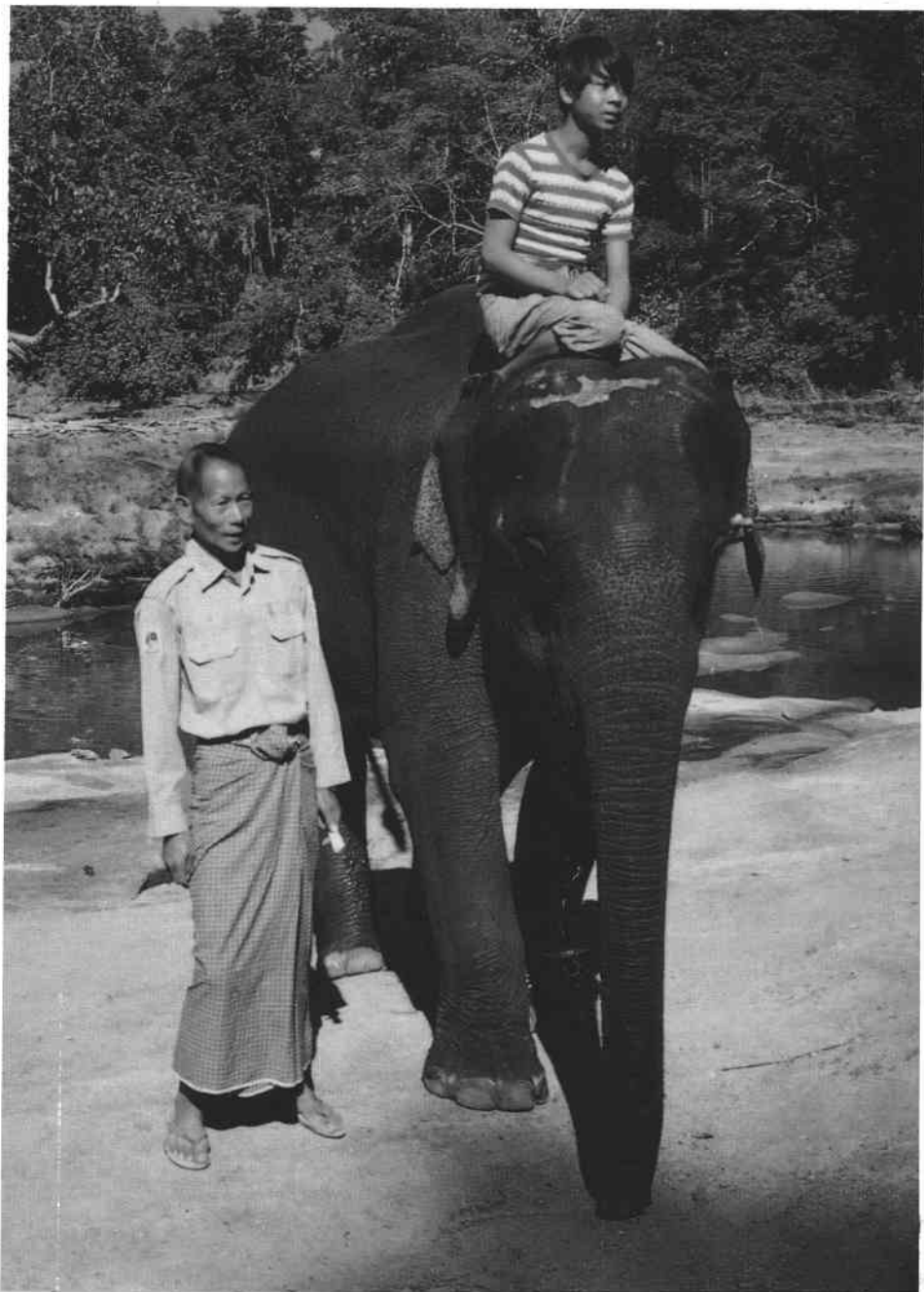


GAJAH

JOURNAL OF THE ASIAN ELEPHANT SPECIALIST GROUP



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GAJAH is a biannual journal of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN -Species Survival Commission (SSC). It is published with financial assistance from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) with the following aims :-

1. To highlight the plight of the Asian Elephant
2. To promote the conservation of the Asian Elephant, and
3. To provide a forum for communication amongst the members of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group.

The Editors of **GAJAH** welcome manuscripts and communications dealing with all aspects of Asian Elephant conservation and management, for consideration for publication. All original papers will be reviewed by referees. Contributions should be typed, double spaced, on one side of A4 paper, or submitted on disks (Word Perfect 5.1) All material may be reprinted unless it has been used in **GAJAH** from an identified source publication, in which case, no reprint is authorised except upon permission of the source publication. Reprinted material should bear the author's name and credit to **GAJAH** should be given. The Editors would appreciate copies of any material so used. The articles published in **GAJAH** do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AESG), Species Survival Commission (SSC), World Conservation Union (IUCN), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Editorial Board or the Editors.

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IUCN/SSC ASIAN ELEPHANT SPECIALIST GROUP (AESG) STRATEGIC PLAN

Lyn De Alwis
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30 Hotel Road, Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka.

I believe that, as conservation group, we should recognize that we have advanced on several fronts. Through meaningful research, field experience and successes and sharing of expertise we qualify as a truly Specialist Group. Our membership has tapped every possible resource in addressing the wide world as regards the sad plight of the Asian elephant and our determination to halt, if not reverse, the causal factors which threaten this charismatic animal. We have achieved this primarily by opening our doors to all 13 countries in which the elephant still occurs in the wild and by inviting the Zoo fraternity to join us. We have made bold to go direct even to government Ministers to convince them that the future of their elephant, to a large extent, lies in their hands.

We felt that with our special capabilities in dealing with human-elephant conflict, assessing elephant numbers and their patterns of distribution, the control of poaching and the resultant ivory trade, we needed to crystallize our knowledge into a plan of action which will stretch far into the future.

Out of our discussions in Bangkok in March 1996, involving both the Steering Committee as well as the general membership, was born the Strategic Plan which is now before you. The 5 functions which comprise our "Grand Vision" should always be in the forefront of our minds in our determination to do our best for an animal which in its heyday bound Asian culture with a golden thread.

The Strategy is a collective work but I will be failing in my duty if I do not say that it could not have been done so quickly and efficiently without the indefatigable Dr. Simon Stuart who performed so well in his role as "facilitator". I commend this Strategic Plan to all members as a guide in planning future programmes to save the elephant for the benefit firstly of this generation and of those to come.

IUCN/SSC ASIAN ELEPHANT SPECIALIST GROUP (AESG) STRATEGIC PLAN

GRAND VISION OF THE AESG :

1. *PROMOTING THE LONG-TERM SURVIVAL OF THE ASIAN ELEPHANT IN ITS NATURAL HABITAT*
2. *MAINTAINING VIABLE ELEPHANT POPULATIONS IN THE WILD*
3. *MITIGATING ELEPHANT-HUMAN CONFLICTS AND PROMOTING THE CO-EXISTENCE OF ELEPHANTS AND PEOPLE*
4. *CONTROLLING POACHING OF ELEPHANTS FOR IVORY AND MEAT*
5. *MANAGING ELEPHANTS IN CAPTIVITY (EX-SITU CONSERVATION)*

1.0 *Mission Statement :*

SSC Mission Statement: *To conserve biological diversity by developing and executing programmes to study, save, restore and manage wisely species and their habitats.*

Within this context, the mission of the AESG is :

To develop, conduct and strengthen programmes to study, conserve, and manage the Asian elephant and its habitat.

2.0 *Constituency:*

To achieve this mission, the AESG must address focal or target groups such as:

- 2.1 Relevent government agencies including Environment, Wildlife, Forestry, Law Enforcement Agencies, Timber Enterprises, Land and Land Reform Departments, etc.

- 2.2 Politicians and decision makers
- 2.3 Media
- 2.4 People living in and around elephant ranges
- 2.5 NGOs
- 2.6 Donors
- 2.7 Corporate sector managing elephant habitats
- 2.8 Researchers and conservationists

3.0 Strategic objectives of the AESG

The AESG will achieve its mission by working on the following strategic objectives:

External Objectives

- 3.1 To strengthen national and regional capabilities and human resources to conserve the Asian elephant.
- 3.2 To gather and process information on the status of the Asian elephant and disseminate it to specialist and political audiences and to the general public.
- 3.3 To identify and set priorities for the conservation of the Asian elephant and to stimulate actions to address them.
- 3.4 To advise key inter-governmental mechanisms relevant to the conservation of the Asian elephant (e.g., the Elephant and Rhino Conservation Facility/ UNEP; ASEAN; SARC, CITES)
- 3.5 To evaluate the ecological impacts of legal and illegal usage of the Asian elephant.
- 3.6 To communicate priority recommendations and policies to promote the implementation of the actions needed for the long-term survival of the Asian elephant.

Internal Objectives

- 3.7 To strengthen the AESG to gather information, set priorities, stimulate action, develop policies, and provide advice for the conservation of the Asian elephant.
- 3.8 To monitor and evaluate the activities of the AESG in order to maximize its effectiveness.
- 3.9 To increase the management capability of the AESG
- 3.10 To strengthen the AESG's ability to generate support for its programmes and diversify its funding base.

4.0 Modus operandi for AESG

The following types of work will be carried out by the AESG in pursuit of the strategic objectives.

- 4.1 Acting as a catalytic agency to promote elephant conservation
- 4.2 Carrying out studies on elephant ecology, conservation & management
- 4.3 Providing technical advice
- 4.4 Exchanging information
- 4.5 Conducting regular training programmes
- 4.6 Monitoring the status of the elephant
- 4.7 Conducting seminars and workshops
- 4.8 Conducting or convening regional/zonal and thematic meetings
- 4.9 Communicating information to decision makers

5.0 Priority Issues / Work-plan

For the next five years, the AESG will focus on the following priority issues (*see proceedings of the Vth Meeting of the AESG held in Indonesia in 1992 for more details):

- 5.1 Protected areas, managed elephant ranges, viable populations, forest corridors, large areas of habitat.
- 5.2 Monitor the status and trends of Asian elephant and its habitats (partly through GIS projects).
- 5.3 Mitigating human-elephant conflicts
- 5.4 Management of problem & non-viable elephants
- 5.5 Development of census capabilities
- 5.6 Economic and ecological evaluation of captive elephants, and welfare of mahouts
- 5.7 Training in enforcement in the field and in elephant management techniques
- 5.8 Studying the effectiveness of the elephant corridors
- 5.9 Improvement of veterinary care and welfare of captive elephants
- 5.10 Studying the impact of trade in elephant products on wild populations
- 5.11 Studying the impact of poaching on elephant populations
- 5.12 Development of AESG communications programme
- 5.13 Development of alternatives for people living in elephant habitats, in collaboration with other stakeholders

6.0 Needs of the AESG

To achieve its mission, the AESG structure requires attention along the following lines:

- 6.1 Establishment of Indian Chapter with Task Forces as needed
- 6.2 Exploring the possibilities of establishing similar chapters in other countries