

Summer Course in Thailand

Elephants and Conservation Ecology: Thailand and Laos

A field-based summer course studying Asian elephant conservation across two countries

Four weeks studying Asian elephant ecology, health, and conservation across Thailand and Laos — from a UNESCO wildlife sanctuary to veterinary training to cross-border conservation policy — culminating in an Independent Field Research Project.

MODULE 1

Introduction & Wildlife Sanctuary

Week 1 · Uthai Thani, Thailand

The course begins in Chiang Mai before traveling to the Thung Yai–Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to study wild elephant ecology and behavior alongside park rangers.

- UNESCO World Heritage wildlife sanctuary
- Wild elephant observation with park rangers
- Introduction to field research methods

MODULE 2

Elephant Care & Veterinary Practice

Week 2 · Chiang Mai, Thailand

Hands-on veterinary assistance training, mahout training, and visits to elephant camps and conservation centers around Chiang Mai ground a study of elephant health, care standards, and ethical management.

- Veterinary assistance training with professors from Chiang Mai University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
- Mahout training and traditional elephant care knowledge
- Visits to elephant hospitals, conservation centers, and working elephant camps

MODULE 3

Elephant Conservation in Laos

Week 3 · Xayaburi, Luang Prabang & Vientiane, Laos

Travel to Laos to study a different governance and conservation context, visiting the Elephant Conservation Center, Mandalao Elephant Camp, and national conservation institutions in Vientiane.

- Elephant Conservation Center, Xayaburi
- UNESCO World Heritage city of Luang Prabang
- Meetings with Lao conservation & veterinary institutions

MODULE 4

Synthesis & Final Presentations

Week 4 · Chiang Mai, Thailand

The course returns to Chiang Mai for synthesis, reflection, and presentation of each student's Independent Field Research Project to the full group.

- Final research studies and review
- Peer learning & course-wide reflection
- Independent Field Research Project presentations

WHAT MAKES THIS SUMMER COURSE UNIQUE

Two countries, one species

Compare elephant conservation approaches directly across Thailand and Laos, with extensive experiential learning.

Independent field research

Every module includes work on an Independent Field Research Project, presented in Module 4.

Hands-on veterinary training

Direct veterinary assistance training under the supervision of veterinary professors from Chiang Mai University.

UNESCO World Heritage sites

Fieldwork at both the Thung Yai–Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary and Luang Prabang.

4 credits · 4 weeks · Early Decision: January 31 · Deadline: April 1

Questions? Email us at admissions@isdsi.org

Apply now: isdsi.org/summer/elephants

