

A close-up photograph of an elephant's face, showing its wrinkled grey skin and a dark eye. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "ElephantsWorld" is overlaid diagonally across the image. The text "It's an ElephantsWorld" is also visible in white, semi-transparent font at the top.

It's an ElephantsWorld

ElephantsWorld
Sample

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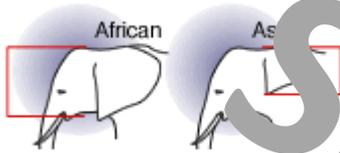
“Perhaps the most important lesson I learned is that there are no walls between humans and the elephants except those that we put up ourselves, and that until we allow not only elephants, but all living creatures their place in the sun, we can never be whole ourselves.”

— Lawrence Anderson, *The Elephant Whisperer*

The Asian Elephant

The elephant is the planet Earth's largest land animal but the Asian elephant is slightly smaller than its African cousin and has the highest body point on the head. Average height of females is 2.24m with an average weight of 2720kg. Bulls can weigh up to 5400kg and can reach heights of up to 3.2m at the shoulder. The length of the body and head including trunk is 5.5–6.5 m.

Asian elephants can be identified by their smaller, rounded ears with dorsal borders folded laterally. In contrast, an African elephant's ears resemble the continent of Africa.



An elephant's ears radiate heat to help keep them cool, but as a cooling mechanism this isn't enough and it is crucial that these large animals have daily access to water. Elephants greatly enjoy showering by sucking water into their trunks and spraying it all over themselves. The distinctive trunk is an elongation of the nose and upper lip combined; the nostrils are at its tip, which has a one finger-like process (African elephants have two). The trunk contains as many as 60,000 muscles and has many functions, being used for smelling, breathing, trumpeting, drinking (the trunk can hold about four litres of water), touching, dusting, sound production and communication and grabbing things.

The Asian elephant's feet have more nail-like structures than those of African elephants — five on each forefoot, and four on each hind foot.

Female Asian elephants usually lack tusks and if present, they are barely visible, and only seen when the mouth is open. Some males may also lack tusks.

Tusks have many functions. They serve to dig for water, lift and rocks, to debark trees, as levers for moving fallen trees and branches, for work or display as a weapon, as trunk-rests and as protection for the trunk. Tusks differ in size, shape and direction and are used by researchers (along with an elephant's ears) to identify individuals.



Did you know?

Elephants are known to be right-tusked or left-tusked. The favoured tusk is used more often as a tool and is therefore shortened from constant wear.

An elephant's skin colour is usually grey, and may be masked by soil because of dusting and wallowing. Their wrinkled skin is movable and contains many nerve centres. It is smoother than of African elephants, and may be de-pigmented on the trunk, ears, or neck.

Welcome to ElephantsWorld

ElephantsWorld was founded in 2008 by Dr. Samart Prasitthiphon, as a sanctuary for sick, old, disabled, abused, illegal and street elephants. Because of his work as a veterinarian, Dr. Samart had been associated with elephant treatment and had seen all the associated problems. He was looking for a place where a better shelter could be developed to take care of these elephants in a natural surrounding and with sufficient water resources. Dr. Samart met a land owner who had the same intention to help these elephants. Before, the land was used by the organization "Elephants and Friends", but they had to stop their project because of different reasons. So the owner agreed with Dr. Samart to use this place to run the project. And so ElephantsWorld was born, a home stay for retired elephants.

Since then, Thai staff, international volunteers and the mahouts work together to ensure these elephants receive the best and joy that they deserve. They can enjoy themselves in their own natural environment here until their last breath.



Dr. Samart examining a young street-rescue elephant

Most elephants in captivity work so hard that they do not become in heat. Additionally there has been concern about the genetic effects of reduced numbers of male big tuskers. The danger arises when these males are eliminated, and poachers turn to killing immature males for their small tusks. When tuskers are killed, the number of males in a population decreases, resulting in skewed sex ratios, i.e. there are less male elephants than females. This may lead to inbreeding and eventually to high juvenile mortality and overall low breeding success. Removing large tuskers also reduces the probability that these longer-ranging loners will mate and exchange genes with females of different sub-populations, which again often results in inbreeding.

Habitat fragmentation also divides elephant populations into small, isolated groups, which are then at risk of inbreeding. Some biologists believe that there are not enough wild Asian elephant populations large enough to avoid genetic deterioration over the long term. This means that if nothing changes, inbreeding in existing smaller elephant populations will lead to a further weakening of this endangered species.

Dr. Samart Prasitthiphon (veterinarian and head of the Department of Livestock of Kanchanaburi province) plans an artificial insemination project for domesticated elephants. The purpose of this project is to protect the wild bulls in the forest. He hopes to prevent their capture for breeding and counteract the severe inbreeding observed in domesticated elephant populations in Thailand.



NGO-HOK "JOHNNY" (Five Star)

facts	his temper	how to recognize him
- male	- playful	- one of the smallest elephants
- born in 2007 (Surin)	- loves to swim and dive in the river like a whale	- two small tusks
- Was supposed to become a street elephant	- loves to be a show elephant	- very bright yellow eyes
- Ngo-Hok is a Chinese name	- likes to be an entertainer	- long tail
	- loves to be loved by two older ladies	- chubby cheeks

Johnny was born in captivity in a village near Bangkok in 2007. He was taken from his mother when he was one or two years old, which is very stressful for baby elephants. He was supposed to work as a street elephant in Bangkok, but a company called Ngo-Hok bought him and gave him to ElephantsWorld to have a nice life.

Johnny seems to be small and cute, but should not be underestimated. He is very strong and is at an age where his hormones rule. His Mahout is the only one who can control him. It is not often that the Mahout and the elephant can be such a perfect match. Even though he is a wild teenager, he can also present another side of him when he is with Aum Pan and Songkran. It was, for all the members of ElephantsWorld a surprise when Johnny started to form a family with two of our older elephants, Songkran and Aum Pan. These two ladies are really in love with him and they share their wisdom with him. Also the relationship between Johnny and Romsai is very special. He sees ElephantsWorld's other male elephant as his father. Only Rom Sai succeeds to calm him down.