

Name sought for rare albino orangutan rescued in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A conservation group is seeking assistance to name a rare albino orangutan that was rescued from villagers on Borneo island in April. The group hopes the name will become a symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species.

The five-year-old female great ape is being kept in a dimly lit quarantine enclosure with round-the-clock veterinarian care after being rescued in the Indonesian part of the island on April 29, Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation spokesman Nico Hermanu said. She's the first albino orangutan to be encountered by the foundation in its 25 years of conservation work.

The foundation said in a statement that the orangutan has become an ambassador for her species and it wants a "meaningful" name for her that will reflect the significant conservation challenges that orangutans face in the wild.

It said she is sensitive to sunlight due to a complete absence of pigmentation and physically fragile, which is common for rescued orangutans, but gradually improving.

"Understandably, she still has a long way to go in her recovery following the trauma of losing her mother and her illegal capture," the statement said.

Hermanu said villagers in Central Kalimantan province on Borneo had the orangutan for two days and claimed it had strayed out of the forest. Other villagers reported its capture to police and a government



NEW NAME. An albino orangutan sits in a cage while under quarantine at a rehabilitation center in Nyaru Menteng, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation conservation group is seeking assistance to name a rare albino orangutan that was rescued from villagers on Borneo island in April. The group is hoping the name will become a symbol of efforts to save the critically endangered species. (Indrayana/Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation via AP)

conservation agency that asked the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation to intervene.

Hermanu said she may only have survived in the wild due to a protective mother that she apparently became separated from. Whether she can ever be returned to her natural habitat is still uncertain, he said.

Orangutans, known for their gentle temperament and intelligence, live in the wild only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra and on Borneo, which is divided among Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates the number of Bornean orangutans has dropped by nearly

two-thirds since the early 1970s and will further decline to 47,000 by 2025.

Bornean orangutans were declared critically endangered by the IUCN last year due to hunting for their meat and conflicts with plantation workers, which kills 2,000 to 3,000 a year, and destruction of tropical forests for plantation agriculture. The only other orangutan species, the Sumatran orangutan, has been critically endangered since 2008.

Suggested names for the rescued orangutan are being collected via e-mail and social media until May 15.

It and several other conservation groups specialize in rehabilitating captured orangutans and returning them to the wild.



MASSIVE CLEANUP OPERATION. People collect garbage on the north slope of Mount Qomolangma, in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Workers and volunteers collected four tons of garbage from the Chinese north side of Mount Everest in the first five days of a cleanup operation, according to state media. (Awang Zhaxi/Xinhua via AP)

Tons of garbage collected in Everest cleanup effort

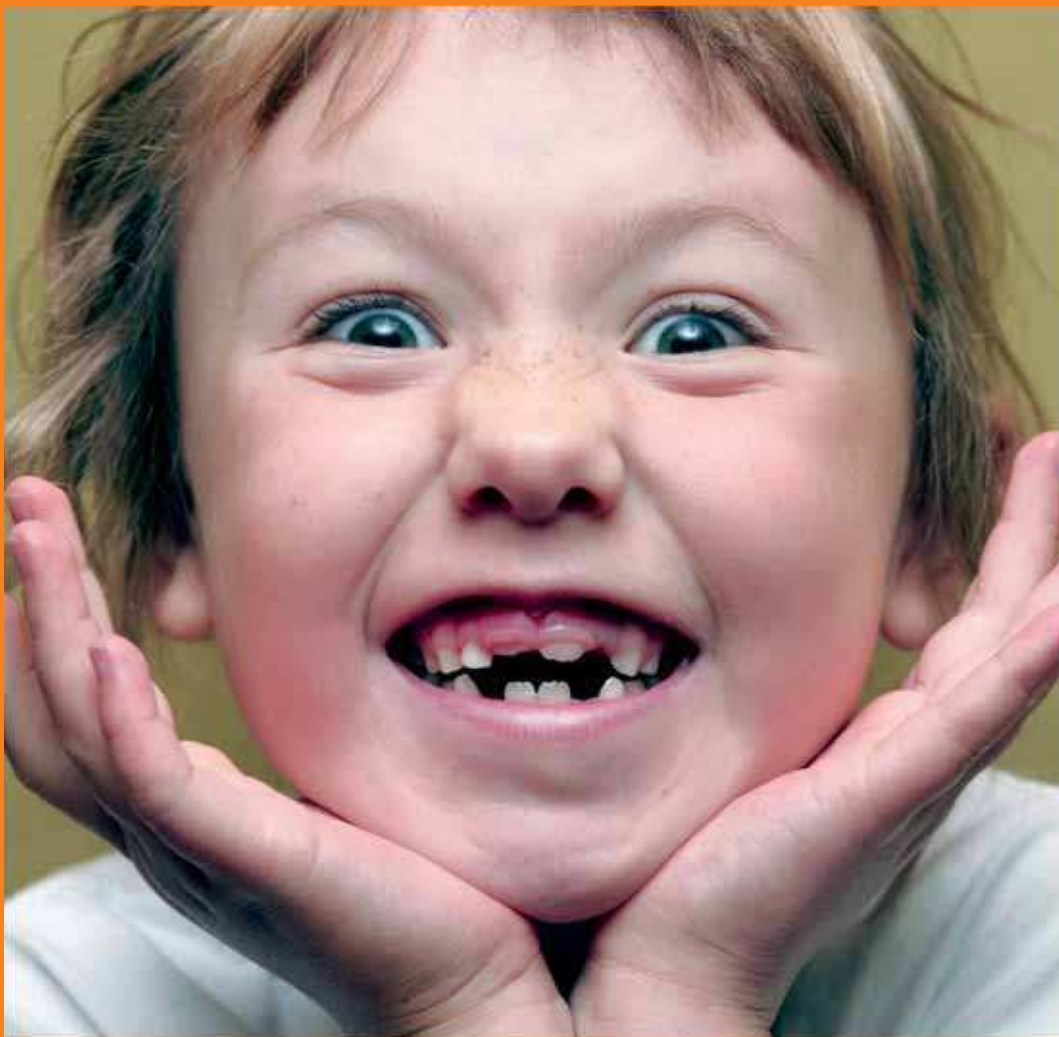
BEIJING (AP) — Workers and volunteers collected four tons of garbage from the Chinese north side of Mount Everest in the first five days of a cleanup operation, according to state media.

Hoping to find a more permanent solution, the local government in the Tibet region set up stations to sort, recycle, and break down the garbage, which includes cans, plastic bags, stove equipment, tents, oxygen tanks, and other mountain climbing paraphernalia, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The nine-day cleanup targets climbing trails and campsites between 17,000 and 21,300 feet.

Parts of Everest are in China and Nepal. Each year, about 60,000 climbers and guides visit the Chinese north side of the mountain, which China refers to by its Tibetan name, Mount Qomolangma.

On the Nepalese side, mountaineering expedition organizers have begun sending huge trash bags with climbers during the spring climbing season to collect trash that then can be winched by helicopters back to the base camp.



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