

Malaysia tracks orangutans with implants

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This undated handout photograph, made available by the Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD), shows a male flanged orangutan hanging from a tree in Malaysian Borneo's Sabah State. Malaysian wildlife authorities are using electronic implants to keep track of orangutans in a bid to protect the endangered apes after they are freed into the wild, an official said Tuesday.

Malaysian wildlife authorities are using electronic implants to keep track of orangutans in a bid to protect the endangered apes after they are freed into the wild, an official said Tuesday.

Laurentius Ambu, wildlife department head in Sabah state on Borneo island, said three orangutans had coin-sized transmitters implanted in

their necks in September.

"These are rescued orangutans. Eventually they will be reintroduced into the wild and we would like to monitor their movement, to know how they are doing in the forests," he told AFP.

"We would like to ensure the orangutans are safe."

The three chosen orangutans now live in a sanctuary in Sabah that houses about 250 orangutans in all.

Laurentius said the department aims to gradually install the [transmitter](#) on more orangutans in the state, which has about 11,000 of the [primates](#).

Experts say there are about 50,000 to 60,000 orangutans left in the wild, 80 percent of them in Indonesia and the rest in Malaysian's eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo island.

A 2007 assessment by the United Nations Environment Program warned that orangutans would be virtually eliminated in the wild within two decades if current rates of deforestation continue.

[Orangutan](#) habitats in Malaysia and Indonesia are disappearing as their jungle homes are cleared for logging and to make way for plantations.

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