

China's trekking elephants wait for youngster to catch up

June 15 2021



The elephant herd has travelled around 500 kilometres, and is now lingering a couple of days south of the city of Kunming.

A herd of elephants on a mammoth trek across China is taking an enforced break—as they wait for a wayward youngster to catch-up.

The 10-year-old got sidetracked from the family walk several days ago, and is now lagging around 14 kilometres (nine miles) behind.

Despite repeated calls from increasingly impatient adults, the dawdling dumbo appeared in no hurry.

Chen Mingyong, a professor at Yunnan University who is monitoring the [herd](#)'s huge hike, told Chinese media that the matriarchs are trumpeting for the youngster to get his skates on.

But state broadcaster CCTV—which is carrying a 24-hour live feed of the migration—said he shows no sign of wanting to rejoin the group.

Male elephants usually leave their mother's herd to live alone or in [small groups](#) with other males as they reach [sexual maturity](#).

The herd has travelled around 500 kilometres, and is now lingering a couple of days south of Kunming, the provincial capital of Yunnan province.

The migration has captivated Chinese social media and drawn international attention while costing local farmers more than a million dollars in losses.

Wildlife officials at the weekend said they were planning to use "food bait and roadblocks" to guide the elephants to a suitable habitat.



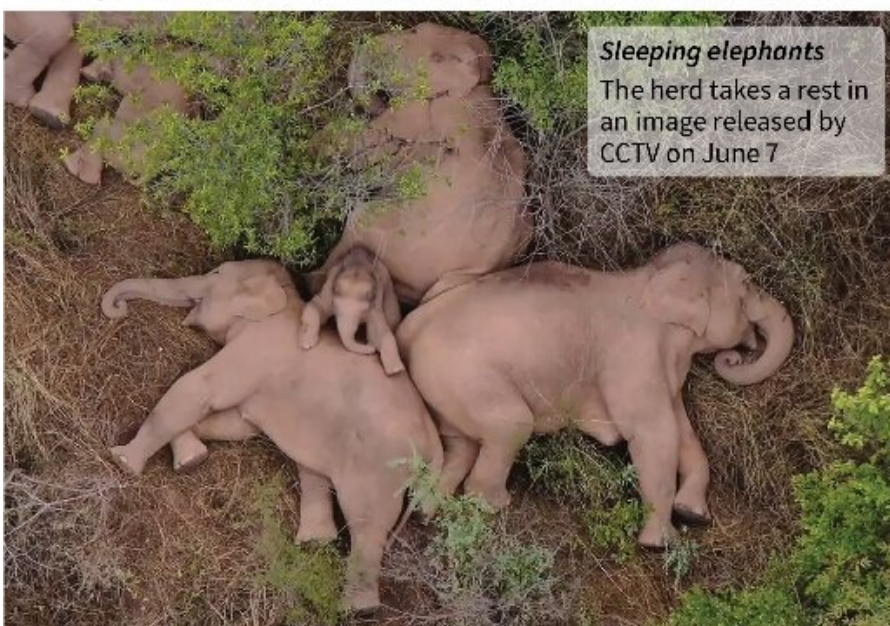
Experts are unsure why the herd left their home at the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve late last year.

China's roaming elephants

Herd wanders 500 km north from its usual habitat



Since mid-April, the elephants have wrecked around 56 hectares of crops, causing an estimated 6.8 million yuan (\$1.07 million) in losses, CCTV said



Sources: Chinese media reports

Map of China's Yunnan province, showing the route a herd of wild elephants has taken since leaving the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve in the spring of 2020.

Over 3,500 residents have been evacuated to make way for the [elephants](#), and hundreds of trucks have been deployed to keep them away from densely populated areas, official news agency Xinhua reported.

Experts are unsure why the herd left their home at the Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve late last year.

The wild elephant population in Yunnan stands at around 300, up from 193 in the 1980s, Xinhua said.

Human-elephant conflicts in the region have intensified in recent years due to unfettered development projects that encroach on the animals' natural habitats.

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Citation: China's trekking elephants wait for youngster to catch up (2021, June 15) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-06-china-trekking-elephants-youngster.html>

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