

ELEPHANT ECHOES

Updates from the International Elephant Foundation (IEF)

INTERNATIONAL
ELEPHANT
FOUNDATION.ORG

August 2022

The International Elephant Foundation is the catalyst for creating a sustainable future where elephants thrive by linking people and elephants for their mutual long-term benefit.

Founded in 1998, IEF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation of individuals and institutions dedicated to the conservation of African and Asian elephants worldwide. IEF creates a sustainable future for elephants by generating and effectively investing resources to support elephant conservation, education, research, and management programs worldwide. Through our passion, expertise, knowledge, and partnerships, we inspire and engage people to ensure a vibrant future with elephants everywhere.



International Elephant Foundation Staff:
Deborah Olson
Executive Director
Sarah Conley
Conservation Coordinator
Julie Bates
Donor Relations Manager

Follow IEF online:

www.elephantconservation.org



GRAND OPENING!

The Buligi Marine Ranger Station in Uganda

Over the past 10 years, IEF has supported the construction of 14 ranger stations, a veterinary facility, and Joint Operations Command Center (JOCC) as part of a focused effort to take back Murchison Falls National Park (MFNP) from poachers. The new ranger station in Buligi is a critical part of this recovery.

The Recovery of Murchison Falls Program has focused on providing the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) the foundation needed for park management including the construction of ranger posts to counter and respond quickly to poaching threats, problem animal control, park safety and the other issues that arise on a daily basis establishing the long-term protection and conservation of all wildlife in the Delta and along the River Nile. Other vital parts of the Recovery Program include supplying communications and operations systems, ranger training and equipment, and vehicles for all areas of their operations.

Illegal activity in the Buligi Sector of MFNP has greatly been reduced through the establishment of the Semanya and Kabim Marine Ranger Stations, both supported by the International Elephant Foundation. However, there was a 30 kilometer stretch along the Delta and lower part of the River Nile unprotected by UWA and its rangers due to the lack of nearby ranger facilities. This unprotected area allowed access to the Delta resulting in large scale illegal fishing and poaching. Literally thousands of snares were being set monthly killing many animals and severely injuring and killing elephants, giraffe, and lions.

Building the new Buligi ranger station not only protects this area but it has also been important for community development. The Pacer Community College apprentices and teams were employed. This supports youth north of the park where each individual represents a family that in some way interacts with the park, possibly from the poaching community or who have been negatively impacted by elephants crop raiding. Providing

long term training and employment opportunities is dramatically and positively changing the community-park relationship.

Due to our many donors, the construction of the Buligi Marine Ranger Station is complete and it is now open and operational! We are pleased to be able to meet the dedication of wildlife rangers with support and respect embodied in the construction of modern ranger posts to increase their quality of life while on patrol.

Watch a video about this important ranger station [here](#).

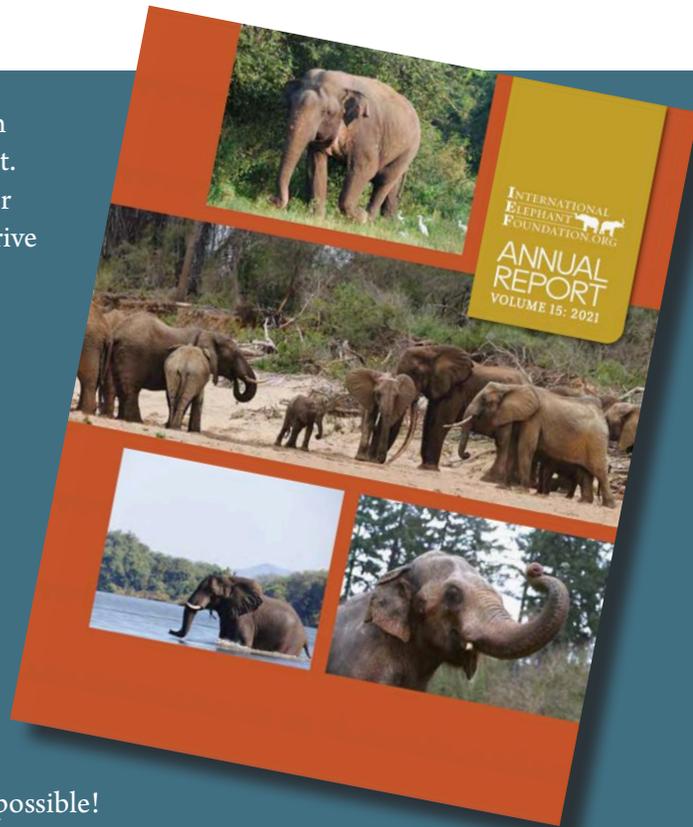


2021 ANNUAL REPORT

IEF's 2021 Annual Report is now out! The past few years have been unprecedented in many ways, both good and bad; 2021 is no different. Yet, despite the hurdles, challenges and left turns, YOU stepped up for elephants! Your commitment to building a world where elephants thrive has:

- ▶ Removed **7,809** snares;
- ▶ Protected **>140,582** km² of habitat;
- ▶ Provided **227** educational opportunities;
- ▶ Taught **>44,000** children and adults;
- ▶ Captured at least **234** poachers and wildlife criminals; and
- ▶ Directly protected at least **51,408** elephants through project activities.

Read about the important, wildlife-saving work accomplished in 2021. We are excited to show you what your generosity has made possible! Thank you for making it a reality.



Help Elephants, Help Tigers

Living alongside wildlife is dangerous. The communities around Nepal's Bardia National Park know this firsthand, sharing their habitat with approximately 120 elephants and 87 tigers. Conservation efforts have helped these wildlife population numbers grow, but with that comes increasing incidents of human-wildlife conflict that causes crop losses, property damage, and human injuries and even deaths--all of which lead to animosity towards animals and retaliatory killings of elephants and tigers. The Community Based Elephant Conservation Project supported by IEF helps to protect both wildlife and humans by mobilizing Rapid Response Teams, holding conservation education events, and safely utilizing mitigation measures.

Beginning late last year and into this year in the communities of the Banke, Raptisonari forest area, there was a series of human casualties caused by a tiger. Because the attacks happened in the same region it was thought the same animal was responsible. The Bardia teams deployed to the area, using camera traps to identify and monitor the suspected tiger. After 10 long days, the tiger was identified and safely captured and transferred to a holding center in Kasara Chitwan.

Acting quickly was important to show the community that their lives and safety are a priority. This quick action was also key to preventing the tiger from being killed in retaliation. While not a case of human-elephant conflict, all cases of wildlife conflict have the potential to damage community support for conservation efforts. Protecting elephants means having a big picture view of the entire situation, protecting their habitat and all the wildlife therein because safe coexistence is the only way to protect elephants, tigers, and all wildlife for generations to come.

IEF Keeping Busy

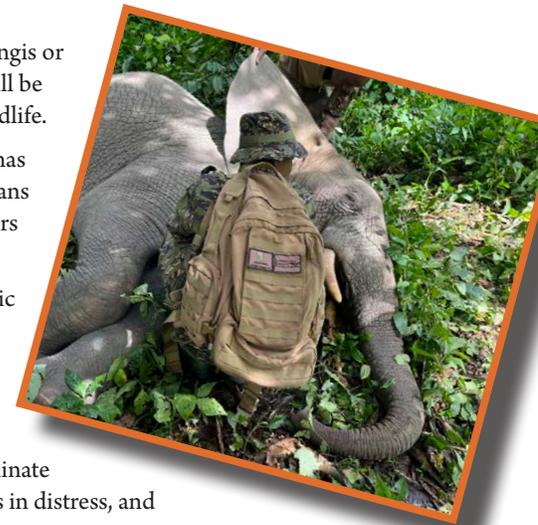
We cannot believe how quickly 2022 is moving! The small but dedicated IEF staff has been hard at work making things happen and moving forward, keeping the IEF vision of a sustainable future with elephants always at the forefront. We have so much on the horizon we thought we'd share some events and updates.

On August 15 to 19, we are holding our second-ever virtual symposium! The *18th International Elephant Conservation and Research Symposium* is once again being held completely online. Featuring talks from around the world there are sessions covering everything from Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus to the Ancestors of the Modern Day Elephant, from New Technologies to Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation, and so much more. This is a can't-miss event. Register by [clicking here](#).

Also for the second year in a row IEF has partnered with Turning Point Beer for a *special elephant brew!* Available for a limited time, this exclusive beer inspired by the fruits and flavors that appeal to elephants will be available at the Dallas/Fort Worth area's taproom both in cans and on tap. To celebrate the launch of the beer we are holding an Elephant Brew & Bingo Night on August 25th. This evening of fun will include elephant-themed bingo, a food truck, prizes, a raffle, and more! The merriment starts at 4:30pm CST and Bingo will begin at 7pm! For more information visit our [Facebook event page](#).

It's well over the midpoint of the year which means we are receiving interim reports from the 20+ projects we are supporting this year. Full results are still forthcoming but here are some updates:

- ▶ **From India's Kaziranga National Park:** Construction has finished on 27 of the planned 65 tongis or lookout points despite another serious wave of illnesses caused by COVID-19. These tongis will be used by farmers to help protect their crops and prevent crop-raiding by elephants and other wildlife.
- ▶ **From Nepal's Bardia National Park:** A recent tiger survey shows the Nepali tiger population has more than doubled (250+ individuals) since the last survey in 2008 (121 individuals). This means the Community Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPUs) who work to protect elephants and tigers from human-elephant conflict are having a positive impact.
- ▶ **From Zambia's Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area:** A new poliwire electric fencing system was installed, assisting 16 farmers and their families by helping to protect their subsistence farms and deter elephants.
- ▶ **From Tsavo, Kenya:** From January to June 2022 a total of 35,538 kilometers over 308 hours of flight were carried out providing "eyes in the skies" to protect Tsavo Conservation Area's last Big Tuskers, Iconic Cows, and Emerging Tuskers. These aerial reconnaissance flights coordinate closely with teams from the Kenya Wildlife Service to respond to sightings of poachers, animals in distress, and illegal wildlife crime.
- ▶ **From the Ziama Forest in Guinea:** Two forest elephants have been fitted with satellite collars which will help researchers learn about habitat use, elephant movements, and establish an early warning system to prevent elephants coming into conflict with humans.



Human-elephant Coexistence Projects in Namibia's Arid Northwest



by *Christin Winter*
Conservation Project Manager
Elephant-Human Relations Aid (EHRA)

IEF has been proud to call EHRA a conservation partner since 2020 and your support of IEF has helped multiple EHRA projects in Namibia, including the work discussed below. We are proud to continue to support EHRA projects and hope that you agree.

Human-elephant conflict (HEC)

Living with wild elephants in rural areas comes with many challenges. In Namibia's arid northwest, people live in small settlements surrounding water boreholes drilled by the Namibian Government. Most villages use either hand pumps, windmills, or diesel pumps to provide water for themselves and their livestock. In these areas, elephants share the land with the villagers and farmers. Human-Elephant Conflicts (HEC) often centers around access to water, because the elephants can smell the water in the boreholes from miles away and come to drink it. They often destroy the pipes, tanks, zinc reservoirs and pumps in the process of trying to drink. The loss of water and damaged equipment in such an arid area puts the resident people at immense risk.

The frustration and desperation felt by the local people means that HEC is one of the main causes of the declining elephant population in this area. However, the elephants play a critical role in the desert ecosystem and generate a lot of money for the country, including the rural conservancies, by attracting tourists from all over the world.

Elephant Corridor Project

Droughts and an increase in human populations are influencing elephant movements and have pushed several herds east into a new conflict hotspot of commercial farmland that borders rural communal land. In their pursuit of fresh grass and water, some elephants have been breaking down these private farm's livestock fences and causing up to N\$ 1 million a year in damage per farm. If the elephants do not break the fences, then most owners do not mind their presence. EHRA sees an opportunity here to find innovative solutions to the conflicts, including reopening elephant migration pathways connecting and expanding available elephant habitat. This becomes increasingly important as erratic climate patterns may further prolong droughts and influence the viability of the elephants' arid core range.



In the first phase of our Elephant Corridor Project, EHRA embarked on a data collection phase, created a Corridor Concept Plan, and a network of collaborators and stakeholders that support and adopt the mission. Strategy meetings with stakeholders set the foundation of a 10-year vision for restoring elephant migration pathways and opening elephant corridors.

Elephant drinking dams

Two new elephant drinking dams are contributing to reducing conflict potential as elephants do not have to walk through villages to drink anymore.

Elephant headcounts

Elephant observations through direct sightings and camera traps enabled EHRA to identify 12 distinct herds and 23 bull elephants, along with conducting regular headcounts of the Ugab and Huab desert elephants.

Elephant-Human Relations Aid *continued*

New generation

One new-born desert elephant calf in our focal desert subpopulation (Ugab River West) in early 2022 ends the seven-year death toll in calves.

Reduced mortality rate

Overall, EHRA's holistic conflict mitigation programmes prevented further conflict-related mortalities in our project area.

Elephant collaring

EHRA have fitted three satellite collars to track elephant movements in real time, and more are planned. In collaboration with Earth Ranger, we successfully trialled an Elephant Early Warning System, that sends alerts via WhatsApp or SMS to conservancy chair people who share the information with their community members. We created geofences in a two kilometer radius around all villages, which triggers the alert automatically if collared elephants cross the invisible boundary. This greatly enhances tolerance amongst communities as people are not surprised by elephant visits anymore and are prepared for the approaching giants.

P.E.A.C.E. Project

Our educational P.E.A.C.E. Project trained seven communal Elephant Guards to become the local elephant experts. The Elephant Guards are continuously reaching out, conducting training on conflict mitigation, sharing tips on the local radio stations and responding to elephant emergencies. This greatly empowers communities to own the human-elephant coexistence challenge. The Guards that are still in training, will soon become the Elephant Alert receivers and share the information with the communities they are responsible for.

Positive change in attitudes

In recent stakeholder meetings, we experienced examples of how the perception of elephants is changing in a positive way. Several years ago, one particular area had formed a "no elephants" group, which campaigned for the removal of all resident elephants. EHRA concentrated all its efforts in this area to tackle the existing problems from all sides. This work included protecting water point infrastructures, providing elephant drinking dams, conducting educational conflict-mitigation training courses and relieving the financial pressure of sharing water with elephants by replacing diesel water pumps with solar pumps. Traditional authorities and conservancy chair people have reported that coexisting with elephants is now possible. They accept that they are sharing their land with the giants and recognise the positive development that the elephants bring to the area.

Next steps

Along with continuing our existing projects, we are going to replicate our holistic conflict mitigation programme in other areas of Namibia, conservancies north of or area of operation, that experience conflicts with elephants.



ABOUT ELEPHANT-HUMAN RELATIONS AID

Since registration as an NGO in 2003, EHRA has been working to secure the long-term survival of Namibia's desert-dwelling elephants (*Loxodonta africana africana*). These free-roaming elephants live outside national parks in the arid northwest of the country. EHRA's team protects them, and the rural communities that live alongside them, by taking a holistic approach to reducing human-elephant conflicts (HEC).

EHRA's base is well positioned on the northern bank of the ephemeral Ugab River, which is the boundary between the Kunene and Erongo Regions. This location allows EHRA to work with all HEC-affected people, including communal conservancies, rural communities and schools, commercial and resettlement farmers.

NEW MERCHANDISE!

We heard you and it's finally here: [the NEW IEF Store!](#)

Now you can put on your elephant yoga pants with your elephant shirt, while drinking coffee from your elephant tumbler, throw your stuff in an elephant tote bag, checking texts from your elephant phone case, while on the way to your fitness class with your elephant yoga mat. You can literally wear your love for elephants and conservation on your sleeve... and everywhere else.

Our new store features exclusive designs including multicolor variations of an outline of an elephant created with silhouettes of the many species that live under its "umbrella," highlighting the positive benefits elephants have on their ecosystems. We hope you love the designs and products as much as we do! [Check them out!](#)



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Elephants inspire our conservation work every day, but there is another group who inspires us: IEF's donors. Our donors are some of the most passionate, caring, and committed people we know and we thought you might like to meet them too! Exclusive to Elephant Echoes, we are starting our Donor Spotlight Series where you can get to know fellow IEF supporters from all walks of life. We kick off this series with a few words from one of the donors herself: Sylvia D. Hepler (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania)

"My serious interest in elephants opened up in 2018 when I read well known author Jodi Picoult's researched novel, Leaving Time. In 2019, while immersed in Lawrence Anthony's autobiographical nonfiction book, The Elephant Whisperer, that interest deepened into a commitment to help conserve and rehabilitate these iconic, often misunderstood animals. More compelling books, both scientific accounts as well as personal experience stories, eventually moved me to take tangible action.

Upon searching the internet for organizations with missions devoted to improving the lives of elephants, people in nearby communities, and ecosystems, I happened to discover the International Elephant Foundation website. Immediately I was attracted to the diverse offerings and invitations for involvement on the home page. However, I also believe I was given an intuitive nudge to connect with IEF. For nearly two years now I've been affiliated with them as a monthly donor and as a participant in the regular virtual "Conservation Chats" with senior leaders of funded groups and projects on the ground in Africa and Asia.

Without exception I continue to be impressed with IEF staff: their ongoing dedication, strategic thinking, and responsiveness to issues in the field keeping the long term view in mind. And I, one individual, receive satisfaction knowing that I'm contributing to the power of collective giving."



Thank you, Sylvia! Your passion and curious mind has helped support the IEF conservation community and we are honored to work alongside you on behalf of these magnificent animals!

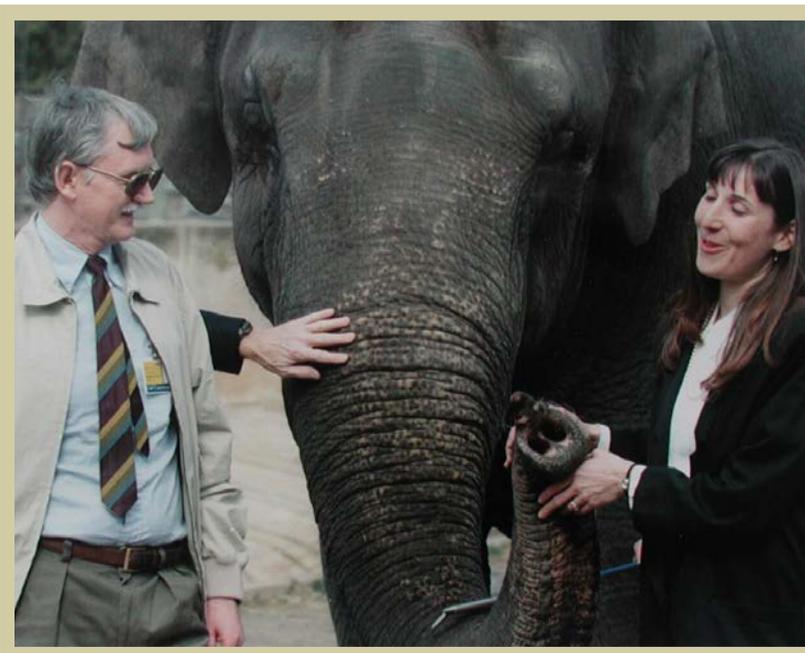
Meet Dr. Gary Hayward, IEF Advisor

IEF is honored to count Dr. Gary Hayward as one of our advisors. To say that Dr. Hayward is an important figure in the elephant conservation and research community is an understatement. After a career studying human herpesvirus diseases, Dr. Hayward proceeded to become the leading “virus detective” carrying out research into understanding Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus (EEHV) and its impact on both captive and wild Asian and African elephant populations worldwide. EEHV was first identified in 1999 by Dr. Laura Richman under the tutelage of Dr. Hayward, and he has been researching this novel “Proboscivirus” branch of the herpesvirus family extensively ever since. Cases of EEHV hemorrhagic disease (HD) have been confirmed in Asian range countries, making it all the more important to study. Dr. Hayward and his team identified all seven known species of EEHV and the numerous highly diverged subtypes and strains of each through “genetic fingerprinting” as well as carrying out genomic DNA sequencing and phylogenetic analysis. Their work allows researchers to compare EEHV with similar diseases and understand more about how it affects elephants, facilitating the development of diagnostic PCR and serology tests and research into treatments and vaccines. It is safe to say that nearly all work being done to fight EEHV can be traced back to Dr. Hayward and his findings. Dr. Hayward has an expansive list of over 200 peer-reviewed publications including 25 describing his EEHV studies and can be regularly seen presenting internationally at conferences, sharing his expertise and experience.

Let’s hear directly from Dr. Hayward:

How did you get inspired to work with animals/elephants?

“It was indirect, I was interested in genes and evolution from my early teens and was most inspired to study viruses that cause human diseases, especially cancer-related ones. Reading Paul De Kruif’s text on Microbe Hunters and Stanley Valen’s book on Viruses and the Nature of Life at age 14 sealed my fate as a career biomedical research scientist. I was lucky having invented agarose gel electrophoresis as a method for separating DNA molecules of different sizes in 1970 as a Ph.D. student in New Zealand where I grew up. This was an important step in the worldwide “Genomic Biology Revolution” and helped open doors for me. My wife Diane and I ran a large NIH-funded laboratory at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine studying human herpesviruses for 45 years, but I was also always interested in endangered species and conservation efforts, which included comparative work with great ape viruses. When Laura Richman came to me with the problem of what killed a young Asian elephant



“Kumari” in 1997 with a sudden devastating hemorrhagic disease, it was logical and easy to divert some of our attention to the study of this novel family of elephant herpesviruses, which has turned into nearly full time “volunteer” virus detective work for myself and several other members of my team over the past 15 years.”

What can you tell us about being involved with IEF?

“The IEF has specifically supplemented the funding of a good deal of our research and it is an honor and privilege to be associated with IEF. The conferences, workshops and Newsletter that they organize and sponsor have been essential for making progress, developing sensitive new assays and bringing together a highly diverged group of concerned veterinarians and various other experts worldwide for free exchanges of samples and critical information and experiences about trying to cope with and treat individual cases of EEHV HD.”

As you can see, Dr. Hayward is not only incredibly impressive but a very good person. We are lucky to have him and his team working on behalf of elephants!