Description:

Orangutans are most characterized by their reddish colored hair. They are tailless primates. Orangutans have long narrow hands and feet that are suitable for grasping objects. Their opposable thumbs and big toes are short and placed far from the other digits to facilitate the hook-like function of hands. The most characteristic feature of the male is the large cheek pads and tremendous laryngeal sac, which they use to vocalize.

Size:

Males weigh between 180 and 275 pounds and are 4 to 4 1/2 feet tall, while females weigh between 90 and 150 pounds and can reach heights of 3 to 3
**Life Span:** They live about 35 years in the wild and up to 40 years in captivity.

**Diet:**
- *In the wild:* fruit, young leaves, bark, flowers, insects, and bird eggs
- *At the Zoo:* fruits and vegetables, grains, primate biscuits

**Geographic Range:**
The Bornean sub-species lives in Borneo, while another sub-species lives in Sumatra.

**Habitat:**
Orangutans live in the mature rainforests. They are the only truly arboreal (tree-dwelling) great ape.

**Reproduction:**
The female reproductive rate is very slow, with an offspring being born once every 3-6 years. The female becomes sexually mature at age 10, while a male matures at 15 years. The female may only have 3-4 offspring in her reproductive lifetime, which means that only one offspring is born at a time. The newborn clings to its mother for the first two years of its life.

**Special Adaptations:**
They have long arms and long hands for moving through the trees. They use a hand-over-hand motion called brachiation, and the weight of their body gives them momentum. Their arm span can reach over 6 feet. Their hind feet have an opposable toe for grabbing on to the branches. They also use bipedalism, walking with their arms held upright for balance, but that is usually only seen in captive orangutans when walking on the ground.

**Behavior:**
Orangutans are diurnal; with 60% of the daylight hours spent searching for and eating food. The males are solitary, while an adult female and 1-2 of her offspring usually stay together in a group. Each night, an orangutan makes a new nest to sleep in. They use the brachiation in the trees, but they are fist walkers when traveling on land.

**Current Status:**
They are endangered mainly because of habitat destruction, but also illegal capture for the pet trade. The harvesting of trees for palm oil also threatens their survival.

**Related Species:**
They are related to the African great apes, such as gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos. Their closest relation is the Sumatran orangutan (*P. p. abelii*), which are another sub-species of *Pongo pygmaeus*.

**Where am I in the Zoo:**
The orangutan family’s exhibit is located in Wild Asia.