

Name sought for rare albino orangutan rescued in Indonesia

May 10 2017



In this undated photo released by Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), an albino orangutan sits in a cage as it's being quarantined at a rehabilitation center in Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The conservation group is asking the public to suggest names for the rare albino orangutan that was rescued from villagers in the Indonesian part of Borneo last month, hoping it will become an inspiring symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species. (Indrayana/BOSF via AP)

A conservation group is asking the public to name a rare albino

orangutan that was rescued from villagers on Borneo island last month, hoping it will become a symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species.

The 5-year-old female great ape is being kept in a dimly lit quarantine enclosure with round-the-clock veterinarian care after being rescued in the Indonesian part of the island on April 29, Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation spokesman Nico Hermanu said Wednesday. She's the first albino [orangutan](#) to be encountered by the foundation in its 25 years of conservation work.

The foundation said in a statement that the orangutan has become an ambassador for her species and it wants a "meaningful" name for her that will reflect the significant conservation challenges that orangutans face in the wild.

It said she is sensitive to sunlight due to a complete absence of pigmentation and physically fragile, which is common for rescued orangutans, but gradually improving.

"Understandably, she still has a long way to go in her recovery following the trauma of losing her mother and her illegal capture," the statement said.

Hermanu said villagers in Central Kalimantan province on Borneo had the orangutan for two days and claimed it had strayed out of the forest. Other villagers reported its capture to police and a government conservation agency that asked the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation to intervene.



In this April 30, 2017 photo released by Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), an albino orangutan sits in a cage as it's being quarantined at a rehabilitation center in Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The conservation group is asking the public to suggest names for the rare albino orangutan that was rescued from villagers in the Indonesian part of Borneo last month, hoping it will become an inspiring symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species. (Indrayana/BOSF via AP)

Hermanu said she may only have survived in the wild due to a protective mother that she apparently became separated from. Whether she can ever be returned to her natural habitat is still uncertain, he said.

Orangutans, known for their gentle temperament and intelligence, live in the wild only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra and on Borneo, which is divided among Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates the

number of Bornean orangutans has dropped by nearly two-thirds since the early 1970s and will further decline to 47,000 by 2025.



In this May 2, 2017 photo released by Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), an albino orangutan stands in an enclosure at a rehabilitation center in Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The conservation group is asking the public to suggest names for the rare albino orangutan that was rescued from villagers in the Indonesian part of Borneo last month, hoping it will become an inspiring symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species. (Indrayana/BOSF via AP)

Bornean orangutans were declared critically endangered by the IUCN last year due to hunting for their meat and conflicts with plantation workers, which kills 2,000 to 3,000 a year, and destruction of tropical forests for plantation agriculture. The only other orangutan species, the Sumatran orangutan, has been critically endangered since 2008.

Suggested names for the rescued orangutan can be sent to name@orangutan.org.id or by using the hashtag #albinoorangutan on social media until May 14. The group, known as BOS, plans to announce its selection the next day.

It and several other [conservation](#) groups specialize in rehabilitating captured orangutans and returning them to the wild.



In this May 3, 2017 photo released by Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), a keeper examines an albino orangutan at a rehabilitation center in Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The conservation group is asking the public to suggest names for the rare albino orangutan that was rescued from villagers in the Indonesian part of Borneo last month, hoping it will become an inspiring symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species. (Indrayana/BOSF via AP)

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