Borneo is burning: How the world’s demand for palm oil is driving deforestation in Indonesia

By Rebecca Wright, Ivan Watson, Tom Booth and Masrur Jamaluddin, CNN


Kalimantan, Indonesia (CNN) — Deep within the jungles of Indonesian Borneo, illegal fires rage, creating apocalyptic red skies and smoke that has spread as far as Malaysia and Singapore.

People are choking.
Animals are dying.

This is no ordinary fire. It was lit for you. Farmers are clearing land the fastest way they know how to cash in on growing demand for palm oil, which is used in half of all supermarket products, from chocolate to shampoo. They’re not only burning the forest, they’re destroying the peatlands that lie beneath it -- the world’s largest natural terrestrial carbon sink.

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