

# IUCN Oil Palm Task Force

2020 Report



Erik Meijaard



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## Co-Chairs

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## Location/Affiliation

<sup>(1)</sup> Brunei Darussalam  
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## Number of members

26

## Social networks

Website: [www.iucn-optf.org](http://www.iucn-optf.org)

## Mission statement

The Oil Palm Task Force (OPTF) aims to inform the debate on the sustainability of palm oil, using the latest research and scientific information, and give guidance to, for example, IUCN about its policies and strategies that affect or are affected by palm oil. We aim to make use of IUCN's extensive knowledge networks on biodiversity and environmental issues, social, economic and cultural issues, and policy to comprehensively guide thinking on the complex issues of agro-industrial and small-holder oil palm in the world's tropical regions. The OPTF will act as an authoritative advisory body on oil palm and how this relates to global sustainability objectives, and an intermediary between the oil palm industry, the IUCN network, and the other stakeholders in the oil palm discussions.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Oil palm threatens tropical wildlife when plantations are developed in forested areas. We seek to minimise impacts on tropical wildlife by helping promote palm oil production practices that avoid negative impacts on threatened wildlife species, such as orangutans, while maximising socio-economic benefits from palm oil production. The broader sustainability context of vegetable oil production requires that the Task Force also looks at other oil producing crops to ensure that reductions in palm oil production and concomitant reductions in conservation threats do not lead to disproportionate increases of production of other vegetable oil crops and even larger negative conservation impacts elsewhere.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Assess

Research activities: (1) coordinate the IUCN review process of the draft Situation Analysis (with support from the SSC Chair's Office), incorporate the comments and suggested edits into the final Situation Analysis, and publish the Situation Analysis; (2) carry out global mapping of oil palm and other vegetable oil crops; (3) develop a study on the socio-economic impacts of oil palm and how these affect biodiversity and environmental outcomes; (4) conduct a study and publish a paper on the global distribution of oil palm.

### Network

Membership: expand Task Force membership and coordinate membership registration with IUCN.

Synergy: (1) conduct third workshop for discussing the situation analysis and developing OPTF strategies 2018–2020; (2) lead internal IUCN meetings to discuss the strategic objective of the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force to focus on palm oil production in forest frontiers; (3) get conflict of interest statements from all Task Force members.

### Communicate

Communication: (1) develop Task Force website; (2) translation of *Oil palm and biodiversity. A situation analysis by the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force* into Indonesian; (3) organise webinar 'Palm oil and other vegetable oils: impacts and prospects'.

Scientific meetings: organise a symposium at IUCN Congress.



Aerial view of oil palm and forest set asides in West Kalimantan, Indonesia  
Photo: Patrick Fries



Smallholder oil palm growers at harvest time, Indonesia  
Photo: Erik Meijaard



Erik Meijaard on field work in a High Conservation Value area in a West Kalimantan oil palm plantation  
Photo: Patrick Fries

## Activities and results 2020

### Assess

#### Research activities

- i. A paper on global oil palm map was published: Meijaard, E., et al. (2020). 'The environmental impacts of palm oil in context'. *Nature Plants* 6:1418–1426. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41477-020-00813-w> (KSR #32, 41)
- ii. Two papers on welfare impacts of oil palm and palm oil certification on villages in Indonesia were published: (1) Santika, T., Wilson, K.A., Budiharta, S., Law, E.A., Poh, T.M., Ancrenaz, M., Struebig, M.J. and Meijaard, E. (2019). 'Does oil palm agriculture help alleviate poverty? A multidimensional counterfactual assessment of oil palm development in Indonesia'. *World Development* 120:105–117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.04.012>; (2) Santika, T., Wilson, K.A., Meijaard, E., Budiharta, S., Law, E.E., Sabri, M., Struebig, M., Ancrenaz, M. and Poh, T.-M. (2019). 'Changing landscapes, livelihoods and village welfare in the context of oil palm development'. *Land Use Policy* 87:104073. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104073> (KSR #32, 41)

### Communicate

#### Communication

- i. Webinars were held on 15 and 17 September 2020. (KSR #28)

#### Scientific meetings

- i. Organisation of the symposium at IUCN Congress was delayed due to COVID-19. (KSR #28)

### Acknowledgements

We thank the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) for funding the IUCN project 'Global Commons: Solutions for a Crowded Planet', which contributed to the Task Force's development of the Situation Analysis on Oil Palm and Biodiversity.

### Summary of activities 2020

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 2/5

Assess **2** **||**

Communicate **2** **||**

Main KSRs addressed: 28, 32, 41

Resolutions addressed: WCC-2016-Res-061

KSR: Key Species Result