

# Offspring for first captive-bred Philippine eagle

February 14 2013

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Pag-asa, the first Philippine eagle bred in captivity, is pictured on April 23, 2004 at the Philippine Eagle Foundation in the southern island of Mindanao. She has sired her first offspring, in what conservationists said Thursday was a small victory in efforts to save one of the world's rarest raptors.

The first Philippine eagle bred in captivity has sired her first offspring, in what conservationists said Thursday was a small victory in efforts to

save one of the world's rarest raptors.

The bird was hatched after a dramatic wait on February 9 at the Philippine [Eagle](#) Foundation in the southern island of Mindanao, the group's executive director Dennis Salvador told AFP.

"This is a triumph for the Philippine Eagle, but there is still a long way to go to for these majestic creatures to grow in number in the wild," Salvador said.

"It (the bird) is in very good condition, although we had a very problematic hatch—we waited with baited breath for it to finally come out of the shell," he said.

The chick's mother is an eagle named Pag-asa (Hope) that was the first [raptor](#) bred in captivity at the centre in 1992, Salvador said.

The Philippine eagle, or *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, found only in the country's vanishing forests, is the world's largest eagle and is considered "critically endangered".

With a distinctive shaggy and cream-coloured crest, the raptor grows to up to 3.35 feet (one metre) in length with a wing span of up to seven feet.

According to the foundation and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, there are only about between 180 to 500 pairs in the wild, mostly in the lush jungles of Mindanao, the country's main southern island.

The new hatchling is only the 25th bred in captivity at the centre, which has a total 37 of the eagles.

It took about 48 hours for the chick to emerge from the shell from the time it began breaking its way out, Salvador said.

"This underscores the fact that breeding these birds in captivity remains difficult," he said. "We are certainly a long way off in coping with losses in the wild."

Conservationists said decreasing [forest cover](#) and hunting by humans either for sport or food were to blame for the decreasing numbers.

In 2012, a court fined a 26-year-old man some 2,300 dollars for shooting and then eating an eagle that had previously been cared for by the foundation, triggering an uproar.

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