

Regional Workshop and Training of Asian Elephant Veterinarians

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Veterinarians with field experience in elephant health and medicine from around Asia participated in the Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop held in Banda Aceh (Sumatra-Indonesia) from March 27 through March 30, 2012.

This Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop was hosted by the Veterinary College of Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, in collaboration with the Aceh Nature Conservation Agency (BKSDA), and the Veterinary Society for Sumatran Wildlife Conservation (VESSWIC). The Workshop was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Asian Elephant Conservation Fund in collaboration with Asian Elephant Support, the International Elephant Foundation, and Singapore Wildlife Reserves.

Veterinary expertise is important to conservation efforts, especially in cases such as radio-collaring and/or translocation of wild elephants, treatment of wild elephants and other wildlife injured during human-wildlife conflicts, rescuing wild elephants and other species trapped in snares and wells or confiscated from illegal trade, and

conducting post-mortems on elephants and other endangered wildlife. Of equal importance is the need to provide regular veterinary care for captive elephants.

The Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop is a step in providing practical training, sharing experiences regionally, building local and regional capacity in elephant veterinary care, and enhancing elephant veterinary expertise needed for effective conservation in Asia. The Workshop hosted representatives from many of the Asian elephant range countries including India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, as well as veterinarians from Germany, Japan, and Singapore.

The Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop addressed veterinary topics such as general elephant health check-ups, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, identification of proper drugs and proper sample collection. During the Workshop, presentations from each participating range country discussed regional and local elephant health issues, scientific studies, and elephant management plans. Additionally, part





of the Workshop was spent in hands-on practical sessions with six elephants, males and females of varying ages, from the nearby Saree elephant camp. These sessions included topics such as the practice of blood collections, ultrasonography, and foot care.

Oftentimes support is lacking to further develop the capacity of Asian range country veterinarians by allowing them opportunities for practical training and experience exchanges. Therefore this Workshop will be followed by hands-on training opportunities where Asian range country veterinarians will participate in a study tour in another region to better exchange knowledge and experiences. Such ongoing practical training enables veterinarians to be more effective in cases of elephant disease studies, captive elephant health care management, radio collaring



and/or translocation of elephants, as well as in conducting post-mortems and collecting data.

In the Workshop framework, a network of collaborations and knowledge exchange was established between the participating veterinarians and others involved in elephant and wildlife medicine. This network will allow ongoing communication and support between veterinarians from different Asian regions, and will continue the collaborations beyond practical work to benefit Asian elephant conservation.

Acknowledgements and grateful thanks for all of their efforts are due to the Organizing Committee of the Regional Asian Elephant Veterinary Workshop, and to the BKSDA staff and mahouts of the Saree elephant camp.

