

News Briefs

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1. Six pygmy elephants found dead died due to disease (Malaysia)

The Star – 5.7.2018

The six endangered pygmy elephants found dead on Sabah's east coast between April and May had died due to diseases, said Deputy Chief Minister Christina Liew. Liew said that this was determined by postmortems conducted on the elephants, but did not say what disease caused the deaths.

The Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister said that a circular has since been sent to all stakeholders on the need to protect elephants in the state. "Elephants are very precious to Sabah, because they are tourist attractions and because they are endangered species," she said. "We understand that sometimes these animals will encroach into plantations and housing areas but do not kill them," Liew said.

2. "Canteens" ease tensions between elephants and humans (China)

XinhuaNet – 12.7.2018

Environmental workers in southwest China's Yunnan Province have opened a number of "canteens" for wild Asian elephants to reduce conflicts between villagers and the endangered animal. In Pu'er City, more than 253 hectares of sugarcane, bananas and maize have been planted for the elephants.

This year, staff from Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve have created a total of around 100 hectares of the elephant's favorite food, such as bamboo and paper mulberry, in three different sites.

On July 5, a canteen has received its latest guests -- 20 Asian elephants. They enjoyed their meal, which lasted around two hours. Authorities hope the open-air canteens can help draw elephants away from human settlements to prevent conflicts between the animal and villagers.

The wild Asian elephant is an endangered species. In China, the animals mainly live in Xishuangbanna, Pu'er and Lincang in Yunnan. The population of the species in China has grown from over 170 in the 1990s to around 300 today.

3. Baby Asian elephants are being crippled by snares (Cambodia)

National Geographic – 12.7.2018

Cambodia's Cardamom Mountains, blanketed in emerald-green rain forest, should be a haven for endangered Asian elephants. But cameras triggered by motion sensors reveal that most of the baby elephants in the region have been injured, some fatally, by wire traps intended for other animals.

Thousands of snares litter the stomping grounds of the Cardamoms' resident elephants. Hunters set them in order to feed the nation's growing demand for bush meat from illegally caught wild animals, especially wild pigs and deer.

Of the seven babies less than a year old that the researchers identified, four could be seen hobbling with severe limps and wires cinching their lower legs. The encircling wires restrict the blood supply, and the deep cuts are prone to infections that can be fatal. Two calf carcasses with injuries like the ones recorded by the camera traps were recently reported by local villagers.

4. Yok Đôn National Park ends elephant riding (Vietnam)

Viet Nam News – 13.7.2018

As of this month, Yok Đôn National Park will no longer offer elephant riding for tourists visiting the Central Highland province of Đắk Lắk. Under an agreement signed by the national park and Animals Asia Foundation on Friday, the park committed to develop an alternative tourism activity designed around watching elephants in social groups within an elephant sanctuary.

The Animals Asia Foundation gave the national park US\$ 65,000 to support the transition towards elephant watching tourism from July 2018 to July 2023. The alternative benefited not only the elephants but also their owners, tamers and local community. There are 45 captive elephants in Đắk Lắk Province. For years, elephant riding has been a popular tourism activity for visitors to the province.

5. Sumatran elephant ‘poisoned’ in Indonesia palm plantation

The Express Tribune – 13.7.2018

A critically endangered elephant has been found dead in a palm oil plantation on Indonesia’s Sumatra island in what is suspected to be a deliberate poisoning, an official said Friday. The 10-year-old female Sumatran elephant was found in Jambo Reuh village in North Aceh on Thursday -- the third of its species to be found dead of suspected poisoning in the same palm plantation since 2015.

“We found fruits and a pouch with traces of powder inside the animal,” Aceh conservation centre head Sapto Aji Prabowo told AFP. “We suspect the death was caused by deliberate poisoning because her liver and spleen turned dark, a classic sign of poison,” he added.

Sumatran elephants are a critically endangered species. Rampant deforestation to create plantations has reduced their natural habitat and brought them into conflict with humans.

6. A dangerous place for elephants (Indonesia)

Global Indonesian Voices – 16.7.2018

Conservationists are worried that Indonesia will continue to see a decreasing number of elephants amidst no serious efforts made to prevent the occurrence. Found mostly in Sumatra and Kalimantan, Indonesia is currently home to at least 1740 elephants belonging to two sub-species of Asian elephant.

More than 1000 Sumatran elephants are reportedly found in Sumatra, the country’s largest islands. But, the number of elephants in Indonesia has fallen over the past 25 years due to different reasons.

Many of the animals, which included a pregnant one, reportedly died from poisoning, and crime groups were suspected as culprits. Other causes were said to include natural death and the decline in conserved forest areas due to the opening of new plantations, notably palm oil estates.

7. Rajaji National Park gets soil ramps for safe passage of elephants (India)

The Press Trust of India – 17.7.2018

Over a half-dozen soil ramps have been built along the 18-km corridor between Motichur and Kansrao ranges of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve for the safe passage of elephants. The stretch, which passes through the heart of the reserve, had become notorious as the “killer track” due to frequent deaths of elephants in collision with speeding trains on the route.

Twenty-five elephants were killed after collision with trains along the track in the last 18 years. The ramps, made of raw earth, will give a safe passage to elephants on the route. A total of 15 such ramps are to be built at identified spots between Suswa rail bridge Haridwar and Kansrao out of which seven are complete, Sonkar said. He said the ramps were built in just a month at a cost of Rs 3.5 lakh and funds were awaited from the Centre under its elephant project for the construction of the remaining eight ramps.

8. Dong Nai adds more electric fences to protect wild elephants (Vietnam)

Vietnam Net Bridge – 18.7.2018

Dong Nai Province will add more than 20km of electric fence to minimise conflicts between wild elephants and residents in the area. The Department of Planning and Investment has been working with various units to evaluate the project. The new fences will extend from Dinh Quan District to Vinh Cuu District. The investment of VNĐ20 billion (US\$867) was sourced from state and local budgets.

According to Dong Nai Province's Forest Department, a herd of 16 elephants has damaged crops and orchards in Dinh Quan District 35 times since the beginning of the year. Nguyen Viet Phuc, a farmer in Dinh Quan District, said six wild elephants had destroyed his banana crop in only one night.

Due to conflicts between wild elephants and people, a 50-km electric fence was erected from Dinh Quan District to Vinh Cuu District in July last year with capital of VNĐ85 billion (US\$3.75 million). The 50km electric fence is part of the elephant conservation project, which began in 2104 and will end in 2020.

9. Endangered pygmy elephant shot dead for destroying crops on Borneo Island (Malaysia)

Newsweek – 26.7.2018

A villager in a remote settlement shot and killed an endangered pygmy elephant on Borneo island after it destroyed palm oil trees. Local wildlife officials are now investigating the elephant's death after the body was found on the side of a road Monday on the Malaysian part of Borneo.

“(The elephant) was killed out of revenge for destroying crops,” Tuuga said. An autopsy of the body determined that its cause of death was from a bullet hole in the right side of its abdomen. The wound was traced and it led to the finding of a bullet pellet inside the abdomen. Some parts of the intestines were torn. There was a severe

internal bleeding inside the abdomen suggesting several blood vessels were damaged.

Pygmy elephants are baby-faced with huge ears, plump bellies and long tails that often drag on the ground. There are only an estimated 1500 left in the wild, according to environmental group WWF. They roam the rainforest in Borneo, the world's third-largest island, which is shared between Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

10. Killing of Myanmar elephants rise in a decade

Eleven Myanmar – 24.7.2018

Myanmar's wild elephants face alarming rate of extinction by hunters during the 2010 to 2018. Around 123 wild elephants have been killed so far, according to Director of Mandalay Region Forestry Department Tint Swe.

“According to the statistics I've gathered, during 2010 to 2018, about 123 elephants have been killed. It could lead to the extinction of wild elephants. It reached an alarming rate. We all need to join hands to protect these elephants,” said Tint Swe.

Poachers escaped without getting to carved the dead elephants for parts. Elephant skin as well as ivory or tusks have long been part of the illegal wildlife trade and the demand of elephant skin had increased recently, leading to the rise in elephant killings. Some elephants were killed in wars waged against humans over land and resources. According to government figures, since 2010, at least 35 people and 95 elephants have died this way.

11. Malaysia, Indonesia collaborate on conservation effort

The Star – 1.8.2018

Partners in Kalimantan and Sabah continue to work together to secure wildlife corridors under the “Heart of Borneo” initiative. The landscape of south Sabah and North Kalimantan not only serves as a border between the two countries, but

also as key corridors that are important to the movement of Borneo elephants.

Recognising the importance of protecting these corridors, WWF-Malaysia signed an agreement with the Sabah Forestry Department and Sabah Wildlife Department last October to secure and protect key elephant habitats in the transboundary area. As a part of the Heart of Borneo initiative, the agreement served as a precursor to the trans-boundary work between Malaysia and Indonesia.

Sabah Softwoods was selected as one of the host plantations due to their long-standing commitment towards conservation. In 2013, the plantation company agreed to set aside approximately 1067 ha of its land to establish a wildlife corridor to promote connectivity between the fragmented Ulu Kalumpang Forest Reserve, to the Ulu-Segama Malua main forest complex.

This enables elephants to access larger foraging areas away from human activity, which therefore helps to reduce conflict with humans as a whole. Sabah Softwoods has also set aside a corridor to allow elephants to move through another area being newly planted with oil palm.

12. Work on elephant corridor starts, Province 1 govt allocates budget (Nepal)

The Himalayan Times – 9.8.2018

Conceived as an effective measure to reduce human-elephant conflicts, work related to the elephant corridor project has picked up the pace in Jhapa.

The government of Province 1 allocated Rs 60 million for the project, which will appropriate some 152 km of forest land and river banks from Jhapa's Kachankabal Rural Municipality to Bahundangi of Mechinagar Municipality.

Once the corridor is constructed, it is expected to minimise damage to human life and property from wild tuskers keeping them away from settlement areas while conserving the bio diversity of the region.

Prior to this, solar fencing and tunnel fencing were adopted to keep tuskers away. As many as 35 persons have lost lives in Jhapa from tusker attacks, while nine elephants were killed by locals in the past seven years.

13. Bhutan has 678 elephants

Kuensel – 13.8.2018

Bhutan has 678 elephants roaming the wild, an increase from 513 elephants in 2011. This is according to the second edition of the National Elephant Survey report launched yesterday.

The Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) conducted the survey. Chief forestry officer with Nature Conservation Division, Sonam Wangdi, said that the increase in the number could be due to the nation's conservations efforts. He added that since the elephants were trans-boundary animals, they could have moved to the habitats in Bhutan. "We can see that along the Indian border, the once elephant habitats are now villages. And the habitats in Bhutan are strongly protected. This also shows that we have succeeded in protecting the habitat."

14. WWF urges stronger elephant conservation (Cambodia)

The Khmer Times – 14.8.2018

WWF Cambodia yesterday urged conservation groups to unite and protect elephants by battling illegal logging and wildlife hunting.

WWF Cambodia said that elephants play a crucial role in balancing ecosystems by maintaining biodiversity. It said that elephants continue to face extinction due to habitat destruction and conflict with humans, including poaching.

"Together we can save the Asian elephant by not eating bushmeat and by not using luxury wood," it said. There are about 70 elephants in Cambodia, including 40 in his province. He said that wild elephants continue to face loss of habitat due to deforestation.

15. Felda worker finds out elephants really never forget (Malaysia)

The Sun Daily – 15.8.2018

It is said that elephants never forget. Felda worker Mohd Khairul Abdul Karim, 33, found out about this the hard way.

At about 10:30 pm yesterday, he drove his Toyota Avanza mini MPV into a herd of elephants at Batu 8 of Jalan Mawai here while returning home to Taman Sedili, hitting a leg of one of the elephants. He had not noticed the animals, a small herd of three or four of them, on the road as he was driving with his low lights on and the road was dark.

He injured his lips, eyelids and left cheek in the incident, which needed 20 stitches at the hospital later. After he knocked the elephant, Mohd Khairul alighted from the vehicle and in a state of panic ran into the jungle for fear of being attacked by the herd, but the elephants also disappeared into the jungle.

A married couple who had come along, helped to call an ambulance, he said. “While waiting for the ambulance, the herd of elephants returned and stomped my vehicle until the front portion was wrecked and then returned to the jungle,” he said.

16. Lethal virus detected in wild elephants (India)

The Telegraph India – 27.8.2018

Scientists have detected multiple cases of a lethal haemorrhagic viral infection for the first time in wild elephant calves in India and raised concerns that it could threaten the long-term survival of some Asian elephant populations.

Wildlife officials in India have identified 13 lethal cases of elephant endotheliotropic herpes virus (EEHV) between 2013 and 2017, eight among them in elephant calves living among free-ranging wild herds, three in camp-raised orphans and two in captive-born calves.

Since the early-1990s, scientists have documented the deaths of more than 100 captive elephant calves from EEHV, a mammalian herpes virus that can cause acute haemorrhagic disease and that had been identified in 1990.

The virus has since then also turned up in captive elephant calves in Borneo, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Singapore and Thailand, prompting some scientists to suggest that EEHV affects only captive elephants and that it had crossed into Asian elephants from African elephants.

17. Alert helps train save jumbos in nick of time (India)

The Telegraph India – 27.8.2018

The Northeast Frontier Railway on Sunday tweeted video footage, showing a herd of elephants along tracks under the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary and claiming that they could be saved because the Forest Department had shared the animals’ movement on time.

The train stopped 250 m from the elephants, which were on the tracks on Friday evening and waited for 10 minutes for the herd to move away.

The railways, which had often been blamed in the past for elephant deaths on the tracks in the Dooars, said on Sunday that if the movement of herds was informed on time by the forest department, the animals could be saved.

The train didn’t knock down the herd as the information about the animals was shared with the drivers in advance. We are proud of the driver and the assistant driver, a railway official said.

18. Sabah steps up efforts to destroy jumbo snare traps

The Star Online – 28.8.2018

Efforts to find and destroy snare traps responsible for a number of injuries and deaths of Sabah’s critically endangered pygmy elephants have been carried out, says state Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Christina Liew.

She said wildlife officials had been on the ground doing this for some time. “We hope plantation owners and anyone else who comes across snare traps can help by destroying them or informing the authorities immediately for the sake of our wildlife.” She said the decreasing number of the pygmy elephants was alarming.

19. Worry over live wire deaths of elephants (India)

The Telegraph India – 2.9.2018

Conservationists have expressed concern over the rise in cases of elephants’ death due to electrocution. On Friday, a tusker died of electrocution after it had come in contact with live wire trap laid by suspected poachers in the Denguri forest. Electrocution is fast emerging as a major cause of elephants’ mortality in the state.

These long-ranging elephants perish mostly due to poaching, electrocution, train collision and road mishap besides by falling into open wells. Odisha has lost 167 elephants to electrocution since 2000. The decade following 2000 year witnessed 77 electrocution deaths, mostly due to the sagging and live power lines, according to the Wildlife Society of Orissa.

The state has lost 90 elephants to electrocution from April 1, 2010 till August 21, 2018, averaging nearly 11 elephants a year. Before 2010, the majority of the unnatural elephant deaths, approximately 80%, were attributed to the sagging power lines. Since 2010, of the 90 electrocution deaths, 33 were due to sagging lines and 57 to live wire poaching.

20. Sri Lanka probes deaths of wild elephants

Phys.Org – 3.9.2018

Sri Lankan authorities on Monday began investigating the deaths of wild elephants in the east of the island after pulling seven carcasses out of a marsh. Six out of the seven animals found in the swamp were young—below the age of 12—and he suspected that many more may have died there.

The swamp is located on a migratory route and the animals may have become bogged down and exhausted battling through the plants and then drowned.

Sri Lanka considers elephants a national treasure and they are protected by law. However, human-elephant conflict near wildlife sanctuaries have led to the deaths of 375 people in the past five years, according to official figures. Enraged villagers have retaliated by slaughtering nearly 1200 of the beasts.

21. Elephant dies as neck gets stuck in tree trunk (India)

The Times of India – 10.9.2018

A female elephant aged about 15–20 years was found dead on the forest boundary at Jambukandi near Anaikatti on Sunday evening. Forest department officials said the elephant died after its neck got trapped in a tree trunk as it was moving down a slope.

Anti-poaching watchers, guards and foresters attached to Coimbatore forest range came across the carcass of the animal during a patrol at Jambukandi area on Sunday around 6:30 pm. The elephant was moving down a slope and hit against a tree. Its neck got stuck in a tree trunk and died. A herd of elephants were roaming in the area.

The forest officials have left the carcasses at the spot itself. “We will bring a veterinarian on Monday morning to perform post-mortem.”

22. Drone camera made elephant go berserk, says activist (India)

The Hindu – 16.9.2018

The recent incident in which a wild bull elephant entered a human habitat near Iritty here and caused injuries to Forest Department personnel and the death of a domestic animal was due to the use of drone camera, according to an animal enthusiast.

In his complaint to the Divisional Forest Officer (Flying Squad) here, Manoj Madhavan, a member of a group that campaigns for the prevention of cruelty against elephants, said the animal had entered the Haji Road area at Vellakode after getting panicked by a drone camera deployed by the Forest Department to track the movement of elephants.

The wild elephant had gone berserk then, overturning a department vehicle and killing a domestic animal. Incidentally, the video captured by the camera was extensively circulated on social media. According to the complaint, the animal was petrified by the sound of the drone camera, leaving it panicked. However, it calmed down once the camera was stopped and returned to the forest later.

23. Indian tea estate gets world's first 'elephant-friendly' tag

Asia Times – 18.9.2018

Nuxalbari, based in eastern India, has become the first large grower in the world to produce "Certified Elephant Friendly Tea" after research by the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) and the University of Montana in the United States.

Nuxalbari is a 1200-acre tea estate in Darjeeling in the east Indian state of West Bengal which is owned and operated by women. The certification is a unique program that combines efforts to mitigate climate change, educate the stakeholders – especially children – on the environment and to provide a sanctuary for wild elephants.

Lisa Mills from the University of Montana pointed out that elephant-friendly tea aims to decrease one of the main sources of mortality for elephants. It mitigates issues that impact elephants such as habitat loss and degradation, poisoning from chemicals and other factors.

Established in 1884, the Nuxalbari Tea Estate serves as a model for elephant conservation, biodiversity and ecological practices that can be replicated in other tea growing areas. Since

the tea industry is facing economic challenges, Mills said it was an opportune time to engage more stakeholders. This will create a paradigm shift towards more ecologically sustainable tea that is also economically viable. "The tea regions are among the last strongholds for wild Asian elephants and what we do now on and around tea estates will determine whether or not our grandchildren will see elephants in the wild," she said.

24. Seismic sensors to warn train drivers of elephants (India)

The Tribune – 19.9.2018

With increasing incidents of elephants getting killed after being hit by locomotives along railway tracks that pass through the tuskers' natural habitats, Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIO) here has developed a seismic-based sensor system to track their movement and trigger an alert. A pilot system has been installed.

It has been developed in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India under a grant from the World Wide Fund for Nature. The system consists of a number of interlinked seismic activity sensing nodes laid a few inches below the earth's surface along areas that are prone to elephant movements.

A monitoring node with embedded algorithms discerns the actual signal of elephant movement from other man-made or animal noises or natural seismic activities. The pattern of elephant seismic signature is stored locally at each sensing node and the key information is transmitted to a central server for generating alerts.

25. Baby elephant stuck in mud freed after 24-hour operation (Sri Lanka)

Adaderana – 26.9.2018

An elephant calf, which had been stuck in the mud for several days, has been rescued yesterday (26) following a 24-hour rescue mission in the Sooriyapura area. According to the Kantale

Wildlife Officers, this five-year-old elephant calf has been trapped in mud for three days near the Janaranjana Wewa in Sooriyapura area on Ella-Kantale road.

Following the medical treatment, given by the Giritale veterinary surgeons, the rescued elephant calf has regained its health.

26. Demand for ‘lucky’ hair puts Vietnam’s elephants in jeopardy

Agence France-Presse – 26.9.2018

“I’ll cut a hair off right in front of you here, so you can be sure it’s not fake,” said the saleswoman in Tri A village in the country’s forested central highlands. A fondness for rings and bracelets embedded with elephant hairs is fuelling a worrying fashion fad in a country notorious for its illicit wildlife trade, from rhino horns to pangolin scales, tiger teeth and bear bile.

The trend is putting a strain on the few surviving elephants in Vietnam whose hairs are plucked or tails cut off by poachers, leaving the animals without the crucial appendage used to swat flies and keep their backsides clean.

With just 80 elephants left in captivity and about 100 in the wild – down from as many as 2,000 in 1990 – It is suspected that most of the tails are being smuggled in from neighbouring countries or as far afield as Africa.

The appetite for elephant parts is a cruel trend familiar to much of the region. In nearby Myanmar elephants are killed to feed a growing demand at home and in China for their skin, believed to cure eczema or acne.

27. Poachers are killing Myanmar’s elephants in increasing numbers

The Irish Times – 27.9.2018

Seeing a group of elephant calves up close, eyes calm and trunks playfully sniffing the ground and each other, their lives seem nothing but serene. Since opening in November 2016,

the Wingabaw elephant conservation camp 90 minutes north of Yangon, has become home for six baby elephants and a number of adults.

The camp opened both for tourism, and as a place to take care of the elephants. And care they need because these babies’ short lives have been anything but peaceful. They are orphans – castaways in an alarming and growing threat to Myanmar’s Asian elephant population; the killing and skinning of their adult folk.

Less reported is the surging demand for elephant skin in China that is fuelling a spike in elephant killings in Myanmar. North and northeastern Myanmar share a 2200 km border with China. Myanmar’s Asian elephant population is critical: India aside, no country is home to as many.

28. Five jumbos swept away by flood water in Mahanadi (India)

Odisha TV – 15.10.2018

At least five elephants were swept away by flood waters in Mahanadi River near Mundali in Cuttack this morning. The incident took place when a herd of around 20 elephants were crossing the river while going from Athagarh to Chandaka forest.

The wild elephants used to cross the river on a daily basis but due to heavy flow of flood water in the river following incessant rain triggered under the impact of cyclone Titli, the jumbos were swept away today.

29. Keeping watch on elephant herd (China)

NHK World – 29.10.2018

Authorities in China are turning to technology to protect villagers from a herd of 100 wild elephants. Drones have been deployed to track the animals, giving residents time to prepare. People who live in this village in southwest China are troubled by the elephants’ frequent visits. The video shows a giant creature taking a leisurely walk between houses.

It is swinging a bag of corn that it has scavenged. The villager says an elephant destroyed his door. Local forestry authorities hope unmanned drones will help residents stay safe and prevent damage. They plan to track the elephants' movements and analyze activity patterns in a bid to issue early warnings about an approaching herd.

30. Odisha lost 179 elephants to electrocution since 2000 (India)

Down to Earth Magazine – 31.10.2018

Electrocution is killing the pachyderms of Odisha, once prized for its war elephants. Information provided by the Wildlife Society of Odisha (WSO) reveals a picture of criminal neglect on part of the state authorities to prevent the deaths of the animals due to electrocution.

The data shows that since 2000, Odisha has lost a total of 179 elephants to electrocution. Between 2000 and 2010, there were 77 electrocution deaths, mostly due to sagging power lines averaging less than 8 elephants in a year.

However, from 2010 onwards, the situation turned even worse. "From April 1, 2010 to October 27, 2018 (8 years & 7 months), the state has lost 102 elephants to electrocution, averaging about 12 elephants in a year," the letter notes. It also points out that this uptick in deaths has come about despite some preventive steps being taken by the government, including allocation of adequate funds to strengthen power lines.

31. India's first elephant hospital opens in Mathura (India)

The Business Standard – 16.11.2018

India's first specialized hospital for elephants was on Friday formally opened by Agra Divisional Commissioner Anil Kumar at Farah block's Churmura village. The unique medical centre offers wireless digital X-ray, laser treatment, dental X-ray, thermal imaging, ultra-sonography, hydrotherapy and quarantine facilities.

Located close to the elephant conservation and

care centre, the hospital is designed to treat injured, sick or geriatric elephants and is equipped with a medical hoist for lifting elephants, as also an elephant restraining device with a dedicated indoor treatment enclosure for long duration medical procedures. An observation deck will allow veterinary students and interns to observe and learn about elephant's behaviour and treatment from a safe distance.

32. Poachers kill 15 wild elephants in first 9 months, say officials (Myanmar)

The Myanmar Times – 16.11.2018

Fifteen wild elephants were killed by poachers from January to September this year, while five others died of natural causes, the Nature Wildlife Conservation Department said. Many of the wild elephants that were killed lived in Ayeyarwady and Yangon regions, where poaching remains rampant. In Ayeyarwady alone, five elephants were killed by poachers while two died natural deaths. In Yangon, three elephants were killed by poachers while one died of natural causes.

In 2016, 17 wild elephants were killed across the country from January to September, and that figure rose to 25 for the same period last year. In Myanmar, 80% of elephants are domesticated, and only 20% remain in the wild.

33. 32 elephants recorded in Gelephu (Bhutan)

Kuensel – 28.11.2018

It took a dozen forest officials and eight farmers of Shershong gewog in Sarpang at least eight hours to chase a herd of seven elephants away from the settlement in Shershong yesterday. Among the herd were three juvenile elephant and four adults. The herd was chased into the forest above Umling gewog.

Last week, it was villagers of Pelrithang in Gelephu gewog that spent a night chasing away the elephants from the field. Farmers started by 10 pm and whistle, crackers and loud drum noise could be heard until 4 am.

Singye Wangchuk said there are a total of 32 elephants in Gelephu, Samtenling, Shershong and Chuzagang. Eight are in Pelrithang, three in Dzomlingthang, six in Dechenpelri, another eight in the Airport area, six in Chuzagang and one in Shershong.

34. Wild elephant killed with poison arrow in Ayeyarwady (Myanmar)

The Myanmar Times – 28.11.2018

A 15-year-old wild elephant was killed by suspected poachers in Pathein township of Ayeyarwady Region, the regional Forest Department said. Residents notified officials in the area the elephant had been killed with a poison arrow.

A combined team of officers from the department, forest police, Elephant Emergency Response Unit and police found the dead elephant, which had been skinned, in Chaung Thar forest. The male elephant was about, had an 3.4 m girth, and was 2.4 m tall.

From January to September, seven wild elephants died in Ayeyarwady, three of them killed by poachers. Seven suspected poachers have been arrested.

35. Endangered elephants trapped by world's largest refugee camp (Bangladesh)

National Geographic – 27.11.2018

For thousands of years, Asian elephants around the city of Cox's Bazaar, in southeastern Bangladesh, have walked the same forest paths over and over on their migration to and from Myanmar. Then, last year, the refugees started coming. Between August and December 2017, 600,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees poured from Myanmar across the Bangladeshi border. Fleeing rape, murder the refugees settled in camps that happen to be right on eight vital elephant migration corridors.

When elephants attempted to migrate in September of last year, they encountered a sea of people—the tragic irony of one displaced group inadvertently displacing another. Elephants

and people alike panicked. Elephants ran haphazardly, looking for an exit, while people desperately tried to seek cover and avoid being trampled. Tragedy followed.

In total, elephants killed 13 people between September 2017 and February 2018. In March, the deaths stopped, in large part thanks to efforts by the IUCN and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These organizations teamed up to teach people living on and around the corridors how to cope with future elephant encounters and how to better understand elephants themselves.

36. Fence built along China-Laos railway to protect wild elephants

Xinhua – 3.12.2018

Builders are establishing a fence along a newly completed section of a railway to connect China with Laos in efforts to protect wild elephants. China Railway's Kunming bureau said on Monday that the fence will be extended to 36 km long in valley areas, where a tunnel group on the railway was completed on Friday in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture of southwest China's Yunnan Province.

Zheng Xiancan, a project manager with the bureau said the project planning has taken into consideration avoiding a migration pass of wild elephants. The fence is built with light and sound resistant technology to further reduce the railway's disturbance to wild animals. There are around 300 wild elephants living in the region.



Elephants in Yala National Park (Sri Lanka)