

ASIAN ELEPHANT BODY CONDITION INDEX
(Developed by Dr. V. Krishnamurthy, Dr. C. Wemmer, and John Lehnhardt)

Elephant's
Name/ID _____

Sex _____ Age _____ (Estimate _____ Known _____)

Date _____

Location _____

NOTE: Body condition is most easily assessed in direct overhead sunlight. Use parameters 1-6 to assess wild elephants, and all parameters (1-9) to assess domestic elephants where palpation of body parts is possible.

1. HEAD: TEMPORAL DEPRESSION (*view from several angles*)

_____ full and convex in outline when viewed from behind, frontal ridge vaguely outlined at best (2 points)

_____ slightly to moderately concave, frontal ridge defined (1 point)

_____ deeply concave, frontal ridge forms a crater-like rim around the temporal depression (0 points)

_____ *Number of points*

2. SCAPULA (SHOULDER BLADE) (*view from side*)

_____ spinous process not visible, or slightly visible when the leg is in certain positions (2 points)

_____ spinous process visible as a vertical ridge with a concavity between the ridge and the posterior edge of the scapula (1 point)

_____ spinous process pronounced and bladeline with the acromial process pronounced as a knot (0 points)

_____ *Number of points*

3. THORACIC REGION (*view from side*)

_____ ribs not visible, barrel smooth (2 points)

_____ some ribs visible, but the extent and demarcation not pronounced (1 point)

_____ many ribs strongly demarcated (even behind the scapula) with pronounced intercostal depressions (0 points)

_____ *Number of points*

4. FLANK AREA (IMMEDIATELY IN FRONT OF PELVIS) (*view from side and behind*)

_____ no depression visible, flank bulges outwards in front of the pelvis (1 point)

_____ depression visible as a sunken area immediately in front of the pelvis (0 point)

_____ *Number of points*

5. LUMBAR VERTEBRAE (BEHIND RIBS AND IN FRONT OF PELVIS) (view from behind; an elevated vantage point may be necessary)

- _____ not visible, lower back smooth and rounded (2 points)
- _____ visible as a ridge; skin slopes away from the top of the ridge; height of the vertebrae does not exceed width (1 point)
- _____ visible as a knife like blade; sides of the spinal ridge are parallel, and the height exceeds the width (0 points)
- _____ *Number of points*

6. PELVIC BONE (EXTERNAL ANGLE OF THE ILIUM) AND RUMP (view from several angles)

- _____ not visible (or slightly visible); rump region between ilium and caudal vertebrae filled with tissue (and not forming a depressed zone) (2 points)
- _____ visible but not pronounced; the rump is slightly depressed zone between the ilium and the caudal vertebrae (1 point)
- _____ visible but as a jutting bone; rump is a pronounced sunken zone between the ilium and the caudal vertebrae (0 points)
- _____ *Number of points*

Conduct the next three tactile assessments only when the elephant is under the direct control of the mahout

7. AXILLARY FAT (IMMEDIATELY BEHIND JOINT OF HUMERUS AND SCAPULA)

- _____ skin contains a thick handful of fat, can be easily seized (2 points)
- _____ skin contains some fat (1 point)
- _____ skin thin, little tissue palpable underneath (0 point)
- _____ *Number of points*

8. BRISKET FAT (BETWEEN FORELEGS AT BASE OF NECK)

- _____ sternum well padded with muscle and fat, bone neither visible nor palpable (2 points)
- _____ sternum not visible but palpable (1 point)
- _____ sternum both visible and palpable (0 point)
- _____ *Number of points*

9. TAIL

- _____ fat and muscular, not bony feeling (1 point)
- _____ thin and bony, feels stringy, individual joints palpable (0 points)
- _____ *Number of points*

_____ **Total number of points**

SCORE:

(0 – 5 = emaciated condition; 6 – 10 = average condition; 11+ = fat or very good condition)