

## Free health check-ups for captive elephants

A group of veterinarians in India have initiated a unique project that aims at providing free health check-ups to captive elephants through mobile clinics.

Conceptualised by a team of veterinarians under the guidance of Jacob V. Cheeran, the project is supported by two [Bangalore](#) based NGOs - Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF) and Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA).

The Elephant Welfare Association, Trissur, and the Elephant Study Centre at Kerala Agricultural University are also assisting the veterinarians.

The feasibility of the project was assessed through a pilot study where mobile elephant clinics were set up and the team examined nearly 150 elephants in three states - Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

'The pilot study received excellent support from elephant owners and veterinarians treating the elephants and has prompted the team to initiate a detailed one-year project in the whole of India and is likely to continue for a couple of years,' Cheeran told IANS.

He said all clinical samples from elephants were subjected to on-the-spot laboratory analyses in the mobile elephant clinic and an elephant health card was given to each of the elephant owners after analysing the health parameters.

The goal of the project is to help field veterinarians in providing better treatment to captive elephants. The mobile clinic will perform all relevant laboratory tests, which are otherwise not possible in field conditions.

The one-year project starting November will conduct health check-ups for nearly 600-900 captive elephants all over India. The initiative offers a one-time opportunity for a detailed check-up for elephants maintained in remote hamlets free of cost.

David Abraham, a wildlife veterinarian with the Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre, Bangalore, will be in charge of the mobile clinic and on-the-spot laboratory analyses of samples.

'After hearing of the pilot study, we have received requests from neighbouring countries too for a similar health check up. The first mobile clinic would be held in Kerala. Requests have come from Jaipur, northeastern states and the Jim Corbett National Park in Uttaranchal,' said Cheeran.

*Sanu George ( © IANS / India eNews)*