

Project Update: August 2001

The first three months, from November, 2000 to January, 2001 have been hectic- working on my huge data set containing 6000 plus animal records; data cleaning and filtering is the first part of my work. At the same time, I spend as much possible as I can for literature searches at the British Library, Institute of Zoology and University College London Libraries. Much of February, 2001 was devoted to participating in the International Workshop on Domesticated Asian Elephant in Bangkok, Thailand organized by the FAO. The workshop included visits to Chaingmai and Lampang. I took opportunities visiting national and zoological parks and private elephant camps of Northern Thailand involved in tourist businesses. The main topic discussed in this workshop was registration of domesticated elephants, in order to make ease of law enforcement and better veterinary care and animal welfare. The need to initiate networking between elephant holding facilities and within the range countries was also discussed. It was a rewarding trip for me as I learnt that the elephant problems were very varied country to country. I present a paper in this workshop. The title of my paper was "The Studbook of Timber Elephants of Myanmar with the special reference to survivorship analysis". During my stay in Thailand, I was invited to give presentation of my work at the Veterinary Faculty of the Ketsersert University.

After my return to England, I registered on the Mphil/PhD programme at the Biology Department of the University College London (UCL) in March, 2001; Professor Dr Adrian Lister from UCL and Dr. Georgina Mace, Director of Science of the Institute of Zoology (IOZ) gracefully acted as my supervisors. Research Fellow, Dr. Marcus Rowcliffe of the Institute of Zoology helped me in statistical part of my study. From April until June, I used most of my time writing my first article. The title is "Factors affecting mortality of calves born from the Working elephants of Myanmar". The draft is now in the hands of my supervisors and we are planning to submit this article in the Journal of Conservation Biology, before end of August, 2001. Starting from July, 2001, I was preparing for the next article. Although the title of this article has not been chosen, I am planning to emphasize on reproductive performance of working cow elephants. I shared part of my time writing proposals for my next year funding for field trip in the Elephant range countries of Asia. I have chosen Morris Animal Foundation and Wildlife Conservation Society of the United States to submit proposals for the 2002/2003 academic year. At the same time, I worked closely with Dr Susan Mikota, the founder of Elephant Care International, who is now resided temporary in Sumatra. Through emails, we shared our experience and supported her as much possible as I can in veterinary care of Indonesian elephants under her care.

I was honoured by an invitation to continue the membership of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group and Veterinary Specialist Group, which are under the umbrella of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC). I was also invited a member of Field Veterinary Programme of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx Zoo, USA.