

ABSTRACTS

The Impact of Captive Elephants on Conservation

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Elephants have a long history of captivity in both Africa and Asia, and have adapted to many environments. Currently a significant portion of the world's Asian elephant population is in captivity, mainly managed in Asian countries. Captive elephants are those in direct human care and control. The words "domestic" and "domesticated" have been used to describe captive elephants; however, despite the close link for thousands of years, elephants have not been selectively bred by humans for certain traits as is the case with other animals defined as "domestic" such as dogs, cats, or cattle.

The majority of captive elephants managed worldwide come from wild elephant capture programs. Some elephant range countries have used capture as a conservation tool to address increasing conflicts with humans due to loss of habitat or to the re-settlement of local people in or near elephant habitat. For a few African countries, capture has been one component of management policy to control overpopulation through removal (via culling and capture) of wild elephants in areas with limited space, such as within fenced parks. While the large-scale capture of wild elephants for captivity has significantly declined worldwide in recent years, both legal and illegal captures and trade of live elephants continue.

Currently very few African elephant range countries manage captive elephants, yet all 13 Asian elephant range countries have a captive population; the numbers, uses, and need for captive elephants differ from country to country. While some uses of captive elephants have become obsolete (i.e. as war animals), other uses are increasing e.g. for tourism and for elephant-back patrols used in direct conservation interventions such as monitoring protected areas or mitigating human-elephant conflict (HEC).

This presentation will focus on the impacts of captive elephant populations on field research, wildlife legislation, and species conservation.

2016 State of the Rhino

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Rhinos are among the most threatened species on Earth, facing a myriad of threats ranging from poaching for horn to habitat loss and fragmentation to small population effects. For almost 25 years, the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) has partnered with like-minded organizations to conserve rhinos through *in situ* conservation programs in Africa and Asia. These partnerships provide a critical lifeline for rhino conservation in range countries by providing financial support for field programs and generating funds to support critical research projects yielding information that can help to better manage wild populations. This presentation gives an update of the status of rhinos worldwide and provides examples of the important research synergies benefitting rhinos in terms of research.