



PRESS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL ELEPHANT FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Zoo Support for Elephant Conservation Hits Record Levels

Silver Spring, Maryland (January 8, 2008) – The International Elephant Foundation (IEF) today announced their support for 15 new elephant conservation projects for 2008, marking a record level of support.

“Elephants all over the world need our help,” said IEF President Michael Fouraker. “The grants made today by the International Elephant Foundation support critical elephant conservation programs.”

“Conservation projects supported by accredited zoos are essential to the survival of elephants,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. “AZA-accredited zoos support a thriving elephant population. These elephants inspire conservation action and play an essential role in the survival of the species.”

IEF is a non-profit organization that supports and operates elephant conservation and education programs both in managed facilities and in the wild, with emphasis on management, protection and scientific research. IEF receives the majority of its funding from members of the AZA.

“Without the support of AZA-accredited zoos and their elephant programs, we would not be able to generate more than \$1.3 million for elephant conservation, including a record \$209,678 for 2008,” Fouraker added.

For 2008, IEF will support the following elephant conservation projects:

HABITAT PROTECTION

Kalama Community Wildlife Conservancy: Community Conservation of Elephants in Northern Kenya – The Kalama Community Wildlife Conservancy’s project will provide protection to elephants within Kalama, Kenya, by ensuring safe access to critical migration routes and resources. Local communities will benefit from this project through monitoring and management of natural resources, as well as the development of outreach and awareness projects in Kalama schools.

Prey Proseth Elephant Conservation Community, Cambodia – Asian elephants in Prey Proseth Village are the focus of the Cambodian Elephant Conservation Group (CECG) study. This project will conserve key elephant habitat and terminate forest clearing and encroachment on the estate surrounding the village. This project will also improve livelihood strategies, develop ecotourism, raise local awareness, increase the academic and practical capacity of staff, and reduce human-elephant conflict and stress on surrounding pristine elephant habitat.

ANTI-POACHING

Enforcement of Poaching Control and Bush Meat Trade In and Around WAZA National Park, Cameroon – The Poaching Control project at Waza National Park in Cameroon will focus on reinforcing controls against poaching and the illegal bushmeat trade in and around the Park. The project serves to reduce imminent risks to elephant populations from increased human encroachment and poaching in the Park.

Lake George Marine Ranger Station: the Waterways Project, Uganda – The Waterways project, led by the Lake George Marine Ranger Station, will reduce poaching in the Southern Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area in Uganda with new boats for patrolling the area. Strict enforcement of the law, research and community conservation will benefit the elephants and other wildlife in the region.



REDUCTION OF HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

Movement, Population Distribution and Social Dynamics of African Elephants in Kunene and Omusati Region of Namibia – A GPS-Collar study in the Kunene and Omusati region of Namibia will research the elephant distribution, movements, and human-elephant conflicts in the area. This study will contribute to the conservation of elephants in Namibia by: 1) filling an important data gap on Omusati elephants, 2) continuing long term monitoring of desert-dwelling elephants in the Kunene, and 3) providing capacity-building for local people that will ultimately reduce human-elephant conflict in this region.

Support for the core activities of Save The Elephants – Save the Elephants (STE), an elephant conservation organization based in Africa, will continue conducting conservation projects across Africa's many varied terrains, by monitoring elephant movement, poaching, and human-elephant conflict. Additionally, STE will provide education programs, an elephant news service, and work with a variety of species that share habitat with African elephants.

Mahouts and Their Elephants Working as Conservation Response Units in Sumatra – The Conservation Response Unit (CRU) in Sumatra will investigate human-elephant interactions in order to improve local perception by utilizing once neglected captive elephants and their mahouts for direct field based conservation interventions for wild elephants. The projects four main objectives are: 1) mitigating human-elephant conflict; 2) reducing wildlife crime through forest patrol and monitoring; 3) raising awareness among locals of the importance of conserving elephants and their habitat; 4) establishing community-based ecotourism to ensure long-term CRU financial sustainability.

Saving Elephants By Helping People, Sri Lanka – The 'Save Elephants by Helping People' project will take place in rural Sri Lanka. Both farmers and elephants in Sri Lanka will benefit from a 9-mile electric fence to be installed from Batalayaya to Nuwaragala. This project will also implement training programs for community leaders from 55 community fence maintenance organizations and develop a pilot project to establish and measure the efficacy of biological fences using Agave species.

Building Capacities for Mitigating HEC in Buxa-Jaldapara Landscape, Northern West Bengal, India – Eliminating human-elephant conflict has been an important component of the Asian Nature Conservation Foundation's (ANCF) project. This pilot project will facilitate co-existence between humans and elephants by building capacities of communities and test strategies for development of alternative sources of income and alternate crops in a selected cluster of villages and tea gardens in Bengal.

ECOTOURISM/ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Children and Elephants of Boromo Region, Burkina Faso – A French conservation organization Des Elephants et Des Hommes coordinated the Conservation and Environmental Education Program in the Boromo Region of Burkina Faso. Large populations of elephants live in this area although few children have actually seen one. The program will fund groups of pupils between 8 and 12 years old to experience an elephant outreach program, learning about elephants, wildlife conservation, forest protection and career opportunities associated with ecotourism.

Direct Action Education: Cambodian Wild Elephant Conservation Materials, Cambodia – Education is key to wildlife conservation, and the Cambodian Wild Elephant Conservation project will build on several years of elephant-themed education and outreach through the Kouprey Express mobile unit, focusing on protecting the elephants of the Southwest Elephant Corridor (SWEC) in the Southern Cardamom Mountains. An elephant conservation board game aimed at children will be produced by the Wildlife Alliance and distributed to rural communities in and around the South West Elephant Corridor.



Support for GAJAH the publication of the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) – GAJAH, which means elephant in Malay, is a World Conservation Union (IUCN) supported journal dedicated to Asian elephant conservation. AsESG addresses issues specific to Asian elephants and is encouraging younger, less-experienced members to publish and participate in journal production, and share experiences in elephant conservation.

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Lao Elephant Care & Management Program, Laos – Laotians working with domesticated elephants, employed mostly in the timber industry, will benefit from socio-economic development and improvements of living conditions in the dense jungles of Vientiane and Luang Prabang, Laos. Veterinary and basic elephant care training will be provided, and a mobile veterinary unit will receive medicine and medical equipment. Additionally, the development of a nationwide elephant registration database will ensure domesticated elephants are properly cared for and will improve opportunities for ecotourism.

Ultrasonographic and Endocrinological Characterization of Luteogenesis in Pregnant and Non-Pregnant Asian Elephants – Elephant reproduction is key to maintaining healthy populations and conserving the species. The Asian Elephant reproductive project will illuminate a very important part of the reproductive cycle and pregnancy maintenance, providing a better understanding of complex reproduction mechanisms, which are indispensable for management and breeding of elephants.

Study to reduce elephant deaths caused by Endotheliotropic Elephant Herpes Virus (EEHV) – An epidemiologic study of the Endotheliotropic Elephant Herpes Virus (EEHV) aims to identify the causes of the disease in an effort to ultimately prevent future EEHV fatalities. The study aims to find the status of EEHV in individual elephants, their potential for further transmission, and identify predisposing factors that make specific elephants more susceptible to the disease. This study will also factor in the potential impact this disease poses on the wild elephant populations in Asia.

As a non-profit organization dedicated to elephant conservation, IEF solicits donations to fund worthy conservation and research projects worldwide. To learn more about IEF or to contribute to elephant conservation efforts, visit IEF's website at www.elephantconservation.org. With minimal administrative costs, IEF is able to dedicate more than 90 percent of its budget directly toward elephant conservation programs worldwide.

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, the AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. To learn more, please visit www.aza.org/elephantconservation.

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