

Editorial

Jennifer Pastorini (Editor)

E-mail: jenny@aim.uzh.ch

You are holding the 52nd issue of *Gajah* in your hands. You will find five research articles, one of them peer-reviewed, and one short communication on Asian elephants. Four articles are from India and the other two are from Thailand and Sri Lanka. This *Gajah* also includes two workshop reports and two Working Group summaries.

For the **Peer-Reviewed Research Article** Carleen Schwarz and co-authors studied the foraging behaviour of five semi-free elephants. They found that during 298.5 h of foraging the elephants fed on 165 different plant species.

For the first **Research Article** Jyoti Das *et al.* conducted line transects looking for elephant dung in Manas National Park to get an idea about population densities. They estimated that around 600 elephants are in the park. Rahul De and co-authors designed new primers for three regions of the mtDNA genome of elephants. As the amplified fragments are short it will also work for low quality DNA as in dung samples. Julee Jerang *et al.* looked at 100 facilities, each keeping 1–6 elephants, to evaluate the demography, care-taking and feeding habits of the captive elephant population in Eastern Arunachal Pradesh.

Sreedhar Vijayakrishnan *et al.* compiled a **Review Article** on how to survey elephants. They summarize direct and indirect count methods and discuss the importance of monitoring elephants for conservation.

In the **Short Communication** a very rare sighting of elephant twins in the wild is described and a brief overview of twinning in elephants is provided.

In **News and Briefs** we are informed about a workshop held in Thailand to discuss reintroduction of captive elephants to the wild.

Another meeting was held by the Elephant Conservation Group in Sabah to exchange experiences and ideas between teams working on elephant conservation. As usual this *Gajah* presents abstracts from 48 recent scientific publications on Asian elephants and there are glimpses at 23 newspaper articles across Asia.

I am particularly pleased about the first two summaries of two AsESG **Working Groups** (see previous notes from the Chair of the AsESG) who have completed their tasks. The Working Group for “Guidelines for the rehabilitation of captive elephants as a possible restocking option for wild populations” came up with guidelines for the planning stage, the rehabilitation itself and also the post-release period. The Working Group dealing with “Management and care of captive Asian elephant bulls in musth” described the signs of musth in detail, discussed factors associated with musth and provided guidelines on how to deal with musth bulls, also listing options to diminish or suppress musth.

The **Chair** of the AsESG, Vivek Menon, gives us an update on the progress made by the Working Groups and informs us about the new elephant policies drafted in different countries. Most importantly he explains the proceedings for starting the next 4-year term of the AsESG, as the current term comes to an end in January 2021.

This *Gajah* would not have been possible without the hard work of the **Editorial Board** members and the generous funding of the **Wildlife Reserves Singapore Group**. I would like to thank the **authors** who not only submitted their manuscripts but also revised them willingly to make them much more interesting for the readers of *Gajah*. Four **reviewers** also helped *Gajah* by reviewing manuscripts.