

## Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park at Zoo Zürich

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More space for the elephants, more proximity for visitors. The new Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park exhibit marks a further milestone at Zoo Zurich. While the elephants move around more freely, maintain social contacts and even go swimming, the public will have the chance to get closer to the animals than ever before. The project follows the strategy of Zoo Zurich to streamline its animal population and to connect all the habitats in the zoo with a specific conservation project in the wild and with an educational theme in conservation.

The Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park exhibit was created for a ten-strong elephant herd with two bulls and consists both outdoor and indoor areas. Water plays a significant role in the new Elephant Park. Highlights are six major water basins, and inside the exhibit elephants also can be observed underwater while swimming. The animals make active use of these facilities. Like the Masoala Rainforest at Zoo Zürich, the new Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park at Zoo Zurich is linked, themed and named in association with the Thai National

Park Kaeng Krachan. The Kaeng Krachan National Park covers the largest protected area in Thailand. Approximately 200 wild elephants live on a site covering almost 3000 km<sup>2</sup>.

In Kaeng Krachan, Zoo Zürich in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) supports a royal conservation project. Resolving the “human-elephant conflict” that harms farmers and elephants is one of the main focuses of the local conservation activities. Other concerns include expanding the elephants’ living space by linking separate protected zones together, combating poaching and investing in educational projects.

The conflict is due to the extensive damage caused to plantations by wild elephants as they move from one part of the protected zone to another. Protective fencing is being used to remedy the situation. A series of exhibits at the Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park at Zoo Zurich show visitors what the protective fencing looks like and how it works.





The educational elements such as a house destroyed by elephants and an ‘alarm fence’ show how common peaceful life between elephants and man can be achieved. Zoo Zurich’s six elephants have been living in the Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park exhibit since the middle of March. Another baby is due. This has given them plenty of time to get used to all the innovative features of their new environment. Firstly, they have six times as much room as they did before. The new park exhibit enables the elephants live together naturally as a family group and offers a lot more

opportunities for moving around in different ways, forty places where food is provided leads them to move around and forage. Secondly, the way in which the animal keepers look after the elephants has also changed. The animals are now cared for in “protected contact” at all times.

The Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park exhibit was entirely funded from donations and legacies. This was made possible by 5500 individual donors who supported the CHF 57 million project with small and large contributions.

