

Captive Behavior Appendix

The behaviors listed in this appendix are anecdotal and have been observed by zoo staff or in a captive setting. None of these behaviors have been observed in wild populations of orangutans.

Males

- understands and performs American Sign Language signs
- can do puzzles
- points his finger or touches his head to the mesh to indicate to his keeper that he wants to be shown the keepers posterior or to have the keeper rub his head
- enjoys being tickled by keepers
- head clasping or ear holding seen in several variations including: holds right hand in a fist, raised to the right side of his head and resting on head
- likes to be photographed
- rocks and bobs his head to get the attention of his keepers
- appears to have a fascination with skin punctures (holes) on himself or other orangutan cage mates. Large, open wounds he leaves alone but punctures he manipulates. If he notices a puncture on his own body, he will try to stick items in the puncture continually. After a sedation where an intentional incision was made in his throat sac for medical reasons, he wouldn't leave the incision site alone. He inserted any item he had into it.
- stands on his head and drinks his own urine
- when asked by keepers to play catch, throws a ball out of his exhibit – he's still trying to master catching objects
- regurgitates food onto his arm hair, then sucks the vomitus out of his hair
- sucks chewed food through hair on arms – appeared to be straining the food through his hair
- spinning stereotypically
- combs his own hair
- gives himself a bath
- brushes his own teeth
- squeezes his nipples when stressed
- likes to show visitors worms, birds, or mice that he's caught and killed
- able to pick locks and escapes from his cage
- train ride going by enclosure would stimulate forcible copulation with his female
- intense interest in women and children – masturbates at glass front of exhibit when he sees people
- masturbates and makes a short long call when one of his keepers is menstruating
- attempts to masturbate with rice bread which causes his hair around his penis to knot up and cake with smashed rice bread – he will allow keepers to cut out the knots

- decorates his penis with a variety of items including egg cartons and onion skins
- during forcible copulations with female has attempted to insert objects into the female's vaginal area (one attempt included a large pig ball)
- has used his infant as a method to get his female to come into his cage. This male was housed via the restricted access method (creep) to his female and infant. This allowed the female to choose when she wanted to go into his cage. When their infant would go through the creep door into the male's cage, the male would begin to mount the infant. This would cause the infant to whimper in distress. The female would immediately come through the creep to rescue her infant. The male would then forcibly copulate with the female
- interacts with female keepers in a sexual way. When a female keeper of his choice speaks to him, he will begin rumbling in a deep throaty purr, present his chest and squeeze his nipples. The self-squeezing of his nipples sometimes causes a white substance (resembling milk) to be expressed. He may also present his erect penis through the mesh. As his purring or rumbling continues he sometimes takes a small piece of hay and pierces a piece of skin (sometimes his nipples) and then present that to keepers, trying to get them to remove it. He has greatly increased the frequency of expressing white fluid from his nipples and even self-nursing since one of the adult females gave birth. This behavior was seen infrequently from the male prior to the female's pregnancy. This female never self-nursed prior to being pregnant. Since the birth of her infant, the adult female has begun daily self-nursing. The male has also begun to self nurse often as well.
- Has a preoccupation with skin punctures (breaks) on females. He attempts to stick his penis in the openings no matter the location on the female. In one instance he was rubbing his penis so frequently on the female's hip, he created an abrasion. He has also attempted inserting his penis in the female's ears.

Females

- Clears away a spot on the floor or on a rock outdoors to regurgitate and re-ingest
- runs a piece of straw over lips to induce regurgitation then re-ingests
- pounds her chest or stomach area to induce regurgitation then re-ingests
- sucks chewed food through hair on arms
- swings and "locomotes" methodically when stressed
- self-clasps or bounces when stressed
- when interacting with zoo visitors (begging) she claps her hands, extends one and then smiles
- this behavior exhibited towards her keepers – covers her eyes with her hands or block vision with cage so she cannot see keeper. No particular situation triggers this behavior
- teeth grinding
- likes to make a steam bath by putting a large barrel in front of a stream of warm water and then sleeps in it

- presents her genital area to cage front in hopes of getting a treat reward
- growls at keepers when unhappy
- when given a warm water hose likes to put it up her nose to flush out her sinuses (this animal has chronic congestion)
- makes bras, holsters for sticks and necklaces out of palm fronds
- makes knots and ropes out of t-shirts
- when agitated walks backwards bipedally
- when separated from cage mates to allow an implant site to heal, began biting off her fingertips
- cleans her cage walls
- wipes off her nose if keeper gives her a paper towel after she sneezes
- likes to be tickled
- likes to examine the bottoms of keepers shoes
- smashes food into the long hair on her arms
- vomits on keepers when she is upset
- makes ropes out of cloth, hangs them from skylights and spins from them
- can smoke lit cigarettes which visitors throw to her
- mixes urine with favored food items
- obsessive nest building
- hoards food but does not eat it
- grabs objects and presses forehead against it hard – as a youngsters she did this with keepers shins (reports of broken bones) and continues to do it with almost any vertical object
- snaps her fingers, makes popping noises with her mouth
- after giving birth to one of her infants, she was observed inserting her finger far down the infant's throat, picking intensely at his eyes and attempting to push her thumbs through the infant's eye sockets
- during another birth, dam bit through the infant's top lip, sucked it's facial skin off and put a hole in the esophagus by inserting her finger down it's throat.
- does back flips
- uses chalk to paint her nails and lips
- can use combs and brushes on her own hair
- attempts to imitate human voice
- shorts out hot wires
- ground out electric fences by pounding hot wire into a tree trunk with a rock and by wetting a piece of grass and laying it between two hot wires
- one orangutan would tie the hands of the other orangutan it was caged with to the cage front (keepers discovered the "tied up" individual upon their arrival in the morning)