

Indonesia pet orangutans released back into the wild

19 June 2019



Five-year-old primate Elaine was one of two critically endangered Sumatran Orangutans released back into the wild

The young orangutan looks back at her rescuers before clambering over her steel cage and into the trees, swinging from hand to hand and hanging upside down.

Five-year-old primate Elaine, covered in fuzzy cinnamon-coloured hair, was one of two critically endangered Sumatran Orangutans released back into the wild Tuesday.

Both female apes were rescued after being kept as pets by villagers in Aceh province on Sumatra island.

Elaine and four-year-old Reipok Rere spent nearly two years learning to fend for themselves at a rehabilitation centre and "forest school" before being returned to the wild at Pinus Jantho Forest Reserve.

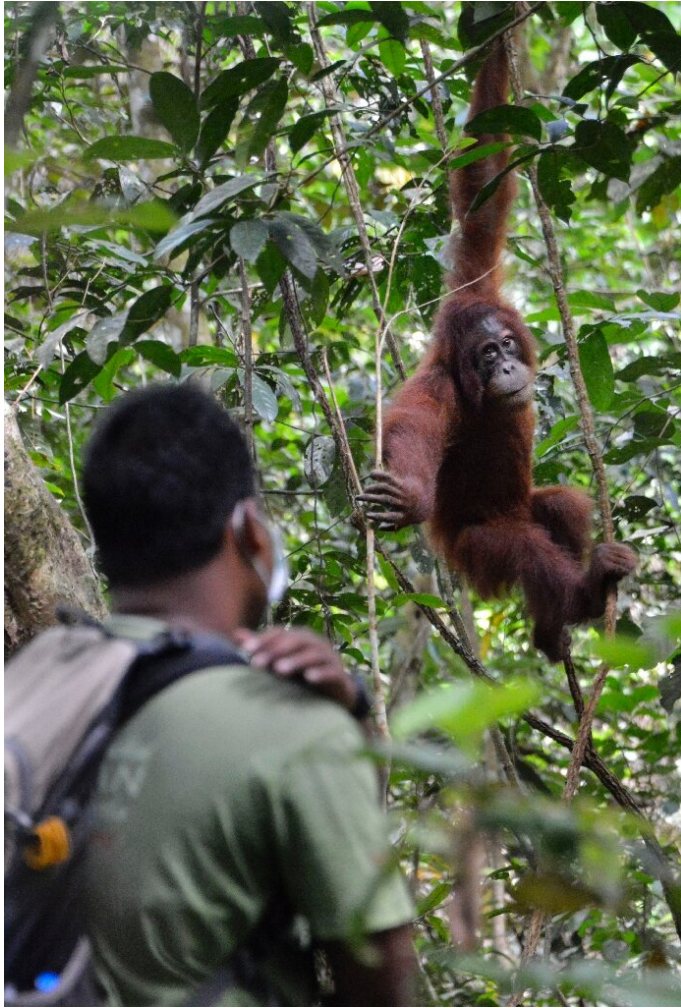
The healthy pair have joined nearly 120 other orangutans freed from captivity at the conservation site, said the Aceh natural resources conservation

agency.

The rescue is a rare spot of bright news for the critically endangered species, which has seen its habitat shrink drastically over the past few decades largely due to the destruction of forests for logging, paper, palm oil and mining.

A string of fatal attacks on the great apes in recent has been blamed on farmers and hunters.

Plantation workers and villagers are sometimes known to attack the animal because they see it as a pest, while poachers also capture them to sell as pets.



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