

# Sumatran elephant found with leg almost severed by rope

February 19 2016

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An injured Sumatran elephant calf pictured after its leg became entangled at the Balairaja wildlife sanctuary in Bengkalis, in the Riau province of Indonesia's Sumatra island, on February 18, 2016

A Sumatran elephant calf lies stricken in the jungle in Indonesia as conservationists fight to remove a rope tightly wound around its leg that almost caused the critically endangered animal to lose a limb.

The youngster was spotted with another [calf](#) and their mother in a wildlife sanctuary in Bengkalis, Riau province, with their legs entangled in ropes that are believed to have come from traps set by locals, according to the Indonesian Mahout Association.

The calf lies on its side in the mud, as a rescuer holds an intravenous drip that is attached to the creature, during the operation to remove the tightly wound cord.

His leg was saved but the other two [elephants](#) were not so lucky—the mother lost her tail and the other calf lost a leg, according to the association, which believes the elephants were entangled for several months.

After being alerted by a group of trekkers who posted pictures on [social media](#), local conservationists tracked down the elephants and carefully removed the ropes from their legs and treated their wounds.

The operation took a week due to a lack of decent equipment and ended Friday, with all the ropes removed and the pachyderms left in the wild, according to mahout association chairman Nazaruddin, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. A mahout is an elephant keeper.



Veterinary workers treat a sick elephant calf after its leg became entangled at the Balairaja wildlife sanctuary in Bengkalis, in Riau province on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, on February 18, 2016

It is not clear whether the elephants were the intended targets of the rope traps or if villagers were trying to catch other animals for food, Nazaruddin said.

Protection group the International Union for Conservation of Nature classifies the Sumatran elephant as critically endangered, and there are believed to be less than 3,000 remaining in the wild.

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