



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



in cooperation with

WYSS
ACADEMY
FOR
NATURE

CONTACTS

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You can view this [short video](#) presenting a typical 2-day stay at the Center.

PARTNERS



ASIAN ELEPHANT
SUPPORT



AN UNFORGETTABLE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AWAITS: STUDY ABROAD AT THE ELEPHANT CONSERVATION CENTER IN LAOS

Dear Educators,

At the Elephant Conservation Center (ECC), we believe students learn best when fully immersed in enriching experiences and unique adventures—far from the distractions of normal daily life. Where nature is the classroom, discovery is the mission, and learning and fun come together to instill a deep sense of wonderment. Such an opportunity exists for your students through our Three-Day, Four-Day and Five-Day Study Abroad Programs at the ECC's ECORE Center in Laos!

Why the Elephant Conservation Center?

Situated in the heart of Southeast Asia, our Study Aboard Program offers a rare opportunity to learn about Asian elephants in their natural habitat. Imagine your students following a herd of elephants through the lush forest, guided by expert conservationists, biologists, and mahouts. Or observing our veterinarians caring for elephants at our Elephant Hospital. These are among the many magical, immersive educational experiences at the ECC!

Educational Insights

Through our Study Abroad Program students learn about tropical ecosystems with a focus on endangered Asian elephants. They gain unique insights into the life-cycle and ecological importance of these magnificent creatures, deepening their understanding of the delicate balance within the ecosystem. This is a rare chance for your students to get up-close-and-personal with our staff who have dedicated their careers to the preservation of this endangered species.

Campus Experience

Nestled on the banks of the beautiful Nam Tien Lake in Sayaboury Province—and only 2.5 hours from the UNESCO World Heritage city of Luang Prabang—our ECORE campus is surrounded by a 540-hectare (1,350 acres) forest and the so-called 'Elephant Mountain Range.' Up to 40 students and their teachers can be accommodated in our charming lodging, dining, and teaching facilities.

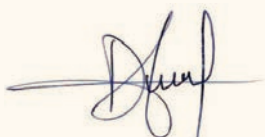
Beyond Conservation

In addition to the core educational activities provided by our program, students have the opportunity to engage in trekking, kayaking, yoga and meditation. Our newly established Bamboo Forest also offers an opportunity for gardening projects and bamboo handicraft production. These activities are designed to complement the educational aspects of our program, providing a well-rounded experience that combines adventure, learning, hands-on activities, and personal growth.

Next Steps

We understand the meticulous planning that goes into organizing study abroad programs, and we are here to assist you every step of the way. Our team is dedicated to ensuring that your students have a seamless and enriching experience that will support their academic and personal goals.

If you would like more information or wish to discuss the details further (or expand your students' experience beyond three days) please feel free to reach out to us. We would be delighted to tailor the program to meet your students' curricular needs. Thank you for considering this unique opportunity for your students. We believe the time they spend with us at the ECC will broaden their academic horizons and inspire a life-changing commitment to conservation and global responsibility.



Sebastien DUFFILLOT

Founder, Elephant Conservation Center
Member IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group



STUDY ABROAD

IN LAOS, SOUTHEAST ASIA

PROGRAM & RATES **P6**

PROJECT STAFF **P10**

COURSE NAME: High School Student Experience

STUDENTS ELIGIBILITY: This programme is open to high school student groups, organised and accompanied by their school or institution.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: No prior experience in conservation is required. The programme is designed to suit a range of student backgrounds and learning levels. It is particularly valuable for students studying or interested in biology, environmental science, geography, animal care, or sustainability, and can be adapted to align with specific curricular goals.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: Participants should be comfortable spending time outdoors and engaging in light physical activity such as forest walks.

Students must be accompanied by adult supervisors or teachers throughout the programme.

The itinerary may involve close proximity to large animals (elephants), so a respectful and calm attitude is essential.

ACCOMMODATION: Dorm, Bungalow, Forest House, Deluxe Lodge

TOTAL CAPACITY: 40 students maximum



PROGRAM & RATES

3-DAY CURRICULUM & EXTENSIONS

Day	Time	Activity
Day 1		
	07:30	Pick-up in Luang Prabang and travel to ECC by minivan and boat
	10:30	Arrival at Nam Tien Lake and boat transfer to ECC
	11:00	Settle into accommodation
	11:30	Forest walk and introduction to ECC
	12:30	Laotian-style picnic lunch at the Nursery
	13:00	Observe mothers and calves in the Nursery
	14:30	Visit Elephant Hospital – talk with vet or biologist
	15:30	Elephant bath observation
	16:00	Group A: Plantation visit / Group B: Target training observation
	17:30	Free Time
	18:00	Conservation video and Q&A with ECC biologist
	19:00	Dinner (family-style Lao cuisine)
Day 2		
	07:30	Breakfast
	08:30	Meet elephants in the forest – observe foraging and social behaviours
	10:30	Elephant bath time
	11:00	Visit Socialisation Area – observe herd dynamics
	12:30	Lunch at the Center
	14:00	Afternoon elephant bath observation
	15:00	Group B: Plantation visit / Group A: Target training observation
	16:00	Free time / explore the Center
	18:30	Dinner at the restaurant
Day 3		
	07:30	Breakfast
	08:30	Trek to observe free-roaming male elephants
	11:00	Visit the Indoor Information Center
	11:30	Visit the Bamboo Forest and plant a tree or bamboo for elephants
	12:30	Lunch at the restaurant
	13:30	Departure by minivan to Luang Prabang
	~17:30	Arrival in Luang Prabang

ECORE RATES

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

2025 - 2026

FULL BOARD* - TRANSPORTATION** BY MINI VAN FROM AND TO LUANG PRABANG

		TEACHER(S)	1-20 STUDENTS	TEACHER(S)	21-30 STUDENTS
		BUNGALOW		BUNGALOW	
PACKAGE COSTS	Public Price	Price Teachers	Price Student	Price Teachers	Price Student
Three-Day Study Abroad Program					
3 days / 2 nights (3D/2N)	\$310	\$155	\$264	\$155	\$248
Extensions					
4 Days / 3 nights (4D/3N)	\$390	\$195	\$332	\$195	\$312
5 Days / 4 nights (5D/4N)	\$460	\$230	\$391	\$230	\$368

* Meals: Day 1: L, D. Last Day: B, L. Middle Days: B, L, D.

** For stays starting on Day X, guests must arrive in Luang Prabang on Day X-1 and board ECC minivan(s) on Day X at 07:30am



When you join our Study Abroad Program at the ECORE Center, you will:

- **Experience the peaceful and beautiful world of the Asian elephant—Asia’s most iconic species.**
- **Join our herd of 30 resident elephants in their natural habitat.**
- **Learn from our English-speaking elephant experts about the biology, welfare, and cultural importance of endangered Asian elephants and the challenges they face in the wild and in captivity.**
- **Develop a deep understanding of how a conservation center functions, and what life working in conservation entails.**

Note: Forest activities vary during the rainy season between May and September. In all months, visitors should be prepared to get dirty during their time in the forest.

Eligibility & Background

This programme is designed for organised groups of high school students and is tailored to suit their curriculum and level of experience. It offers a unique, immersive educational opportunity within a real conservation setting. This is not open to individual applicants.

Accommodation & Group Size

Accommodation is flexible to suit group preference and budget. Options include dormitories, lakeside bungalows, forest houses, or deluxe lodges. All options are located onsite at the Elephant Conservation Center and provide a comfortable stay immersed in nature. Groups of up to 40 students and accompanying teachers can be accommodated.

Overview

Designed specifically for high school student groups, this three-day experience offers an unforgettable opportunity to explore conservation science in action. Hosted at the Elephant Conservation Center—Laos’ only elephant sanctuary with a breeding and rewilding programme—students will engage in field-based learning, expert-led sessions, and real-world conservation challenges. Through close observation of elephant behaviour, ecology, and welfare, students develop critical thinking, teamwork, and environmental awareness, while gaining insight into the scientific, cultural, and ethical dimensions of wildlife conservation. Activities are tailored to suit varied learning levels and can be adapted to align with specific curricular goals.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Travel, Forest Walks & Elephant Encounters
The programme begins at 7:30am with pick-up by ECC minivan from Luang Prabang, followed by a scenic drive and boat transfer to the Elephant Conservation Center. After settling into their accommodation, students embark on a guided forest walk, passing by enclosures and project sites while learning about the different habitats elephants use.

Lunch is served picnic-style at the Nursery, where students can observe elephant mothers and calves in a peaceful,

forested area. In the afternoon, students visit the ECC’s Elephant Hospital, where they’ll receive an introduction to elephant healthcare from our vet technician or biologist.

Next, students observe elephants enjoying their daily bath—an important time for social bonding and comfort. The group then splits in two: one half visits the ECC’s food plantation, where fodder is grown for the elephants, while the other joins a target training observation session, where staff demonstrate how positive reinforcement is used for routine medical checks.

After a short break and free time by the lake, students gather for a group activity and conservation talk. They are invited to propose a solution to a real-world conservation challenge or begin drafting a simple research proposal. The day ends with a group dinner of traditional Lao cuisine, followed by games or time to relax.

Day 2: Forest Immersion, Socialisation & Proposal Work
After breakfast, students head into the forest to reunite with elephants who have spent the night in their natural habitat. They walk alongside them as they forage, bathe, and interact freely in the wild. Students learn to interpret behaviours and social cues with support from our guides.

Following this, students move to the Socialisation Area—an area designed to simulate a natural herd environment—where they observe complex social dynamics among the elephants. This experience offers rare insight into elephant psychology and group formation, often unseen in captivity.

After lunch at the Center, students observe an afternoon elephant bath, followed by the second round of either target training or plantation visit, depending on their group from Day 1. The day ends with further group work, where students refine their conservation proposals or presentations.

At 6:00pm, ECC’s biologist gives a talk about our research and monitoring work. Students are encouraged to ask questions and learn about how science underpins conservation in Laos. Dinner follows at the restaurant.

Day 3: Male Elephants, Bamboo Forest & Farewell

The final day begins with breakfast and a forest walk to observe free-roaming male elephants—a rare and unique experience, as most facilities do not work with males due to their challenging nature. ECC is the only centre in Laos with a dedicated male elephant socialisation programme, and students will gain insight into the complexities of their care and management.

Upon returning to the Center, students explore the Indoor Information Center, where displays explain elephant biology, ecology, and their cultural roles in Asia. Time is also spent in the Bamboo Forest, where students can engage in light gardening or handicrafts.

Lunch is served at the restaurant, followed by a short break before the return trip to Luang Prabang by minivan, with an expected arrival at approximately 5:30pm.

Day 4 + 5 - Extended Programmes Available

High school groups can request a 4-day or 5-day version of the Student Experience Programme. Additional days can be tailored to your curriculum, with custom educational and conservation-focused activities developed in collaboration with your school. Please enquire for more information or to request a customised itinerary.

The price includes

- Round-trip transfer from Luang Prabang to the Center
- English speaking team on site
- Set menu meals: Day 1 (L, D), Day 2 (B, L, D), Day 3 (B, L)
- Unlimited drinking water refill
- Accommodation: a wooden bungalow with communal wash facilities (hot shower)
- Activities as described

The price excludes

- Personal expenses (soft drinks, snacks, tips, etc.)
- Travel insurance
- Bank transfer fees
- Anything not mentioned in 'The price includes'

What to bring to the ECC?

- A cap
- A large refillable water bottle
- Long trousers and long shirts or a jacket to go to the forest (to avoid scratches and insect bites)
- Sunscreen
- A backpack to carry your belongings during activities
- Good quality trekking shoes (recommended)
- Rain jacket, especially during the rainy season (June to November)
- Mosquito repellent



FOR YOU...

PROJECT STAFF

...WITH YOU

Anabel López Pérez



Photo: © Kiko Peltier

HEAD OF EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Anabel joined the ECC at its inception and never left. Her enthusiasm and energy are contagious. She began by limiting interaction with elephants, then by establishing herding protocols that now form the backbone of our rewilding programme. A biologist with limited knowledge of Asian elephants when she arrived in Laos, Anabel's expertise has grown rapidly, and today she is a renowned Asian elephant behaviour expert contributing her work to several leading research institutes, including the Smithsonian Institution and the IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group.

In 2025, Anabel was awarded a PhD from Chiang Mai University, Thailand. Her groundbreaking research explored how different management approaches affect metabolism, stress, social structure, and reproduction in captive Asian elephants, offering valuable insights into welfare and conservation practices in both Laos and Thailand.

Anabel has a deep passion for elephants, and the ECC has become the sanctuary where she fully expresses this commitment—shaping elephant care and conservation in the region through science.

Elizabeth Thompson



ECORE PROGRAMME & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Originally from Sydney, Australia, Libby joined the Elephant Conservation Center in early 2024, bringing with her a strong background in communications, marketing, and wildlife work. Prior to arriving in Laos, she spent two years working with animals in Australia, where her passion for conservation, education and sustainability deepened. With a Bachelor of Advanced Study from Sydney University and over six years' experience in communications, she now leads the development and promotion of the ECORE Programme. Combining her skills in strategic outreach, partnership building, and academic collaboration, Libby works to strengthen conservation efforts, inspire future conservationists, and contribute to the long-term protection of Asian elephants.

Kan Thissamone



Photo: © Romain Willekens

VETERINARY TECHNICIAN

Kan was working with ElefantAsia NGO for several years as an assistant veterinary technician, boarding the organisation's Mobile Veterinary Clinics to provide first aid to elephants wounded on logging sites. He developed an intimate relationships with the country's mahouts while learning veterinary techniques with international veterinarians and staff from the Lao Department of Livestock. When the NGO's projects were eventually autonomised in 2012, Kan naturally proposed to join the Elephant Conservation Center and help with the design and operations of the country's first Elephant Hospital. Sparing no effort to improve the elephants' diet and health, Kan is supervising the supplementary food production unit, positive reinforcement and musth control protocols, mahouts' daily meetings as well as providing veterinary care to elephants in need at the ECC or outside of it. His skills, learned in the field, have earned him due respect from mahouts and the Asian elephant conservation community. His numerous contributions at various elephant care workshops throughout the region (India, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar) are always highly valued and have largely contributed to the excellent reputation of the Elephant Conservation Center abroad.

Anthony Philippe



Photo: © Philip J. Harris

SITE MANAGER

Anthony Philippe left France in 2014 for an eco-volunteer world tour, with his NGO "Around the Rock". During his 50.000 kilometers trip, he worked alongside wildlife conservationists from many walks of lives. In Kyrgyzstan, he participated in the counting of raptors, the fight against poaching and crossed paths with snow leopards. He crossed China and Tibet before arriving in Laos where he settled in 2015. Anthony first worked with "Free the Bears" before taking over the site management of the ECC.

As ECC's Site Manager, Anthony takes care of all aspects of human resources management, security and logistics necessary for the smooth running of the various operations at the ECC. Anthony is your contact on site and outside the Center when you need permits, administrative and logistics support. He runs our "Kids in Conservation" program with local schools in cooperation with the Department of Education of Sayaboury Province.



elephant conservation center

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