

Trapping threatens near-extinct Philippine eagle

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A Philippine Eagle is seen at the Philippine Eagle Center in the southern island of Mindanao. Conservationists have raised alarm over the future of the near-extinct animal after several maimed or diseased birds were retrieved from captivity over recent months.

Conservationists raised alarm Thursday over the future of the near-extinct Philippine eagle after several maimed or diseased birds were retrieved from captivity over recent months.

The Philippine Eagle Foundation said that since last December it had rescued four of the one-metre (3.3-foot) [birds](#), which are among the world's largest raptors, suggesting conservation laws had not deterred trapping.

"The [eagles](#) continue to be harmed and poached," said Tatit Quiblat, development manager with the foundation which has a [captive breeding](#) programme for birds to be later returned to the wild.

"We are extremely distressed about these events," he added.

The foundation said the retrieved birds, all recovered from the large southern island of Mindanao, included a female eagle that was missing two out of three toes on one foot when it was recovered in December.

The government in January handed over a year-old male to the Mindanao-based foundation which it had received from villagers.

This month, a year-old eagle with just two primary feathers remaining on its right wing was turned over by local residents while a juvenile retrieved from another community died from a [fungal infection](#).



Fact file on the Philippine eagle. The bird can grow one metre in height with a wing span of up to seven feet (two metres).

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) says there are just 180-500 mature Philippine eagles in Mindanao, Luzon, Leyte and Samar islands, with forest loss and poaching the main threats to their survival.

It said the captive breeding programme had so far failed. The first released bird electrocuted on a transmission line nine months after it was sent into the wild in 2004.

Another captive-bred eagle was killed by a hunter four months after being released in 2008.

The species is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN.

While the Philippines has laws banning the killing, collection, and maltreatment of wildlife as well as activities that threaten critical habitats, the eagles continue to be prime targets, it said.

It also called for a stop to the practice of bounty-hunting Philippine eagles that are then turned over to the government or the foundation with the expectation of a reward.

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