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# Annual Report 2016

## Bring the Elephant Home

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## 1. Introduction:

The year 2016 has been an inspiring year with a focus on strategy development, community engagement, learning, networking and discovering new conservation models and technologies. Thanks to a grant of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of nature and natural resources), we were able to establish a new network and initiative: the beehive fence project.

We are very excited about this new projects, that truly has been developed in response to the needs of the elephants and the local communities that share space with them.

In this report :

1. Introduction
2. Mission and Objectives
3. Projects
4. Fundraising



Chanthaburi in the South-East of Thailand is one of the most severe areas of human-elephant conflicts (HEC) in Thailand. With about 100 wild elephants are permanently living outside the protected area, causing damage almost each night, effective methods to bring harmony to local people is urgently needed. The beehive project mitigates crop raiding, creates harmony for people and elephants and generates income for local communities. Bring the Elephant Home helps to investigate whether beehive fencing is as effective in Asia as it is in Africa. In addition to measuring the effectiveness of beehive fencing, the project also examines the developing behavior of elephants in reaction to the presence of bees. If this sustainable method proves to be effective in Thailand, it could be implemented in other human-elephant conflict areas in SE Asia.

Through the Conservation Leadership Program funded by IUCN local conservation leaders explored new conservation models that are sustainable, include all stakeholders and really make a chance. The Conservation Leaders received support in the form of training, coaching, help fundraising, practical implementation, and reporting. Our regular programs in Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary continued as planned. Along with many volunteers, we were able to plant trees and we created more access to drinking water for elephants, while they supported the local community through a homestay program.

### Highlights of 2016:

Conservation Leadership Program

Bee the Change

Beehive fence research

Conservation Action

In the Netherlands, we joined the organization team of the Global March for Elephants, Rhinos and Lions again. In Amsterdam, as well as in 135 other cities worldwide, people walked the Global March for Elephants, Rhinos & Lions to stuck a clear note to stop the ivory trade and poaching.

We believe that every elephant should be protected and live in nature. That elephant conservation should focus creating a more harmonious environment for elephants and people. It is why Bring the Elephant Home exists; it is why community engagement, learning, discovering new conservation models and technologies is the passion of Bring the Elephant Home. With a little support, ecosystems can thrive again and human- elephant conflicts will reduce.

There is still a lot of work to do. Last year was an inspiring year with the launch of initiatives that make the needed difference for elephants and people. By working together with different stakeholders, by applying research to design conservation model and by conservation action, Bring the Elephant Home will keep fighting for a better future for the Asian elephants. Together we can continue to make a difference!

Antoinette van de Water

## 2. Mission and objectives

The foundation Bring the Elephant Home (BTEH), registered in 2004, aims for a better chance of survival for Asian elephants. We achieve this by restoring natural habitat and by finding sustainable solutions to mitigate human-elephant conflicts. We are always cooperating closely with local organizations and communities. Local communities will be actively involved in conservation work and inspired to create a peaceful environment for elephants and people alike.

Basically, we want to prevent the extinction of the Asian elephant by:

- Preservation of the wild elephant, and restoration, expansion, and protection of their habitat in cooperation with our partners
- Mitigating human-elephant conflicts
- Encouraging local participation in nature conservation, and empowerment of local communities
- Raising awareness and education directed at protecting nature and elephants



## 3. Projects 2016

- 3.1. Conservation Leadership Program
- 3.2. Bee the Change
- 3.3. Research
- 3.4. Other projects, programs and events

### 3.1. Conservation Leadership Program

In 2015, BTEH received a grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to launch the “Conservation Leadership Program” initiative, allowing the organization to grow and facilitate capacity building. This unique training program allows conservation champions/leaders to make real a real difference for wildlife. With CEPF support, the foundation established a small team,

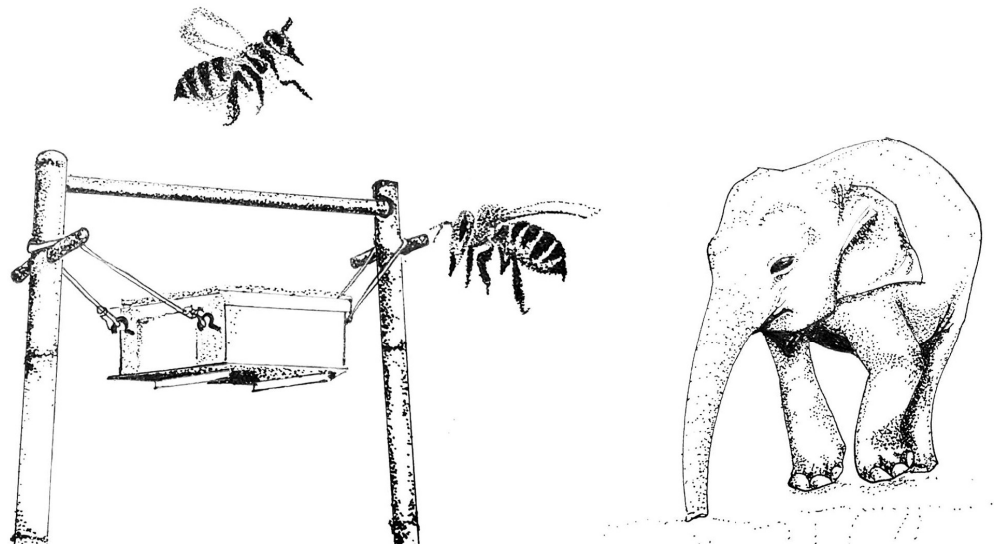
comprising of local community leaders and sanctuary officers, to be more proactive in their conservation efforts. Rather than choosing expensive solutions to prevent elephants from going out of protected areas, such as electric fences, the team explores new solutions, such as joint monitoring plan, crop/livelihood changes, education program and beehive fence control.

Furthermore, in order to mitigate human-elephant conflicts and improve elephant conservation programs in Western Thailand; BTEH organized a study trip for community members, park rangers, researchers and BTEH and ZSL staff to meet with a research team and rangers of Kaeng Krachan National Park.



### 3.2. Bee the Change

- (1) The beehive fences were constructed by the Phluang Wildlife Research Station (PWRS) with the financial and practical support of BTEH in June 2016 in Pawa sub-district, Kang Hang Maew, Chantaburi. 40 boxes of honeybees with approximated 20,000 honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) per box were installed around the private properties of two selected farmers. Each box was hung 150 cm. above the ground and connected with rope. Fence was made by bamboo wood with 3-9 meter in distance.
- (2) The farmers received beekeeping trainings in June – November 2016.
- (3) PWRS and BTEH visit the pilot sites on the monthly basis to check effectiveness of the beehive fences.
- (4) Camera traps were installed around the fence to monitor the effectiveness of the beehive fences.
- (5) Antoinette van de Water, founder of BTEH, monitors the effectiveness of the beehive fence.



### 3.3. Research

Initial results of the beehive fence project:

- Elephants appeared at the fence from 7 pm – 4.25 am. Only a few elephants manage to get inside the fence.
- Most elephants that appeared on the videos spend their time eating, inspecting the hive or seem to be alert. The most frequent observed reaction towards the bees is walking away and curling the tail.
- The farmers and their families feel safer and less stressed as they saw from camera trap footages that it can prevent wild elephants from entering their farms.
- The camera trap footage shows a reaction of the elephants towards the bees. Current videos show how elephants closes their eyes whilst poking the hive and bending down their heads to get under the rope of the hive without disturbing it too much or how elephants quickly run through the fence to exit the plot.



## Sources of information

Ms. Rachaya Arkajak, PWRS, interviews with Ms. Dararat Sirimaha, beehive fence's farm owners and local government officials in Chanthaburi.

## Discussion

As suggested by Dr. Lucy King of Save the Elephants in Kenya, Asian elephants might be less familiar with the bee species *Apis mellifera*. Their behavior towards the honeybees could therefore change during the course of the study. The data is too limited for any scientific conclusions, but it seems that the efficiency of the beehive fences is slowly increasing which could indicate that the elephants are learning to avoid them. To mitigate human-elephant conflicts and to create a more positive perception towards wild elephants and conservation work, beehive fencing does seem to be a good method in SE Asia as well. It has an immediate positive effect on the livelihoods of households, both in terms of reducing crop raiding as generating alternative income. Combined with other community-based conservation projects, the methods can make sure that elephants and people to live near each other in harmony. If this sustainable method proves to be effective in Thailand, it could be implemented in other human-elephant conflict areas in SE Asia.

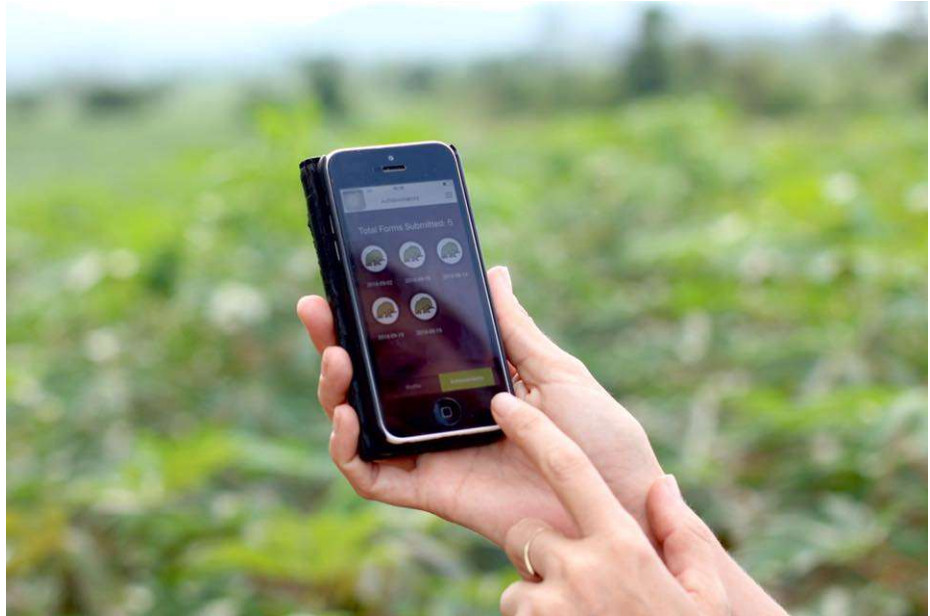
### 3.3. Conservation technology

In collaboration with Electric Bench, we developed and tested the mobile app HECTOR to monitor human-elephant conflicts. The app HECTOR is a tool for citizen scientists to participate in wild elephant's conservation and management.



HECTOR stands for Human Elephant Conflict Tool for Ongoing Research and has been developed

and sponsored by Electric Bench. When the beta version was launched, we organized a community workshop in Kang Hang Meow to introduce the technology and to get feedback for improvement.



### 3.4. Other projects, programs and events

#### *Educational programs*

In 2016, we have been collaborating with Walking Tree Travel, KIS, Bangkok International School local schools in several eco camps and lectures.

On request, we organize volunteer tours, volunteer weekends or events, for international and Thai groups depending on the needed conservation action at the time of the year.



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### *Bike for Elephants*

We organized two Bike for Elephants events in 2016: one in Kanchanaburi and one in Loei. The funds raised by Bike for Elephants goes towards the conservation of wild elephants in both sites.

### *Adoption program*

Since many years, BTEH supports the costs for the care of the elephants that are living at the Elephant Nature Park thanks to Bring the Elephant Home. The adoption program consists of seven elephants: Dok Ngeon, Sri Nuan, Faa Sai, Chang Yim, Sri Prae, Navann and Dok Mai. We have 212 adoption parents to help take care of them. Keeping elephants in captivity is always a compromise, especially with bulls. But as captive elephants, we believe the Elephant Nature Park is the best option for them. They are living peaceful lives, without much interference of people.

### *Events*

The Edge in Chiang Mai organized three Buzz cafe events to support Bee the Change. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January we had our annual Dutch traditional 'new years dive' for the elephants in Honselersdijk. The 4<sup>th</sup> of October we joined the March for Elephants, Rhinos and Lions in Amsterdam to call for an end of the slaughtering of elephants and a complete ban on ivory trade.

With these public events our enthusiastic volunteers were able to reach new people and inform them about the plight of Asian elephants and to motivate them to get active as well. By selling merchandising and the donation box they also raised funds for our projects in Asia.



## 4. Fundraising

In 2016, 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 these categories:

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

In 2016, we received the support of these events and international funds and grants (through the Thai and Dutch foundation):

Bike for Elephants Kanchanaburi

Bike for Elephants Loei

Buzz café at the Edge, Chiang Mai

Kootje Foundation

ASN Bank

IUCN

Fondation Ensemble

