

# UGM Hosts National Elephant Conference

Wednesday, 30 November 2016 WIB, By: Marwati



The Sumatran elephant (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*) is currently critically endangered, even heading towards extinction according to nature conservation agency, IUCN. Animal trade protection agency CITES said the Sumatran elephant has come into the "appendix 1" category which means not for trade.


These issues emerged in the *National Elephant Conference* at Faculty of Veterinary Sciences UGM on Saturday (26/11), which was hosted by the Faculty and presented speakers such as Donny Gunaryadi (Indonesian Elephant Conservation Forum - FKGI), Sukirna Puja Utama (Environment Ministry), Drh. Muhammad Wahyu (VESSWIC) and Dr. Wisnu Nurcahyo (UGM).

Donny Gunaryadi said in the conference that the government needs to stop natural forest conversion because the forest is the habitat of the elephant and other wild animals, also to have a moratorium on elephant poaching.

"Take firm measures, and guide the communities living around natural forests," Donny Gunaryadi urged the government.

Drh. Muhammad Wahyu said the most severe threat to elephants in the past five years was the death due to herpes virus (EEHV), not to mention the rare opportunities for elephants to have sexual interaction.

"In 2007, the tame population was only 500, which was decreasing every day. So, it is time for us not to blame each other, but to act," said Muhammad Wahyu.



Sukirna Puja Utama said the government was aware of the barriers that reduce elephant sustainability, including the loss of habitat, conflict between man and elephant, illegal poaching, illegal use of animal organs, and disease viruses. The government has actually planned a strategy for prevention for the period of 2007-2017.

"One of the rules is to include the elephant as one of critically endangered animals and to target the elephant population to increase by 10 percent in 2019," said Sukirna.

Dr.drh. Wisnu Nurcahyo, event initiator, hoped the conference would be followed up with real actions.

"We hope all can work on the site to save the elephant, from the Environment Ministry, Asian Pulp and Paper (APP), VESSWIC, PKBSI, Forum Mahout (Fokmas), YKSLI and FKGI as well as UGM," he concluded.

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