

MOVIE

RECOMMENDATION

EYES OF THE ORANGUTAN

Eyes of the Orangutan is an investigative documentary exposing the cruelty behind Southeast Asia's wildlife tourism industry. Following photojournalist Aaron Gekoski's four-year journey, it reveals how orangutans are exploited for entertainment and the efforts of rescue centers working to return them to the wild. It's both a disturbing exposé and a call for compassion toward our closest animal relatives.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Wildlife tourism is often sold as a way to connect with nature, but behind the staged photos and "animal experiences" lies a darker truth. **Eyes of the Orangutan** confronts that reality, revealing how intelligent, sensitive creatures are reduced to props for human amusement. The documentary begins with environmental photojournalist Aaron Gekoski's visit to a cramped glass enclosure in Vietnam, where a single orangutan stares back with weary eyes. That moment triggers a four-year investigation across Southeast Asia. Joined by filmmaker Chris Scarffe, cinematographer Will Foster-Grundy, and editor Damian Antochewicz, Gekoski captures shocking scenes: orangutans forced into boxing matches in Thailand, posed for "selfies" in Indonesia, and made to sit with tourists over breakfast. Beneath these spectacles is a system of exploitation poachers killing mothers to steal their young, corrupt officials ignoring abuses, and a tourism industry profiting from suffering. Yet the film also offers hope. At the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation, rescued individuals are cared for and slowly reintroduced to the wild, showing that compassion can undo some of the harm. Ultimately, **Eyes of the Orangutan** is more than an expose it's a call to re-examine our relationship with wildlife. If we can justify harming creatures that share 97% of our DNA, what does that reveal about us?

