A REPORT ON THE WORKSHOP ON ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND

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A Workshop on Elephant Management was conducted by the Royal Forest Department, Thailand, from 2nd to 11th October, 1991. This Workshop was held at Erawan National Park and Salakphra Wildlife Sanctuary. Financial assistance for the workshop was provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

The purpose of the workshop was to train researchers and officials of the Royal Forest Department in the various techniques of managing elephants in the wild. The workshop addressed two important issues:

1. Estimation of elephants in the wild,
2. Resolution of human-elephant conflicts.

The participants for the workshop included Forest Department staff from the different National Parks and Sanctuaries of Thailand.

The workshop was inaugurated on the 2nd of October at the Royal Forest Department, Bangkok. Dr. Schwann Thunnhikorn was the Principal Organizer for the workshop. Later, the participants were taken to Erawan National Park in Kanchanaburi district.

On the 3rd, lectures were given on methods of estimating elephant number and densities. Ms Shantini Dason gave an introduction on how to plan a census operation and later went into the details of censusing elephants by the indirect count method of surveying dung. Ms Uma Ramakrishnan spoke on the various census methods and then explained censusing elephants by the Direct Line Transect Method.

Field exercises were conducted on the 5th. The participants were taken to the adjoining Salakphra Wildlife Sanctuary which has recently been having a lot of human-elephant conflicts. Participants were divided into five groups and a census exercise was conducted on the Direct Line Transect Method.

Mr. Shariff Daim of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Malaysia, discussed the Elephant Management plan in Malaysia. He then gave details on the method of drug induced immobilization of elephants.

On the 7th, participants were again divided into five groups and taken to Salakphra Wildlife Sanctuary where field exercises in censusing elephants using the Indirect Dung Count Method were carried out. Later, Mr. Shariff Daim demonstrated the use of immobilization darts and drugs to tranquilize elephants for translocation.

Analysis of census data using computer programmes was demonstrated on the 8th. The participants then entered and analysed the data collected in the field during the two field exercises.

Mr. Mohd Khan, Director (Dept. of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation) Malaysia, discussed the translocation of elephants in Malaysia and briefly summarized elephant management plans in Malaysia.

The workshop was concluded on the 10th. The conclusions proposed at the workshop were as follows:

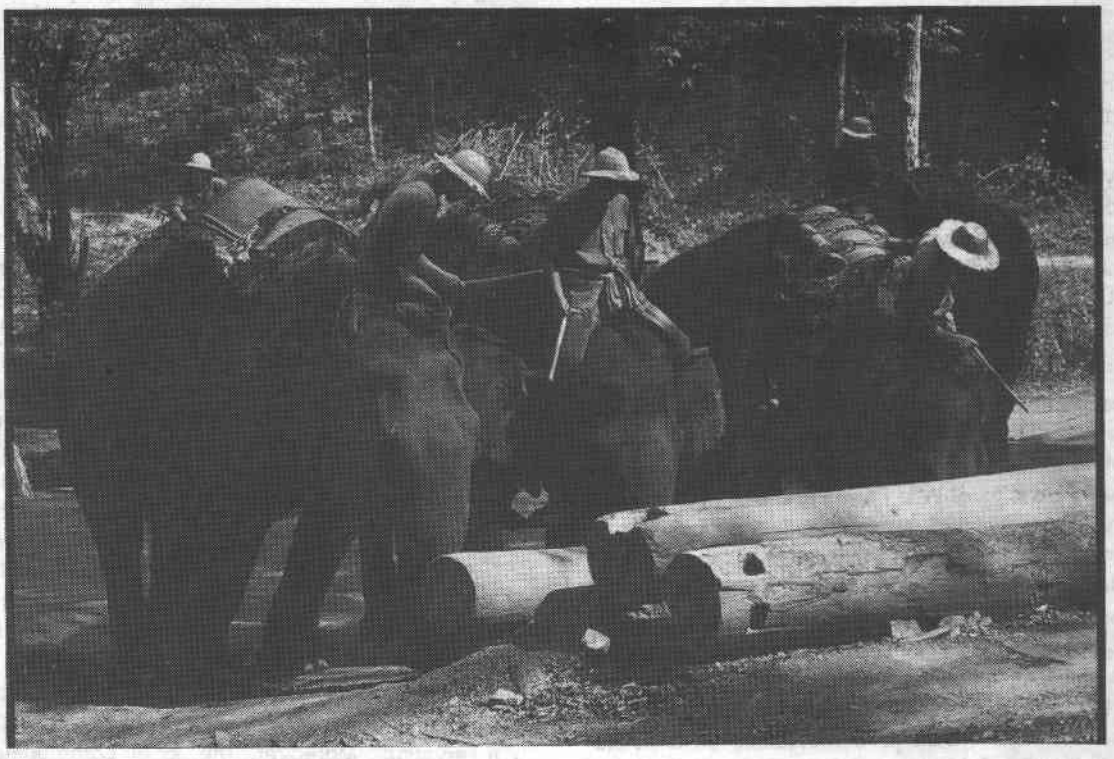
1. There would be a strict protection of the elephant's habitat for its long term survival.

2. A census would be carried out throughout Thailand using appropriate methods so as

to get relatively accurate estimates of elephant numbers.

3. Set up a team of experts to translocate elephants in areas where there is a lot of man-elephant conflicts.
4. Establish elephant corridors to connect elephant habitats.

The participants returned to Bangkok on the 11th.



Thai mahouts demonstrating the use of trained elephants in hauling timber in Chiangmai. (Photo: Jatuporn Rutnin).