



**BRING THE
ELEPHANT
HOME**

Annual Report 2018
Bring the Elephant Home Foundation
For a world where elephants and people can thrive.

The Netherlands, Thailand, South Africa
Approved by the board: 15/03/2019

Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Mission and Objectives**
 - 2.1 Mission
 - 2.2 Objectives
 - 2.3 Our team
- 3. Projects and Programs**
 - 3.1 Conservation Leadership Programme
 - 3.2 Conservation Action
 - 3.3 Bee the Change
 - 3.4 Research
 - 3.5 Projects in Africa
 - 3.6 Charity and educational events
- 4. Fundraising**
- 5. Media and (online) outreach**
- 6. In summary**

Highlights of 2018

- Publication of our study on the social dimensions of HEC
- World premiere of Forest Hope at the Wildlife Film Festival Rotterdam
- Growing network in South Africa



1. Introduction

The year 2018 has again been an inspiring and active year for Bring the Elephant Home (BTEH). Like previous years, we focussed on community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, research, and conservation action. Additionally, 2018 can be marked as the year that BTEH settled in South Africa. We will now work on a better coexistence of elephants and people in both Asia and Africa.

A new office was set up in the middle of a big 5 Game Reserve and significant progress has been made for future projects. This office will be the base for research, workshops, and other projects throughout Africa. Major projects are community workshops in human-elephant conflict (HEC) areas and a PhD research on community engagement to mitigate conflicts. These projects focus on finding practical solutions to HEC by involving local communities. The already elaborate and growing network of BTEH with elephant experts and conservation organisations in Africa will surely benefit these projects. The PhD research will be conducted in collaboration with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and BTEH works in close contact with the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group and Elephants Alive. Meanwhile, the first steps have been made for the development of a field station for research, education, a volunteer program and conferences.

The team in Thailand continued to do great work. Constant collaboration with international schools and reputable volunteer abroad organizations has led to ongoing conservation action in various sites in Thailand. Successful conservation education events not only raise awareness about the plight of wild Asian Elephants, but this sustainable tourism serves as additional income for our partner communities and shifts community perception of elephants in a positive direction. In addition to this, Bring The Elephant Home's relationship with the researchers and rangers at the Phu Luang Wildlife Research Station aids the foundation's work and serves as an essential resource in determining future project sites and goals. Further, persisting with research-focused mitigation tactics, Bring The Elephant Home has, and will continue to, restore habitat, facilitate communication amongst stakeholders, and promote holistic solutions to bring about human-elephant coexistence in Thailand.

One of the highlights of the year, was the world premiere of the film Forest Hope at the Wildlife Film Festival in Rotterdam. Our long term collaboration and friendship with the film crew of Nature Conservation Films has resulted in a second beautiful documentary about our work in Thailand and Africa. The premiere was sold out and a great success. In 2019, we hope that the documentary will be ready for the launch on international TV.

Our regular community-based conservation program, at the border of Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary, continued as planned. Along with many Thai and international volunteers, we were able to plant thousands of native trees and create more access to drinking water for elephants, while continuing to support the local community. In 2018, we completed our study on the social dimensions of human-elephant conflicts in this area and demonstrated the importance of benefits for community members. The results have been published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE in June 2018 with the title: “Human-elephant conflict in western Thailand: Socio-economic drivers and potential mitigation strategies”.

The international Bring the Elephant Home family is slowly growing. We are very grateful to have David Owen joining the team in Thailand as our new program coordinator. Together with our conservation manager Boat Meesena, the Thai board and volunteers, exciting new conservation projects are about to be launched! We also invested in strengthening our team in the Netherlands. A team of passionate software engineers of Flock formed an expert volunteer IT team for BTEH to create an advanced system that includes a new database, an online donation tool and newsletter integration that complies with the EU General Data Protection Regulation. Thanks to their support, BTEH is now a more professional organisation and better equipped to increase online donations. Our collaboration with Future for Nature Academy has resulted in an exciting citizen science project to analyze camera trap videos of the beehive fence project in Chanthaburi, Thailand. By organizing citizen science events at the university and through the Zooniverse platform, many students from around the world are now helping us analyzing data. We hope to publish the findings in 2019.

Overall, 2018 was an exciting and inspiring year for Bring the Elephant Home. By working together with different stakeholders across continents, by applying research and conservation action, we will keep fighting for a better future for the Asian and African elephants. Together we continue to make a difference!

Antoinette van de Water
Director Bring the Elephant Home



2. Mission and Objectives

2.1 Mission

Bring the Elephant Home (BTEH), registered in 2004, aims to increase the chance of survival for elephants worldwide and contribute to a world where people and elephants coexist in harmony. It is our strong belief that we only achieve this through a holistic stakeholder approach with a focus on practical, sustainable solutions. By engaging local communities through participatory workshops, citizen science and community-based conservation action, we develop a body of knowledge about local drivers for and threats to human-elephant coexistence. At the same time, this approach is the only guarantee for the sustainability of peaceful coexistence.

Our conservation projects are supported by a holistic stakeholder approach as BTEH believes that the best guarantee for living, thriving ecosystems is the involvement of the people actively supporting them.

2.2 Objectives

Bring the Elephant Home contributes to the conservation of elephants by:

- Protecting elephants and restoring, expanding and protecting their habitat in collaboration with local stakeholders;
- Implementing, testing and promoting sustainable solutions for human-elephant coexistence;
- Encouraging local participation in nature conservation and empowerment of local communities, among others by income-generating activities;
- Raising awareness about the importance of elephant conservation and nature in general.



2.3 Many thanks to all involved

Bring the Elephant Home can only realize its goals thanks to the endless dedication of many people from different nationalities.

BTEH has a board in the Netherlands (Berrie Jurg, Remko Bronswijk and Leo van de Water), and a board in Thailand (Antoinette van de Water, Siriporn Sriaram, Supassawan Homchailert and Wachiranee Luengpairajana). Our projects in Thailand are coordinated by our Program Manager David Owen and our Conservation Manager Jatupoom Boat Meesena. They are joined by many Thai and international volunteers.

We are also very grateful for all our partners and donors who make our work possible! Special thanks to the Phuluang Wildlife Research Station (Thailand), FORRU (Thailand), the Elephants and Bees Research Station (Kenya), Dragonfly Program of Miami University (USA), Elephants Alive (South Africa) and Electric Bench (UK). We couldn't execute our projects and initiatives without the financial support from the CEPF program of IUCN, Kootje Foundation, Cryotainer and the INNO Fund of WWF. Nature Conservation Films and the crew of the Wildlife Film Festival Rotterdam are also greatly appreciated for helping us spread the word about our work.

We couldn't receive a better welcome in South Africa thanks to our collaboration with Elephants Alive and the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group. Our very first intern in South Africa, Vera Praet, contributed a lot to the design of the projects and the field station in South Africa. Many thanks as well to the supervisors of Antoinette's PhD project: Prof. Rob Slotow (University of KwaZulu-Natal), Dr. Michelle Henley (Elephants Alive) and Dr. Kevin Matteson (Miami University).

We won't be able to mention all our volunteers, but special thanks to our long term volunteers: Emily Dean, Jenna Bissell, John van de Water, Joy Carolus, Laura Groothedde, Liesbeth Sluiter, Marian Notebaard, Marleen Veenstra, Rob Notebaard, Toni van de Water and Vera Praet. And also to the enthusiastic volunteers who joined in 2018: Suzan Doornwaard of The Elephant Path, Willem Veelenturf of Flock and the whole team of the Future for Nature Academy!

And of course to everyone else who contributed to the success of BTEH in 2018! We couldn't realize our goals without the loyal support of all our donors and sponsors. We are truly grateful for your support, trust and friendship.



3. Projects and Programs 2018

All our projects are in collaboration with local organizations and include the participation of local communities. As a small, practical foundation, we are flexible and we act quickly when an opportunity arises. Our projects and programs in 2018 were:

1. Conservation Leadership Programme
2. Conservation Action
3. Bee the Change
4. Research
5. Projects in Africa
6. Charity and educational events

3.1 Conservation Leadership Programme

In 2017, BTEH received a grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for a 1.5 year project. The grant has been used to continue with the “Conservation Leadership Programme”, allowing the organization to grow and facilitate capacity building. This unique training program allows conservation champions/leaders to make a meaningful difference for wildlife and be more proactive in their conservation efforts. Rather than choosing expensive solutions to prevent elephants from going out of protected areas, such as electric fences, the team explores new solutions, such as bio-fencing, community rangers or crop/livelihood changes. To inspire conservation leaders to improve elephant conservation programs, we organized a stakeholder workshop on local HEC solutions in which participants from three HEC areas in Thailand participated.



Stakeholder workshop Human-Elephant Coexistence

Part of the Conservation Leadership Programme was the workshop: 'Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation and the Process to Reach Sustainable Coexistence between People and Elephants' on the 14th of July, 2018 in Pawa Sub-district, Kanghangmaew District, Chanthaburi Province.

The objectives of the workshop were to share information between organizations in government and private sectors about Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC), including access to benefits, impact, and solutions, to create a network of community members (e.g., farmers, beehive fence owners, community rangers), government and NGOs (FREELAND, IUCN, Bring the Elephant Home) to collaborate and work together on the implementation of integrated long-term solutions and to establish guidelines and standards in learning from past HEC experiences.

Lessons learned:

The participants identified the long-term and short-term solutions for Human-Elephant Conflicts as:

1. Stakeholders should respect each other's views in order to work together effectively;
2. Additional budget is needed to protect people living in risky areas;
3. Discussions about which method is the best are counterproductive; just find the best way to work together according to the plan already selected and respect the rights of those who live in the area to decide on the solution.
4. Stop expressing statements that could lead to conflict between government staff and people, so that the work can be carried out smoothly. Private organizations, charity, or NGOs should offer constructive suggestions and work with the local communities constantly.
5. Improve habitats and food and water sources to provide in the elephant's needs. These improvements should be appropriate for an increasing number of elephants. Professional advice is needed on how to control wild elephant populations.
6. Improve the human welfare of people living in HEC hotspot areas, because if people have better lives, it is easier to create environmental awareness. Eg. economic benefits through for example beehive fences to protect households.
7. Government should show determination and continuity on dealing with HEC in time and listen to suggestions by those who are affected.
8. Show the condition of the problems to the public to help outsiders better understand the issues.
9. Be transparent in budgets used to mitigate HEC so that people can ensure that their taxes have been spent on something valuable and effective.

3.2 Conservation Action

Chanthaburi in the South-East of Thailand and Kanchanaburi in Western Thailand are two of the most severe areas of human-elephant conflicts in Thailand. In Chanthaburi about 100 wild elephants are permanently living outside the protected area, causing damage almost every night. In 2018, the beehive fence site in Chanthaburi hosted its first conservation action program, when students from NIST International School visited to learn about the community's complex relationship with elephants and the tactics in place to bring about coexistence. Students planted over 300 chili plants parallel with the beehive fence, to not only test whether this secondary deterrent would make the beehive fence more effective, but also to provide a natural source of food to the bees and even more additional income to the homeowner.

Our regular programs in Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary, home of about 180 wild elephants and a hotspot of human-elephant conflicts, continued as planned. Along with many local and international volunteers, we planted thousands of trees and created more access to drinking water for elephants, while supporting the local community. The community's tree nursery is maintained and utilized by the community members, who take a great deal of pride in self-directed reforestation activities.

3.3 Bee the Change

Through the Conservation Leadership Program in 2015, we established a collaboration with the Phuluang Wildlife Research Station for the project Bee the Change. Through workshops, study trips and adaptive management, beehive fences have been promoted to different HEC areas in Thailand. The beehive project mitigates crop raiding, creates harmony for people and elephants and generates income for local communities. In 2018, we started a citizen science project on Zooniverse to analyse the camera trap footage and measure the success rate in deterring elephants that interact with the fencing. Products created from the beehive fence honey have expanded, and now candles, lip balm and other honey and beeswax products are available, which will inevitably benefit the homeowners in the future.



3.4 Projects in Africa

In 2018, BTEH made a huge step to expand their focus beyond Thailand to include African elephants. The progress made in Africa deserves a subchapter dedicated to the development of projects in Africa.

In the beginning of 2018, BTEH opened a new office in the middle of a Big 5 game reserve with conflicts between elephants and landowners that continue to arise. Joined a Steering Committee of elephant experts from various reserves, NGOs and universities to create a better understanding of the elephant issues. We also facilitated a workshop on conflict mitigation with the various stakeholders. From our new office, research strategies are developed and mitigation methods will be tested. The same methods will be used and adjusted for research and mitigation workshops in other African countries.

Antoinette's Ph.D. research on human-elephant coexistence strategies in Africa has been accepted by the University of Kwazulu-Natal. The study will focus on the social dimensions of HEC in various African countries and will shed light on the different societal drivers of conflicts.

Workshops with local communities of numerous different ethnic groups will lead to a better understand of and practical solutions to conflicts. Different mitigation tools will be summarized in a HEC mitigation toolkit, to be used by people in HEC areas in Africa and Asia.

BTEH has made great progress in networking with important organisations for elephant research and conservation. We work in close contact with numerous South African elephant experts from the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group, Elephants Alive, and the University of Kwazulu-Natal. The existing and growing network in multiple African countries, including for example Save the Elephants in Kenya, will offer valuable advise and new contacts for future projects in Africa.

Besides our South African office, our projects provide great potential for the development of a field station. In 2018, the first plans were made to create an office with more work space, a meeting and lecture room, and accommodation for volunteers and students. BTEH plans to invite dedicated interns on a regular basis from September 2019 onwards, to help with all aspects of the organisation.

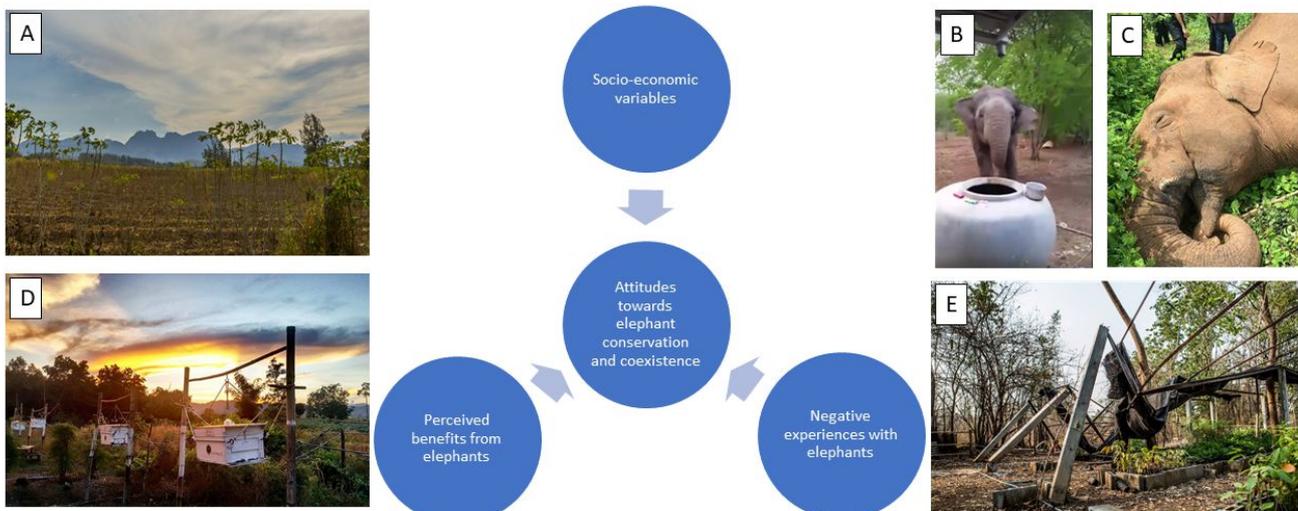
The adoption program for African elephants was launched in January 2018. So far, the program has resulted in 48 adoptions and 2,880 euro of funds raised for the conservation of the African elephant. We plan to strategically promote this project further in 2019 and create an adoption package with regular updates on the individual elephants.

3.5 Research

In June 2018, our paper ‘Human-elephant conflict in western Thailand: Socio-economic drivers and potential mitigation strategies’ by Antoinette van de Water and Dr. Kevin Matteson was published in PLOS ONE.

Summary of paper:

Understanding human-wildlife conflict is an important first step in the conservation of highly endangered species that can have adverse effects on human communities, such as elephants. To gain insights into variables that shape attitudes toward elephant conservation in Asia, we surveyed 410 households and 46 plantation owners in seven villages around the Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary in western Thailand, an area of high human-elephant conflict. We sought to evaluate how past experiences with elephants (positive or negative), as well as socio-economic variables (age, income level, gender, and employment type) affect attitudes toward elephant conservation and coexistence in this area. In addition, we quantified deterrence methods currently used and identify potential mitigation strategies supported by community members. In general, less supportive attitudes toward elephant conservation and coexistence were held by individuals older than 35 years of age, those who had previously had experienced negative interactions with elephants, those with lower incomes, and those working in the agricultural sector. Conversely, those who had received benefits from living near elephants (e.g., supplemental income or feelings of pride from hosting volunteers or participating in conservation work) had more supportive views of elephant coexistence. Plantation owners reported using a variety of deterrence methods with varying success, with firecrackers being the most commonly utilized method. Community members identified several potentially beneficial mitigation strategies including forest restorations and patrol teams, adding water sources to wild elephant habitat, and education of local school and community groups. Overall, our results highlight the value of community members receiving benefits from living near elephants and suggest that special incentives may be needed for demographic groups disproportionately affected by elephants (e.g. those at lower income levels, those working in agriculture). A combination of these and other approaches will be required if human-elephant coexistence in western Thailand is to be realized.



Citizen science to evaluate the effectiveness of beehive fences in Thailand

Through a citizen science project, BTEH offered volunteers and students a chance to participate in elephant research and conservation. Volunteers received a lecture on how to analyze camera trap videos of elephants and beehive fences. These videos can now be analysed on an online project on the website 'Zooniverse'. Immediately thereafter the participants could start analyzing videos that BTEH had collected in Thailand in collaboration with the Phluang Wildlife Research Station. The citizen science project was a joined initiative from BTEH and the Future for Nature Academy in the Netherlands, with supervision and participants from all over the world. This citizen science project will be followed up in 2019, and is supposed to result in informal and formal publications with the help of volunteers who became enthusiastic from the project.



Our Beeyond Honey manager, Emily Dean, established a partnership with Little Spoon for the bottling, labelling and packaging of the jars. Aptly named 'Beeyond Honey', comes directly from our projects, the farmers not only benefit from the protection of their crops and homes, but also gain extra income from the sales of the honey. It is for sale now at 'Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand' and 'Boon Lott Elephant Sanctuary' in Thailand.

100% Pure Honey
This Honey comes from beehive fences that are used to save the lives of wild elephants and better the lives of local farmers in Thailand

Ingredients: Honey
ส่วนผสม: น้ำผึ้ง
Free of artificial preservatives, colourings & flavours.
ไม่ใส่วัตถุกันเสีย ไม่แต่งสีและไม่แต่งกลิ่น
Store in a cool dry place.
ควรเก็บไว้ในที่เย็นและแห้ง

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203/195 Moo 3, Mae Hia,
Chiang Mai, 50100
ผลิตโดย บริษัท ลิทิลสปูน (ไทยแลนด์) จำกัด
203/195 หมู่ 3 ซ.แม่เหือะ อ.เมือง จ.เชียงใหม่ 50100

น้ำผึ้ง

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Did You know that Elephants are afraid of bees?
Our honey comes from beehive fences, which are used to humanely deter elephants from leaving protected areas in Thailand. The fences help restore the peace between humans & elephants, whilst the bees improve biodiversity, increase crop yields, & provide the local community with an additional source of income.
Visit: www.bringtheelephanthome.nl to find out more.

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3.6. Charity and educational events

Educational programs

In 2018, we have been collaborating with Walking Tree Travel, NIST International School and JUMP in several eco camps and lectures. On request, we organize volunteer tours, volunteer weekends and events for international and Thai groups. These activities are organized based on the needed conservation action at the particular time of the year. Like other years, our work was also covered by various media, which are obvious promotional and educational assets for our foundation.



Bike for Elephants

For the ninth time, we organized Bike for Elephants to benefit the survival of the Asian elephant. The weekend of the fourth and fifth of February 2018, over 70 local and international supporters joined this event in the exotic eastern part of Thailand, either as a cyclist or as a member of the support crew. The event was coordinated by Bring the Elephant Home, Phluang Wildlife Research Station, the local government, the police, the community rangers and local community members—demonstrating the unity and ownership of the cause by people of all walks of life. The funds raised by Bike for Elephants go toward the conservation of wild elephants in Thailand.



4. Fundraising

In 2018, we have invested in maximizing the potential of BTEH, and to include the African elephant as one of our target species. By doing this, we will enhance our possibilities to find long-term holistic solutions of which all countries in elephant range countries can benefit. Additionally, we invested a lot of time in strengthening the structure of BTEH in terms of databases, data security and donation tools. The consequences were that we had higher costs and at the same time less opportunities to raise funds. Although the income from grants fluctuates, Bring the Elephant Home's income can roughly be divided into the following categories:

Private donors:	60%
Fundraising and volunteer events:	20%
Grants:	20%

In 2018, we received support for these events as well as international funds and grants through the Thai and Dutch foundation:

Bike for Elephants Chanthaburi.
Suan Sati, Chiang Mai.
Kootje Foundation, the Netherlands.
Cryotainer, the Netherlands.

Please note that although this annual report is a combined overview of Bring the Elephant Home International. Please see the Dutch and Thai Financial Reports 2018 for the financial details of the separate foundations.



5. Media and (online) outreach

In October 2018, the film *Forest Hope* about our projects in Thailand and South Africa had its premiere at the Wildlife Film Festival Rotterdam. After the award winning documentary *Return to the Wild* about the rescue of two street begging elephants, the producers of Nature Conservation Films again documented the situation of elephants and the impact of our projects in a beautiful way. The launch for TV is expected by the end of 2019.

The world premiere of *Forest Hope* resulted in various articles in the Dutch media, such as *de Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *Rotterdams Dagblad* and *Groot Vlaardingen* and interviews on *Radio Rijnmond* and *Nieuwsweekend* on *Radio 1*.



In 2018, our followers on Instagram has grown from a few hundred to 15,000. Our Facebook page has 5,700 likes and 3,800 people join our Facebook group.

We have 1,473 subscribers to our Dutch newsletter, and 420 to the English version. 48 people joined the African elephant adoption program so far.

Thanks to the Zooniverse project, 82 students could join our citizen science project. The HECTOR app has 80 registered users.

Plans for the future

As soon as *Forest Hope* was finished, we started discussing the production of a third documentary with Nature Conservation Films about our new projects in Africa. After the book '*The Great Elephant Escape*', Antoinette and journalist Liesbeth Sluiter also planned their second book about the upcoming African adventures!

6. In summary

The future of elephants is heavily dependent on human attitudes and tolerance levels. Elephants are an umbrella species; their protection positively affects key biodiversity areas and other threatened species. However, land use changes and social issues increasingly cause human-elephant conflicts (HEC). Preventing these conflicts is one of the greatest challenges in elephant conservation worldwide. Despite the direct impact

on their lives, community representatives have often been excluded from decision-making processes. We aim to connect and collaborate with communities living with elephants and local organisations, to include their visions on ecological problems and to co-create sustainable solutions from the bottom up.

We can't fully understand all the consequences of losing a keystone species such as the elephant. Because they are integral in so many connections in nature, their extinction would create a snowball effect of biodiversity loss. By reconnecting patches of habitat to allow elephants to move uninterruptedly, by applying a mix of community-based mitigation methods, and by applying models that help to improve attitudes of local communities, we can create a world where elephants and people can thrive.

Bring the Elephant Home!





Foundation: **Bring the Elephant Home**

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