

Borneo orangutan was shot over 100 times with airgun

October 25 2012



A female orangutan who is pictured in Indonesia. An endangered orangutan on Borneo island has survived after being shot more than 100 times with an air rifle, Indonesian officials have said.

An endangered orangutan on Borneo island has survived after being shot more than 100 times with an air rifle, Indonesian officials said on Thursday.

The female ape, whom conservationists have named Aan, has gone blind in one eye and sustained serious wounds across her body after being repeatedly hit with pellets on the Indonesian part of the island.

Conservationists had feared the orangutan, found on an oil palm plantation with 37 pellets lodged in her head and 67 elsewhere in her body, would not survive but officials now believe she has cheated death.

"She is fighting hard. She was badly wounded, but she's starting to eat so we're hopeful," Hartono, head of the local government conservation agency, told AFP.

But he fears she may lose the sight in her remaining eye and her hearing could be affected.

"We may be able to release her, but we're worried about her chances of survival with no sight and poor hearing," said Hartono, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

The agency said it did not know who shot the ape, which is now in a rehabilitation centre in the Borneo jungle. But the past year has seen several shootings of [orangutans](#) on plantations as a form of pest control.

Rangers from the agency rescued Aan on October 10 after she was spotted with serious injuries in Central Kalimantan province. They removed all 104 pellets from her body with the help of the UK-based Orangutan Foundation.

The foundation had feared she would die from infections caused by the serious wounds to her head, as well as near her heart, lungs and eyes.

Four men were sentenced to eight months' jail in April for shooting and beating to death three orangutans and long-nosed monkeys in East

Kalimantan in Indonesian Borneo.

In that case, employees at a Malaysian-owned palm [oil company](#) had paid them to drive the orangutans away. Borneo is shared between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Experts believe there are about 50,000 to 60,000 of the two species of orangutans left in the wild, 80 percent of them in Indonesia and the rest in Malaysia.

They are faced with extinction from poaching and the rapid destruction of their forest habitat, mainly to create [palm oil plantations](#).

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