



Wildlife & Conservation Field Learning  
**STUDENT EXPERIENCE**  
At the Elephant Conservation Center in Laos

**ORIENTATION  
GUIDE**

At the



in cooperation with

WYSS  
ACADEMY  
FOR  
NATURE





# STUDY ABROAD

IN LAOS, SOUTHEAST ASIA

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CAMPUS & CURRICULA

# ORIENTATION GUIDE

SAFETY, FOOD & ACCOMMODATION

## WELCOME TO LAOS! THE “LAND OF A MILLION ELEPHANTS”

Yindee Thon Hap! (welcome!)

to the Elephant Conservation, Research & Education Center!  
This guide details what to expect during your stay at ECORE.

For questions related to **science and curricula** at ECORE, contact **our Research Coordinator, Anabel Lopez Perez** ([biologist@elephantconservationcenter.com](mailto:biologist@elephantconservationcenter.com)).

For questions about **life at ECORE, logistics** and to plan your next visit, reach out to **our ECORE programme manager, Libby Thompson** ([ecore@elephantconservationcenter.com](mailto:ecore@elephantconservationcenter.com)).

**Science and traditional knowledge** are at the core of our conservation work. We are welcoming all students willing to contribute to the preservation of Laos' rich but fragile ecosystems through their work.

**We will do everything we can to ensure your stay with us is both enjoyable and rewarding.**

The ECORE / ECC team.





# LIFE AT ECORE

Basic information you need to get settled and oriented at the Education, Conservation & Research Center.

## Food and Water

Meals include both **vegetarian** and **non-vegetarian** options.

Please notify our Programme Manager during booking if any students have a special diet (vegan, gluten-free, etc.) or food allergies.

- **Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.**
- **Lunch: 12:00 p.m.**
- **Dinner: 6:30 p.m.**

Meal times can be adjusted to suit student group schedules.

Drinking water, tea and coffee are available in the restaurant at all times.

Please remember that **water is precious and limited** in this remote area.

We ask that students can try to limit their shower times and other water-consuming activities.

## Transportation

Transportation to and from the ECC is included in our packages. Transfers are arranged by private A/C minivans.



## Health, Safety & Security

ECC is an **accredited LaoSafe** destination. Food hygiene and facilities disinfection are implemented on site. In case of emergency, extraction plans are in place with comprehensive maps on display around the main site.

We are living out in the forest, and share the ECC campus with many creatures. There are some snakes, scorpions and spiders around – to avoid bites, students should not walk around bare foot, and check their shoes and clothing before putting them on. **Students and teachers should never go alone for a stroll in the forest.** Elephants are staying in various locations day or night. Always ask permission from

our Site Manager or your supervisor prior to entering the forest. Students should **always be accompanied by a research assistant or security staff member** (rangers; mahouts) in the field. These staff members are well versed with the area, wildlife, terrain, and local communities.

The Nam Tien lake is a great place for kayaking. However, please alert the staff in the administrative office before students go out, never jump from the pier and never swim or go kayaking after dark.

After dark, always carry a **flashlight** and minimize movement in remote parts of the campus. If you would like to be accompanied to your room after dark, staff members are always available in the Administrative Office or near the restaurant. Laos' climate is generally hot. Stay hydrated with plenty of water and electrolytes, and avoid drinking unfiltered water.

There is a basic first aid box in the Administration Office for minor injuries, and our staff are certified in first aid and fire safety (Lao Red Cross yearly training). To access medication or treatment, please ask our Site Manager.



## Clothing

Elephant Conservation Center staff and visitors come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. **Culturally appropriate clothing** includes covered shoulders and trousers or skirts extending at least to the knee. Shoes are a no-go indoors in Laos and should be removed before entering any public space.

In the field, long trousers and sturdy, closed-toe shoes provide essential protection against biting insects, snakes, and thorny vegetation. A hat or cap and loose, long-sleeved shirt are also recommended for sun protection. Although usually warm by day, Laos can be quite cool at night, depending on the season. We recommend that visitors bring some warm clothes.

**Linens, towels, and mosquito netting are all provided** with accommodation.

## Facilities & Research

ECORE/ECC Workspace can accommodate up to 40 students, teachers and researchers.

It is divided into 2 units: The ECC Main Site (ECORE Workspace, Accommodation & Restaurant) and the Lab.

## The ECC Main Site

The ECC is equipped with a range of facilities to support both daily life and educational activities. Our brand-new **student workspace** features three air-conditioned rooms designed for **lectures, group work, and independent study**. Each room includes desks and chairs, a whiteboard, and a projector—providing a comfortable and functional learning environment right on site.

Accommodation options include 13 single/double bungalows, a dormitory, and the Lodge—a 4-room building with private washrooms in each room. Other shared washroom facilities are available near the main accommodation area. Meals are served in the communal dining hall, and guests have access to a bar, restaurant, shop, and a small playground, all located within the main ECC site.

Additional facilities include an administrative office, a meeting room, and a fully equipped kitchen.

The Elephant Hospital contains a preparation room, office and storage areas, a pharmacy, an elephant skeleton for anatomical studies, and an adjacent elephant training area. The hospital is connected to clean water, electricity (220–240V), and Wi-Fi. It also includes a covered space used for plant experiments and research.





## The Lab

The lab is about 1 km away from the ECC main site. It is accessible by boat or car. It includes communal equipment and freezer and fridge space, and receives clean water, electricity (220-240v) and wifi internet on a 24-hour basis. The lab offers access to general laboratory equipment such as centrifuge, microscope, scale, vortex, pipettes, stirrers, water bath, pH meter, etc. It is fully equipped for endocrine analysis. For more information about the laboratory equipment, please contact the research coordinator.

## Biobank

The ECC laboratory staff have been collecting specimens from our elephants (blood, serum and dry faecal samples) since 2018. This biobank can give researchers the opportunity to perform longitudinal and retrospective analysis for different study types. For more information about the specimens available, please contact the research coordinator.

## Staying Connected

Fiber and wi-fi internet are available at both the main site and the lab. 4G/5G sim cards are readily available throughout Laos and credits are inexpensive. **Unitel** cell network has the best coverage in the Elephant Conservation Center's area.



**Power** (220-240v outlets) is supplied on site on a 24-hour basis. Please help us conserve energy by switching off appliances and lights when not in use. Charge ports are available at the restaurant, administrative office, hospital and lab.

## Finances in the field

**LOCAL CURRENCY:** Lao Kip (LAK) or US Dollar (USD) and Thai Baht (THB) for higher-priced items.

**PREFERRED MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE:** Laos is primarily a cash-based economy. Do not plan to use a card for most expenses. We recommend bringing cash in \$100 and \$50 bills and use official Exchange Offices (such as BCEL Bank) to obtain LAK equivalent. Any cash that you bring must be in excellent condition, meaning clean, unwrinkled, unmarked,

and with no tears or else they will not be accepted in the country.

**UPON ARRIVAL:** It is recommended to bring a supply of cash in USD to start the program. As USD is easy to change for LAK in Laos, we do not recommend that you exchange US dollars into LAK before arriving in Laos.

**ATM ACCESS:** There are ATMs that accept international cards in Luang Prabang. ATMs in Laos dispense LAK and keep a small commission, so we recommend that withdraw larger sums at a time so that you can have a supply on hand for a few weeks at a time, as the bank commission is equal whatever the amount. You will not have access to ATMs in most rural areas in Laos, so make sure to plan ahead for extended field trips away from the ECORE / ECC Center.

## Kayaks

Kayaks are available to all guests free of charge.

## Souvenirs

ECC t-shirts, caps, handicraft made by our resident mahouts and other goodies are available at the shop; If you are interested, please inquire with our Site Manager.

# FACILITIES & SERVICES

## LODGING

- ECORE Dormitory (16 single beds in 4 rooms)
- 12 Bungalows (1-2 Pax)  
Single & Double beds  
Communal Wash Facilities
- 1 Forest House  
4 Rooms  
Private Wash Facilities
- 2 Deluxe Lodges (Up to 6 Pax). Private Wash Facilities

## FOOD & BEVERAGE

- Kitchen
- Restaurant

## STUDENT WORKPLACE

- Lecture hall
- Projectors + Whiteboards
- Desks and chairs for group / individual projects

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Kayaks
- Trekking
- Yoga
- Sunset Cruise





## HOSPITAL

- Preparation Room
- Elephant Training Area
- Pharmacy

## LABORATORY

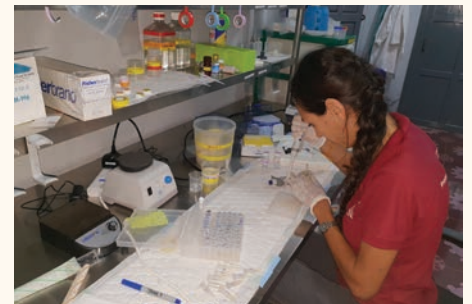
- Sterilizer
- Centrifuge
- Microscopes
- Ultrasound & Probes
- Fridges & Freezers

## ADMIN & SERVICES

- Permits
- Translation
- Printing

## WORKSPACE & TECH

- Meeting Room
- Admin Office
- Fiber Internet
- Cameras
- Camera Traps
- Drones
- GPS Units
- LCD Projector
- Microphones





### VEHICLES

- 2 Hi-ACE Minivans
- 2 Hilux 4WD Trucks
- 2 Boats

### INFORMATION CENTER

- 2 Permanent Exhibitions
- Traditional Elephant Saddlery

### ELEPHANTS

- 17 Cows
- 9 Bulls
- 2 Calves

### STATIONS

- Elephant Nursery
- Reproduction Area
- 3 Socialization Areas
- 1 Training Area (Veterinary Checks)

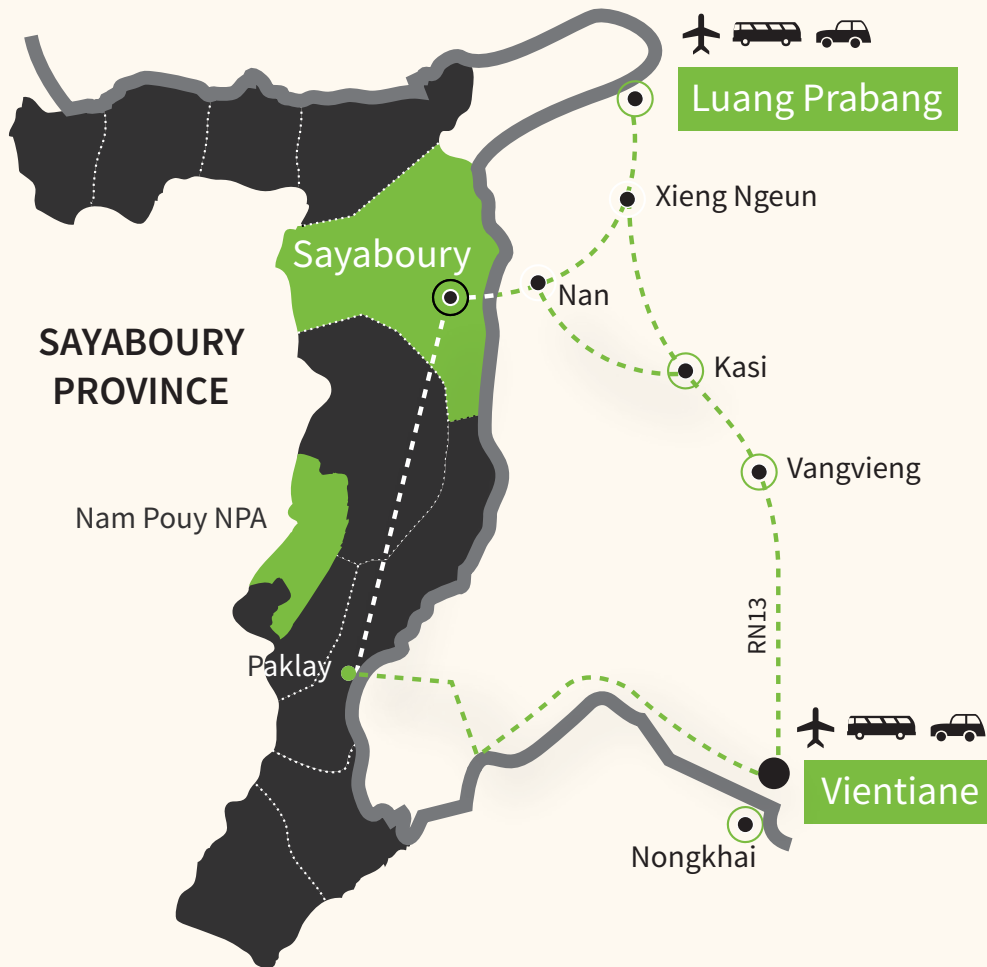
### NAM TIEN PROVINCIAL PROTECTED AREA

- 6.000 Ha
- Elephant Conservation Center
- Elephant Bamboo Forest





# ACCESS MAP



## How to get there?

### FROM/TO LUANG PRABANG

From Luang Prabang ECC minivan departs from the post office on the main street daily at 7:30am and arrives at the ECC at 10:30am. It returns daily to Luang Prabang at 2:00pm, arriving approximately at 4:30pm. The journey takes approximately 2 hours.

### FROM/TO VIENTIANE

**In Vientiane:** Sakura Minivans (Sikhay station, pass the airport).

Departures at 7:00am, 8:00am and 10:00am.

**In Sayaboury:** Sakura Bus Station.

Departures at 7:00am, 8:00am and 10:00am.

The journey takes approximately 7 hours.

**Or fly to Luang Prabang.** Lao Airlines and Lao Skyway have several departures daily, and board the ECC minivan the next morning.

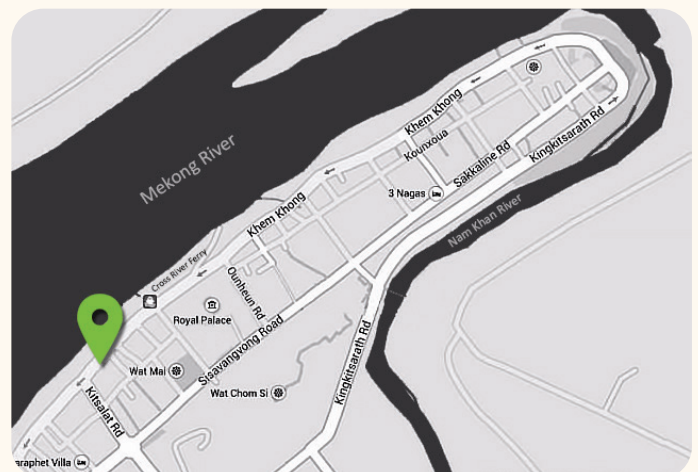
### FROM/TO VANGVIENG

**In Sayaboury:** Public Buses from the Bus Station.

Departures at 3:00pm.

**In Vangvieng:** Minivan from Vangvieng bus station.

Departures at 10:30am (reservation required).



### Luang Prabang Office

Manthatoulat Road (Mekong)  
Ban Pakham, Luang Prabang  
TEL: +856(0)20 96 59 06 65

### ECORE / ECC

Nam Tien Lake,  
Sayaboury Province, Lao PDR  
WHATSAPP: +61 412 183 018

[marketing@elephantconservationcenter.com](mailto:marketing@elephantconservationcenter.com)

# AMENITIES





# TERMS & CONDITIONS

## CURRENCY

All amounts mentioned in this rate card 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. Clients booking are deemed to accept these terms and conditions and sign a waiver when boarding our minivan to 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 a timely manner, ECC reserves itself 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 or Credit Card 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.

In case of a payment being made later than 90 days after the invoice is sent, a penalty of 10% of the total invoice will be applied.

## CANCELLATION (ALL SEASONS)

ECC Cancellation policy is as follows:

Cancellation less than 30 days prior to arrival date: 25% charge of the full price will be applied, bank fee not included. (ECC will pay back 75% of the amount invoiced, bank fees not included).

Cancellation less than 15 days prior to arrival date: 50% charge of the full will be applied, bank fees not included (ECC will pay back 50% of the amount invoiced, 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 invoiced).

## TOUR LEADER AND FOC POLICY

Lao National guide will be charged 20\$ / night (per person),

International Tour Leader (and/or teachers/supervisors) will be charged 50% of the public price (per person). We do not offer FOC.

## 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 (minus bank transfer fees).

## INSURANCE

ECC guarantees that all vehicles it owns 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 kayaking, 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 our 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

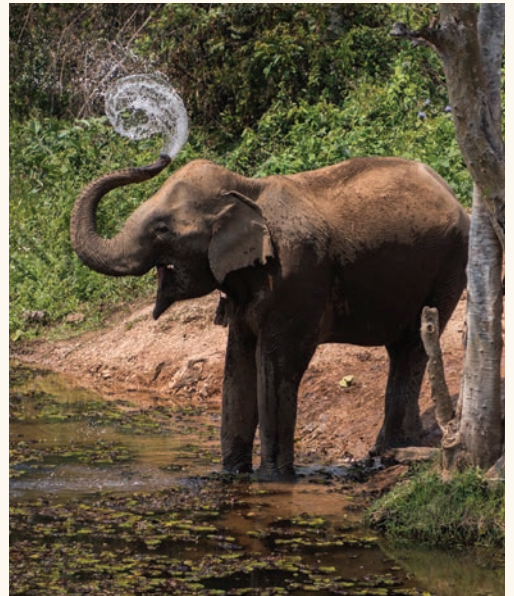
If a client has a complaint about the tour, he or she must make it known to the tour guide (leader) as soon as possible so that he/she is able to take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity. If the client is not satisfied with our response and he/she feels his or her enjoyment of the tour will 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 a stay at ECC, the client understands that ECC is established in a forested area of 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 stay 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 stay 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 staying at ECC 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 can incur additional expenses that may 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 stays. 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 PDR. No employee, servant or agent of ECC has authority to alter these conditions.

The ECC community includes people from many different cultural backgrounds and ages, so we are asking that our visitors be tolerant of others while on site.







# MEDIA QUOTES

“One of the world’s best places to see elephants”

– *Wanderlust*

“ECC rescues elephants from the logging industry”

– *The Guardian*

“The Centre offers visitors a unique insight into the lives of these majestic creatures in a natural setting”

– *Lonely Planet*

“The work of the ECC (...) offers some hope for the future survival of Laos’ largest mammal.”

– *The Diplomat*

“A chance to observe the elephants from morning until evening”

– *Lonely Planet*

“The ECC team are now working towards their rewilding goal”

– *The Telegraph UK*

“ECC is a bright light in an increasingly dark landscape for wildlife conservation in the region”

– *Lonely Planet*

“El Centro de Conservación de Elefantes en Sayaboury se dedica a la protección y recuperación de los paquidermos”

– *El Pais*

“ECC and Lao Tourism welcome 13 rescued elephants”

– *We Are Lao*

“Elephant Conservation Center is a memorable experience”

– *Wanderlust*

“An innovative project to utilise Laos’ elephant experts in service of protecting the country’s natural treasures”

– *Geographical UK*

“Meet and interact with elephants the ethical way at the Elephant Conservation Center”

– *The Independent*

“A true sanctuary”

– *Travel3sixty*

“The ECC team works to protect the Asian elephant from extinction”

– *NHK World*

“Elephant Conservation Center sets a sustainable example”

– *The Outdoor Journal*

“The ECC is not your typical tourist elephant camp. It is run by people with a passion for the animals”

– *Lonely Planet*

“Through a partnership with the Smithsonian Institute, the ECC has established a successful breeding program”

– *The Diplomat*

“El Centro de Conservación de Elefantes es un brote verde en medio del turismo convencional”

– *El Pais*

“Lao’s only sanctuary that offers an undisturbed natural environment with professional staff and world-class facilities”

– *We Are Lao*

“The local mahouts genuinely care for their elephants’ survival”

– *The Outdoor Journal*

“The ECC breeding program seeks to (re) create sustainable breeding populations in the wild”

– *The Diplomat*

“Ici (...) les éléphants vivent en paix.”

– *Le Monde*

Wanderlust  
THE ORIGINAL TRAVEL MAGAZINE

Le Monde

INDEPENDENT

the guardian

THE DIPLOMAT  
Read The Diplomat. Know the Asia-Pacific.

The Telegraph

EL PAIS

Geographical

GRANDS REPORTAGES

Newsweek

lonely planet

TERRA DARWIN

herald scotland  
The Herald

3sixty

OUTDOOR  
Journal

the yak

FUSION

outer edge

Action Asia

L'ES

LE MATIN

itv

NHK WORLD TV

arte

0

2DF

2

KBS

NEWS

rtbf

npr

C8

TF1





## elephant conservation center

Luang Prabang Visitor Center  
Manthatoulat Road  
(Mekong Riverside)  
Ban Pakham, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR  
[lp@elephantconservationcenter.com](mailto:lp@elephantconservationcenter.com)  
TEL: +856(0)20 96 59 06 65

Elephant Conservation Center  
Nam Tien Reservoir, Sayaboury District  
Sayaboury Province, Lao PDR  
[elephantconservationcenter@gmail.com](mailto:elephantconservationcenter@gmail.com)  
Whatsapp: +61 412 183 018  
[www.elephantconservationcenter.com](http://www.elephantconservationcenter.com)  
Facebook: elephant conservation center  
Instagram: #elephantconservationlaos

**"CONSERVATION  
LEADERSHIP"  
AWARD BY**

