

Greetings from Asian Elephant Support!

Happy Valentine's Day



Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate and acknowledge the love you have in your life. This can be the love between you and your partner, or it could be the love you share with your family, friends, neighbors, and animals (especially, of course, elephants!). This Valentine's Day, break from tradition and show your love in other ways besides chocolate and flowers by making a donation to AES. You can even send an accompanying e-card! There are a variety of images to choose from and you can even personalize your message.

Certainly there are people in your life who would be happy to know that a donation made in their name helped support the care and conservation of elephants in Asian range countries. This gift will not wither and die like flowers, nor will it disappear in a moment's time (and then show up on those hips later!) like chocolate. This gift will ensure that Asian elephants get the love they most certainly deserve.

The process is easy, too! All you have to do is visit <http://asianelephantsupport.org/send-an-ecard.asp> and follow the simple instructions. You will be asked to make a secure PayPal donation, then you can create an e-card that will be emailed to your loved one.

Wishing that you and those dear to your heart feel loved and cherished this Valentine's Day.



The Elephant Conservation Center Sayaboury, Laos

In the past two years, Asian Elephant Support has made donations for medical supplies to ElefantAsia, a French nonprofit organization operating in Laos that is dedicated to protecting Asian elephants. In December 2012, the AES president made her first visit to Laos to see some of the work we have supported.

The destination was the Elephant Conservation Center (ECC) in Sayaboury, Laos. The ECC is a privately owned entity that provides funding for the first elephant hospital in Laos. ElefantAsia has partnered with the ECC and makes up any shortfall in this funding. ElefantAsia also funds the mobile missions and conservation education outreach program, including a regional mahout association to improve the level of education and elephant welfare.

The ECC raises funds for the hospital by offering lodging and volunteer elephant experience to visitors. While most visitors go for the three-day package for \$175, there is also a six day package for \$399, and longer term volunteers are accepted for \$399 a week. The ECC is home to five elephants, one bull and four

females, who became residents out of need for a permanent home. It is located on a gorgeous lake amid beautiful hills and lush flora and is rural enough to preclude unplanned visitors.

ElefantAsia has been working in Laos for 12 years. Years of visiting every captive elephant they could find with their mobile clinic has built trusting relationships. Today, elephant owners and mahouts are calling for help more frequently and the owners, who are making an income with their elephant, are usually willing to pay for treatment. The mobile units and clinic have helped improve the lives of the elephants by providing inoculations, de-worming medications, other treatments, and kits of basic elephant medical supplies for the mahouts. ElefantAsia has also initiated a breeding incentive program in which elephant owners/mahouts are paid for the elephant's "maternity leave" (from near birth until the calf is 18 months of age). The owner is also given a small plow to assist with alternative income while his elephant is out-of-work.



Mahout with elephants at bath time



This is where eles and visitors interact. The red roof in the background is the hospital. As you can see, they need a need barn!

The ECC has arrangements with local villages to provide training on growing food for the elephants and a "guarantee purchase" program to create sustainable relationships. Recently, a French agronomist worked for six months to start a gardening system using solar-powered irrigation from the lake to create sustainable food growth for a population of 12 to 15 elephants year round. This program has also reduced the use of fertilizers and "slash and burn agriculture" through education and support of local producers. In addition, the ECC offers job opportunities to a dozen or more people.

When you have a program that is making positive strides for an elephant population, you always have future goals. ElefantAsia would like an enclosed barn for the elephant patients, an ultrasound for the breeding program, and other equipment and medicines. This visit reinforced our conviction that our past funding to ElefantAsia has been a wise use of our funds and we will look at further ways to help them continue their work in Laos.

Please visit www.elefantasia.org to learn more about the Elephant Conservation Center and ElefantAsia.



Mom and calf who are part of a breeding incentive program

Emerging Diseases and Conservation in India Research Report

In September 2010, we announced that we had been awarded a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Asian Elephant Conservation Fund to support a research project in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in South India. The goals of this project were to identify emerging diseases, their prevalence in the largest global population of Asian elephants, and to determine the impact of these diseases for long-term conservation. Please see <http://asianelephantsupport.org/emerging-diseases-and-conservation-in-india.asp> for more information about this research.

Fast forward to November 2012...

Two years of intense field and laboratory work have brought to the forefront new observations about diseases in wild Asian elephant populations. Several diseases were identified during the course of this study.

One of the diseases identified is the Endotheliotropic Elephant Herpes Virus (EEHV). This study provides the first report of EEHV in free ranging Asian elephants. Although only a few cases were confirmed, the findings of EEHV in free ranging elephants, and the scientific data generated, can help to identify the cause of EEHV emergence in captive populations. This research may also shed light on the evolution of the virus, which has a high mortality rate in elephants.

Like all good research, we have a better understanding of certain issues, but have been left with a long list of questions. In this case, there are serious questions that can and need to be addressed. Even these initial findings will impact our efforts to conserve Asian elephants.

More research is needed on how the free ranging elephant population has been affected by emerging diseases such as EEHV. As this free ranging population shares habitat with captive elephants, livestock, and human settlements, there is an important need for long-term wildlife health monitoring of the elephant populations. There is also a need to determine the extent that environmental factors, such as sharing space with livestock, contribute to the emergence of disease of Asian elephants.

Knowledge and good science represent the real hope for the future of this magnificent species. Obviously, there is much more work to be done. To this end, AES is continuing to partner with scientists, veterinarians, and other organizations concerned about Asian elephant health. AES will focus support on continuing the study of EEHV in Asian elephant populations around the world.

Each life is precious, not only to the population, but to the future of the species. Please consider making a donation (<http://asianelephantsupport.org/donate-with-paypal.asp>) to AES today to help support additional research and efforts that are needed to protect the next generation of Asian elephants.

With your help, we are improving the lives of elephants and mahouts across Asia.



Wild elephant populations are experiencing losses due to EEHV. This picture of a mom guarding her dying calf sends a powerful message. This is not just another statistic: it's another lost life.

GAJAH

We are very proud to share our article on AES that was published in *Gajah*, the bi-annual journal of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG). "The journal is intended as a medium of communication on issues that concern the management and conservation of Asian Elephants both in the wild and in captivity. It is a means by which members of the AsESG and others can communicate their experiences, ideas, and perceptions freely, so that the conservation of Asian Elephants can benefit." (www.aesg.org) It is a privilege to share our work with this prestigious elephant conservation community. Here is the link to the article:

<http://www.asesg.org/PDFfiles/2012/Gajah%2036/36-37-Reifschneider.pdf>

Buffalo Exchange

And if you happen to be in Seattle or Long Beach, California, don't forget to stop by the Buffalo Exchange and support us with the token you receive in lieu of a bag for your purchase! For more information, visit: <http://asianelephantsupport.org/buffalo-exchange.asp>. Thanks for your support!

THANK YOU

We at AES wish to extend a very sincere thank you to each donor who has voted their support with a financial gift. We value that confidence and will always do our best for the animals we all care for so deeply.

Please visit our website (www.asianelephantsupport.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) (Asian Elephant Support). If you have questions, please [contact us](#). We appreciate your support. Please consider a [donation](#) to help Asian elephants and those who care for them.

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