

# BACK TO THE **WILD**

*A Conservation  
Expedition Like  
No Other*

Join our elephant  
rewilding Mission

*8 days. All inclusive*

*LUANG PRABANG - SAYABOURY - VIENTIANE*

[www.elephantconservationcenter.com](http://www.elephantconservationcenter.com)



**BACK TO  
THE WILD**



**Back to the Wild**  
 (Thongmixay & Nam Pouy National Park)



**Sayaboury's Nam Pouy National Protected Area**  
 192,000 Ha

Home to the **second largest wild elephant population** in Laos.  
 Home to ECC's **Rewilding Programme**.



From 390 Ha of land used during the first month of the release of 4 elephants in March 2019, the current area used by the group spans a whopping 19,500 Ha.

# EXPLORATION WITH A PURPOSE



## Next Expeditions:

**1<sup>st</sup> week of Each Month Between  
October and April**

**Spaces are limited!** This is your chance  
to leave footprints that matter.

**Are you ready to go Back to the Wild?**

## Wilderness Unleashed

**Join the ECC Elephant Rewilding Team**

Contribute to pioneering research in a national  
protected area where wild elephants still roam.

Immerse yourself in the extraordinary world of  
Lao elephants — and the people who care for  
them — in untouched nature.



# BACK TO THE WILD

It's not a tour — it's a mission

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Looking to go beyond a traditional wildlife experience? Back to the Wild is ECC's most immersive programme yet — **an 8-day expedition** designed for travellers who want to dive deeper into the real work of elephant conservation in Laos. Building on our 3-day 'Exploration' package, **this exclusive journey takes you off-grid and into the heart of the Nam Poy National Protected Area**. In a small group of **no more than four participants**,

you'll join ECC's conservation team in the field — shadowing biologists, assisting with elephant health checks, setting up camera traps, and camping beneath the forest canopy where wild elephants roam. Along the way, you'll visit sacred temples, explore cultural landmarks, support local schools, share meals with mahouts, and experience how science, tradition, and passion come together to protect Laos' last elephants.





# A RAW AND RARE EXPEDITION DEEP INTO THE FORESTS OF LAOS

*Whether you're a conservation enthusiast, an explorer at heart, or simply looking to make your travel meaningful, Back to the Wild offers an unforgettable opportunity to be part of something bigger.*





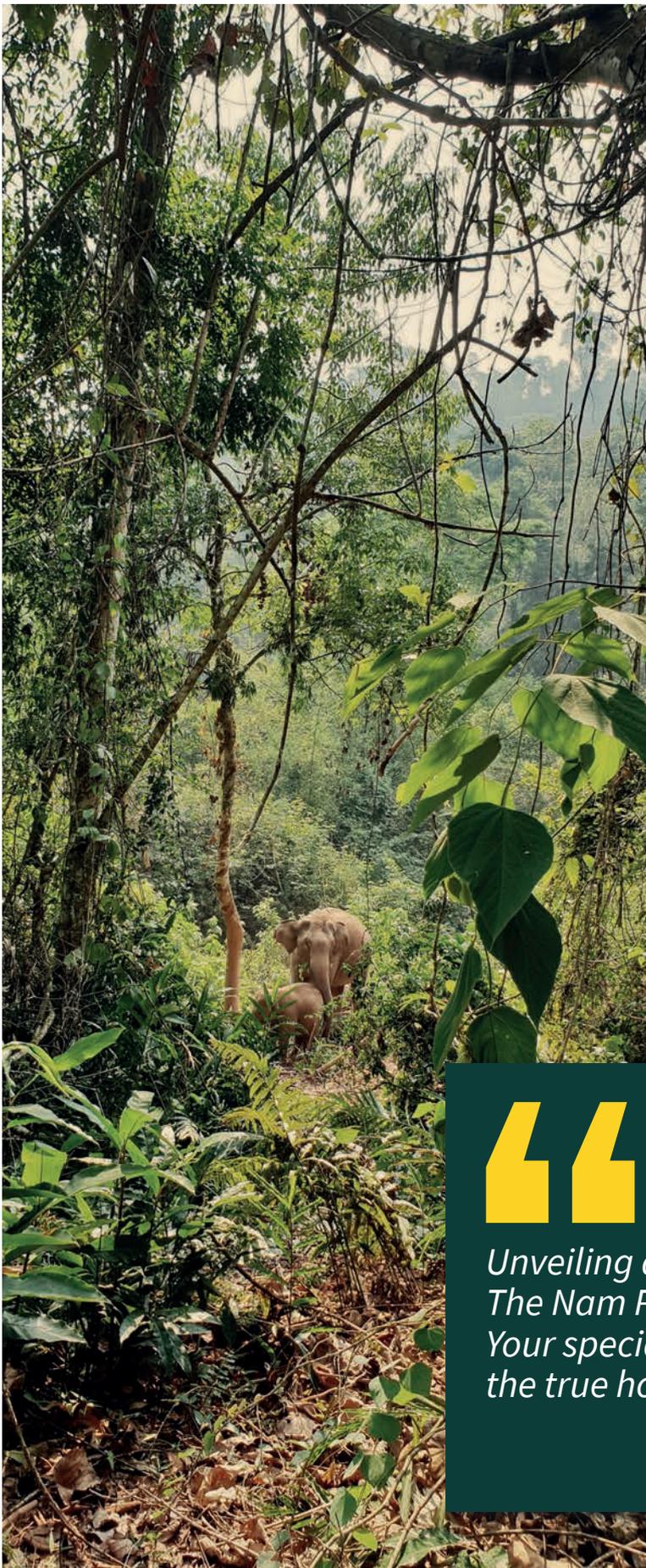
## ON PATROL

Be part of the team!

- **Trek through elephant habitat** alongside our monitoring team
- Assist with real-time **elephant health checks**
- **Track wild herds** using camera traps and field surveys
- **Camp under the forest canopy**, completely off-grid
- **Connect with traditional mahout culture** and remote communities



*Unveiling a secret natural gem:  
The Nam Pouy National Park.  
Your specialist guides will take you into  
the true homeland of Lao elephants*



# YOUR TEAM



**Kan Thissamone**

ECC Vet Technician - Elephant Manager

Kan Thissamone is a leading figure in elephant health and welfare in Laos. He began his career delivering emergency care to logging elephants with ElefantAsia's Mobile Vet Clinic. In 2012, Kan joined the founding team at the Elephant Conservation Center and helped design Laos' first Elephant Hospital. Today, he plays a vital role in ECC's daily operations — overseeing health checks, nutrition plans, positive reinforcement training, and mahout support. His deep field-based knowledge and years of hands-on experience make him a trusted mentor for mahouts and a key speaker at conservation workshops across Asia. Kan's commitment to elephant welfare continues to shape best practices in Laos and beyond.



**Moukthida Vilasith**

ECC Vet - WILDMED Mobile Elephant Clinic

Moukthida "Mouk" Vilasith is a dedicated wildlife veterinarian at the Elephant Conservation Center in Sayaboury. With a strong focus on elephant health, she supports ECC's breeding, rewilding, and veterinary programmes. Mouk has trained with international institutions such as the Denver Zoo and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, expanding her skills in both laboratory analysis and fieldwork. In addition to her clinical work, she actively participates in youth education programmes across Laos, representing ECC at events organised by Econox and the Anoulak Association. Through her expertise and passion, Mouk helps bridge the gap between conservation science and community engagement — inspiring future generations to care for wildlife.



**Keo Inthavong**

ECC Mahout - Wild Elephant Monitoring Unit

Keo Inthavong represents a new generation of Lao mahouts driven by passion. Keo joined ECC in 2018 to help care for elephants rescued from trafficking. His gentle and observant approach quickly stood out, and in 2019 he joined ECC's rewilding programme. Since then, he has worked deep in the Nam Pouy National Protected Area, monitoring rewilded elephants as they adapt to forest life. Keo's work is critical to ensuring these elephants' long-term survival in the wild, and his story reflects the growing role of passionate, conservation-minded youth in shaping the future of elephant care in Laos.



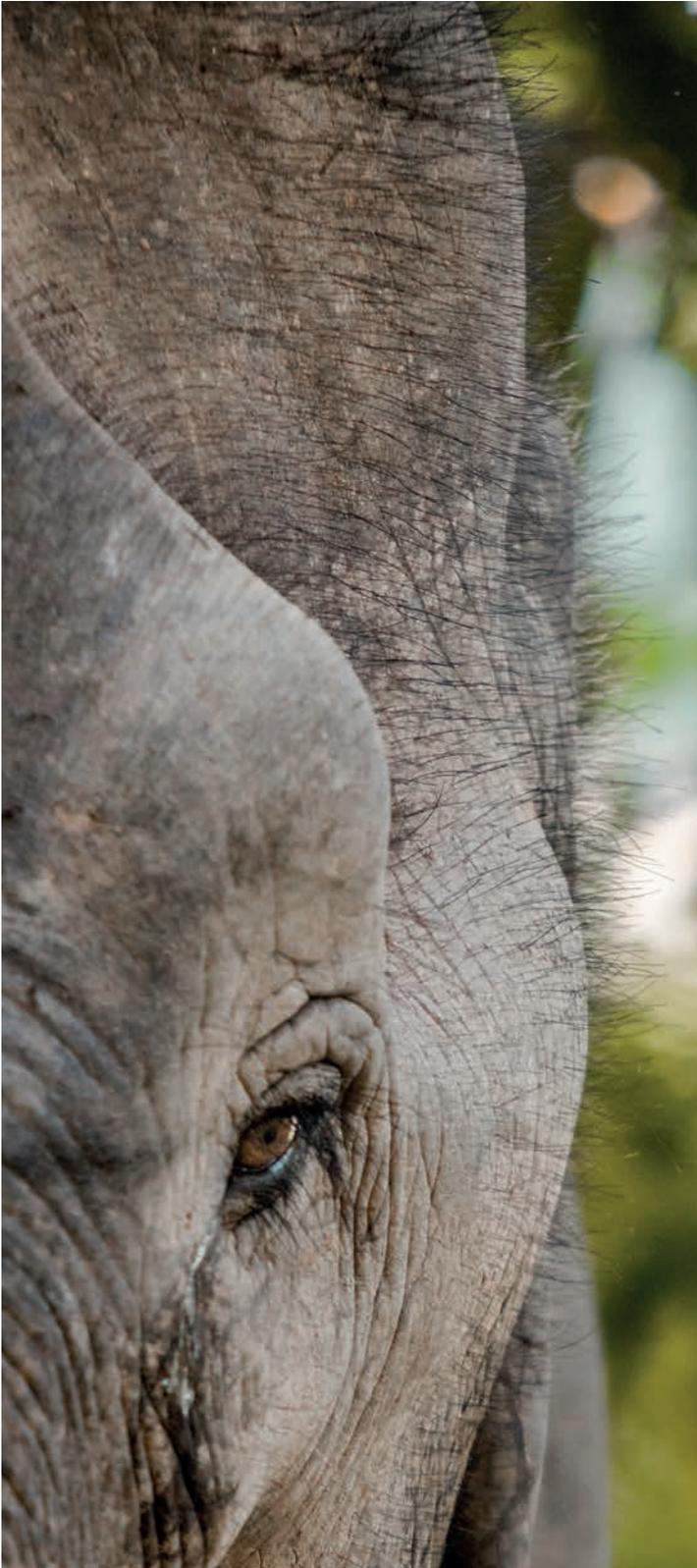
**Jamie Russell**

ECC Biologist - Elephant Behavior and Welfare

Jamie Russell is a wildlife biologist at the Elephant Conservation Center. He supports the ECC's elephant management, rehabilitation, research, and breeding programs, and contributes to education efforts through talks and outreach. Jamie holds a BSc in Animal Behavior from Indiana University Bloomington. He has a background in avian fieldwork, having worked on migration monitoring, breeding behavior surveys, and raptor research across the United States. His experience in behavioral data collection and fieldwork, combined with experience in guiding and education, support the ECC's efforts in improving elephant welfare and fostering public understanding of elephant conservation.

# EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

A Journey of discovery across the world of Lao elephants and mahout culture. Dive into the essence of adventure, where cultural richness and natural wonders intertwine



## Elephant **Monitoring**

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GPS tracking, camera trapping, footprints measuring, dung sampling... Help our team keep track of wild and released elephants.



# AN ACTION-PACKED JOURNEY

## Elephant Health Checks

Board the WILDMED Mobile Elephant Clinic and support our team while they conduct routine health checks on pre-release elephants.



## Life With Mahouts

A transformative exploration with Laos' best mahouts.

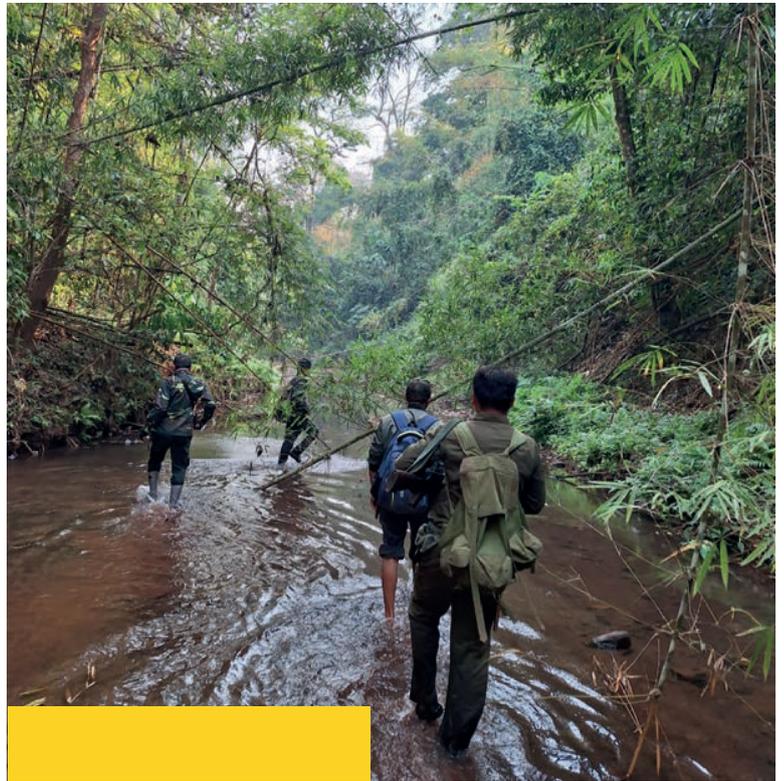
# DEEP INSIDE

One of the Richest and Least Known National Parks in SouthEast Asia

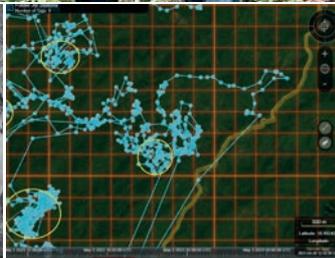
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Follow the Elephant Monitoring Team into wild elephant territory.

Treck the mountainous terrain of Nam Pouy, follow river streams, build the camp...



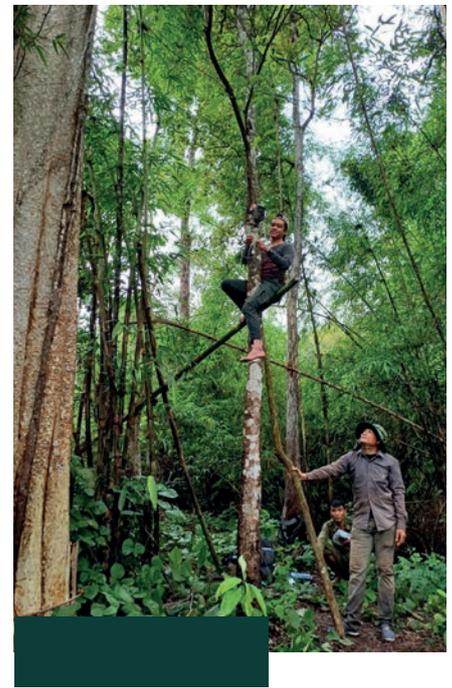
... learn the Way of the Mahout



## EXPLORING HORIZONS

A Journey Unveiling Rich Cultures, Breathtaking Landscapes, and Timeless Stories

From spiritual Luang Prabang to the Elephant Conservation Center, down to remote Thongmixay and wild Nam Pouy NPA, this adventure provides you with the very best Laos has to offer.



## OBSERVATION

Observe elephants released by the Elephant Conservation Center; collect and analyse data using camera traps.



## DATA COLLECTION

Assist our Wild Elephant Monitoring Unit with samples collection and input data using ZooMonitor© for later analysis at the ECC's lab.

# EDUCATION

## Contribute to Education in Thongmixay District

Contribute to the Elephant Conservation Center's "Kids in Conservation" programme through educational material dissemination and conversation with Thongmixay Primary School's schoolchildren and teachers.



## "KIDS IN CONSERVATION"

Your visit is a highlight in a typical school day in remote Thongmixay! Join our team during their educational visits in one of the district's schools and help with environmental education.



# CULTURE

## A One-In-A-Lifetime Off-the-Beaten-Tracks Cultural Discovery

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Embark on a sensory voyage through the rugged mountain peaks and tranquil valleys of Thongmixay District.



## Come Celebrate the Elephants' Spiritual Power With Our Mahouts and Friends.

In Laos, elephants are sacred, in both animism and Buddhism. Tour the ritual sites and pagodas in Thongmixay to feel the force of the revered Asian elephant, a national emblem and a spiritual semi-god.



# SCIENCE & CONSERVATION

## International Partnerships

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The ECC collaborates with leading international institutions to advance elephant conservation in Laos. In partnership with the Smithsonian Institution (USA), we analyse hormones (testosterone, cortisol, progesterone) and collect DNA from wild elephant populations. Our endocrinology lab is funded by the Australian Embassy in Laos, while Asian Elephant Support contributes to veterinary care. The French institute IRD partners with us to study elephant feeding and self-medication behaviours, and Des Éléphants et Des Hommes, Wyss Academy for Nature (Switzerland) and Eco-Faune (France) support our “Kids in Conservation” education programme.

Participants in Back to the Wild, Laos directly contribute to these ongoing research and education initiatives.

## BACK TO THE WILD

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Back to the Wild, Laos is open to anyone passionate about protecting nature. Whether you're an enthusiast or a professional in conservation, biology, veterinary care, botany, or related fields, your contribution is welcome. With a wide range of tasks involved, there's space for anyone eager to support one of Laos' most biodiverse regions.

## DIFFICULTY

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Trekking in a tropical forest environment can be strenuous. The first days spent at the Elephant Conservation Center are accessible to anyone fit enough to undertake short walks on rough terrain. But the Nam Pouy National Protected Area is much more challenging. With steep climbs and slopes, untouched secondary forest, high levels of heat and moist and the ubiquitous mosquitoes and leeches, it is highly recommended to participants to equip themselves with adequate gear and have prior knowledge of this kind of environment.

## PRICE

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8 DAYS  
ALL INCLUSIVE

**\$ 1,990**

## Next Expeditions:

1<sup>st</sup> week of Each Month Between  
October and April

# ITINERARY

**NOTE:** This itinerary is tentative and activities may vary depending on weather and other external factors. Altogether, only minor variations to be expected.

	Location / Base	Programme	Key Activities	Expedition Narrative
<b>DAY 1</b>				
	Luang Prabang → Sayaboury → Nam Tien Lake → ECC  Accommodation: ECC – Premium Bungalow / Deluxe Lodge	Orientation & Foundations	Road transfer, boat crossing, forest walk, Nursery visit, Elephant Hospital visit, bath observation, conservation video & Q&A	You enter the Nam Tien wilderness by road and boat, arriving at ECC’s conservation basecamp. The day focuses on ethical observation, meeting the herd in its forest habitat, discovering the Nursery and Laos’ only Elephant Hospital, and ending with a sunset conservation briefing.
<b>DAY 2</b>				
	Elephant Conservation Center (ECC)  Accommodation: ECC – Premium Bungalow / Deluxe Lodge	Behaviour & Welfare Immersion	Forest tracking, bath observation, Socialisation Area, positive-reinforcement training observation, veterinary routines	A full day moving with the herd. You observe foraging, social interactions, and veterinary routines, learning to read herd dynamics while seeing how science-led care supports elephant wellbeing.
<b>DAY 3</b>				
	Elephant Conservation Center (ECC)  Accommodation: ECC – Premium Bungalow / Deluxe Lodge	Field Readiness & Mission Briefing	Trek to observe free-roaming male elephants, Information Center session, expedition briefing, equipment preparation	The transition from visitor to expedition member. After tracking free-roaming bulls and deepening your scientific understanding, you prepare routes, safety protocols, and tools for the field phase ahead.
<b>DAY 4</b>				
	ECC → Thongmixay District  Accommodation: Local Guesthouse (Thongmixay)	Transition into Wild Elephant Territory	Overland travel, interpretive stops, Ban Phonesavath protected area trek, arrival in Thongmixay, dinner with mahouts	Leaving the lake behind, you cross remote Sayaboury landscapes and enter wild elephant territory. Fieldcraft begins in earnest, ending the day with cultural exchange over dinner with mahouts from the ECC Wild Elephant Monitoring Unit and the WILDMED Elephant Vet Clinic Team.
<b>DAY 5</b>				
	Thongmixay → Nam Pouy National Protected Area  Accommodation: Forest Camp (Nam Pouy NPA) - Camping	Nam Pouy Field Mission – Health & Monitoring	Sacred forest visit, non-invasive elephant health check, picnic, camera trap deployment, forest camp setup	You go fully off-grid into Nam Pouy jungle. Working alongside ECC specialists, you assist with health checks, deploy camera traps, collect biological samples, and establish a low-impact forest camp deep in elephant habitat.
<b>DAY 6</b>				
	Nam Pouy NPA  Accommodation: Forest Camp (Nam Pouy NPA) - Camping	Nam Pouy National Park – Deep Forest Fieldwork	On-foot fieldwork inside Nam Pouy NPA, Camera trap checks and data retrieval, Elephant track, sign, and habitat interpretation, biological sample collection	Wake early at a forest camp in Nam Pouy NPA and head out on foot for a full day in the protected area. Camera trap checks, trekking between wildlife observation points, and learning how biologists read elephant signs and collect non-invasive biological samples. The day ends back at the forest camp.
<b>DAY 7</b>				
	Nam Pouy NPA → Thongmixay  Accommodation: Local Guesthouse (Thongmixay)	Monitoring Circuit & Data Collection	Early monitoring circuit, track and sign interpretation, camera trap checks, return to Thongmixay, mahout family dinner	A classic patrol day: dawn starts, fresh signs in the forest, data retrieval, and learning how landscape features shape elephant movements—followed by shared stories with a mahout family.
<b>DAY 8</b>				
	Thongmixay → Paklay → Vientiane	Community Engagement & Return	School visit with ECC team, environmental education, final debrief, overland return	Conservation extends beyond the forest. You support local education efforts before returning to ECC and concluding the expedition with a final team debrief and departure to Vientiane Capital.

# TERMS & CONDITIONS

## CURRENCY

All amounts mentioned in this quotation are stated in US Dollars, but are occasionally calculated in other currencies - especially when using a credit card.

## BOOKING

All clients are deemed to have read these terms and conditions and have signed a reservation form which must be made directly between the customer and the Elephant Conservation Center (ECC). The booking includes the number of participants, a list of participants' names incl. title (Ms., Mr.), nationality and passport numbers prior to the departure. To secure a booking, ECC requires a completed booking containing all relevant information detailed above by e-mail, telephone, fax, or via Checkfront. Clients booking are deemed to accept these terms and conditions and sign a reservation form and a waiver when arriving at the Center. A booking is accepted and a contract is entered into as soon as ECC issues a written confirmation of the booking. The booking will be secured upon reception of the payment (see below). If Clients are not paying the booking in timely manner, ECC reserves the right to cancel the booking.

## PAYMENT

An invoice will be issued with the confirmation of the booking and the submission of the participants' details as stated above. Payments can be made by bank transfer which will incur a bank fee, or cash (at the ECC). Account details are given on the booking confirmation. Note that all bank transfer fees have to be covered in full by the client.

## CANCELLATION (ALL SEASONS)

ECC Cancellation policy is as follows:

- Cancellation less than 30 days prior to arrival date: - 25% charges of the full price will be applied, bank fee not included. (ECC will pay back 75% of the amount received, bank fee not included)
- Cancellation less than 15 days prior to arrival date: - 50% charges of the full price will be applied, bank fee not included (ECC will pay back 50% of the amount received, bank fee not included)
- Cancellation less than 72 hours (3 days) prior to the arrival date or 'no show' - Full charge from all services requested for will be applied (ECC will retain the full amount received)

## AGE LIMITS

- Participants must have 18 years or more.

## TOUR LEADER AND F.O.C. POLICY

- International Tour Leader will be charged 80% of the public price (per person). Tour leader will sleep in the dormitory.

We do not offer Free-of-charge participation.

## CANCELLATION BY ECC

ECC reserves the right to cancel any trip due to reasons beyond its control (i.e.: natural disasters or political instability). In such a case ECC will refund monies received in full.

## INSURANCE

ECC guarantees that all its buses and cars owned by ECC are insured as commercial passenger vehicles. Insurance coverage does not apply after the passengers have exited the vehicle. A private travel insurance is compulsory for all people traveling with ECC. Your travel insurance must provide cover against personal accident, medical expenses, emergency repatriation and personal liability. We also advise to contract insurance coverage against cancellation, curtailment, and loss of luggage and personal effects. The participants must be aware that during the course of the trip certain risks

and dangers may occur, including but not limited to hazards of traveling on a mountain bicycle, kayak, hiking, or driving in a motor vehicle or boat, snakes, insects and other wildlife and proximity of elephants. It may also involve an accident or illness in remote places without appropriate facilities, or be caused by the forces of nature. The client agrees to assume all risks associated with the trip and agrees that no liability will be attached to the company or its outfitter, employees or agent, or to any member of the tour group. ECC accepts no liability in respect of death, personal injury, illness or delay of the passenger, or for any loss or damage to the property of the participant during the course of the trip, however caused.

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Clients must carry a valid passport and obtain the relevant visas when traveling with ECC. We cannot accept responsibility if entry is denied to Laos or any other country due to incorrect visa or passport documentation.

## COMPLAINTS

If a client has a complaint about the tour, he or she must make it known to the tour guide (leader) as soon as possible so that he/she is able to take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity. If the client is not satisfied with our response and he/she feels his or her enjoyment of the tour will be significantly affected the client should contact our manager at ECC to discuss how we might best resolve the problem. If the client remains unsatisfied after return from the tour, we must be notified in writing within 30 days.

## RESPONSIBILITY

When booking an ECC tour, the client understands that ECC runs adventure and outdoor tours in Laos where the standards of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, level of infrastructure development and medical facilities, and telecommunication services are not necessarily the same as one may be used to at home, or one would find on a conventional holiday. This type of holiday inherently involves a higher level of personal risk than a 'conventional holiday'. ECC, the Government of Laos and the Lao National Tourism Administration cannot accept any responsibility for accidents, injuries, death, or loss of personal effects. The client understands that during the course of the tour certain events may occur, including, but not limited to, accident or illness in remote places without medical facilities, political instability and the forces of nature. The client agrees to assume all risks associated with the journey to the maximum extent permitted by law. Each client acknowledges that travel on ECC tour requires a degree of flexibility, and understands that the itinerary, accommodation and modes of transport are subject to change without prior notice due to local circumstances. Should ECC deem it advisable to amend an itinerary for any reason, it may do so by shortening, varying or re-routing any trip. These changes are binding and additional expenses will be charged to the client, if the reason for any alteration is outside control from ECC. While traveling with ECC, the client agrees to accept the authority of the leader or local operator at all time. He/she is aware that travel within a group may involve compromise to accommodate the diverse desires and physical abilities of group members. The client understands that ECC reserves the right to decline the participation of any person as a member of the group at any time. The client acknowledges that ECC contracts a network of companies, government agencies and individuals throughout the country to assist in the running of its tours. To the best of ECC knowledge, these third parties are qualified to perform the duties they are contracted to perform. However, ECC will not be held liable for any injury, damage, loss, delay or irregularity that may occur due to the behaviour of these third parties. ECC will not accept responsibility or liability for any traveller who contravenes any law or regulation of Lao P. D. R. No employee, servant or agent of ECC has authority to alter these conditions.





BACK TO THE WILD



World's 10 Best Places  
**Wanderlust**  
TRAVEL MAGAZINE  
N°4  
to See Elephants

**Tripadvisor**  
Travelers' Choice Awards  
  
2025

10 of the Best Places  
**lonely planet**  
2024  
to Visit in Laos



elephant conservation center

## BACK TO THE WILD

Uncover hidden gems, sacred culture, and breathtaking landscapes, in the Land of Elephants.



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[www.elephantconservationcenter.com](http://www.elephantconservationcenter.com)  
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