

Asian Elephant Body Condition Index

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(Developed by Dr. V. Krishnamurthy, Dr. C. Wemmer, and John Lehnhardt)^a

Body area	Observation			Score
1. Head: temporal depression (<i>view from several angles</i>)	full and convex in outline when viewed from behind, frontal ridge vaguely outlined = 2 points	slightly to moderately concave, frontal ridge defined = 1 point	deeply concave, frontal ridge forms a crater-like rim around the temporal depression = 0 points	
2. Scapula (shoulder blade) (<i>view from side</i>)	spinous process not visible, or slightly visible = 2 points	spinous process visible as a vertical ridge with a concavity between the ridge and the posterior edge of the scapula = 1 point	spinous process pronounced and bladeline with the acromial process appearing as a knot = 0 points	
3. Thoracic region (view from side)	ribs not visible, barrel smooth = 2 points	some ribs visible, but the extent and demarcation not pronounced = 1 point	many ribs strongly demarcated with pronounced intercostal depressions = 0 points	
4. Flank area (immediately in front of pelvis) (view from side and behind)		no depression visible, flank bulges outwards in front of the pelvis = 1 point	depression visible as a sunken area immediately in front of the pelvis = 0 points	
5. Lumbar vertebrae (behind ribs and in front of pelvis) (view from behind; an elevated vantage point may be necessary)	not visible, lower back smooth and rounded = 2 points	visible as a ridge; skin slopes away from the top of the ridge; height of the vertebrae does not exceed width = 1 point	visible as a knife-like blade; sides of the spinal ridge are parallel, and the height exceeds the width = 0 points	
6. Pelvic bone (external angle of the ilium) and rump (view from several angles)	not visible (or slightly visible); rump region between ilium and caudal vertebrae filled with tissue	visible but not pronounced; the rump is slightly depressed between the ilium and the caudal	visible but as a jutting bone; rump is a pronounced sunken zone between the ilium and the caudal vertebrae = 0 points	

	(and not forming a depressed zone) = 2 points	vertebrae = 1 point		
7. Axillary fat (immediately behind joint of humerus and scapula)	the SQ contains a thick handful of fat, easily seized = 2 points	the SQ contains some fat = 1 point	the skin thin and little tissue palpable beneath = 0 points	
8. Brisket fat (between forelegs at base of neck)	sternum well padded with muscle and fat; bone neither visible nor palpable = 2 points	sternum not visible but palpable = 1 point	sternum both visible and palpable = 0 points	
9. Tail		fat and muscular, not bony feeling = 1 point	thin and bony, feels stringy, individual joints palpable = 0 points	
Total				

0 – 5 = emaciated condition

6 – 10 = average condition

11+ = very good condition (or fat)

^a Adapted from personal communication, Dr. V. Krishnamurthy, India, 2000. A version of this table appears in Das, D. ed. 2003. Healthcare, Breeding and Management of Asian Elephants. New Delhi, Project Elephant. Govt. of India. p.189.