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The bones (top) were discovered by the Wildlife Rescue Unit team yesterday.

Left: A file picture showing the 'sabre-like' tusks which stunned the zoological world.

Pygmy elephant found dead

> Jumbo among two shot by ivory poaches within a week

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PETALING JAYA: A rare Borneo pygmy elephant which stunned the zoological world with its unique "sabre-like" tusks has been found dead, believed to have been shot by ivory poachers.

According to a Facebook posting by the Danau Girang Field Centre (DGFC) yesterday, the carcass of the mammal, which possessed tusks growing downwards, was discovered at the Segama conservation centre near Tawau last Saturday.

"Its remains and satellite collar were discovered by DGFC and the Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) team yesterday morning.

"There are no words to express our sadness and anger. We hope the departments in charge will do everything to catch the culprits and the crime will not go unpunished," the group said in its posting.

The sabre-tusked elephant was among two elephants found dead within a week in the same vicinity.

The animal was first discovered by wildlife experts at an oil palm plantation in Tawau in August and was fitted with a satellite collar to monitor its movements.

It was then released into Kawag forest reserve in October.

DGFC said based on the information derived from the satellite collar, the elephant might have been killed on Nov 20.

Sabah Wildlife Department assistant director Sen Nathan had said the sabre tusks could be the result of a congenital defect or due to inbreeding.

The incident is another setback at efforts to increase the number of Borneo pygmy elephants, whose population has dwindled to about 1,500.

On Sept 18, five of the nine elephants found stuck in a mud pool near the Berkat Saga logging camp in Rinukut, Sabah died after being trapped for more than a week.

In 2013, 14 pygmy elephants died of poison near the Gunung Rara forest reserve.