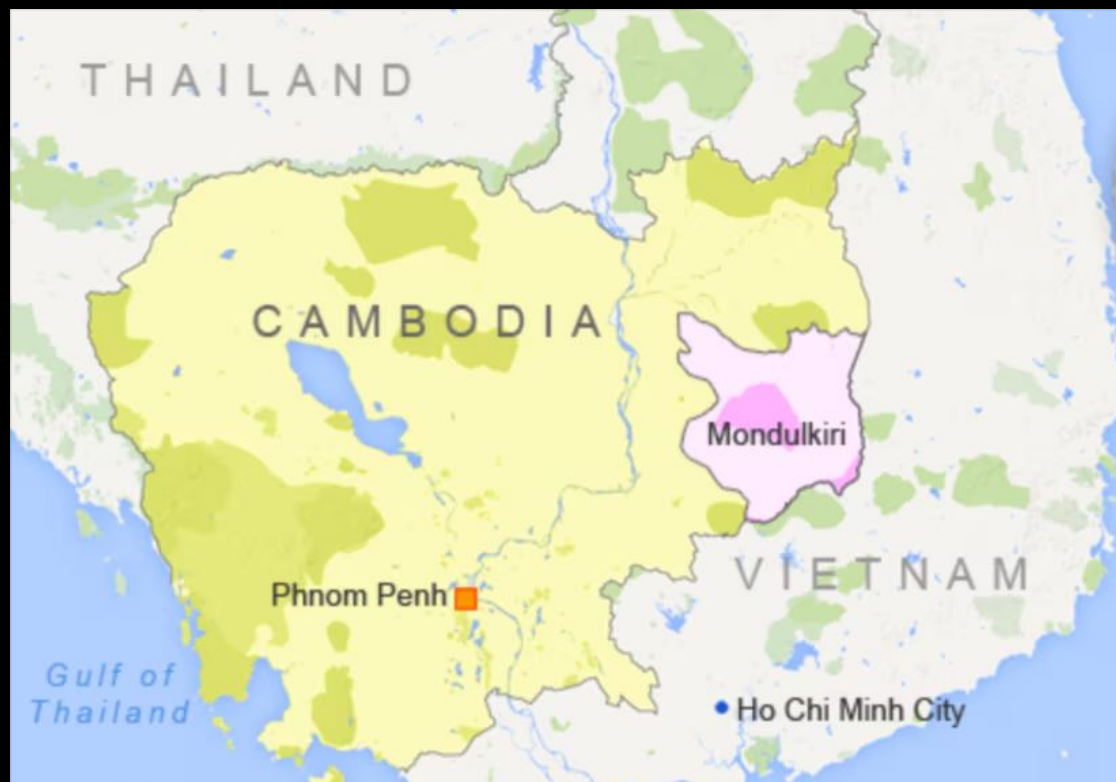


A Culture in Transition:

Exploring the changing relationship between
captive elephants and Bunong communities at
the Elephant Valley Project in Mondulkiri,
Cambodia

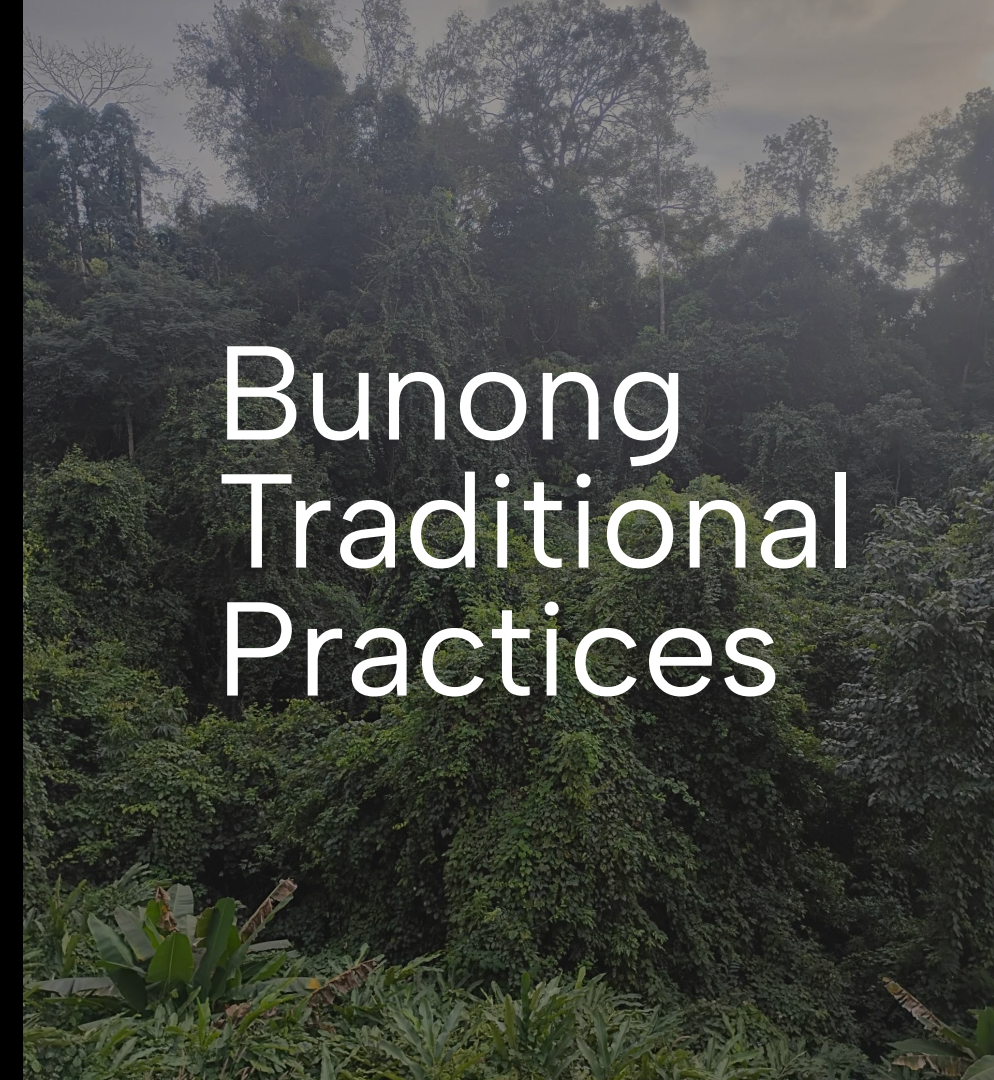
Emma Bilgreen





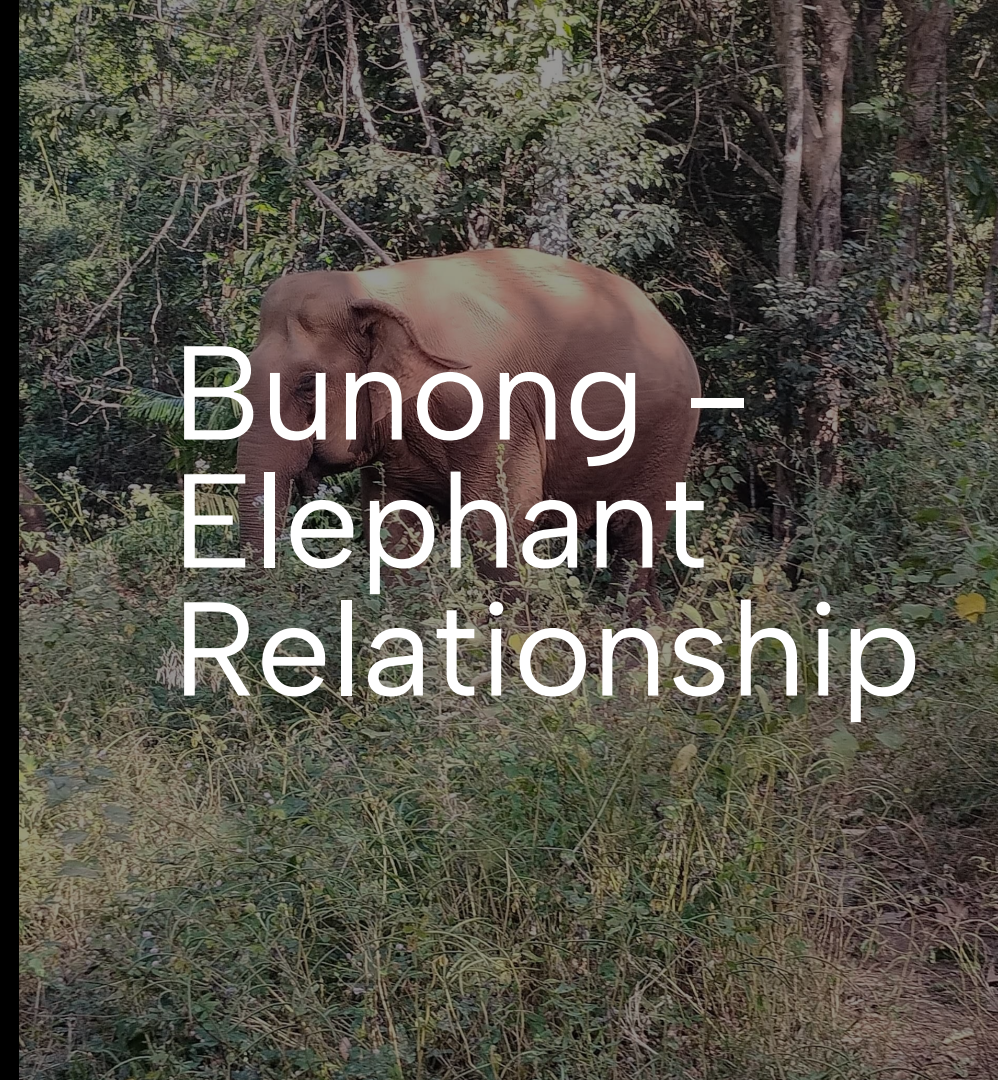
Changes to the Highlands

- Modernization
 - New infrastructure, roads, schools
- Industrial Agriculture
- Economic Land Concessions
- Deforestation



Bunong Traditional Practices

- Subsistence Lifestyles
- Swidden Agriculture
- Non-timber forest products
- Spirit Forests

A photograph of an elephant standing in a dense forest, partially obscured by tall grass and trees. The elephant is facing left, and its trunk is visible. The background is filled with green foliage and tree trunks.

Bunong – Elephant Relationship

- Capture young elephants from forest
- Common uses
- Mahouts
- Elephant Care

A photograph of an elephant standing in a river, surrounded by lush greenery. The elephant is facing right, and its trunk is slightly raised. The water is shallow and clear, reflecting the surrounding trees. The background is filled with dense tropical forest. The text 'Elephant Valley Project' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Elephant Valley Project

- Elephant Sanctuary
- Launched in 2007
- 1500 ha
- Putrom Village
- Ecotourism Site

A photograph of three people in a forest. In the foreground, a person with a large tan backpack is seen from behind. In the background, two other people are standing and looking towards the camera. The forest is dense with green foliage and trees.

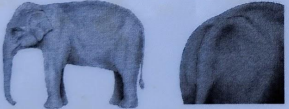
Methods

- 2 visits
 - Oct. 20–21, 2025
 - Dec. 14–23, 2025
- 8 interviews
 - 6 mahouts
 - 1 guide
 - EVP director



EVP Elephant Care

- Temporary/Long Term Care
- Routine baths
- Health Checks
 - Distance observations
 - Up close examinations

Body Condition Score	Forequarters	Midsection	Hindquarters
1 Extremely low (Emaciated. Skeleton sharply defined, skin stretched tightly over bones.) 	Forequarters: Neck sunken in, dorsal ligature acutely defined. Shoulder blade concave and sharply defined with angular depressions in front and behind shoulder. Ridges on the front and rear edges of the scapula form a sharply defined triangular peak.	Midsection: Crest of spine forms a vertical, fin-like ridge from shoulder to hip. Multiple ribs are visible and extend the length of the ribcage.	Hindquarters: Point of the hip protrudes as a bony ridge extending all the way to the backline, with sharp depressions in front and behind. Point of the buttocks is apparent. Rump forms a concavity on either side between the pelvis and tailhead. Tailhead is a sharply defined ridge with individual vertebrae clearly visible.
2 Very Low (Skeleton barely covered; bones clearly visible but covered by a thin layer of tissue.) 	Forequarters: Neck depressed, dorsal ligature clearly defined. Shoulder blade slightly concave with angular depressions in front and behind shoulder beginning to blend together. Ridges on the front and rear edges of the scapula form a triangular.	Midsection: Crest of spine forms a tall, prominent vertical ridge from shoulder to hip, but the base flows smoothly into the torso. The dorsal curves of multiple ribs are visible.	Hindquarters: Point of the hip protrudes as a bony ridge extending to the backline, with sharp depressions in front and behind. The point of the buttocks is no longer apparent. Rump forms a concavity on either side between the pelvis and tailhead. Tailhead is a defined ridge with some individual vertebrae visible.
3 Low (Articulations apparent and angular, but beginning to blend together. Not all bones visible.) 	Forequarters: Neck depressed from shoulder but angles smoothed. Dorsal ligature still apparent. Shoulder blade slightly concave. Rear edge of the scapula defined but blending into torso. Front edge of the scapula just noticeable but blending with shoulder.	Midsection: Crest of spine forms a vertical ridge from shoulder to hip, but the base flows smoothly into the torso. Some ribs may be visible.	Hindquarters: Point of the hip visible but vertical line of the pelvis only slightly apparent, with depressions in front and behind. Rump slightly concave or flat on either side between the pelvis and tailhead. Tailhead is a defined ridge with a smooth base. Some individual vertebrae may be noticeable.
4 Moderate Low (Articulations apparent but blending) 	Forequarters: Neck indented from shoulder but filling out. Dorsal ligature blending with side of neck. Triangle back of shoulder just visible but no longer concave.	Midsection: Crest of spine noticeable as a ridge several inches high from shoulder to hip but blending into the torso. Ribs not visible but can see ribcage.	Hindquarters: Hip blending into torso but point of hip still visible with a depression in front. Rump flat on either side between the pelvis and tailhead. Tailhead is a defined ridge with a smooth base. Some individual vertebrae may be noticeable.

5 Moderate (Articulations noticeable but becoming filled and smooth) 	Forequarters: Neck indented from shoulder but round and filled. Dorsal ligature no longer visible. Shoulder barely visible, shoulder blended with torso.	Midsection: Crest of spine barely noticeable as a smooth or slightly concave downward slope into the torso. Ribs not visible.	Hindquarters: Hip blending into torso but point of hip still visible with a depression in front. Rump flat or becoming rounded on either side between the pelvis and tailhead. Tailhead noticeable as a slight ridge but beginning to blend with rump. Individual vertebrae not visible.
6 Moderate High (Articulations slightly noticeable, animal beginning to appear smooth and rounded) 	Forequarters: Neck round and filling close to level of shoulder. Shoulder continuous with torso, but apparent as a rounded peak between neck and back.	Midsection: Crest of spine barely noticeable as a downward slope with little to no depression between the backline and the torso. Torso becoming filled and rounded.	Hindquarters: Hip barely apparent with point of hip blending into the back and only a slight depression in front. Rump slightly rounded on either side between the pelvis and the tail head. Tailhead just noticeable.
7 High (Articulations just noticeable, animal appears rounded). 	Forequarters: Neck round and nearly continuous with shoulder. Shoulder continuous with torso and nearly continuous with back, apparent as a slight bump between neck and back.	Midsection: Crest of spine apparent as a raised mound in center of back or continuous with torso. Torso nearly filled and rounded.	Hindquarters: Hip barely visible with point of the hip blending into the back and only a slight depression in front. Rump rounded on either side between the pelvis and tailhead. Upper half of tailhead blends with rump; lower half of tailhead just noticeable.
8 Very High (Articulations barely noticeable; animal becoming spherical). 	Forequarters: Neck round and nearly continuous with shoulder. Shoulder continuous with torso and back. Topline nearly smooth above shoulder, with shoulder forming a barely noticeable bump between neck and back.	Midsection: Spine barely distinguishable from torso. Back becoming rounded. Torso forms a round, almost smooth curve from topline to undercarriage and from front to rear.	Hindquarters: Hip disappearing, with only a slight depression in front of pelvis. Rump rounded on either side between the pelvis and tail head. Tailhead becoming continuous with rump.
9 Extremely High (No articulations visible, animal becoming a smooth sphere). 	Forequarters: Neck filled and continuous with shoulder. Shoulder continuous with torso and back. Topline smooth from neck to rump.	Midsection: Back rounded or table-like. Torso forms a continuous smooth curve from back to undercarriage and from front to rear.	Hindquarters: Hip almost completely filled and smooth. Rump rounded when viewed from side or back. Tailhead nearly continuous with rump.

Belly: Full & round Not as full / Not full at all (assess visually and/or by pressure)

Further comments:

Hydration: Head above shoulders Head in line with shoulders / Head below shoulders

Trunk above ground / Touching ground (if on ground note by how much) cm

Eyes: Clean & Moist / Dirty / Dry / Excessive mucus from eyes (Left / Right / Both)

Further comments:

Trunk/nostrils: Clean & Moist Dirty / Sore / Cuts

Further comments:

Ears: Are there any new tears, cuts or abrasions on the pinna (ear flap)?

Entrance of the ear: Normal Bleeding / Irritated / Soreness / Dirty / Mites

Further comments:

Dry back of ear

Skin / Body Condition:

Fly bites: left: <5 5-10 10-20 / 20-30 / 30-50 / >50 right: <5 5-10 10-20 / 20-30 / 30-50 / >50

Eggs/fly larvae present (note amount): / none found

Mud: Fresh Dry Soil Wet Mud / Thick Old Mud

Any fresh skin tears or puncture wounds? Yes / No (If yes note where on the body)

Further comments:

External Genitals: Normal / Tears & Wounds / Discharge & Soreness (if present, note where, how big)

Further comments:

Feet: Skin around the nails/cuticles: Normal / Dry / Very Dry / Peeling back / Cracked

Nails: Normal and Whole Cuts or Tears (is any visible, note which nail and how big)

Further comments:

Small cut left back foot above toe

Faeces: Moist / Dry Hard / Normal / Diarrhoea Small Fibres / Big long fibres

Leaves present: Yes / No

Further comments:

Weight kg: 1. 344 cm
2. 342 cm
3. 342 cm
Average: $343.3 \text{ cm} \times 18 = 3336 = 2844 \text{ kg}$

BCS: 5 / 9 (See BCS picture sheet)

Further comments:

Shouts: Note if any instructions regarding the elephant health, feeding or cleaning were given

Further comments:

Health Form for Doe
December 2025



Local Community Support

- Financial Security
- Food Security
- Education Support
- Emergency Medical Support

A group of approximately 15 people are standing in a line on a dirt path, posing for a photo. Behind them is a large wooden archway sign that reads "WELCOME TO THE ELEPHANT VALLEY PROJECT". The scene is set outdoors with trees and a cloudy sky in the background. The text "The Need for EVP" is overlaid in large white letters on the image.

The Need for EVP

- Traditional Elephant Roles
- Lack of Resources
- Economic Opportunities

An elephant is standing in a forest, facing the camera. The elephant is dark grey and has a long trunk. It is surrounded by trees and greenery. The text "Future of EVP" is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Future of EVP

- Aging Captive Elephant Population
- Captive Breeding



Thank You

