

6-1-2010

Roadmap of Torture: Captive Thai Elephant and the Anecdote

Sumolya Kanchanapangka

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/tjvm>



Part of the [Veterinary Medicine Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kanchanapangka, Sumolya (2010) "Roadmap of Torture: Captive Thai Elephant and the Anecdote," *The Thai Journal of Veterinary Medicine*: Vol. 40: Iss. 2, Article 1.

Available at: <https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/tjvm/vol40/iss2/1>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the Chulalongkorn Journal Online (CUJO) at Chula Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Thai Journal of Veterinary Medicine by an authorized editor of Chula Digital Collections. For more information, please contact ChulaDC@car.chula.ac.th.

Roadmap of Torture: Captive Thai Elephant and the Anecdote

Sumolya Kanchanapangka*

The loss of forest habitat of the forest reserve areas for agriculture, illegal logging, illegal poaching for ivory and elephant calves, human exploitation and human-elephant conflict situations have posed threats to the survival of Thai elephants (both wild and captive). The outdated legislation should be amended and new practical regulations should be adopted to save our elephant from extinction.

Last few years, Thailand has 2,900 captive elephants, astonishingly; we have 3,825 on microchips at the present time. The main reason is due to **registration fraud between wild and domesticated elephants**. Out of the wild, calf elephant will be tamed and trained, then apply for identification certificate when the calf reaches 8 years old. No need to prove the fact that the elephants are born to captive females, just declare that the parents of the calves are dead. The long period of time allowed (8 yrs.) before registration is a big loophole to fraud birth for the wild elephant. For the adult captured, fraud identification can be easily acquired by putting on the unsundered ID of the passed away elephant. These are the answers to the cases that sex and also physical appearances of the elephants are contradicted to the identification certificate.

Regarding to the Beast of Burden Act1939 (2482 BC), the domesticated elephants are draft animal, they and their body parts are legally owned by their owners, "THE OWNER HAS THE RIGHT TO TRADE AND USE THE ANIMAL AT WILL". Logging Ban in 1989 (2532 BC) left most elephant with unemployment, some are forced to illegal logging, while most of the elephant get into tourism business, entertainment and roaming the city streets for easy money.

It is undeniable that captive elephant live a miserable life, live hard die young, and is destined to be chained for life. **Inadequate living space** is the main cause for elephants to meet their **biological and behavioural needs** and also **removes all autonomy** (self taught and functioning) from the elephants.

Conclusions: Laws on domesticated elephants are inadequate and outdated. Wild elephant population is decreasing while the domesticated is increasing. Wild males are hunted for tusks and females are killed for calves. Registration fraud between wild and domesticated elephants is not uncommon.

TO STOP: Prevent the capture of wild elephant and calves and **enforce the tight system of registration for all domesticated elephant from birth to death**.

During years of an advisor and Senate's Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, the Thai Senate 2003-2006 and our team have done a rigorous study on this matter and the followings are proposed.

1. Tight registration system
 - 1.1. Registration of all captive-born elephants within 30 days after birth and every 5 years until 60 year of age.
 - 1.2. Microchipping and DNA analysis of all captive elephants. Establishing the database on these and the following information.
 - 1.3. Pictures and records of the front, rear, left and right sides of the elephant and its physical body marks.
 - 1.4. Measurement of elephant body parts for weight calculation. Birth, health, breeding and deceased, translocation and transfer of title records should be included.
2. Certificate (permit) should include
 - 2.1. Physical marks (tusk, scars, ear irregularities, pattern of tail hair, nos. of toe nails etc.) at 30 days of age and every 5 years until 60 year of age.
 - 2.2. Microchip and DNA analysis of the elephant (also of the two parents, if available).

* Faculty of Veterinary Science, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 10330 Thailand.

3. Requirements for elephant camps & breeding facilities
 - 3.1. Facilities registration
 - 3.2. Report of the number of calves produced
 - 3.3. Random inspections of the facilities concerning over the welfare of the elephant
 - 3.4. Good recordkeeping requirement

Additional requirements for elephant camps and breeding facilities to enhance the elephant welfare and public safety should also be implemented. This will be accomplished through the enforcement of regulations on Standards of Elephant Camp (Department of Livestocks Development and Office of Tourism Development).