

Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop in Myanmar

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Elephant veterinarians from around Asia participated in the Second Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, from March 7 through March 11, 2014.

This Workshop was hosted by the University of Veterinary Science, Yezin, in collaboration with the Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE) from the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Workshop was supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Asian Elephant Conservation Fund in collaboration with Asian Elephant Support.

The Second Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop continued the efforts of the first such workshop which was hosted in Aceh, Sumatra-Indonesia, in March 2012. These Workshops build local and regional capacity in elephant veterinary care which improves the expertise needed for effective elephant conservation in Asia. The Second Regional Workshop hosted representatives from several Asian elephant range countries including India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, as well as veterinarians from the United States and Singapore.

The Workshop addressed veterinary topics such as general elephant health, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, and proper sample collection. During the workshop, participants from each range country made presentations about regional and local elephant health issues, scientific studies, and elephant management plans. An important topic of discussion, which was also included in several presentations, is the significant role and value of captive elephants and mahouts. Discussions also emphasized the need for comprehensive post mortems, as



Workshop speaker Dr. Arun Zachariah, India



Workshop demonstration of darting equipment

well as the need to address veterinary issues at the interface of wild and captive elephant populations.

In addition to presentations, part of the Workshop was spent in hands-on practical sessions on the topics of wildlife immobilization and laboratory protocols. The wildlife immobilization component

allowed participants to become better informed about the operation and handling of various darting equipment. During the laboratory session, the elephant endotheliotropic herpes virus

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MTE Pinlounng timber camp

(EEHV) was confirmed for the first time to be present in tissue samples from Myanmar elephants.

The Workshop included visits to several different local elephant facilities such as the Nay Pyi Taw Zoo that houses a large group of 12 elephants (3 males, 8 females and 1 baby born on site), and the 5 (1 male and 4 females) sacred

white elephants housed in a special pavilion at the Uppatassanti Pagoda. Another site visit was to the MTE Pinlounng elephant timber extraction camp in Taunggyi Agency. This camp manages 37 elephants (15 males, 15 females and 7 calves). The workshop participants were shown demonstrations of elephant

management and training for traditional timber work.

These Regional Veterinary Workshops underscore the importance of veterinary science for wild and captive elephant conservation, and for support of elephant welfare programs in Asian range countries. As a result of these two workshops, there is better communication amongst elephant veterinarians in Asia, and the sharing of information and experiences has increased. Additionally several field course initiatives are being discussed to continue practical training opportunities for elephant veterinarians in Asia.



Workshop participants at MTE Pinlounng camp

