

Rare tiger dies after Indonesia flight switch

October 4 2012



File picture of a Sumatran tiger. One of the big cats died after his transport to an Indonesia park was aborted and he was put on a second flight because plane passengers complained about the smell, an official said. The eight-year-old was being sent with other animals on a commercial flight Tuesday from Banda Aceh in the northern tip of Sumatra island to a conservation centre on Java.

A rare Sumatran tiger has died after his transferral to an Indonesia park was aborted and he was put on a second flight because passengers complained about the smell, an official said.

The eight-year-old [big cat](#) was being sent with other animals on a [commercial flight](#) Tuesday from Banda Aceh on the northern tip of [Sumatra island](#) to a conservation centre on Java island.

But during a scheduled stopover in Medan, Sumatra, the national carrier Garuda Indonesia decided to unload the animals and fly them back to

Banda Aceh, citing passengers' complaints about unpleasant odors, said provincial conservation agency chief Afan Absory on Thursday.

"When the tiger arrived in Banda Aceh on the same day, we found out that it was already dead," he told AFP. The tiger was flying along with a gibbon and two bearcats, which have a distinctive smell.

"We are seeking clarification from the airline as they returned the tiger to Banda Aceh without informing our official who was flying with them," added Absory, who said he found blood coming out of the animal's nose.

The airline's spokesman Pudjobroto, who goes by one name, said Garuda was waiting for results of their investigation into the tiger's death.

Garuda had "implemented standard procedures" for transporting animals, he said in a text message.

The male tiger had been rescued in 2010 from a forest in Aceh province where it was threatened by human encroachment on its territory.

There are fewer than 400 [Sumatran tigers](#) left in the wild and [environmental activists](#) say the animals are increasingly coming into conflict with people as their natural habitat is rapidly deforested.

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Citation: Rare tiger dies after Indonesia flight switch (2012, October 4) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-rare-tiger-dies-indonesia-flight.html>

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