

Elephant poachers arrested in Malaysia

March 13 2018



Asian elephants, found in India and Southeast Asia, are listed as an endangered species

Four heavily armed poachers who targeted wild elephants in Malaysia have been caught, officials said Tuesday, the second such arrest in less than two years.

Wildlife officials said the [gang](#) caught near the town of Gerik in the northern Malaysian state of Perak was found with deer antlers and suspected tiger bones.

A joint police and [wildlife](#) department investigation also led the agents to find an elephant shot dead by the poachers in a nearby forest with its [tusks](#) ripped out.

"This crew is notorious. They hunt [elephants](#)," wildlife department chief Abdul Kadir Abdul Hashim told AFP.

"There are maybe two more (poaching) groups (in the area). We are working together with the police on this."

A police statement said weapons including rifles and homemade shotguns as well as animal snares were found after they arrested the gang.

The elephant's tusks were not found, with a wildlife official believing that they were already sold.

He added that the gang—all locals—were believed to have been operating since 2009, and were also active in the nearby state of Kelantan.

The arrests come a year after a seven-man gang was arrested in Kelantan, with explosives, guns and parts of tusks seized.

Elizabeth John, senior communications officer of wildlife trade watchdog Traffic Southeast Asia, hoped to see more busts like these in the future.

"The seizure of high powered weapons clearly shows what wildlife and

other authorities are up against," she said.

There are believed to be some 1,200 wild Asian elephants in peninsular Malaysia, down from as many as 1,700 in 2011.

Though endangered and protected by law, many of these pachyderms have been hunted for their ivory, which can fetch thousands of dollars on the black market.

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