

THAI VETS NURTURE LOST BABY DUGONG WITH MILK AND GRASS

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

Officials of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources feeding milk to Marium, a baby dugong separated from her mother, on Libong island, Trang province, southern Thailand. | Photo Credit: [AP](#)

A baby dugong, a large ocean mammal, that has developed an attachment to humans after being separated from its mother and getting lost off southern Thailand is being nurtured by marine experts in hopes that it can one day fend for itself.

The estimated 5-month-old female dugong named Marium has become an internet hit in Thailand after images of marine biologists embracing and feeding it with milk and sea grass spread across social media.

The dugong is a species of marine mammal similar to the American manatee and can grow to about 3.4 meters (11 feet) in length. Its conservation status is listed as vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Marium was spotted alone near a beach on Ko Poda island in Krabi province in April. Officials later tried to release it into a dugong habitat off the coast of another island but it swam away.

Veterinarians and volunteers set out each day in canoes to locate Marium near the dugong habitat off Ko Libong island. It does not swim with the herd and usually comes straight to them, then follows them into shallower water, where it is fed milk and sea grass, similar to her natural diet, for up to 15 times a day while also receiving health checks.

Marium's caretakers believe it has formed a bond with humans but is also drawn to the shape of the underside of canoes, perhaps seeing it as a mother substitute. Veterinarians say they need to continue looking after Marium for at least another year until it can be weaned off of bottled milk, after which they hope it will be able to look after herself.

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New find is bigger in size than one discovered in 2016, also in Arunachal Pradesh

The Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) has lost one of its beloved members — 41-year-old Orangutan, an extant species of great apes. According to NZP,

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