

Orang-utan mothers

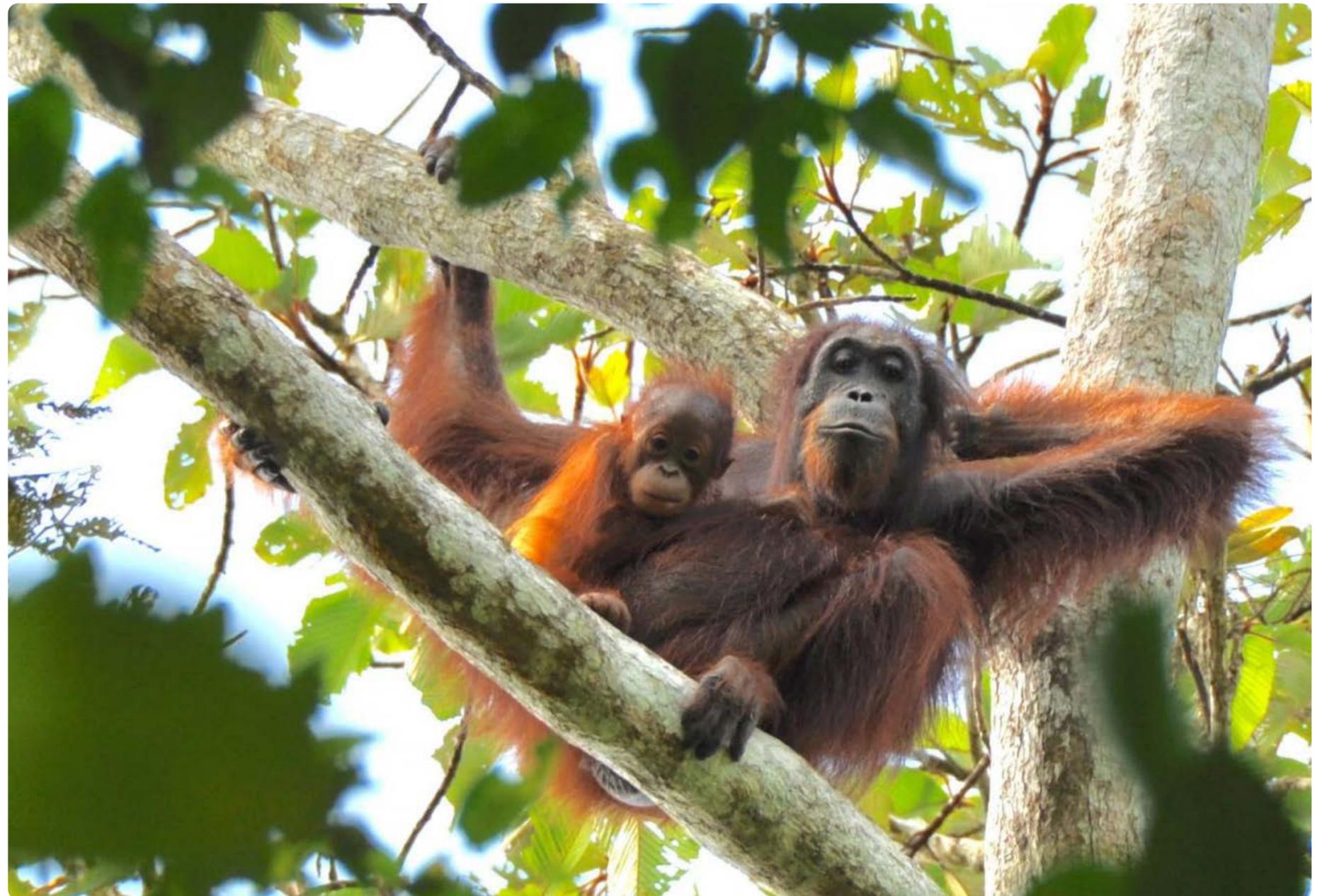
The bond between an orang-utan mother and her young is one of the strongest in nature.

During the first two years of life, the young rely on their mothers for everything: there is so much they must learn before they can leave their mothers. For the first two years the mother will carry her infant everywhere and feed it milk until it is six years old.

The mothers then stay with their young for six to seven years, teaching them where to find food, what and how to eat and how

to build a sleeping nest every night. It can take an orang-utan mother nine years for her to teach her young everything it needs to know to survive without her.

Once they grow up and can survive without their mothers, they will leave. Female orang-utans will often “visit” their mothers until they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen years of age.



Elephant aunties



When a new mother elephant has a calf, she is not alone in raising her young.



Elephants live in groups of females, so other females in the group help a calf to its feet after birth and show the baby how to nurse.

The older elephants start walking slower so that the calf can keep up with them. By

watching the adults, the calf learns which plants to eat and how to get them. The females are often caring towards the calf by snuggling and joining trunks with it.



Courageous penguin parents

Emperor penguins live in the coldest place on Earth, the Antarctic. After laying an egg, mother emperor penguins leave it with males who protect it from the cold and the ice.

The mothers then travel on foot (penguins are flightless birds) up to fifty miles to reach the ocean and fish.

During this time, the males are in charge of keeping the egg safe and warm by keeping it on their feet and covering it with their

feathers.

The mothers return months later to feed the new chicks by coughing their food back out of their stomach and pouring it into the chick's beak.

Then it is the father's turn. He will leave the chick with the mother and make the same long, cold journey to the ocean to get food. He will not eat for weeks, and by the time he returns to his family he will have lost half his bodyweight.



Penguin parents work together to protect their young.





Loving octopuses mothers

Mother octopuses often end up dying, trying to protect their eggs. On average, an octopus lays between 50,000 and 200,000 eggs while giving birth. To make sure that the eggs all survive, she separates them into groups

according to their shape and size. She then spends the next two months of her life protecting them from predators and making sure they get enough oxygen by pushing water towards the eggs. Because female octopuses are so

busy keeping their eggs alive, they don't have time to feed themselves and often end up passing away shortly after the babies hatch from the eggs.



Caring alligators

Most reptiles lay their eggs and then leave the young to survive by themselves. Not alligators!

When a female alligator gives birth to her litter, she spends the next year of her life protecting her young from other alligators looking for a snack.

After creating the perfect nest, mother alligators carry the new-borns in their jaws to take them there safely.

For the next full year,

the mother will help her babies get into the water where they will learn to catch and eat fish, insects, snails and other shellfish.



Cooperative clownfish parents

Clownfish parents work well together. Before their young are born, they carefully clean a special plant to transform it into a perfect nursery. Once the eggs are laid, clownfish dads clean them until they hatch,

and both parents fan the babies with their fins to give them as much oxygen as possible. This will give their babies the best chance of surviving.

The female watches the male keeping the eggs clean and healthy. If she thinks he is not good enough, she gets rid of him.

