



Policy Position Statement

Palm Oil

Zoos SA recognises that palm oil production has been a significant driver for large-scale deforestation, threats to species and greenhouse gas emissions. To avoid further habitat loss Zoos SA supports organisations that use, or are working towards using, certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO).

Zoos SA supports labelling for palm oil and CSPO so consumers can make an informed choice.

By facilitating change through partnerships, suppliers and community education Zoos SA will work with likeminded partners worldwide to help break the link between palm oil production and deforestation.

Zoos SA's position is consistent with WWF International, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and other major Australian zoos.

What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil comes from the oil palm plant, native to West Africa, South and Central America. It is the most widely used vegetable oil on Earth and demand for palm oil is increasing. Around half of the packaged products on Australian supermarket shelves contain palm oil or its derivatives including food products, plastics, detergents, shampoos, and cosmetics. Palm oil is also used increasingly as a biofuel.

Palm oil is often favoured because it is relatively inexpensive to produce, has a long shelf life, can be used in a wide range of products and contains no cholesterol.

Rationale

Unsustainable palm oil is a known driver of deforestation in tropical regions and therefore a significant threat to biodiversity. While non-forested land is available for plantations, many companies opt to first log forested areas to sell the timber. Zoos SA believes the practice of clear-felling to establish oil palm plantations is unsustainable and has an unacceptable impact on local communities and species.

Many of the species found at Adelaide Zoo are threatened in the wild by the cultivation of palm oil including Sumatran Orangutan, Sumatran Tiger, Malayan Tapir and Sun Bear.

Unfortunately finding an alternative to palm oil is unlikely to address the issues. Encouraging a complete shift away from palm oil may push manufacturers to source alternative oils such as soy or rapeseed which can require six to nine times more land than is needed for palm oil and subsequently even more habitat will be cleared.

Palm oil is also a major part of the economy in the areas where it is grown, contributing to rapid economic growth and rural development. Ceasing the industry without first establishing sustainable alternatives would threaten local livelihoods and put the environment at further risk by potentially driving communities to play a role in illegal activities such as wildlife trade.

Promoting CSPO will ensure global palm oil supply does not lead to further deforestation, that wildlife is protected and that local communities have a viable alternative income. The criteria and principles for certification can be viewed at:
http://www.rspo.org/en/principles_and_criteria_certification.

What is Zoos SA doing?

Zoos SA recognises the urgent need to protect habitat for wildlife threatened by unsustainable palm oil production, and as a zoo-based conservation society we believe by working with others we can make an impact.

Zoos SA will work to raise awareness of the impacts of unsustainable palm oil, promote CSPO and the value of appropriate product labelling for palm oil.

We will encourage our suppliers to use CSPO or other sustainable alternatives. We will favour suppliers who have committed to using CSPO and over time eliminate the use or sale of products with unsustainable palm oil where a viable alternative exists.

We will provide ongoing support to conserve species in habitat affected by unsustainable palm oil through our conservation and education programs.

For more information on Zoos SA's activities visit our website at: <http://www.zoossa.com.au/>.

How our supporters can help

Zoos SA believes that every person can make an impact through the choices they make. To support our efforts we encourage supporters to:

- write to their local MP expressing support for palm oil labelling in Australia;
- write to supermarkets requesting they promote and stock CSPO products;
- write to companies encouraging them to commit to CSPO or meet their public CSPO targets;
- buy CSPO products or sustainable alternatives;
- donate to Zoos SA's conservation programs; and/or
- become a Zoos SA member to support the organisation's important long-term work.

Reviewing the Position Statement

Zoos SA's Position Statement – Palm Oil will be reviewed every two years or where circumstances warrant by the Zoos SA Board. This Statement will guide the work of all staff and volunteers of Zoos SA.

Next review due: September 2022

References

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil www.rspo.org

Palm Oil Scorecard 2016 (International) | Publications | WWF

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/palm-oil-scorecard-2016>

WWF Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard 2017 (Singapore and Malaysia) <https://palmoil.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/POBSReport.pdf>