

Project Update: January 2016

After some difficulties with permits and logistics we eventually could head to the field for elephant collaring on January 14th 2016. The team consisted of 18 persons, including research collaborator Dr Muhammad Ali Imron (holding the research permit), veterinarian Christopher Stremme, elephant experts Nazaruddin and Hidayat, forest police officers Sartono and Benyamin, and 11 experienced field rangers of Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS).

The group split up into three teams in order to survey the area where recent elephant signs have been detected by FZS rangers before. Heavy rains, flooded rivers and generally very difficult access rendered elephant tracking challenging, but already at the second day we found fresh elephant tracks and dung. After two more days of intense tracking the Harapan Rainforest elephant group could be detected, and an adult female, named Jenny by the team, was darted and collared on January 18th 2016. The cow was estimated to be more than 30 years old and was 3.1 tons and 2.27m at the shoulder an impressive animal. After treating the puncture wound of the dart and injecting antibiotics Jenny was released and re-joined her family group. First GPS signals were already received, proving that the GPS collar works just fine. Now elephant monitoring and support of anti-poaching and other conservation work by forest police and local conservation groups can commence.

Note: all pictures were taken by FZS ranger Maskun Sofwan. Picture quality suffered as collaring was conducted after nightfall and just after we found the elephants it started to rain quite heavily.



Top left: Elephant Jenny tranquilized. Top right: Jenny with GPS collar. Bottom left: Nazaruddin and Alex attaching GPS collar. Bottom right: Vet Chris Stremme injecting medicine.