



Annual Report 2017

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Highlights of 2017

- Investigating the social dimensions of HEC
- Testing beehive fences to mitigate HEC
- Warner Bros documentary for Dutch national TV
- Conservation Leadership Program



1. Introduction

2017 has been an inspiring year with a focus on research, community engagement, collaboration and testing new conservation models. In addition, new technologies have been researched for possible integration in the overall effort. The main project we focused on in 2017 was 'Bee the Change': our beehive project to reduce crop raiding while generating income for local communities. We are studying the effectiveness of beehive fencing in Thailand. The research findings will be published early in 2018. Thanks again for the grant given by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and natural resources) that allowed us to continue our support for local conservation leaders and help them find new ways to live in harmony with wild elephants. Local conservation leaders explored new sustainable conservation models and received support in the form of training. With funding, practical implementation became a reality. 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 2017 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 will be published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE in the beginning of 2018.

Our inspiring projects received excellent coverage from the media, which helps raising awareness about the plight of elephants. Two highlights of the year were the Warner Brothers documentary 'Helden van de Wildernis' and an in-depth interview on the live 'RTL Summer Night' talk show. Both programs were broadcast on Dutch National TV.

The year 2017 ended with the approval of our new policy plan for 2018-2022. Included in this plan is an ambitious change: Bring the Elephant Home is maximizing its potential and includes the African elephant as one of its target species—now! By doing this, we enhance our possibilities of finding long-term holistic solutions that will benefit all elephant range countries. Overall, 2017 was a beautiful, inspiring year for Bring the Elephant Home. By working together with different stakeholders, 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

2. Mission and Objectives

2.1 Mission

The foundation Bring the Elephant Home (BTEH), registered in 2004, aims to better the chance of survival for elephants worldwide and to create a world where people and elephants can 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. BTEH's vision is to save elephants worldwide by restoring damaged ecosystems, creating suitable habitats for elephants and eliminating the cause of human-elephant conflicts (HEC). 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. Economy and ecology can and should be complementary instead of contradictory forces.

2.2 Objectives

Bring the Elephant Home contributes to preventing the extinction of elephants by:

- Preservation of the wild elephant, and restoration, expansion, connection and protection of habitat in collaboration with local partners;
- Implementing, testing and sharing knowledge about sustainable solutions and new technologies to encourage human-elephant coexistence;
- Mitigating human-elephant conflicts in collaboration with local stakeholders;
- Encouraging local participation in nature conservation, and empowerment of local communities;
- Raising awareness about the importance of nature and elephant conservation.



2.3 A new logo

In 2017, we created an exciting new logo. The new logo relates to science, care and connectivity. It is modern, with a reminder of the roots of BTEH.



2.4 Our team

After a few years of giving strategic advice for BTEH on a personal level, we are happy to announce that our previous President and Chair, Berrie Jurg, is back at his original position! Under his supervision, the board of the Dutch foundation BTEH will focus on enlarging our capacity to reach our goals in more efficient ways. We would like to thank Rob Notebaard for his dedication as the previous President and Chair. We look forward to continue having him on our team. Bring the Elephant Home has a board in the Netherlands (Berrie Jurg, Remko Bronswijk and Leo van de Water), a board in Thailand (Antoinette van de Water, Siriporn Sriaram, Supassawan Homchailert and Wachiranee Luengpairajana), a Thai coordinator (Mr. Jatupoom Boat Meesena) and many international volunteers.



3. Projects and Programs 2017

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 2017 were:

1. Conservation Leadership Program
2. Asian elephant conservation
3. Bee the Change
4. Conservation technology
5. Research
6. Adoption Program
7. Charity and educational events

3.1 Conservation Leadership Program

In 2017, BTEH received a grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for the second time. It will be used to continue with the “Conservation Leadership Program” initiative, allowing the organization to grow and facilitate capacity building. The Conservation Leaders receive support in the form of training, coaching, fundraising, and practical implementation. 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 organize study trips to other HEC areas in Thailand.



3.2 Asian Elephant Conservation

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. The beehive project mitigates crop raiding, creates harmony for people and elephants and generates income for local communities. BTEH helps to investigate whether beehive fencing is as effective in Asia as it is in Africa. If this sustainable method proves to be effective in Thailand, it could be implemented in other human-elephant conflict areas in SE Asia. 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.



3.3 Bee the Change

Through the Conservation Leadership Program in 2015, we established a collaboration with the Phluang Wildlife Research Station (PWRS) for the project Bee the Change. BTEH provided PWRS with financial and practical support since April 2016. Through workshops, study trips and adaptive management, beehive fences have been constructed and improved in different HEC areas in Thailand.

Our beehive fence study site is located in Kaeng Hang Meow district in the South-East of Thailand. The site is surrounded by protected areas which are the original home of Asian elephants. As a result of human encroachment and habitat degradation, elephants prefer to stay outside the protected area on a permanent basis resulting in increasing HEC. Camera traps were installed around the fence to monitor the effectiveness of the beehive fences.

3.4 Conservation technology

In collaboration with our IT partner Electric Bench, we developed and tested the mobile app HECTOR (Human Elephant Conflict Tool for Ongoing Research) to monitor human-elephant conflicts. The app is a tool for citizen scientists to participate in wild elephant conservation and management. Feedback from a community workshop about the use of the app in Chanthaburi helped to improve the app, which is now ready for implementation in HEC areas around the world. Scientists of Elephants Alive reached out to us to develop a similar app for South Africa, to collect additional data on damage causing elephants. BTEH supported the launch of the adapted version of HECTOR and facilitated a workshop for the Elephant Specialists Advisory Group (ESAG) in October 2017 in Dinokeng Game Reserve. The app will assess the cause of destructive, learned behavior and help in the planning of intervention to mitigate conflicts.



3.5 Research

The social dimensions of HEC

To create a better understanding of the social dimensions of HEC, we conducted a study to evaluate opinions and attitudes regarding elephant conservation held by 410 villagers and 46 plantation owners residing near the Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary in Western Thailand. We evaluated how socio-economic variables (gender, age, employment sector, income and past experiences with elephants (either negative experiences or positive) affect people's support for elephant conservation and coexistence. Moreover, we tested the perception of effectiveness of a variety of deterrence methods, with firecrackers being the most commonly utilized method. The study also identified several potentially beneficial mitigation strategies including forest restorations and patrol teams, adding water sources to elephant habitat, and education of local school and community groups. Our results showed the importance of community members receiving benefits from living near elephants and suggested that special incentives may be needed for the people that are affected most by the elephants (e.g. those at lower income levels or working in agriculture). The results in this paper represent the first detailed study of perceptions of HEC in western Thailand and contribute to a broader understanding of HEC in Asia. The research paper will be published in PLOS ONE in the beginning of 2018.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of beehive fences in Thailand

To evaluate the effectiveness of the beehive fence model in Thailand, a camera study examined the learned behaviour of elephants in reaction to the presence of disturbed honey bees. We used the data of twelve camera traps over the course of a 15-month trial to capture videos of Asian elephants attempting to break into private property. We evaluated the reaction of the elephants toward the bees and recorded elephant deterrent success or failure. In 87% of the cases, we observed elephants inspecting the beehive fence without entering the farm. Over the duration of the study, we noticed a learning curve as to what extent elephants avoid bees and a decrease in crop-raiding attempts. Elephants that were confronted with bees at the start of the project, avoided the beehive fence at a later stage. We concluded that the efficiency of beehive fences increases over time, as Asian elephants seemed to learn to avoid bees. Although our initial study showed positive results, more research on the effectiveness of beehive fencing in Thailand, and on HEC in general, is needed.

During the 15-month trial (August 2016-October 2017), the two farmers who worked at the experimental plots had a hive occupancy rate of 100% (all hives contained active bees) and produced a total of 300 kg of honey. The two farmers generated a total income of 60,000 THB (1,811 USD). With a national average monthly wage of 413 USD (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2016), the extra income from honey sales represented a 18.3 % increase to their monthly income. Additionally, one farmer initiated a project to raise queen bees and new colonies to sell to other beehive fence farmers. She generated approximately 40,000 THB (1,207 USD) through the sales of new colonies.

We established a partnership with Little Spoon for the bottling, labelling and packaging of the jars and branded the beehive fence honey as 'Beeyond Honey', as it is more than just honey. Beeyond is for sale now at 'Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand', 'Pun Pun Airport Store', 'Aden Health Food Store', 'Birds nest Cafe' and 'Food for Thought' in Chiang Mai.

100% Pure Honey

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

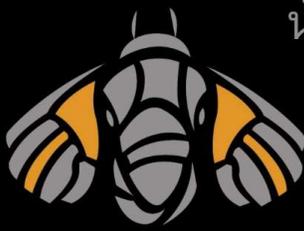
Ingredients: Honey
ส่วนผสม: น้ำผึ้ง
Free of artificial preservatives, colourings & flavours.
ไม่มีสารกันบูด สี และ รสเทียม
Store in a cool dry place.
ควรเก็บไว้ในที่แห้งและเย็น

Produced by Little Spoon Thailand
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Chiang Mai, 50100

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น้ำผึ้ง



BEEYOND HONEY (R)

MORE THAN JUST HONEY

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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ไม่เพียงช่วยปกป้องสุขภาพสัตว์ที่ตระหนักรู้และช้างป่า
แต่ยังพัฒนารายได้ให้กับเกษตรกรไทยอีกด้วย.

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Preparations Ph.D. Research

The collaboration with Elephants Alive, the development of the South African app and the workshop in South Africa resulted in exciting discussions about the need for elephant research in South Africa. After graduating with her Master's Degree in Biology at Miami University, founder Antoinette van de Water decided to continue her research on human-elephant coexistence with a Ph.D. project in South Africa. The study will focus on the drivers of the development of human–elephant coexistence in South Africa. Also, in South Africa, we will investigate the social dimensions, procedures and elephant behavioural variables that affect the relationship between elephants and people in areas where contact creates concerns.

3.6. Adoption program

After over 12 years of support for the elephants that were rescued by BTEH and brought to the Elephant Nature Park, a new adoption program will be launched that will be in line with the new mission described in our strategic plan 2018-2022. Our focus continues to be on human-elephant coexistence and the protection of elephants in the wild. Therefore, we developed an adoption program that supports these objectives and our new objectives in South Africa. In the beginning of 2018, we hope to welcome many new supporters of our brand new wild elephant adoption program!



3.6. Charity and educational events

Educational programs

In 2017, 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.

Bike for Elephants

For the eighth time, we organized Bike for Elephants to benefit the survival of the Asian elephant. The weekend of the fourth and fifth of February 2017, 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, Phuluang 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 goes toward the conservation of wild elephants in Thailand.

Education and awareness

In 2017, our work was covered in the high-profile film documentaries ‘Helden van de Wildernis’ (Warner Bros), on the talk show ‘RTL Summer night’ and we finalized a scientific publication in PLOS ONE (expected to be published in 2018). Furthermore, Nature Conservation Films visited our project sites to create a second version of ‘Return to the Wild’. To finalize the new documentary, they will come to South Africa to cover our new project as well. Like other years, our work was also covered by various other media, which are obvious promotional and educational assets for our foundation.



4. Fundraising

In 2017, we have invested in expanding the range of activities of BTEH, enlarging our network and organizing the foundation in a more professional way. 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 2017, we received support for these events as well as international funds and grants through the Thai and Dutch foundation:

Bike for Elephants Chanthaburi
WNF INNO
Kootje Foundation
ASN Bank
IUCN
Fondation Ensemble

Please see our Financial Report 2017 for details.



5. In summary

Human-elephant conflicts are increasing in Southeast Asia because of the ongoing decrease, degradation, and fragmentation of habitat. With the expected human population growth, resulting in expansion of occupied land and growing economic development, the problem will only intensify over time. In many areas, it is unlikely that we can solve human-elephant conflicts completely. Therefore, our aim is to reduce the impacts to a level that can be tolerated. Healthy elephant populations will always depend on the tolerance of local communities and their willingness to coexist with elephants, while recognizing their value for ecology, culture, and the local economy. The results of the questionnaires we distributed showed that there is local support for elephant conservation. It also showed that the benefits local people gain through our conservation projects increases tolerance toward elephants. This result was confirmed by the beehive fence study, indicating that beehive fencing aids in creating more positive attitudes toward elephant conservation. This method has an immediate positive effect on the livelihoods of households, both in terms of reducing crop-raiding and generating alternative income through the sale of honey. Combined with other community-based conservation efforts, this, now, is a proven model to promote human-elephant coexistence. Looking at the positive results of the study and our conservation efforts, we can conclude that our sustainable HEC mitigation methods are working.

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 domino effect of biodiversity loss. By reconnecting patches of habitat to allow elephants to move uninterruptedly, by applying a mix of multiple mitigation methods, and by applying models that help to improve attitudes of local communities, we can create a world where elephants, people, and the ecology can thrive.

We would like to thank all our volunteers, partners and donors who make our work possible! Special thanks to our partners: the Phluang 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, the ASN foundation, Kootje Fundation and the INNO Fund of WWF. Nature Conservation Films and Warner Bros Netherlands are also greatly appreciated for helping us spread the word about our work.

Watch our "End of the year thank you video" here: bit.ly/2lrc8pc





Foundation: **Bring the Elephant Home**

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