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GAJAH is the official journal of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The journal is intended as a medium for communication by members of the AsESG of important issues that concern the conservation and management of the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) both in the wild and in captivity. GAJAH welcomes communications and research papers on all aspects of the Asian elephant. GAJAH is aimed at professionals, biologists and academics carrying out research on Asian elephant, government and non-government organizations involved in its conservation, and interested members of the general public. All articles published in GAJAH are deemed to reflect the individual views of the authors and not the official points of view, either of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) or the Species Survival Commission (SSC). GAJAH is a non-profit publication that is supported by financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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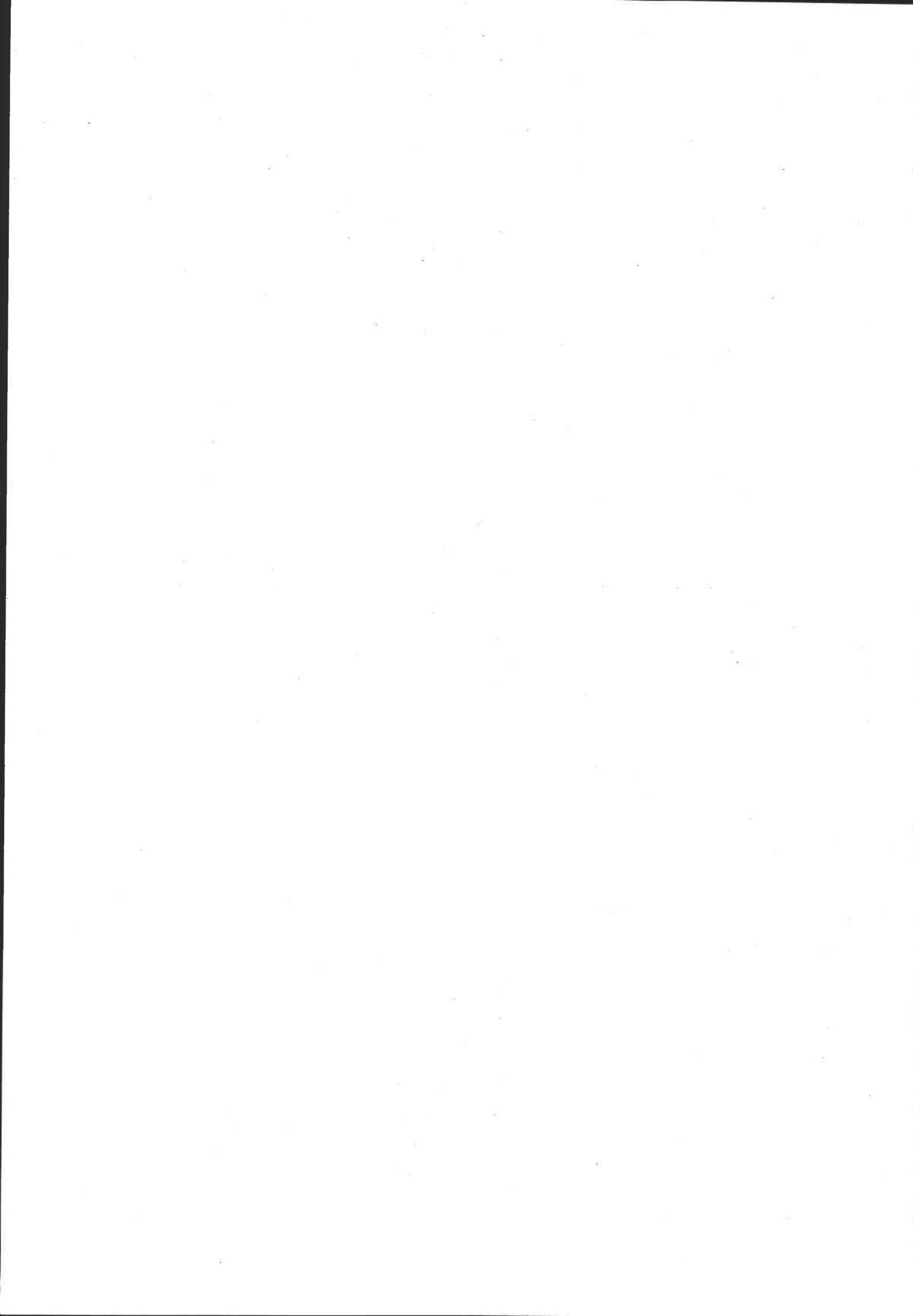
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Conservation News

Sri Lanka

Re-introduction of the insurance scheme for mahouts

The Diyawadana Nilame of the Sacred Temple of the Tooth (The Dalada Maligawa, Kandy), Neelanga Dela Bandara plans to re-introduce the insurance scheme for mahouts following an unfortunate incident of a mahout named Mr. M. Piyasena killed by his elephant while he attempted to give it a wash. He was 59-year old father of four children. According to an eye witness, the elephant concerned was boisterous for a while forcing Piyasena to use the goad to control it. The elephant became so furious that he took the goad and broke it in two, before turning on the mahout. This was the second incident of elephants in captivity killing their mahouts within two months. In the past two years, more than six mahouts have been killed by enraged elephants in Kandy alone.

Source: *The Sunday Times (Sri Lanka) November 6, (2005).*

USA

Sanctuary receives Excellence Award

Riddle's Elephant & Wildlife Sanctuary has become the first recipient of the Institution of Excellence Award given by the Elephant Managers Association (EMA), which is a non-profit organization of professional elephant handlers, administrators, veterinarians, researchers and elephant enthusiasts. The award was handed out in the Fall of 2005 during the EMA annual conference hosted by the Portland Zoo in Oregon. The award was granted "for contributions to elephant training, research and care performed with professionalism, integrity and passion". The Sanctuary is operated by an Arkansas non-profit organization dedicated to preserving both Asia and Africa elephants. It offers permanent refuge to any elephant in need. The facility provides training and education in elephant management and conservation and conducts scientific study in the health and physiology of elephants.

Source: *Log Cabin Democrat, December 24, (2005).*

Workshop on Ultrasound and Veterinary Procedures

The 9th Ultrasound and Veterinary Procedures Workshop for Wildlife Veterinarians was hosted by the Riddle's Elephant & Wildlife Sanctuary in May 2005 at Greenbrier, Arkansas. World renowned elephant veterinarian Dr. Dennis Schmitt, assisted by the sanctuary staff, taught the course. Veterinarians from international elephant facilities (Canada, USA and Sri Lanka) attended the course and shared experiences.

Source: *Pachyderm Periodical, 15: 3 (2005).*

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Elephant program at the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park

Elephants in North American Zoos number approximately less than 275 among 70 or so widely dispersed cities. AZA institutions attract over 150 million visitors, more than all professional sports combined. American Zoos have a unique ability to focus and educate these visitors on the critical conservation issues of this century. Within North America itself, there is tremendous need to establish breeding bull groups as management strategies to dramatically increase the captive population and improve genetic diversity. Captive elephants are not breeding fast enough to keep up with natural mortality. The Smithsonian Institution National Zoological Park can change all this now and make a critical leadership step. It plans to proceed with an ambitious plan to renovate its present elephant exhibit. The new facility will take up an 8-acre parcel of land at the Zoo, with approximately 3 acres of ground space for a group comprising 8 Asian elephants. In addition, the Zoo plans to expand its capability to conduct Asian elephant research and propagation by eventually developing a facility at its Front Royal campus - a 3,200 acre parcel of land that constitutes the Zoo's Conservation & Research Center.

Source: *Smithsonian Institution National Zoological Park (2006).*

Cambodia

Community participation in elephant conservation in Cambodia

As wild elephant habitat is eroded by the spread of cultivation and over exploitation of forest resources, wild elephants resort to feeding on crops. In this context, the resolution of human-elephant conflict to prevent death or injury on both sides, is no less important than the conservation of elephant habitat. A recent survey of Cambodian rural communities indicates that the work of Fauna & Flora International (FFI)'s Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) teams is already changing attitudes to Asian elephants. Community leaders interviewed by Tuy Sureivathana, one of FFI's local counterparts in Cambodia's Ministry of Environment, revealed that villagers no longer retaliate against elephants that raid their crops or damage their property. FFI team has been instrumental in dissuading people from using spring traps and even poison against the elephants. The mitigation of the HEC is a vital element of FFI's Asian Elephant Conservation Programme, which also works to prevent poaching, protect habitats and gather crucial scientific data.

Source: *FFI Update 2 (2005).*