



ORANGUTAN FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL
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Tommy is a lone ranger. He still occasionally plays with his orangutan friend Hayes but prefers to be left to his own devices. Tommy will show an interest in his caregivers if they bring any enrichment, milk, or fruit. An orangutan marches on his stomach to paraphrase the saying. When his mind isn't on his stomach, Tommy can be found up in the forest canopy over 20 metres up in the air. Other than food, exploration is his other major interest. He glides through the trees hand over hand, calmly moving deeper into the forest. There is no need to rush; mistakes happen when you rush. In the tropical rainforest the Indonesian phrase "jam-karet" (rubber time) applies. This literally translates as a period of time which is rubber or elastic. The concept is a general cultural acceptance that people will be late. Orangutans have their own schedule too, and we humans have no choice but to accept that. Tommy ascends higher and higher into the canopy, never once looking back, until he reaches the point where his caregivers can only just make him out. In the Learning Forest Tommy has the time to experiment and ultimately innovate when it comes to exploring and foraging.

Tommy observes his surroundings. He reaches a meditative state where he is open to and aware of everything going on around him. Sometimes he will come near Pondok Medang, another orangutan release camp at the Orangutan Care Centre and Quarantine and observe his fellow orangutans there. He commits all these things to memory and builds a mental map of the forest. He doesn't display much in his body language, but his mind is agile.

Tommy is an expert ant detector and an even better ant eater. The time he spends on the forest floor is well utilised, digging through much earth in search of ants and termite nests. He occasionally also eats some of the soil. Orangutans do this as an aid to digestion. At the end of the day Tommy likes to give himself a shower back at camp, washing his face and lathering his arms and legs with soap! He even tries on his caregiver's clothes, expertly putting on a shirt, imitating what he has seen his carers do.

Tommy is a lean and compact orangutan. His ever-watchful features seem to consider the world around him. All this acquired knowledge and willingness to try new things are essential for his development and future wellbeing. We will continue to watch over him and look forward to updating you about what Tommy learns over the next six months.

Orangutan Foundation International Australia Foster Program

PO Box 8940, Gold Coast MC, Bundall, Queensland, 9726

Website: www.orangutanfoundation.org.au

Email: info@ofiaustralia.com



Tommy

