



Case Study:
Habitat

PROTECTING THE SUMATRAN ELEPHANT

Credit: Sri Mariati



The Challenge

The survival of Sumatran elephants is at risk. In 2012, the Sumatran elephant's risk category was changed from "Endangered" to "Critically Endangered" because half of its population had been lost in one generation. According to the WWF, only 2,400-2,800 Sumatran elephants remain in nature a mere 50 percent of its estimated population in 1985. The staggering decline is largely due to habitat loss and human-elephant conflict.

As elephants roam what was once a continuous forest, they must now cross farmlands where they often eat or trample crops. Conflicts with farmers, as well as poachers and ivory hunters, resulted in the death of many elephants. A solution was needed to allow both the elephants and the farmers to share the resources of the vast forest.

One of the Belantara Foundation's focus areas is Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu located in Riau, Indonesia. This is one of its grant areas and is also a protected area defined by UNESCO as a biosphere forest area. It is also home to large animals such as the Sumatran elephants. Over time, the protected area was transformed into industrial estates for palm oil, acacia and eucalyptus plantations, further exacerbated by the presence of residential areas leading to conflicts between humans and animals.

Our Solution

The handling of conflicts between animals and humans is a shared responsibility between communities, governments and environmental groups.

Together with local NGOs, Belantara locked arms with the local community to jointly address the loss of lives and farming value. The Foundation worked in five villages - Koto Pait Beringin, Beringin, Tasik Serai Timur, Tasik Serai and Serai Wangi - beginning with awareness education for the local community. The program established conflict mitigation teams in villages and improved the standard for proper handling and prevention of wildlife conflicts with humans.

Our Impact

Sumatran elephants and communities now coexist peacefully in the same landscape habitat, with the following infrastructure and programs in place:

- 77,627 hectares of patrolled area
- 4 pre-protection assessment documents
- 15 protection teams
- 1 patrol training with 60 participants
- 1 infrastructure project to support protection
- 2 non-institutional or technical protection trainings with 64 participants



77,627 hectares of
patrolled area



The Belantara Foundation is a non-profit organization that works to protect the Indonesian landscape by establishing local sustainability projects in areas that are set aside for conservation, reforestation and sustainable community development. Through its multi-stakeholder approach with Indonesian provincial governments, NGOs and communities, the Foundation funds programs that conserve and rehabilitate ecosystems, protect endangered species and help local farmers realize sustainable prosperity in Indonesia. For more information visit: belantara.or.id



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