

# Asian EEHV Working Group

## Group Statement

A recently recognized herpes virus, EEHV (elephant endotheliotropic herpes virus), can cause severe hemorrhagic disease in elephants, and is associated with a high fatality rate in young Asian elephants (1-8 years of age). Death frequently occurs within 1-2 days of the first visible signs, and early diagnosis and treatment is critical to survival.

The prevalence of EEHV in captive Asian elephants in North America and Europe has been well characterized, with an estimated mortality rate of 70% in captive born elephants that become ill from the virus. Little is known about the prevalence and impact of EEHV on captive and wild elephant populations in Asian elephant range countries.

From Nov 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Wildlife Reserves Singapore hosted the **1<sup>st</sup> Asian EEHV Strategy Meeting**. For 3 days, 38 (wildlife) veterinarians, researchers, conservationists, and elephant specialists shared information, identified regional needs, and prioritized future EEHV-related projects. Eight Asian elephant range countries were represented (Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam, and Malaysia) along with delegates from Singapore, the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands.

As a result of this 1<sup>st</sup> Asian EEHV Strategy Meeting, an **Asian EEHV Working Group** was formed which together recognized:

- The epidemiology of EEHV in elephants in Asia and its impact on populations is currently unknown. Within the last 10 years, 59 fatal cases of EEHV disease in Asian elephants have been identified within the eight range countries represented at our meeting. Twelve of these deaths were wild elephants.
- The identification of EEHV-associated deaths in wild elephants in Asia is significant and it is the opinion of the Working Group that EEHV is a conservation concern requiring close monitoring and further study.
- Early diagnosis of EEHV-associated disease in young elephant calves allows early treatment and a better chance of a successful outcome. Therefore an important consideration is that the examination, sample collection, and treatment of young calves depend on the ability to handle and manage the calf from a very young age (less than 1 year old).

- Laboratories are critical to the routine monitoring, detection, and post mortem evaluation of elephants affected by EEHV. Currently, of 13 Asian elephant range countries, only 3 (Thailand, Indonesia, and India), have laboratories capable of confirming EEHV.

**Based on the above concerns, the Asian EEHV Working Group seeks the support of regional governments and international stakeholders in the following areas of immediate focus:**

- To build capacity and increase awareness and education of EEHV amongst elephant care staff in Asia including keepers (mahouts), veterinarians, and government officials.
- To develop region-specific medical protocols, “standard operating procedures” that outline routine monitoring, rapid and accurate detection, and appropriate treatment of EEHV-associated disease.
- To closely collaborate within the region and internationally to identify and implement research projects to continue to advance the understanding of EEHV.

## List of members of Asian EEHV Working Group:

Dr Sonja Luz	Director C&R	Wildlife Reserves Singapore, WRS
Dr Abraham Mathew	Senior Veterinarian	Wildlife Reserves Singapore, WRS
Dr Chia-Da Hsu	Pathologist	Wildlife Reserves Singapore, WRS
Mr Saravanan Elangkovan	Curator	Wildlife Reserves Singapore, WRS
Mr Kalirathinam Udhaya Kumar	Junior Animal Management Officer	Wildlife Reserves Singapore, WRS
Ms Paige Lee	Officer C&R	Wildlife Reserves Singapore, WRS
Dr Boon-Huan Tan		Singapore National Defence, DSO
Dr Chatchote Thitaram	Director	Center of Excellence in Elephant Research & Education, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, CMU
Dr Khajohnpat Boonprasert	Head of South Elephant Hospital	National Elephant Institute, FIO
Dr Preecha Phoungkham	Veterinarian	Friends of Asian Elephant Foundation
Dr Taweepoke Angkawanish	Manager	National Elephant Institute, FIO
Dr Channarong Srisa-ard		Save Elephant Foundation Thailand
Ms Supaphen Sripiboon	PhD candidate/University lecturer	Murdoch University/Kasetsart University
Erica Ward	veterinarian	
Mr Pallop Tunkaew	Research scientist	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, CMU
Dr Channarong Srisa-ard		Save Elephant Foundation Thailand
Dr Christopher Stremme	Wildlife Veterinarian	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Syiah Kuala University Banda Aceh
Dr Bongot Huaso Mulia	Veterinarian	Taman Safari Indonesia 1 - Bogor
Dr M. Nanang Tejo Laksono	Veterinarian	Taman Safari Indonesia 2 - Prigen.
Dr Muhammad Agil	Reseracher	Veterinary Faculty of the Bogor Agriculture Institute
Dr Adin Priadi	Reserche scientist	Satwa Duta Medical Lab for Animal health, Bogor, Indonesia
Dr Zaw Min Oo	Assistant Manager (Veterinary)	Myanma Timber Enterprise
Dr Ye Htut Aung	Professor	University of Veterinary Science
Dr Myo Nay Zar	Veterinarian	Myanma Timber Enterprise
U Myo Thant	Deputy General Manager	Sagaing Extraction Agency
Dr Aung Thura Soe	Elephant Veterinarian	Sagaing Division
Dr Vanthinh Pham Van Thinh	Veterinarian	Daklak Elephant Conservation Center
Dr Oung Chenda	Head Veterinarian	Wildlife Alliance
Nick Marx	Wildlife Rescue Director	Wildlife Alliance
Mr Sitheng	Head Keeper	Wildlife Alliance
Dr Vatsana Chanthavong	Deputy of Division of Veterinary Services/Vet technician of ElefantAsia	ElefantAsia Project, Division of Veterinary Services, Department of Livestock and Fisheries
Dr Senthivel Nathan	Assistant Director	Sabah Wildlife Department
Mdm Nurzhafarina Binti Othman	Elephant Conservation Officer	Danau Girang Field Centre
Dr Diana A. Ramirez Saldivar	Assistant Manager	Wildlife Rescue Unit
Dr Arun Zachariah	Assistant Professor	Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University
Dr Kalaivanan	Veterinary Assistant Surgeon	Tamil Nadu Government, Department of Animal Husbandry
Dr Kushal Konwar	Professor and Head of Department of Surgery & Radiology	Assam Agricultural University
Dr Apurba Chakroborty	Director of Research (Vet)	Assam Agricultural University
Dr Chandana	Veterinary Surgeon	Pinnawala
Dr. Vijtha Perera	Veterinary Surgeon	Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka
Ms Erin Latimer	Research scientist	National Elephant Herpesvirus Laboratory, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
Dr Ellen Wiedner	Veterinarian	Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium/Northwest Trek
Ms Heidi Riddle	Co-founder and Director of Operations	Riddle's Elephant and Wildlife Sanctuary (International Elephant Foundation)
Dr Lauren L Howard	Associate Veterinarian	Houston Zoo
Dr Wendy Kiso	Research and Conservation Scientist	Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation
Dr Janine Brown	Research Scientist	Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
Dr Dennis Schmitt	Chair of Veterinary Services and Director of Research	Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation
Dr Paul D. Ling	Associate Professor	Baylor College of Medicine
Dr Willem Schaftenaar	Veterinarian/Veterinary Advisor	Rotterdam (Blijdorp) Zoo/European Elephant TAG