

ELEPHANT ECHOES

Updates from the International Elephant Foundation (IEF)

INTERNATIONAL
ELEPHANT
FOUNDATION.ORG

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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.

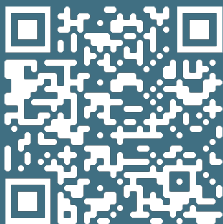
Founded in 1998, IEF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation of individuals and institutions dedicated to the conservation of African and Asian elephants worldwide. IEF creates a sustainable future for elephants by generating and effectively investing resources to support elephant conservation, education, 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.



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Celebrating Conservation Successes:

2022 Results and 2023 Projects

2022 Results

It's a cliché, but time really does move fast! It feels like we were just announcing the exciting projects you supported in 2022. As those projects come to a close, we are receiving amazing results. Even though all of the reports are not in, here are some highlights:

- ▶ Elephant Response Units (ERUs) in Sumatra's Way Kambas National Park helped over 72,000 people in 22 villages. These ERUs protect approximately 18% of the entire remaining population of critically endangered Sumatran elephants, and help secure habitat for what may be the largest remaining connected breeding herd.
- ▶ 65 tongis or lookout points were built in the fringe villages of Kaziranga National Park, India. These have helped 480 families who have reported positive changes in their lifestyle and welfare.
- ▶ Five new solar-powered poliwire fences were constructed in the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area in Zambia. These fences are a low-cost way to prevent crop raiding and reduce human-elephant conflict. These 5 fences encircled 56 plots, benefitting 65 families.



- ▶ The Big Tusker project in Tsavo, Kenya provided aerial surveillance for some of the last remaining big tuskers in the world, covering 152,427 kilometers! This project has been able to maintain an aerial security blanket over the Tsavo Conservation Area, reducing threats to elephants where poaching has decreased by at least 80% since the inception of the program in 2012.
- ▶ More than 300 conflict mitigation workbooks were distributed for the PEACE Project in Namibia. People and Elephants Amicably Co-Existing helped 720 people safely live alongside elephants, and more women than ever were able to take part in the training, learning how to protect themselves and their families.
- ▶ 21,995 students at 30 schools in Cambodia learned about conservation, elephants, and how to peacefully coexist. This approach is working as they are starting to see youth-led grassroots conservation efforts.
- ▶ The Department of National Parks and Wildlife/Conservation Lower Zambezi K9 Unit Operations in Lower Zambezi, Zambia spent 2,020 patrol man-dog days protecting habitat, and detecting and tracking poachers. They also began a groundbreaking program to train village puppies for this important work reducing the need to import expensive dogs.
- ▶ IEF projects did not just help elephants. Other species who benefitted include Sumatran tigers, Sumatran rhino, Malayan Tapir, Sun bear, Sunda Pangolin, White winged duck, Hirola, Grevy's Zebra, Lions, Black Rhino, Bengal tiger, cheetah, African wild dog, giraffe, gibbons, clouded leopards, and fishing cats.



Celebrating Conservation Successes *continued*

2023 Projects

In 2023 your support for elephants is reaching further than ever! This year we have 26 projects in 17 countries focusing on African forest elephants, African savannah elephants, and Asian elephants. We are excited to announce our new palette of projects:

Focusing on African forest elephants:

- ▶ **Guinea Forest Elephants (Republic of Guinea):** Protects forest elephants through increased transboundary wildlife crime and law enforcement training, developing materials for education about wildlife laws, and increased forest monitoring including collaring elephants.
- ▶ **African Elephant Species Distribution and Movement Corridors in West Africa:** Genetically determines the presence of forest elephants, savannah elephants, and hybrids across West Africa so that tailored conservation plans can be developed to maximize conservation effectiveness.
- ▶ **Forest Elephant Demographic Assessment, Gabon:** Determines the demographic structure of elephants and measures poaching pressures on the population in the Bateke Plateau National Park and surrounding regions using camera traps, patrols, and fecal samples.
- ▶ **Saving Forest Elephants in Grebo-Krahn National Park, Liberia:** Gives support to park rangers and the Regional Wildlife Crime Task Force by establishing community outreach and school wildlife clubs, and training stakeholders on wildlife legislation.
- ▶ **Protecting Elephants from Development Projects, Cameroon:** Monitors and protects Ngoyla Wildlife Reserve and a known elephant corridor from habitat fragmentation while conducting community outreach and education, and supporting eco-tourism as an alternative to poaching.



Focusing on African savannah elephants:

- ▶ **Conservation of Elephants in Murchison Falls Conservation Area, Uganda:** Builds an additional ranger station to enhance the security and wildlife recovery of the region.
- ▶ **Big Tusker Project, Kenya:** Provides aerial surveillance to the Tsavo Conservation Area which holds some of the world's last elephants with giant tusks.
- ▶ **K9 Unit Operations in Lower Zambezi, Zambia:** Supports the operation of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife/Conservation Lower Zambezi K9 Detection and Tracking Unit, which helps stop and catch poachers and wildlife criminals.
- ▶ **Training Village Dogs for Wildlife Protection, Zambia:** Groundbreaking program investigating the viability of sourcing and training local village dogs for K9 conservation, detection, and tracking duties.
- ▶ **Mount Kenya Horse Patrol Team:** Supports the operation of the Mounted Horse Patrol Team protecting the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Mount Kenya and surroundings.
- ▶ **Mobile Anti-poaching teams of Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) Conservancies, Kenya:** Supports the operations of the 9-1 and 9-2 Anti-Poaching Units of NRT, protecting habitat, wildlife, and elephants while a building community conservation ethic.
- ▶ **Human-elephant Conflict Mitigation in the KAZA Transfrontier Conservation Area, Zambia:** Conducts scientific research about elephant movement pathways, transboundary crossing points, and critical habitat areas through GPS satellite tracking collars, and works to assist farmers to peacefully coexist with elephants by mitigating the impact of elephants on livelihoods by increasing food security.



Celebrating Conservation Successes *continued*

- ▶ **Conserving Namibia's Desert Elephants:** Addresses human-elephant conflict by holding elephant education workshops, empowering community members to become Elephant Guards, creating an elephant identification database, working towards Elephant Early Warning Systems, and maintaining elephant corridors.
- ▶ **Creating Environmental & Conservation Leadership in Malawi:** Builds a community consensus for conservation through conservation education advocacy, and enhancing quality of life through bee keeping, fuel efficient cooking stoves, and briquette making.
- ▶ **Converting Community Attitudes towards Conservation in Chizarira, Zimbabwe:** Educates communities about elephant conservation and consequences of wildlife crime through village meetings, art, radio and TV campaigns, and empowers communities through development projects.



Focusing on Asian elephants:

- ▶ **Conservation Response Units in Northern Sumatra, Indonesia:** Protects Sumatran elephants in the northern region through Conservation Response Unit patrols.
- ▶ **Way Kambas Elephant Response Units (ERUs), Sumatra, Indonesia:** Protects what may be the largest connected breeding herd of Sumatran elephants in the world through Elephant Response Unit patrols based out of 4 separate locations.
- ▶ **Elephant Response Teams for Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation, Bangladesh:** Strengthens 4 Elephant Response teams by providing them with equipment and training, and organizes community awareness campaigns.
- ▶ **Understanding Human-Elephant Conflict in Sarpang, Bhutan:** Identifies and maps human-elephant conflict hotspots and the number of people impacted, while conducting stakeholder outreach education sessions to enhance coexistence with elephants in the area.
- ▶ **Human-Elephant Conflict in South-Eastern Bhutan:** Takes a community-based approach to address human-elephant conflict through nature clubs, community information sessions, mapping conflict hotspots, and studying the effectiveness of mitigation measures.
- ▶ **Installing Early Warning Signals for Elephants Crossing Roads, India:** Sets up and tests multiple early-warning systems in key locations around Bannerghatta National Park to help minimize human and elephant casualties caused by vehicles and other human development.
- ▶ **Community Based Elephant Conservation in Bardia-Banke Complex, Nepal:** Strengthens Rapid Response Teams by developing a local human-elephant conflict plan and conducting outreach education with students and local government members.
- ▶ **Community Based Elephant Conservation in Central Nepal:** Supports and equips village level Elephant Response Teams, conducts local community education sessions, assesses conflict hotspots, and works to strengthen coordination and cooperation among government agencies for conservation.
- ▶ **Community Support for Elephant Conservation in Far Western Nepal:** Identifies and maps elephant movement corridors and conflict hotspots, conducts community outreach to local authorities about migration corridors, and forms elephant response teams to help address conflict.



Ex-situ research on Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus (EEHV) that benefits all elephant species:

- ▶ **Plasma D-dimer Concentration in Juvenile Elephants with and without EEHV-HD:** Investigates the association between plasmatic D-dimer concentrations, platelet count, and EEHV viremia to help aid in early diagnosis of EEHV and to support early therapy.
- ▶ **Development of EEHV-specific nanobodies as treatment for EEHV-hemorrhagic disease:** Develops a laboratory assay to measure the neutralizing capacities of nanobodies or a "virus neutralizing assay" in order to assess nanobodies with high therapeutic/prophylactic potential.

Donor Spotlight: Dr. Christian Lindsey

Our donors are the lifeblood of our organization. They make all of IEF's elephant conservation work, education, and outreach possible. We are grateful for every donor who gives their support to elephants around the world. Today we celebrate **Dr. Christian Lindsey**, a donor since 2019. Let's learn more about him in his own words:

Tell us about yourself.

I am a 55-year-old pediatrician in Athens, GA. Rebecca, my wife is a microbiologist at the CDC. We met in an invertebrate zoology class in college and have been married for 29 years. We love to travel and Rebecca puts up with my photography excursions.

Do you own any pets?

We have bookended Labrador retrievers – one young and one elderly.

What inspired you to care about elephants?

I am a field biologist at heart and have always been drawn to elephants for many reasons, but especially their importance to the ecosystem. A gut-wrenching article in National Geographic about elephant poaching spurred me to want to help.

What have you learned about elephants that surprises you the most? Have you seen elephants or other favorite species in the wild?

I am fascinated by elephant family social structure, its matriarchal nature, and particularly elephant grief displays. I have yet to see elephants in the wild.

What has your experience with IEF been like? What led you to donate to us?

In my opinion, IEF is the ideal action organization. I think y'all are lean and efficient and my contributions have the most impact possible. I also love the detailed updates that make me feel truly included as a member.

As humans and stewards of God's creation, I feel it is our duty to protect all creatures but particularly fellow sentient beings, as elephants are. As a biologist, I feel like if we can save a large land-intensive creature like elephants then there is hope for everything else, too.

Thank you, Christian! You are one of the many inspirations who keep us going! If you are interested in joining Christian in donating, please visit our [website](#) or contact Julie at jbates@elephantconservation.org.



Support Elephants While You Shop

The tech industry has been changing a lot lately. While these changes do not typically affect IEF, the recent announcement by Amazon to end their Amazon Smile program may encourage you to investigate other means of giving while shopping. One suggestion you might consider is: **iGive**.

iGive is simple and free. Join via this link: <https://www.iGive.com/> **InternationalElephantFoundation** and when you login and shop we'll earn donations at least TWICE what we earned through AmazonSmile. There are 2,000+ stores like Chewy, Walmart, Expedia, Fabletics, Sephora, and more! The average donation through an iGive store is about 3%, with some offering 25% or higher! They even have a tool to make it automatic. You can download the **iGive Button** and turn your browser into an *automatic* donation generating machine!

If you shop online, please consider joining iGive so you help elephants while you shop. It's free and can help make a jumbo impact.



Board Member Spotlight

BRIAN AUCONE

IEF's Board of Directors comes from all walks of life, ranging across many kinds of elephant experience from care and management to research and conservation. We are happy to share a profile on IEF Board Member Brian Aucone who is the Senior Vice President of Animal Sciences at the Denver Zoo. Brian oversees all aspects of animal care, health, nutrition, behavior, and wellness for the over 2500 animals that call Denver Zoo home. His wealth of knowledge and experience has been invaluable to IEF over the years. Let's hear more about Brian in his own words:



Can you tell our readers what your current job is and what it involves?

My current role at Denver Zoo is really driving our animal care, health, and wellbeing, along with how our horticulture program impacts our local wildlife in a positive way. Denver Zoo is leading the charge to better understand the relationships that bull elephants have and how we can incorporate that into their care. We have a group of five bull elephants that we have fully socialized, and they are thriving getting to interact with each other and as a group under this new way of thinking about caring for bulls. Our Toyota Elephant Passage exhibit was designed with this in mind and seeing it come to fruition is humbling.

How did you come to join the IEF Board of Directors?

At Denver Zoo we were interested in partnering with a great organization to help fund and support elephant conservation. IEF was a natural fit because of the breadth of work they do and deep understanding of the issues and conservation programs that are working to save these magnificent creatures. When I was asked to join the board, I happily said yes, allowing Denver Zoo and myself to be an even more active participant in the great work that IEF does.

Why do you support IEF? What do you think is the most compelling about our organization?

IEF has a comprehensive and results oriented approach to the projects they support. They also have a wealth of knowledge about the status across the many range states of elephants and the work that is occurring in each place to help conserve them. This approach gives a broader breadth of impact through IEF than would sending our support directly to one or two projects. This scales up our ability to have impact.

You have had a great career working with and for animals. What brought you to this path? What inspired you to work with animals? Elephants?

I have always had a passion for wildlife, even as a young child. As I grew up, I knew I wanted to pursue a path that helps save wildlife and wild places. Zoos do so much to engage audiences about what is happening with wildlife, and how they can help through their own actions. I came into this field as a herpetologist working with reptiles and amphibians. As my career has advanced, I've had the amazing opportunity to become much more involved in elephants and have spent large part of my career investing in saving elephants.

Are there any other species you are passionate about?

I am a snake person at heart. I love those slithering, no external limbs, creatures.

Have you had the chance to go into the field to see conservation projects in person? Any interesting story or experience to share?

I have spent time in India, Nepal, Vietnam, and Botswana and seen firsthand the challenges that living with elephants poses for all people living alongside them. It is a huge challenge and people are the answer. Without the support of those that live with elephants, we don't have a chance. With their support, we can make a difference. One funny story, from Vietnam, was at a ranger station. They have rangers in the preserve where we were working, and they help with mitigating human-elephant conflict. They have various stations throughout the preserve, which also has people living and growing their food in it as well. One of the stations was raided by an elephant, busting out a wall and taking a bunch of their food. So, the rangers experienced firsthand what it was like to come in conflict with elephants. The funny part is that there was a free-standing sign at the ranger station, warning people about elephant conflict and what to do. For some reason, that elephant not only broke in the side of the ranger station to steal their food, but it also decided to knock down that sign.

Do you have any hobbies/interests outside of animals and conservation that you would like to share?

I am into old Vespa and Lambretta scooters, and I love craft beer.

Thank you, Brian. Your insights and guidance have helped IEF grow and become even more effective in helping elephants around the world!

Advisor Spotlight

DR. CHASE LaDUE

IEF is fortunate to have some of the world's leading elephant experts and researchers serve as our advisors. Dr. Chase LaDue is an integrative ecologist with research interests in animal behavior, chemical ecology, physiology, and conservation biology. He has utilized a "field to fence" approach to understand and characterize the behavioral physiology of free-ranging elephants to enhance the well-being of elephants in human care. Chase's recent publications regarding musth in Asian elephants are already teaching us, plus they are the only studies to our knowledge that directly compare wild and captive elephants using the same methodology. Let's learn more about Chase:



What do you currently do and how does it connect to elephants?

I am Postdoctoral Fellow in Animal Behavior at the Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden. I work with most of the collection, but my focus and experience is with elephants. We house a dynamic group of elephants here at the Zoo, consisting of three males and a female herd (with two related females, and three female offspring from one of those females). My responsibilities are research-focused, and I pursue topics related to animal wellbeing, animal communication, and conservation behavior. I most enjoy the times when I get to collaborate with animal care staff to make positive change within our collection, among cooperative zoo populations, and in the wild.

What inspired you to get involved with elephants? Was there a childhood experience? A work opportunity?

I was one of those kids who was obsessed with elephants, and I've just been too stubborn to do anything else since then. I'm fortunate that my parents took me to zoos as a child (my hometown zoo was the Fort Worth Zoo), and they supported my passion as I grew up. In high school, I went to Thailand on my own to get to know how elephant camps in Southeast Asia worked, and then I volunteered in the research department at the Dallas Zoo and in the elephant barn at the Buffalo Zoo throughout college before pursuing graduate studies in elephant behavior. Zoos have been so formative in my career, and so I don't think we should underestimate the educational value they have.

How do you envision your work (past or current) influencing elephant conservation, management, etc?

A lot of my work centers around better understanding how elephants respond at the individual level to changes in the physical and social environments. This animal-centered approach to conservation may be particularly effective because it considers the factors that may be most biologically relevant to an elephant as it navigates through human-dominated environments. However, this is just one piece of the puzzle; elephant conservation depends on insights from multiple overlapping fields in the natural and social sciences.

Any interesting stories from your experiences in the field or while conducting research?

My most interesting research stories all have to do with the unique personalities of individual elephants I have gotten to know, both in the field in Sri Lanka and in zoos around the world. I often have a better memory of these individual elephants than the human faces I've met!

Do you have any interests, hobbies, passions outside of elephants? Tell us about them.

There's not much time that I'm not at least thinking about elephants, but I really enjoy spending time with my wife in the outdoors and traveling. We also have a mission to try as much good food as possible during our lives, so we spend a lot of time trying to find the next bite.

You have worked to help elephants in multiple ways. How can the reader make a difference?

Most importantly, I recommend that people keep informed and put resources towards efforts that really make a difference. IEF does a tremendous job of connecting and interacting with its followers, and the organization as a whole is so transparent about where funds are going. In other words, you can be sure that any support you give to IEF will go a long way in helping elephants.

Talk about your experience with IEF as a supporter, advisor, volunteer, etc.

I have been so fortunate to be able to learn from everyone associated with IEF, and I am just as happy to be able to give back. As an advisor with IEF, I lend my experience in field research to evaluate ongoing and future IEF-supported projects, and I also assist with IEF's communication strategies. These experiences have demonstrated to me that, with so many people working around the world for conservation, there is a lot of hope for the future of elephants.

Did you know that on top of all of his work he is also the Publications Editor for the Elephant Managers Association, serves on the board of the Conservation Committee of the Animal Behavior Society, and is the editor of IEF's very own Elephant Echoes (the publication you are reading right now)?! We don't know how he finds the time to do it all, but we are very glad to have him on our team!