

# MOVIE RECOMMENDATION

## EYES OF THE ORANGUTAN (2021)

Release date: July 7th 2021

Directed by  
Will Foster-Grundy  
Chris Scarffe

Produced by  
Sabine Holzer  
Susanne Lummer

## Synopsis

Every year, millions of people travel the world to get their fix of the cute, the cuddly, and the charismatic. We take our families to zoos, ride on the back of elephants, visit dolphin shows at aquariums, and watch animals perform tricks at circuses.

Wildlife Tourism is a global, multi-billion dollar industry. But these profits don't come without costs. In front of our eyes, and behind closed doors, lie stories of abuse and cruelty.

Aaron Gekoski is an internationally acclaimed photojournalist who has spent more than a decade documenting human-animal conflict. Over recent years he's turned his lens on the Wildlife Tourism industry; a mission that's taken him to dozens of countries.

But it was a trip to Vietnam that changed everything. At an amusement park in Ho Chi Minh, he spent time with a large male orangutan. Kept in a 4x5m enclosure, the orangutan had little more than two boulders for stimulation, no trees to climb, no place to escape the glare of visitors.

Orangutans are star attractions at Wildlife Tourism attractions. Sharing 97% of our DNA, they are sentient and intelligent animals. When kept in captivity, at places that cannot cater to their complex physical and emotional needs, they often suffer from stress and depression. On their journey, the team witnesses untold pain and suffering. Thankfully, there are groups working to mitigate this crisis. At Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation, they meet local heroes who rescue and rehabilitate rescued orangutans, ready for release back into the wild. This is a story of hope, set within the dark heart of the Wildlife Tourism industry.

