

Several small steps: Elephant calves caught on camera in Cambodia

April 30 2019, by Tim Knight



Credit: Fauna & Flora International

First, the good news. Footage from the 46 camera traps deployed by Fauna & Flora International (FFI) in Cambodia's Cardamom Mountains is giving us a privileged insight into the lives of the Asian elephants that roam through in one of the continent's last remaining forest wildernesses.

Genetic analysis of elephant dung undertaken by our partner, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, leads us to believe that the core population in the southern Cardamoms comprises around 50 elephants. And our [camera traps](#) have provided us with intimate [footage](#) of some of these magnificent beasts, including their calves.

Unfortunately, our monitoring has also revealed that the remaining elephants are under severe pressure, not least from the growing use of snares, a disturbing trend linked to the increased urban appetite for bushmeat.

Asian elephant calves are particularly vulnerable; their smaller legs mean that they are more prone to serious injury from wire snares, and they are more likely to die of their wounds. One [baby elephant](#) caught on camera in late 2017 walked with a pronounced limp and had a badly swollen foreleg – apparently the result of a deep wound inflicted by a snare.

With FFI support, local wardens drawn from the community are conducting regular [forest](#) patrols to monitor the elephant population. A crucial facet of their work is to deter poachers and to deactivate any snares that they encounter. And they are doing a great job.

In the long term, however, the survival of these Asian [elephants](#) is going to hinge not only on anti-poaching measures and protection of their forest habitat, but also on reducing demand for bushmeat and other wildlife products. Funds are urgently needed to enable FFI and our partners to carry out this vital work.

Provided by Fauna & Flora International

Citation: Several small steps: Elephant calves caught on camera in Cambodia (2019, April 30)

retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2019-04-small-elephant-calves-caught-camera.html>

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