KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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Baby elephant loses half its trunk to poacher trap

Indonesia A BABY elephant in Sumatra island has had half of her trunk amputated after being caught in what authorities said was a trap set by poachers who prey on the endangered species.

The one-year-old female is among the last of the island's 700 wild Sumatran elephants. She was found very weak with a snare still embedded in her almost-severed trunk on Sunday in Alue Meuraksa, a forested village in the Aceh Jaya district, said Agus Arianto, the head of Aceh province's conservation agency.

"This obviously was intended to poach endangered animals to earn money," Arianto said in a statement.

"We will cooperate with law enforcement agencies in an investigation."

Arianto said the elephant calf was apparently left behind by the herd due to her deteriorating condition after being caught in the snare trap, allegedly set by a poacher.

He said that wildlife officials on Monday had to amputate half of the trunk in a life-saving operation.

Conservationists say that the coronavirus pandemic has led to increased poaching in Sumatra as villagers turn to hunting for economic reasons.

In July, an elephant was found without its head at a palm plantation in East Aceh. Police arrested a suspected poacher along with four people accused of buying ivory from the dead animal. Their trials are still ongoing since last month.

They face up to five years in prison and a fine of 100 million rupiah (RM29,100) if found guilty.

The number of Sumatran elephants that have died as a result of being snared and poisoning has reached 25 in the past nine years in East Aceh district alone, Arianto said.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN, has raised the status of the Sumatran elephant from endangered to critically endangered in its 2012 Red List, mostly because of a significant drop in the population as indicated by the loss of over 69% of its potential habitat in the last 25 years – the equivalent of one generation. — AP



Still standing strong: The elephant calf that lost half of its trunk being treated at an elephant conservation centre in Saree, Aceh Besar. — AP

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