



INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STUDIES INSTITUTE
ELEPHANTS AND CONSERVATION ECOLOGY:
THAILAND AND LAOS

The **Elephants and Conservation Ecology** course at ISDSI is an immersive, field-based exploration of elephant conservation, ecology, and human-wildlife relationships. Students observe **wild elephants in both Thailand and Laos**, studying their behavior, movement, and interactions with their environment. In addition to field observations, they visit **different models of elephant conservation in Thailand**, from long-established sanctuaries to community-led initiatives, and explore **reintroduction efforts in Laos**, and the challenges of returning elephants to the wild.

Blending **ecology, conservation science, elephant health care, and animal behavior**, the course provides a comprehensive look at elephant populations in **protected areas, national parks, and conservation centers**. Students examine the challenges of habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict, and rewilding efforts while engaging in field research and ecological monitoring. Working alongside conservationists, veterinarians, and local experts, they gain insights into habitat restoration, elephant reproduction and care, and the long-term strategies needed to sustain elephant populations.

This course will study at two **UNESCO World Heritage sites**: The Thung Yai-Huai Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuary and the ancient Lao city of Luang Prabang. A core part of this course is travel in Thailand and Laos, exploring the cities of Chiang Mai and Luang Prabang, and observing elephants in the wild and under human care.

Beyond scientific study, students explore the **historical, cultural, and economic roles** of elephants in the region. They analyze how tourism, traditional practices, and conservation policies influence elephant management. By comparing conservation approaches in Thailand and Laos, students develop a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in elephant protection and the future of conservation in Southeast Asia. Through hands-on experiences and cross-cultural learning, this course provides a unique opportunity to engage with one of the region's most iconic species.

On successful completion of the program, students will also earn an **ISDSI certification in Elephant Conservation** based on their work during the program.

Program length	4 weeks
Credit	4 credits
Eligibility	Currently enrolled in college or university. Recommended for 3rd or 4th year undergraduate students. Also open to graduate students.
Deadlines	April 1. Applications will be reviewed as they are received, and you are encouraged to apply before the deadline. After the deadline applications will be reviewed on a space-available basis.

For more information, see www.isdsi.org/summer

Interested? Email admissions@isdsi.org today to learn more!

