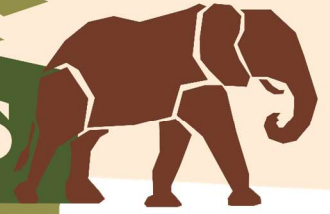


MONARTO
SAFARI
PARK



Asian Elephants

At Monarto Safari Park



Monarto Safari Park is home to a herd of five Asian Elephants, Burma, Permai, Tang Mo, Pak Boon, and Putra Mas. The founding herd was brought together through an ambitious project, which involved a huge fundraising campaign, incredible teamwork between zoological organisations, and intricate logistics to move the species not only across the country but from overseas. The project culminated in a ‘forever home’ in a new 12-hectare habitat that provides them with social opportunities if they choose – a major success for the conservation of the species and the welfare needs of these animals.

The Asian Elephant program supports:

- International conservation collaboration and population management
- Regional species advocacy and public awareness
- Public education and deep community connection with wildlife
- Tourism, visitation, and economic growth in South Australia
- Crucial advancements in specialised animal welfare and husbandry knowledge.

Monarto Safari Park's Asian Elephant program operates as part of the Zoo and Aquarium Association's (ZAA) regional Species Management Program, collaborating with leading zoological institutions across Australia and New Zealand.

The Asian Elephants at Monarto Safari Park are cared for by a dedicated elephant team and specialist veterinarians with extensive expertise in elephant husbandry, nutrition, positive-reinforcement training, and complex social integration.

Building a forever home for elephants

Monarto Safari Park welcomed its founding herd to the park during 2024 and 2025. These gentle giants are the first elephants to call Monarto Safari Park home in 30 years, following Samorn, who was relocated to the park from Adelaide Zoo in the early 1990s.



The ambitious project became reality following an extraordinary community fundraising campaign, bringing together five elephants from different zoos to provide them with social opportunities to be in the same vicinity as one another or to allow social bonds to form on a deeper level if they choose.

The complex relocation process saw Burma arrive from Auckland Zoo in late 2024, followed by Permai from Perth Zoo in January 2025. In May 2025, cows Pak Boon and Tang Mo arrived together from Taronga Zoo, and the founding herd was completed in November 2025 with the arrival of bull elephant, Putra Mas, from Perth Zoo. Together, they are embarking on a historic journey to form a founding herd.

Spanning a massive 12-hectare habitat, the elephant precinct is designed around animal agency, giving the elephants the freedom to choose how they spend their days across varied terrains, mud wallows, and waterholes. The precinct features two custom-built elephant barns equipped with heaters and varied resting substrates. This infrastructure allows the herd to self-select their environments, moving between warm, cool, wet, or dry zones.

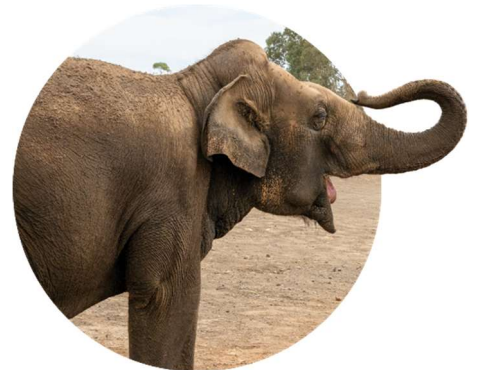
Meet the Herd

Burma

Female | **Born:** 1982, Myanmar | **Arrived from:** Auckland Zoo

Burma is a gentle giant who has matured into a lovely, calm, and deeply affectionate individual. She is the smallest of the female cows but possesses a distinctively long tail that reaches the ground.

She is a sweet-natured elephant, who openly expresses herself and often shows her playful side with her keepers.



Pak Boon

Female | **Born:** 1992, Taronga Zoo, Sydney | **Arrived from:** Taronga Zoo

Pak Boon whose name translates to 'morning glory flower', physically distinguished by her lovely round face and distinct pink ears, she carries a confident presence.

She has been very brave, determined, and adaptable, navigating life while being blind in her right eye. While she often holds her cards close to her chest, she also has a cheeky, playful side.



Tang Mo

Female | **Born:** 1999, Taronga Zoo, Sydney | **Arrived from:** Taronga Zoo

Tang Mo ('watermelon' in Thai) is highly intelligent, observant, and is eager to please her keepers. She is easily identifiable as the tallest cow in the herd, featuring long legs and a high forehead.

She has is developing a strong communicative connection with Permai, both girls are becoming quite "chatty" with one another and are often heard vocalising with different chirps, squeaks, rumbles, pops and trumpets.



Putra Mas

Male | **Born:** 1989, Malaysia | **Arrived from:** Perth Zoo

A remarkably intelligent and confident bull elephant, Putra Mas (meaning 'golden prince') has a proud, graceful demeanour. Weighing nearly five tonnes, he is highly expressive and motivated.

He has an extraordinary aptitude for learning and a dynamic presence. He enjoys using his impressive tusks to manage his food and exploring his habitat.



Permai

Female | **Born:** 1989, Malaysia | **Arrived from:** Perth Zoo

Permai is an expressive elephant, who wears her 'heart on her sleeve' and will show her keepers how she is feeling. An emotive elephant, she has taken time to adapt to her new surroundings and feel comfortable to interact with the other elephants.

She has built a beautiful bond with Tang Mo, with the two cows now relying on and supporting each other. They are becoming incredibly vocal together, and you can often hear them "chatting" back and forth.



Social integration and management

Bringing together four unrelated, mature female elephants to social opportunities was a huge and ambitious undertaking. In the wild, female elephants naturally live within a lifelong matriarchal family unit. Establishing new social bonds between mature elephants is an incredibly complex process, and building social cohesion can take time and requires patience and dedication. The keeping team take the lead from the elephants to allow trust to build naturally, and have been flexible, adapting to the evolving herd dynamics. Time and being comfortable in a settled environment will help build and strengthen the herds' connection.

While male elephants like their independence in the wild, they do come across other bulls or can be seen at times on the outskirts of female herds. Bulls cover large distances and thrive with extensive space. While Putra Mas has previously contributed valuable genetics to the regional breeding program, the current priority at Monarto Safari Park remains the immediate welfare, settling, and social connections of the founding five. Future breeding opportunities will be guided by the regional Species Management Program as the herd establishes its social cohesion.

Elephants possess highly advanced communication methods, which them to maintain social cohesion without needing to be in the same physical space. Through low-frequency infrasound, they can send social cues, locate herd members, or warn of danger across distances that can exceed 10 kilometres. This auditory communication is paired with an acute sense of smell for tracking long-distance scent signals, which they often combine with visual body gestures or physical trunk contact to interact deeply with one another.

Conservation impact

Asian Elephants are currently listed as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

The global wild population has declined by an estimated 50 per cent over the last three generations, with fewer than 52,000 individuals remaining.

The species faces severe threats from habitat loss, fragmentation, and escalating human-elephant conflict.

Global Asian Elephant conservation efforts involve:

- Habitat protection and creation of wildlife corridors
- Community education
- Regionally-coordinated population management and advocacy
- Scientific research into veterinary care and elephant health.

Zoos SA is proud to support our conservation partner, the Centre for Conservation and Research in Sri Lanka, which is working to protect elephants in the wild. Through scientific research, the CCR provides information necessary for better environmental conservation and management strategies, with a particular focus on mitigating human-elephant conflict.



Animal welfare and care

The welfare of the animals in our care is our highest priority at Zoos SA.

The expansive, custom-built 12-hectare elephant habitat at Monarto Safari Park has been purpose-designed across five distinct areas to support the herd's physical, psychological, and social needs.

This includes:

- Varied terrain and vegetation for natural foraging
- Expansive waterholes and mud wallows, essential for skin protection and play
- Two custom-built elephant barns equipped with heating and solar power
- Behavioural enrichment and specialised positive-reinforcement husbandry training
- Spaces designed to offer the elephants choice, autonomy, and flexible social configurations.

Funding and support

The Asian Elephant project was made possible through an ambitious public fundraising campaign alongside vital partnerships, philanthropic giving, and operational investment. More information about the public fundraising campaign can be found [here](#).

Zoos SA is responsible for the ongoing daily costs associated with the care, nutrition, habitat maintenance, and veterinary needs of the herd. The brand-new visitor precinct, which opened in 2026, serves as a powerful asset to drive tourism, visitation, education and conservation awareness.

Tourism and community impact

As Australia's largest safari destination, Monarto Safari Park provides a unique opportunity for visitors to connect with this incredible species.

Visitors can spot the elephants via the walking tracks, the Zu-loop bus or the recently-opened elephant platform.

The project contributes to:

- Regional tourism and interstate visitation to South Australia
- Immersive education regarding global habitat preservation
- Fostering a deep public connection to wildlife conservation.

About Zoos SA

Zoos SA is a not-for-profit conservation charity that exists to connect people with nature and save species from extinction. Since 1878, Zoos SA has long been established as a treasured part of the community, representing a significant part of South Australia's heritage and is one of the state's oldest conservation organisations.

Zoos SA operates Adelaide Zoo and Monarto Safari Park; each is a unique blend of conservation and zoological activities that encourage science-based conservation work, public recreation,

education, and tourism. Together they house a wide variety of spectacular wildlife in internationally renowned exhibits.

Monarto Safari Park spans more than 1,500 hectares and plays a vital role in international breeding and conservation programs, housing a both exotic and native species. Home to more than 50 species of exotic and native mammals, birds and reptiles, you can fit every major zoo in Australia inside the Park and still have land left over.

The park is located 60 minutes (70 kilometres) from South Australia's capital city Adelaide and is the gateway to the picturesque Murraylands region. Monarto Safari Park is home to many of Africa's most impressive animals including one of Australia's largest lion prides and giraffe herds.