

An Animal Mother's Love



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During May, we remember mothers and all they do for us. We recall what makes mom great and how we couldn't live without her. Nothing is ever truly lost until mom can't find it. Am I right? I'm 23 years old and I still call my mom for advice on everything. I can never leave the house without a suggestion from her about wearing or not wearing a jacket. We adore our own mothers but we rarely think about mothers in the animal kingdom. These 3 animal moms love their babies and have a spectacular way of showing it. Unfortunately, there are factors threatening the survival of these animals. Let's count down 3 of the best animal moms and the threats that endanger mommy and me.

1. Orangutans

This bond between mommy and baby is one of the strongest in nature. Orangutans stay with their young for 6 to 7 years, which in animal time is pretty remarkable. During the first 2 years of life, baby orangutans are entirely reliant on their mothers for food and transportation. In fact, infants often never let go of their mothers for the first couple months of their life. And when it is time to leave the nest? Female orangutans are known to go back and visit their mothers until age 15 or 16, a phenomenon I've never heard of in the animal world.

Palm oil is an ingredient in many of the products we buy at the grocery store. To harvest this oil, orangutan habitats are being destroyed. In the Southeast Asian islands lies the world's only orangutan population. Forest clearing for palm oil plantations, illegal logging and poaching are driving massive deforestation in this area. If the orangutans have no place to live, they cannot survive.

2. Polar Bears

This mom often gives birth to twin cubs that stick by her for about two years to learn the necessary survival skills in the cold climate. Polar bears give birth between November and January and keep the cubs warm and healthy by using their body heat and milk. With such a harsh climate to survive in, it's essential that polar bears are very hands on moms with their cubs. They teach them how to thrive in the cold.

Global warming, also known as global climate change, remains the biggest threat to polar bear populations. Polar bears rely on ice for traveling, hunting, mating, resting, and in some areas, maternal dens. They specifically depend on sea ice-dependent prey, such as seals. With global

temperatures rising, this ice is melting and the bears have no place to do all the things essential for surviving.

3. African Elephants

Elephants have a matriarchally society which means other females in their social group help the calves survive. After birth, the group helps the calf to its feet. They also show the calf how to nurse off their mother. The females regularly make affectionate contact with the calves and will even adjust the pace of the herd so the little one can keep up.

The illegal wildlife trade has devastated elephant populations. The demand for ivory is the biggest reason for elephant poaching. The ivory is taken from elephants. Additionally, elephants have less room to roam now with land being converted for agriculture.

Sources:

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