

The Flying Squad Alliance

Human-elephant conflict mitigation in the Tesso Nilo forest needs close collaboration by many stakeholders. The Flying Squads are sponsored by WWF and several of the area's plantation companies. The Flying Squad elephants are former wild elephants from Riau that were captured in conflict situations by Government over the past twenty years. Health care is provided by Drh. Wisnu Wardana, a professional veterinarian. Technical support is provided by WWF's Asian Rhino and Elephant Action Strategy Programme (AREAS). All Flying Squad operations are done in close collaboration with the villagers of the respective areas of operations.

Supporters of Tesso Nilo's Flying Squads

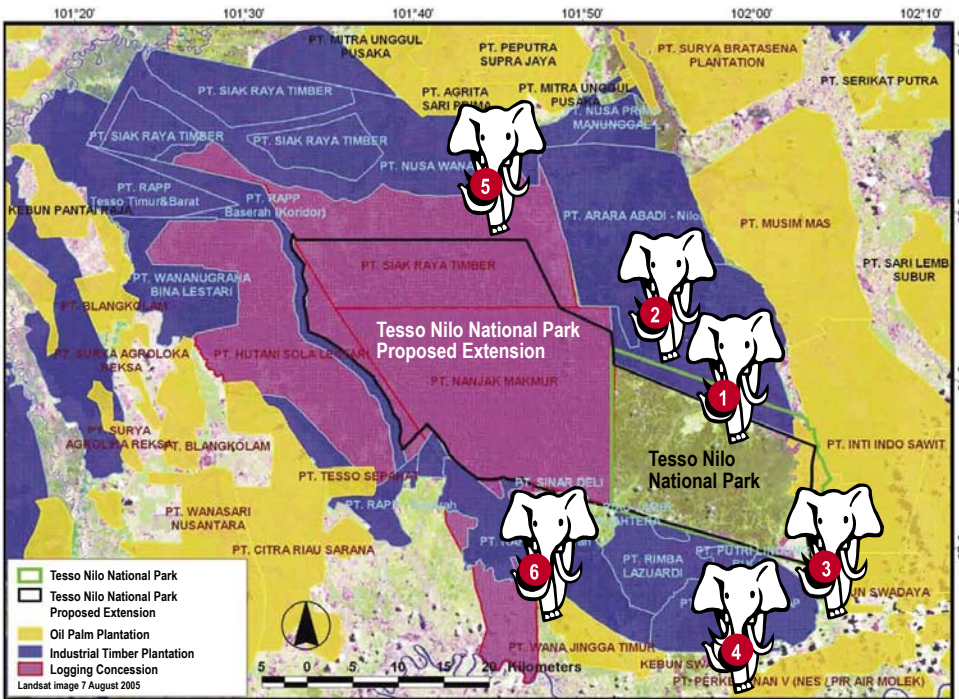
We would like to thank all the individuals, institutions and corporations who made possible the establishment and operation of Tesso Nilo's Flying Squads. Their contributions have greatly improved the lives of many people and elephants living in and around the Tesso Nilo forest complex.

WWF Netherlands financed the establishment and operation of the original WWF Tesso Nilo Programme Flying Squad based at Lubuk Kembang Bunga village. Ms. Nancy Abraham and WWF- US financed construction and operation of the Squad's new center with facilities for elephants, mahouts and WWF field staff.

Riau Pulp (Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Limited) financed the establishment and operation of a Flying Squad based at Elang Mas camp inside the company's pulp wood concession.

PT. Inti Indosawit Subur (PT. AsianAgri) will finance the establishment and operation of a Flying Squad to be based at Pontian Mekar village inside the company's oil palm concession.

PT. Musim Mas will finance the establishment and operation of a Flying Squad to be based at Pangkalan Gondai village outside the company's oil palm concession.

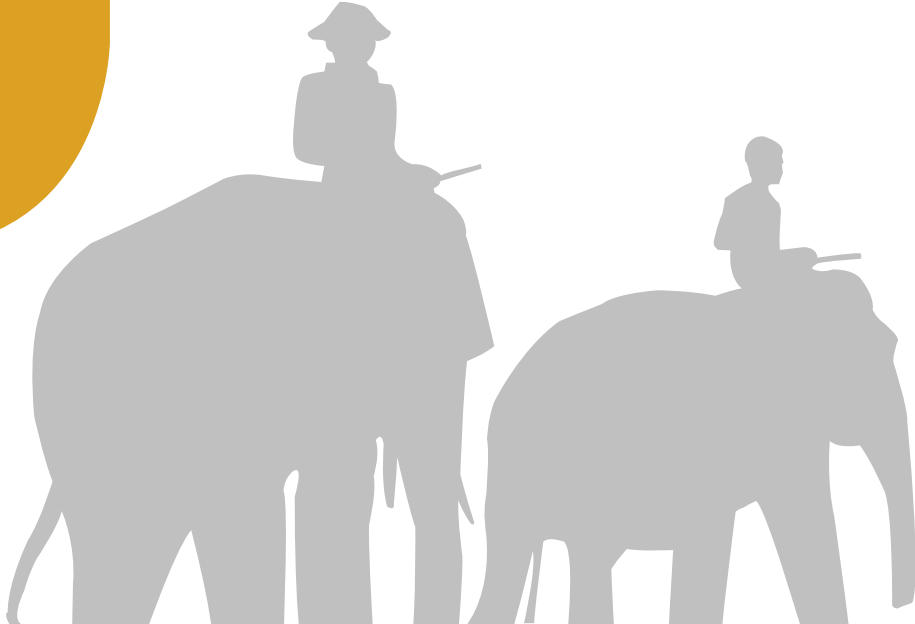


For more information on Tesso Nilo's "Flying Squads" please contact:

WWF- Indonesia Tesso Nilo Programme

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The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Indonesia is part of the Global WWF Network. WWF - Indonesia and WWF Network offices in many countries have charity status and donations are tax deductible.



The operation of one Flying Squad with four elephants and eight mahouts costs approximately US\$ 30,000 per year. That includes food, health care, equipment, salaries, benefits, maintenance and administrative costs.

WWF estimates that six Flying Squads are needed to fully mitigate human-elephant conflict in and around the Tesso Nilo forest. Four Squads are or will soon be operating. Two additional Squads need to be established. The establishment of a new Squad costs approximately US\$ 2,500 for start up cost in addition to the annual operating costs.

For information on how you can contribute to mitigate elephant conflict in the Tesso Nilo forest and help improve the lives of its people and elephants, please contact:

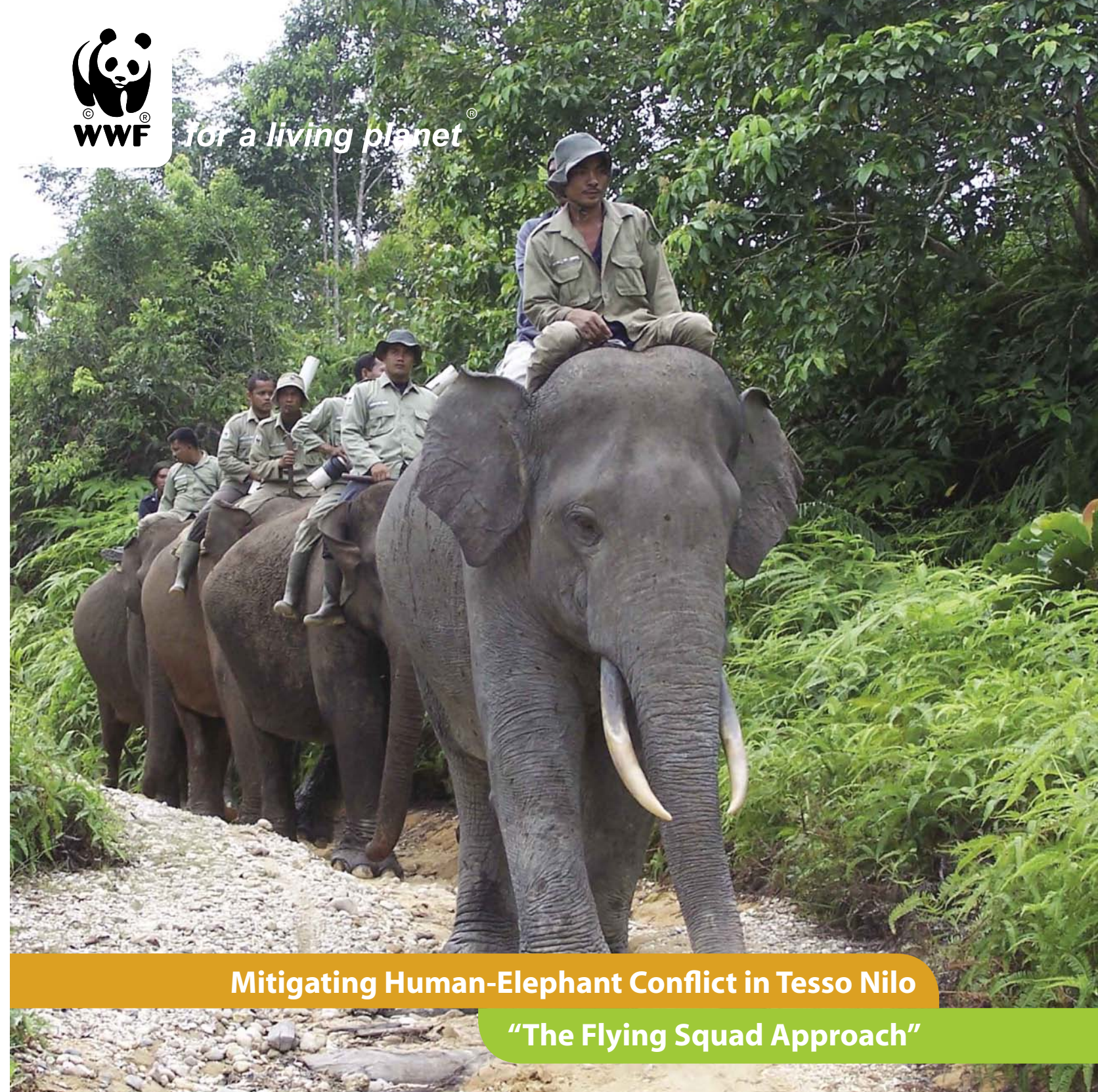
The Tesso Nilo National Park Foundation

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The Tesso Nilo National Park Foundation was established with the help of WWF Indonesia and many local stakeholders in 2006 to provide long-term lasting support to the Tesso Nilo National Park.



for a living planet



Mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict in Tesso Nilo

"The Flying Squad Approach"

Mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict in Tesso Nilo “The Flying Squad Approach”

Sumatra’s elephants are in crisis. Most of the remaining forests of this Indonesian island have become too small and fragmented to support them.

The large contiguous forests of Riau Province in central Sumatra were once home to one of the largest and most secure populations of Sumatran elephants. But over the last 20 years, the palm oil and pulp and paper industries have reduced Riau’s natural forest cover by almost 60 percent. Today, just 10 percent of the remaining forests are suitable for elephants.

Where there were more than 1,600 elephants in 1985, there may now be as few as 350-400. About 80 of these elephants live in the Tesso Nilo forest complex, a priority landscape for WWF. The forests have shrunk so much that today all of Riau’s remaining elephants are attracted by the crops that have replaced their forests. Conflict between man and elephant is escalating throughout the province. Mitigating conflict has become as important as saving elephant habitat to prevent local extinction of this species.

The Tesso Nilo Mission

The Tesso Nilo mission is to provide a secure haven for Riau’s largest remaining elephant population. Avoidance of human-elephant conflict is key to the Tesso Nilo mission.



Crop damaged by elephant raid © WWF-Indonesia

Protecting Elephant Habitat

The ultimate cause of conflict is conversion of natural elephant habitat. WWF has worked with Government to establish the Tesso Nilo National Park as an elephant conservation area. 38,576 hectares of the Tesso Nilo forest complex were declared a national park in 2004 and Government is considering the expansion of the park to 100,000 hectares.

Tesso Nilo management will focus on:

- Expanding the protected area as much as possible
- Promoting elephant-friendly land uses in the forests and plantations surrounding the park to support a contiguous viable elephant population
- To avoid loss of human and elephant lives and reduce injuries and damage to properties and crops.
- Establishing an Elephant Conservation Center as a refuge and treatment facility for elephants that were removed out of conflict situations and have not been released back into the wild.

Managing Crops and Plantations to Protect Elephants

The immediate cause of conflict is elephants entering fields and plantations to feed on attractive crops. Settlements with often illegal private oil palm plantations are spreading inside and along the boundaries of the proposed park. Elephants feed on the palms and in the fields. Conflict erupts, creating problems for people and elephants. WWF works with many local and regional stakeholders to prevent illegal conversion of forest and planting of crops attractive to elephants.

Managing Elephants

While forests are being protected, while elephant-friendly land uses are being promoted, elephants continue to feed on the crops they find outside their forest. Demonstrating to farmers that human-elephant conflict can effectively be reduced through non-lethal means is essential to achieve the Tesso Nilo Mission.



Human-elephant conflict © WWF-Indonesia / Syamsuardi

The WWF Flying Squad

The Tesso Nilo Elephant Flying Squad is a team of four captive elephants and eight handlers (mahouts). The team patrols settlements on the edges of Tesso Nilo National Park and helps the local farmers to reduce elephant conflict.

Established in 2004, the Flying Squad is a joint operation of WWF-Indonesia and the Conservation Authority of Riau. The Squad covers Lubuk Kembang Bunga village on the northern border of Tesso Nilo National Park. Its mission is to:

- Reduce damage to communities by pushing wild elephants back into the forest.
- Teach communities how to mitigate conflict.
- Instill a sense of security in the communities to give them confidence that they can protect their farms without killing elephants.
- Monitor illegal activities in the park.
- Provide employment and decent living conditions to captive conflict elephants.



Wild elephant in Tesso Nilo National Park
© WWF-Indonesia / Syamsuardi



Lisa, a Flying Squad cow and her baby, Nella © WWF ID



© Syamsidar / WWF-Indonesia

Flying Squad patrols the surrounding operation areas

Flying Squad Operations

Flying Squad and farmers are constantly on alert to detect the presence of wild elephant near the villages.

Flying Squads patrol the area around their villages twice a week.

Rangers patrol a wider area by motorcycle or four-wheel-drive truck four times a week.

When detected, Flying Squad rangers approach the elephants on foot and set off carbide “cannons” to scare them away with the boom of the explosion. If the wild elephants don’t leave, the rangers use their trained elephants to push the herd back into the forest. If the wild elephants come at night, the rangers use their car’s spotlight and horn to scare them away.

Human-elephant conflict can never be completely prevented, it can only be contained. All parties must constantly be on alert to deflect wild elephants from the fields before they have begun feeding. Most importantly they must work on eliminating the causes for the conflict: habitat loss and planting attractive food plants near elephant forests!



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Flying Squad Successes

Crop losses dramatically decreased by 94%. Since it began operating in April 2004, one Tesso Nilo Flying Squad has reduced the losses of a local community from elephant raids from approximately 16 million Rupiah (\$1,740) to around 1 million Rupiah (\$109) per month on average.

Elephant health has greatly improved. The Flying Squad’s elephants were moved from Government camps to their new center of operations. They receive good veterinary care, can move and feed in the forest, are bathed daily, and are fed a regular good diet. They are strong and healthy. In February 2007, Flying Squad member Lisa gave birth to Nella.

Peoples’ attitude towards wild elephants is changing. While the squad has been operating no incidences of human attacks on wild elephants have been recorded in the area.

The Flying Squad brings people close to elephants. Visitors to Tesso Nilo National Park can join the Flying Squad during their regular patrols and learn about the park and the squad’s mission from the rangers.

More Squads are about to start operations. In 2006, pulp and paper producer “Riau PulpFiber” sponsored a second Flying Squad which will begin covering an area adjacent to the WWF Squad in 2007. Palm oil producers “AsianAgri” and “Musim Mas” are also committed to establishing and operating a third and fourth Squad completing the coverage of conflict sites along this part of the Tesso Nilo National Park boundary.