

Endangered tree kangaroo born at UK zoo

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The elusive Goodfellow's tree kangaroo is much smaller than the better-known Australian kangaroo species.

Conservationists at a UK zoo have captured the moment a rare tree kangaroo popped out of its mother's pouch for the first time, part of research aimed at helping the endangered species survive in the wild.

The elusive Goodfellow's tree kangaroo is much smaller than the better known Australian kangaroo species. It is native to the mountainous rainforests of Papua New Guinea, where they are under threat from hunting and [habitat destruction](#).

The species lives high up in trees and has lost more than half its population in the past 30 years.

Dave White, team manager of Chester Zoo in northwestern England, said they had documented the marsupial's growth using a special endoscope carefully placed into the mother's [pouch](#) every few weeks since it was born last July.

"By having these [endangered species](#) in our care we can learn so much about them and this sort of information that we are gathering is a small part preserving them in the wild," he told AFP.

Since little is known about their development, scientists hope capturing the process on camera will improve [conservation practices](#) and help other similar species in southeast Asia survive in the wild.

Tree kangaroos have one of the "most complex birthing processes in the animal kingdom", said White. It involves the youngster being born incredibly underdeveloped and instinctively following a path of fur, which has been licked by the mother, that leads to the pouch.



Little is known about tree kangaroos' development.

Once inside the pouch, the young kangaroo latches on to teats for nutrition. Then, slowly, it grows from the size of a jellybean, developing back legs and fur, until "around six months later it starts to open its eyes and pop its head out", he said.

Over the coming days and weeks, Chester's new baby kangaroo, is expected to fully emerge from its mother's pouch and begin learning to hop and climb trees, White added. It is not yet named, but thought to be male.

The Goodfellow tree kangaroo is one of 14 species of [tree kangaroo](#).

The others are found in the lowland and mountainous forests of Indonesia, the far north of Queensland, Australia and also in Papua New Guinea.

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