

Endangered pygmy elephant shot dead on Borneo

July 26 2018



The pygmy elephant was believed to have been killed after destroying villagers' crops in a remote area of Borneo

A pygmy elephant was shot dead on Borneo island after it destroyed villagers' crops, a Malaysian wildlife official said Thursday, the latest of

the endangered creatures to be killed.

The male elephant, believed to be about four years old, was found Monday by the side of a road in the state of Sabah, on the Malaysian part of Borneo, local wildlife department director Augustine Tuuga told AFP.

He said the "merciless" killing was carried out near a remote settlement, and authorities were investigating who was responsible.

"[The elephant] was killed out of revenge for destroying crops," he said, adding the crops included palm oil trees.

He said the creature's tusks remained intact, indicating the elephant was not killed by poachers seeking to sell its ivory on the black market.

It was the latest case in Malaysia of human-animal conflict, which happens when human settlements or [agricultural plantations](#) expand into a species's natural habitat.

Malaysia is home to vast tracts of rainforest and a kaleidoscope of exotic wildlife, from elephants to orangutans and tigers, but the numbers of many rare species have fallen dramatically in recent decades.

As well as human-animal conflict, many endangered animals are hunted for their body parts which fetch a high price for use in traditional medicine in China, and elsewhere in Asia.

At least 18 pygmy elephants have been killed in Malaysian Borneo since April, The Star newspaper reported. Causes of death included elephants being targeted by poachers and poisoning.

Pygmy elephants are baby-faced with large ears, plump bellies and long tails that sometimes drag on the ground, according to environmental

group WWF.

Rainforest-clad Borneo is the world's third-largest island and is shared between Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

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