

Borneo pygmy elephant found dead in Malaysia

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Pygmy elephants, such as this one seen in a 2013 file photo, are sometimes killed by poachers as ivory fetches a high price on the black market

A pygmy elephant has been found dead in a river on the Malaysian part of Borneo island, an official said Friday, the latest of the endangered

creatures to perish.

There are only around 1,500 surviving Borneo [pygmy elephants](#), a subspecies that can reach a height of up to three meters (10 feet), according to international conservation group WWF.

Wildlife officials are still investigating the cause of death of the male creature, aged around 10 years, whose body was discovered floating in the water, attached by a rope to a tree on the riverbank.

Local media reported that the elephant may have had gunshot wounds.

It was found in the Tawau district of Sabah state and is believed to have died about four days ago, state wildlife director Augustine Tuuga told AFP.

Officials could not confirm whether the elephant's tusks had been removed, as they are waiting for a post-mortem report.

The creatures are sometimes killed by poachers as ivory fetches a high price on the [black market](#), although villagers who see the creatures as a pest also target them.

Pygmy elephants are regularly found dead on Borneo, adding to concern about their declining numbers.

Tuuga said at least 100 have died in the past decade, with some killed deliberately by poisoning or being shot.

"It's not easy to get evidence of who did all those (deliberate) acts, not easy to get the suspect, because people are not giving any information to us," he said.

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

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