



# 2024 Elephant Whisperers

A tribute to the elephant caretakers Bomman, Bellie and all other mahouts and cavadies, who dedicate their whole lives to care for and nurture our gentle giants - this calendar celebrates the Elephant Whisperers of TamilNadu Forest Department.



With the bristling history and cultural significance, the human-elephant relationship that flourishes in these lands can be traced back to as early as 1800s in modern history, when large areas of forest patches in the Anamalais and Mudumalai were cleared for timber extraction.

However, in recent times, The elephants at the camp are no longer used for timber extraction and there has been a paradigm shift in the departmental policies and practices of nurturing them. Today, the camp has evolved into a most indispensable, significant aspect in maintaining social and ecological harmony, especially when it comes to mitigating man-animal conflicts. Just how the elephants form the most integral part in fulfilling the above objectives, their caretakers, who also are ancient and native to this land, play a crucial role in maintaining the balance and harmony.

With the kind of progressive administration practices that are being implemented and the tools employed to maintain the elephants, the establishment hardly qualifies to be called a Captive Facility. The scope and purpose of its operation far exceed the captive norms and in all sense constitutes to be termed as a **Conservation, Rescue and Rehabilitation centre**.



# January



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11



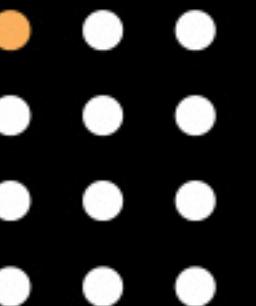
Ramu

*Mahout - Chandran*

Ramu is one of the senior tuskers in the camp, and is easily identifiable by his long, upward curving, divergent tusks. He was rescued from Kalikesam rubber division in Kanyakumari in 1978. He has a slightly nervous personality, and hence has not been actively participating in kumki operations.



# January



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
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**Anna**

*Mahout - M. Marigan*

One of the senior tuskers at the camp, Anna is also one of the largest, most formidable bulls here at Theppakadu. He was rescued, using 6 elephants from the camp, on 30-05-1971. Anna has retired from service and is no longer engaged in departmental works. Throughout his tenure, Anna has maintained cordial relationships with his mahouts and cavadies, and also bonded well with other elephants without causing tensions, which makes him a good team player when it came to departmental work.



# February

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10



Kaleem

*Mahout - Mani*

Rescued in 1972 from Karapallam area of Sathyamangalam Forests, Kaleem belongs to the last batch of elephants that were rescued for timber logging purposes, before captivity was made illegal by the Government of India. A well-mannered and disciplined tusker. His bond with former mahout (late) Palanisamy was an exemplar of elephant-mahout bonding.



# February

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29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10



## Mudumalai

*Mahout - T. M. Bomman*

On a monsoon evening, on 08-07-1967, two sub-adult males were seen fighting with each other on the banks of River Moyar. The next morning, elephant men heard distress sounds, and upon inspection, found one of the elephants pushed into a deep pit with injuries that ensued from the fight. The elephant was rescued and brought to the camp for nurture and rehabilitation and was named Mudumalai.



# March

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



## Kapil Dev

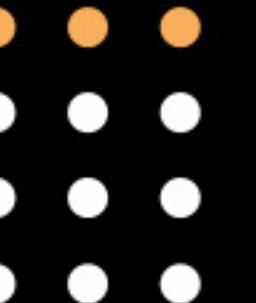
*Mahout - Jayachandran*

Kapil Dev was born to camp elephant Devaki, who is also mother to the celebrated twin Sujay-Vijay of Mudumalai Elephant Centre. He was sired by Sreedhar, a makhna, well known for his kumki skills. He was named Kapil Dev as he was born in 1983, when India won the International Cricket World Cup under the captaincy of veteran cricketer Kapil Dev.



March

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
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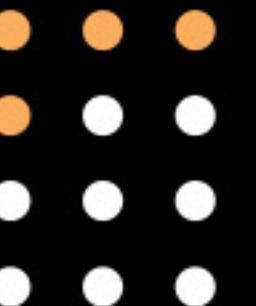
### Indra

*Mahout - M Kethan*

The fourth calf of Kamatchi, Indra was transferred to Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Chennai on 08-03-1999. She later returned to Theppakadu Elephant camp on 31-03-2007 as the department deemed it best to nurture the adult female back at the camp. Indra also happens to be the elder sister of Udhayan, one of the makhna at the camp, and younger sister to Kalyani who is presently at the Perur temple in Coimbatore.



April



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
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### Muthu

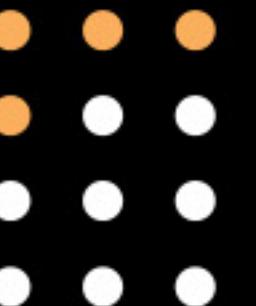
*Mahout - K Palaniswamy*

Known as Arisi Raja due to his rice-raiding practices, this tusker was rescued from Arthanaripalayam, Pollachi division of ATR, in November 2019. He was initially rescued from Coimbatore after he accidentally resulted in death of four people during a drive operation. He was then released in Anakundhi area, but continued to move back into human-use areas, resulting in conflict.





# April



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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
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**Waseem**

*Mahout - Easwaran*

Born as a second calf to camp elephant Bhama and a wild bull on 31-01-1978 here at Theppakadu, Waseem is one of the tallest and most charismatic bulls at the camp. One of the dominant kumkis, he has also starred in Tamil and Hindi films.

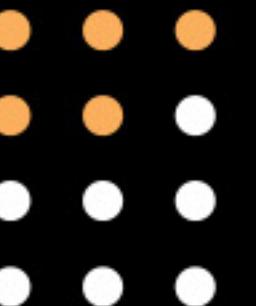
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Elephants  
Of  
Mudumalai  
&  
Anamalais

# May

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29		1	2	3	4	5
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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## Udhayan

*Mahout - Suresh*

Born to Camp elephant Kamatchi (as her fifth calf) and a wild Bull at Theppakadu Elephant Camp, Mudumalai on 24-11-1998, Udhayan is one of the two Makhnas (tuskless male elephant) at the centre. Udhayan has proven to be very useful in the rescue and treatment of injured and weak elephants in the wild. His bold nature has also enabled him to be employed in the capture of big cats that get into conflict.





May

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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## Surya

*Mahout - R. Kaliyappan*

Surya was rescued from the land of Biriyans, Ambur, in the year 1999. He is one of the last elephants to be rescued under the supervision of Elephant Doctor, Dr. V. Krishnamoorthy. He can be easily identified by inward curved tusk, that resembles the tooth of a sabre-toothed tiger. It was also this tusk that made his identification easy and devoid of errors during the capture operation.





June

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



Sanjeev

*Mahout - Murugan*

He was rescued with grievous injuries in his oral cavity from Karamadai area in Coimbatore region. He was given preliminary treatment, and attempts were made to rehabilitate him in the wild. That did not succeed well, and hence he was rescued and brought to elephant camp to be hand-raised. He is currently the youngest elephant in the camp.



# June

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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Vijay

*Mahout - Murugesan*

The twin brother of Sujay, born to the camp elephant Devaki, Vijay, like his brother is yet another formidable and reliable kumki that the department turn to, for rescue and drive operations. He has been deployed in multiple operations in Tamil Nadu as well as neighboring Kerala.

# July



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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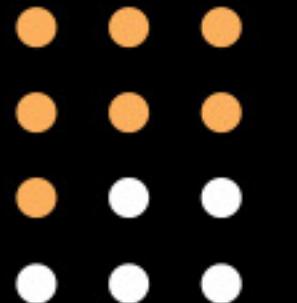
**Mariyappan**

*Mahout - Manikandan*

Mariyappan alias IG-II was born to camp elephants Sivakami and IG. After his preliminary training, he was sent to Samayapuram temple in Trichy. He was responsible for the death of two mahouts, following which he was sent back to the camp, where he has caused deaths, possibly owing to the trauma from being managed at the temple. He has a prolonged musth duration, and is extremely unpredictable during musth, not cooperating with mahouts and kavadis.



# July



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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Sujay**

*Mahout - Devaraj*

One of the native calves that were brought into the world at Theppakadu (on 25-05-1971), Sujay is the fifth calf born to camp elephant Devaki and a wild bull. He is the twin brother of Vijay, another tusker who's still in active service here at the camp. Sujay lost one of his tusks on that fateful day when he got into a bad fight with another wild bull. He was stationed at Saadivayal, to ward off crop raiders that had entered the suburbs of Coimbatore. His injuries were treated with immense care and expertise and are now completely healed. He is back in the field and performing well in operations again.



# August

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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Venkatesh

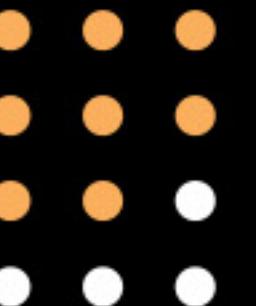
*Mahout - Makali*

Venkatesh was born to camp elephants Devaki and Pallavan in 1987, at Karunepallam range, when a camp was active in that region. He has a fearful personality, and is afraid of loud noises such as crackers. Hence was avoided for capture or drive operations.



# August

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
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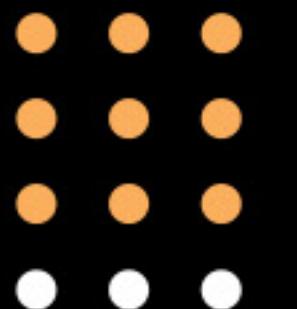
**Bhama**

*Mahout - Maran*

The oldest elephant here at Theppakadu, Bhama is one of the most characteristic elephant one will come across. Rescued from Thunakkadavu range of Parambikulam, on 01-08-1963, she was later transferred here to Mudumalai, where she gave birth to four calves namely Mahesh, Waseem, Rukku, and Bhairavi. She too has graced the screens of Tamil and Hindi films.



# September



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6

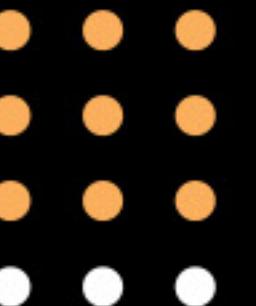
## Suyambu

*Mahout - Suresh*

This tusker is an example of why camps exist as rescue and rehabilitation centres. He was found in a debilitated state in 2008 near the Forest Rest House, Mangarai, with multiple wounds, making feeding and drinking extremely difficult. His survival chances were predicted to be extremely low, but due to prompt and proactive care by mahouts, veterinarians and officers, he was nursed back to life, and is one of the healthiest elephants in the camp today.



# September



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6



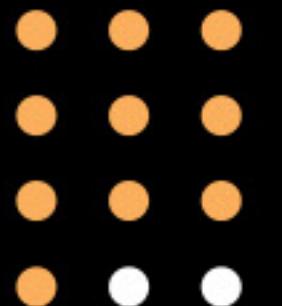
Bomman

*Mahout - Kethan*

Bomman is an interesting story of an unusual bond between camp elephant Rathi and a wild elephant. Bomman, when he was roaming free in the wild, formed an acquaintance with Rathi who was left to graze, and returned to camp with her. Despite efforts made to send him back into the forests, Bomman's bond with Rathi had grown strong, and proved very difficult to wean them off from each other.



# October



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
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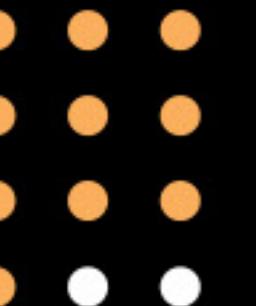


Chinnathambi  
*Mahout - Kaliyappan*

The name Chinnathambi was kept by locals in Thadagam region in Coimbatore, where he used to frequent human-use areas and croplands. The famed tusker was rescued in 2019 January from Thadagam and translocated to Anamalai Tiger Reserve, but continued to venture out of forests into human habitations and was eventually rescued from Kannadiputhur in Udumalpet in February 2019.



# October



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30	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Wilson

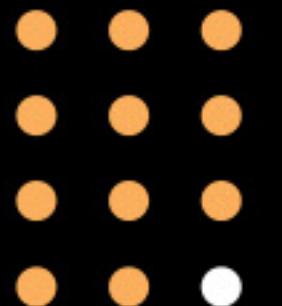
*Mahout - M. Mathappan*

Born to Camp Elephant Gowri (as her fifth calf) and a wild Bull at Theppakadu Elephant Camp, Mudumalai on 16-04-1988. Since birth, Wilson has remained nurtured at the camp. He is opined to possess a dominant character and doesn't easily submit to his mahout, making it tricky for his caretakers to exert dominance over him.



# November

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8



Devi

*Mahout - R Palaniswamy*

In 2013, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department conducted the famous “Operation Malai” during which six elephants that were part of a single herd were removed together from Thiruvannamalai, as a conflict mitigation strategy, and were sent to the rehabilitation camps. Three of them were sent to Mudumalai, and three came to Anamalai. Devi is the youngest of the three that came to Anamalai, and she is a healthy young female, entering her active reproductive age now.



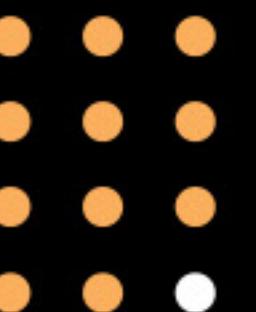
# November

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	1
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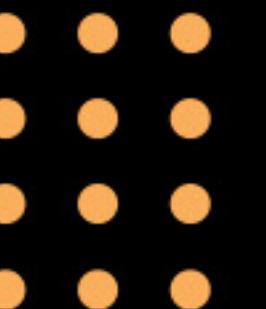
Raghu

*Mahout - B. Kalan*

Rescued as an orphaned calf from Thenkanikottai of Hosur Forest Division on 26-05-2017, Raghu came to Theppakadu camp at the age of just 3 months. He was rehabilitated with the help of caretakers Bomman and Bellie whose story was filmed under the title “The Elephant Whisperers” and won the prestigious Academy Award under the category of Documentary film in the year 2023.



# December



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5



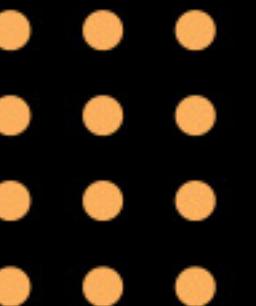
Durga

*Mahout - Manivel*

Durga is a camp-born elephant who was sent to Swamimalai temple to be used for religious purposes. There, her ill treatment by temple staff led to her non-cooperation thereby prompting the temple authorities to send her back to the camp. She is a healthy female, and is in her prime age, and is often courted by the camp males.



# December



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11



Bommi

Mahout - M. Ravi

Rescued as an orphaned calf from Sathyamangalam Forest Division on 26-09-2019, Bommi was 3 months old when she came to the camp. She was nurtured back to health and safety with the help of caretakers Bomman and Bellie. Bommi also starred in the film "The Elephant Whisperers" and is now under the compassionate supervision of her caretakers.

Dhanu Paran, Pravin Shanmughanandam  
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