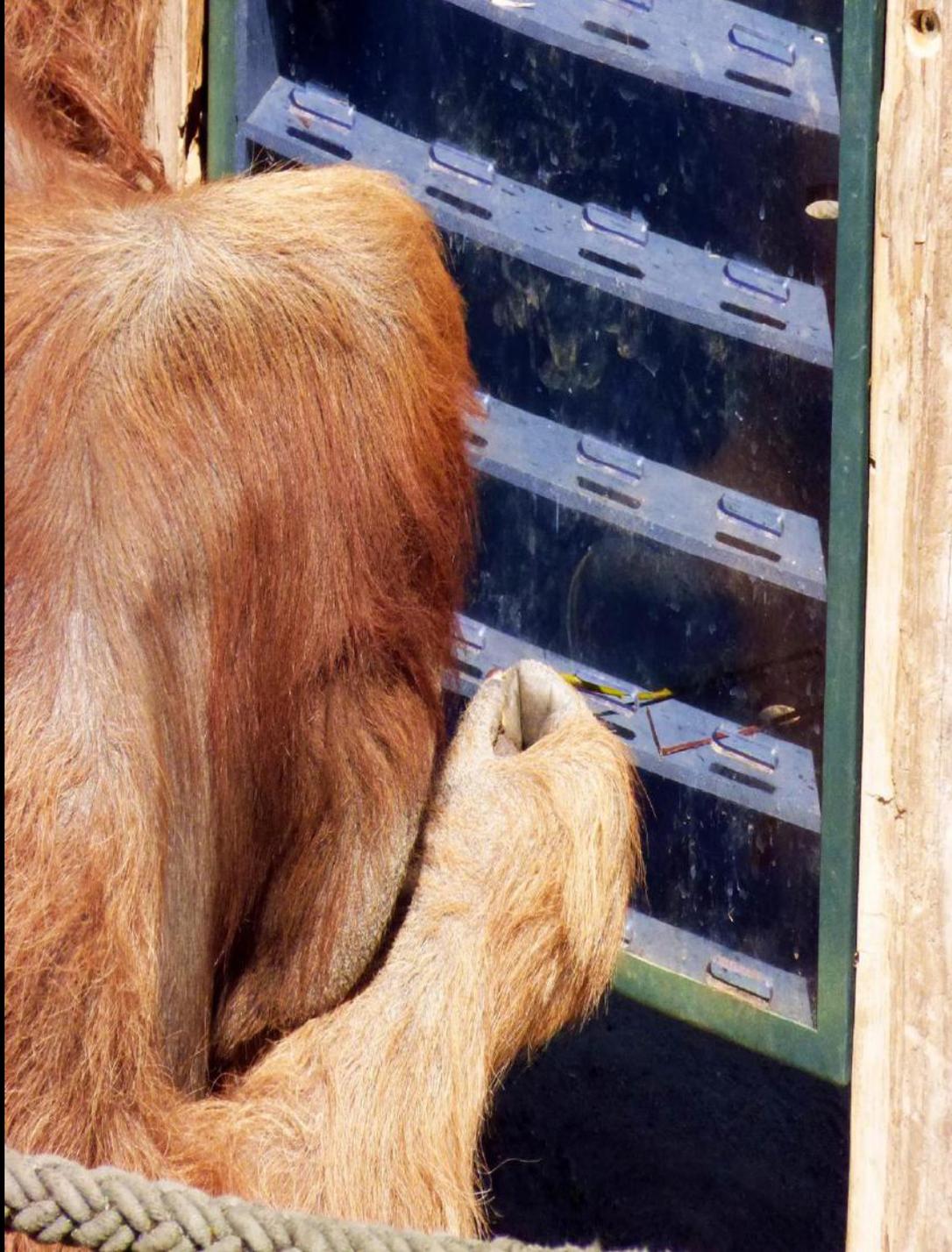
Orangutans are intelligent

Orangutans will spend a long time watching and learning how to solve problems. They can use tools to manipulate objects and to reach items of food. They are very good at opening and untying things and will use this skill to access food, use enrichment and also to escape!

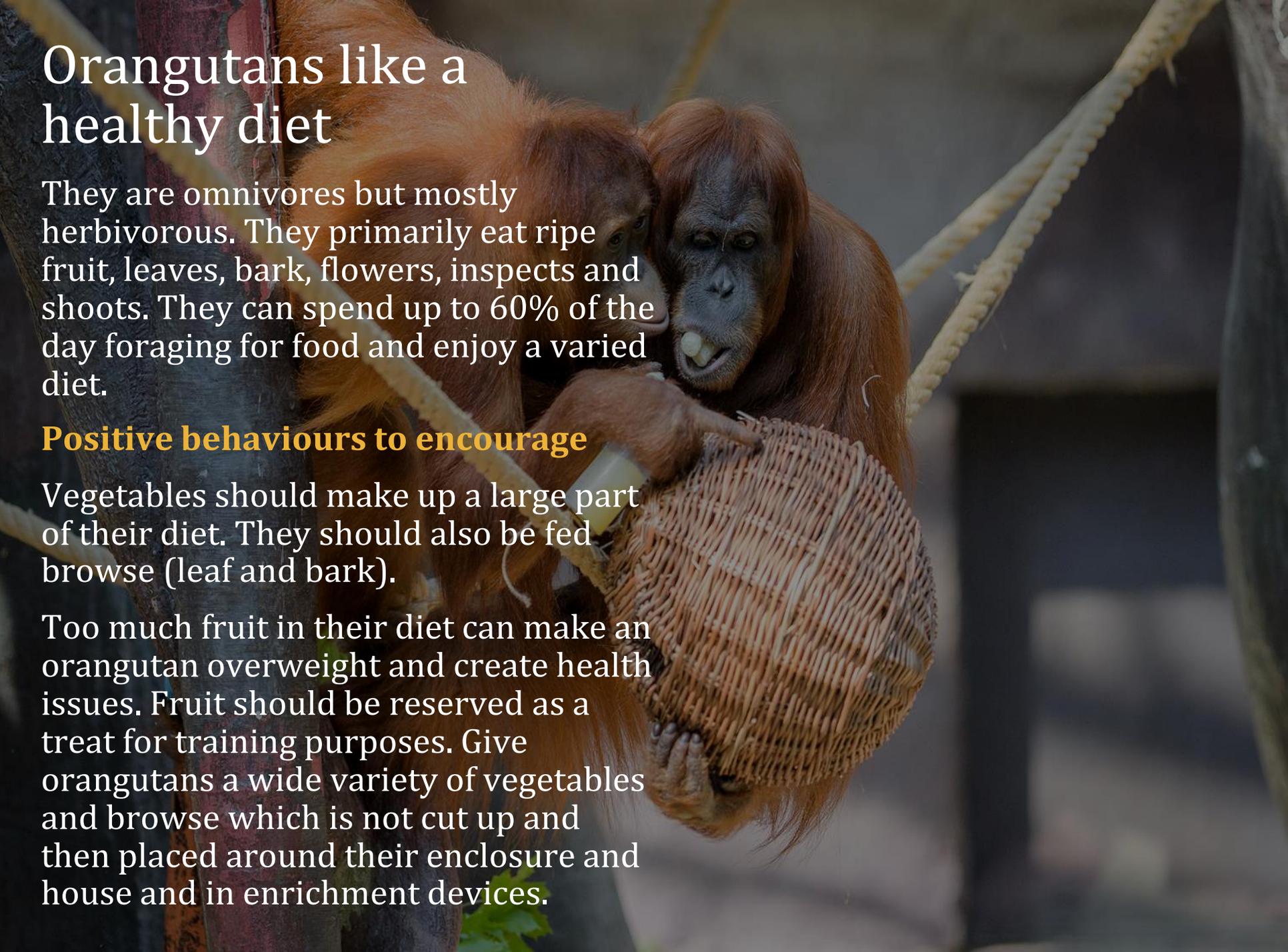
They are as smart as gorillas and chimpanzees.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Orangutans need lots of rewarding challenges and enjoy solving problems. Giving them lots of puzzles and novel objects will stimulate them. They are very strong so enrichment devices need to be very robust and safe.



Orangutans like a healthy diet

A photograph of two orangutans in an enclosure. One orangutan is in the foreground, holding a piece of fruit in its mouth. The other orangutan is behind it, looking towards the camera. They are surrounded by a wooden structure and a large, woven basket.

They are omnivores but mostly herbivorous. They primarily eat ripe fruit, leaves, bark, flowers, insects and shoots. They can spend up to 60% of the day foraging for food and enjoy a varied diet.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Vegetables should make up a large part of their diet. They should also be fed browse (leaf and bark).

Too much fruit in their diet can make an orangutan overweight and create health issues. Fruit should be reserved as a treat for training purposes. Give orangutans a wide variety of vegetables and browse which is not cut up and then placed around their enclosure and house and in enrichment devices.

Orangutans like to socialise

Although orangutans are considered solitary species in the wild, females are often accompanied by their offspring. In captivity they will live in small family groups with the related adult females and their babies.

Adult males tend to prefer spending time on their own but will socialise in appropriate groupings.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Keeping orangutans in family groups and allowing the young to stay with their mothers and siblings. This is important for the adults and teaches the young social behaviours.



Orangutans like to climb

Orangutans are the most arboreal of all the ape species and spend much of their lives living in trees. They are adapted for tree living with their long powerful arms and grasping hands. Females in particular virtually never travel on the ground.

Positive behaviours to encourage

They need large, complex environments, not only to exercise their muscles but also their minds.

Networks of climbing frames with ropes, firehose, poles and nets should allow the opportunity to transverse the whole environment without going to the ground. Provide climbing structures to explore, find food and rest on encourages orangutans to behaviour naturally.



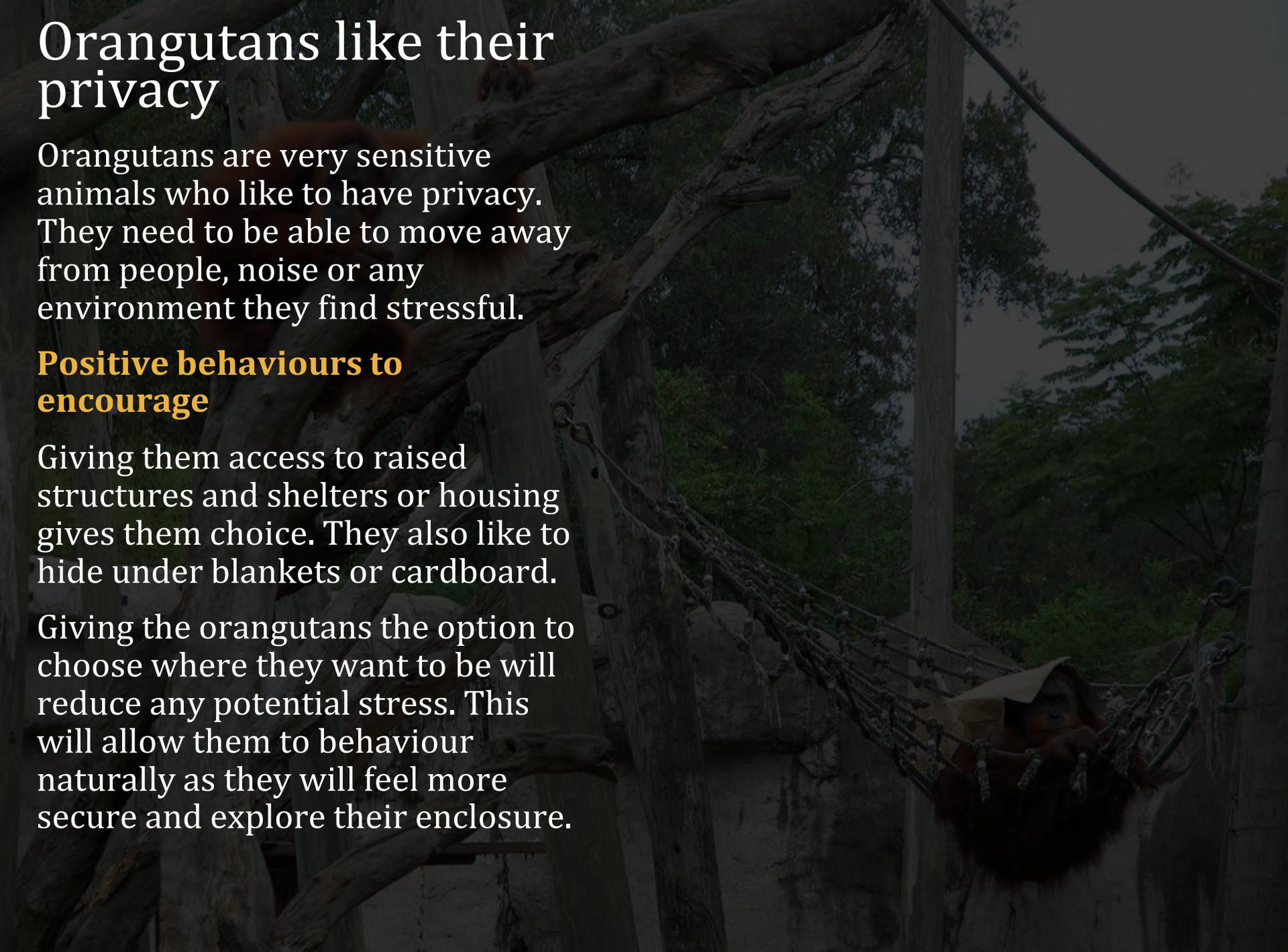
Orangutans like their privacy

Orangutans are very sensitive animals who like to have privacy. They need to be able to move away from people, noise or any environment they find stressful.

Positive behaviours to encourage

Giving them access to raised structures and shelters or housing gives them choice. They also like to hide under blankets or cardboard.

Giving the orangutans the option to choose where they want to be will reduce any potential stress. This will allow them to behaviour naturally as they will feel more secure and explore their enclosure.





Orangutans enjoy...

Climbing and living high up!

They are the most arboreal ape species. Giving them complex and changeable climbing structures allows them to behaviour naturally. They like to climb, swing, explore, play and rest on high climbing frames.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours, so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

WILD
WELFARE

