



## PRESS RELEASE

### INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT FOUNDATION

#### Contact Information

Program Director: Deborah Olson, Program Director

Email Address: [dolson@indyzoo.com](mailto:dolson@indyzoo.com)

Website: [www.elephantconservation.org](http://www.elephantconservation.org)

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Announcement of the 2006 Elephant Conservation and Research Funding Awards

#### **Study to reduce elephant deaths caused by Endotheliotropic Elephant Herpes Virus (EEHV)**

IEF co-sponsored an EEHV workshop Sept. 27-29, 2005. The international delegates - pathologists, epidemiologists, virologists, microbiologists, veterinarians and elephant management experts - unanimously agreed that EEHV is a serious threat to all populations of Asian elephants and that the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of EEHV is a high priority for the international elephant community. EEHV infects the microvascular endothelial cells of the heart, liver and tongue. Viral-induced endothelial injury leads to critical hemorrhages with death attributed to cardiac failure. A substantial proportion of reproductive failures and young elephant deaths have been attributed to EEHV, continually impeding efforts to maintain a self-sustaining captive Asian elephant population. In Europe, losses are reported as 25% of its newborn Asian elephant population due to EEHV and 20% of Asian elephants under the age of ten are lost to EEHV in North America. Multiple elephant mortalities attributed to EEHV have been reported to have occurred on the continent of Asia since 1995. Though there have been no massive outbreaks in Asia, the virus's impact may now be exacerbated by the increased fragmentation of elephant populations and their skewed sex ratios. A complete epidemiologic picture of EEHV and the clarification of the EEHV status of individual elephants and their potential for shedding the virus would aid in the prediction of future outbreaks, as well as identifying the mode of transmission, preventing the transmission of the disease, recognizing the occurrence of the disease early to allow for immediate treatment, and identifying predisposing factors that make specific elephants more susceptible to the disease. Ultimately all of these accomplishments will serve to prevent future EEHV fatalities. This study will also factor in the projection of the potential impact this disease poses on the wild elephant populations in Asia. Using banked and newly collected serum and whole blood samples, both retrospective and prospective studies will be performed and results correlated to epidemiological findings within the North American elephant population.

###