

DETAILS OF TRANSLOCATED ELEPHANTS TRACKED WITH GPS COLLARS

Report by

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Introduction

Capturing Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) that are considered to cause human deaths and frequent damage to property, transporting them a long way and releasing them in a protected area has been undertaken as a human-elephant conflict mitigation measure for decades. The assumption behind capture-translocation is that when individuals are removed from the site where they cause problems and released in a remote location, that they will revert back to 'normal' behaviour and no longer cause problems.

Adult males are responsible for most incidents of human deaths and property damage. Capture-translocation of such males has been conducted for many years in Sri Lanka and the rest of elephant range. Since 2006, the Centre for Conservation and Research in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Conservation has been monitoring such translocated males through the use of GPS-satellite collars.

A research paper with discussion of the findings has been published in the peer-reviewed journal PLoS ONE and is freely available for download:

Fernando P, Leimgruber P, Prasad T & Pastorini J

Problem-elephant translocation: Translocating the problem and the elephant?

PLoS ONE 7 (2012) e50917

<<http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0050917>>

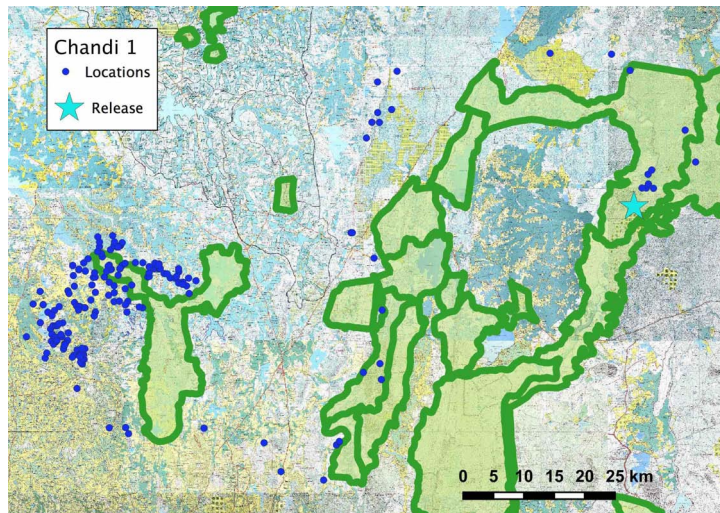
In this report we present maps and short descriptions of what happened with individual elephants when they were translocated.

Methods

From 2006 to 2017 we monitored 19 translocations of 15 elephant bulls with GPS collars. Four males were translocated twice. The collars collected GPS data on an 8-hourly (n = 7), 4-hourly (n = 11) or 1-hourly (n = 1) schedule. The GPS data was sorted in Microsoft Excel 14.7.1 and the maps were prepared in QGIS 3.4.7.

On average each elephant was tracked for 246 ± 258.1 days (range 34–1009 days). In total the 4673 tracking days provided 18,037 GPS locations.

Elephants released in National Parks (NP)

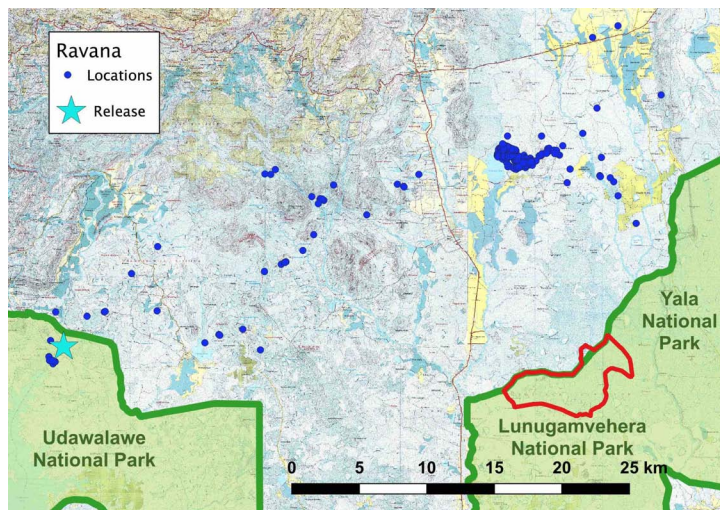


Chandi 1

Tracked period: 117 days
16.2.2009 – 12.6.2009

Capture: Galgamuwa
Release: Somawathiya NP

Left the park 6 days after release and went back to Galgamuwa in 30 days.

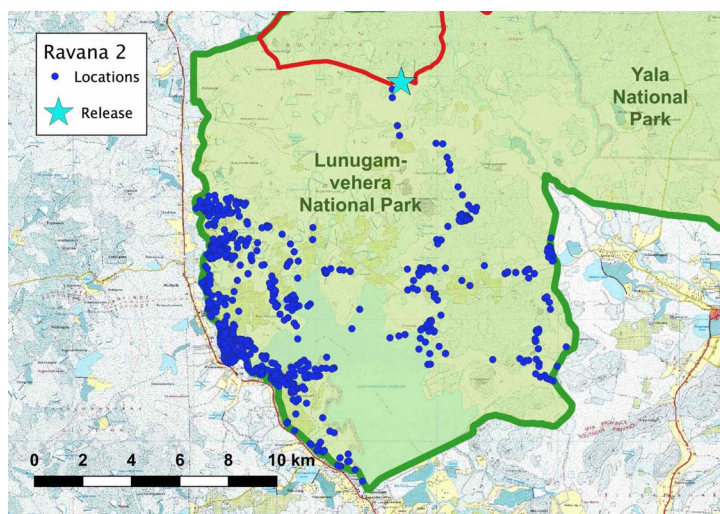


Ravana 1

Tracked period: 91 days
20.9.2007 – 20.12.2007

Capture: Anuradhapura
Release: Udawalawe NP

Ravana left the park after 2 days. He was captured again after 3 months as he created many incidents in Buttala town, injuring two people and being shot in the leg.

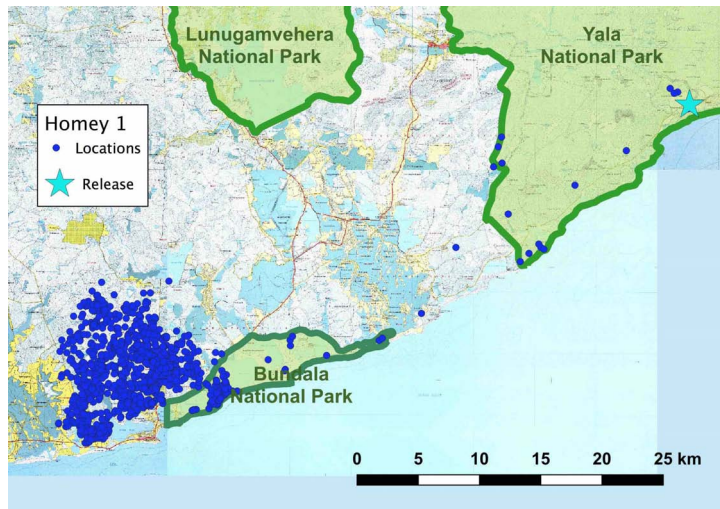


Ravana 2

Tracking period: 244 days
21.12.2007 – 20.8.2008

Capture: Buttala (after first release)
Release: Lunugamvehera NP

Ravana remained inside the NP. He was shot dead by cultivators inside the NP.



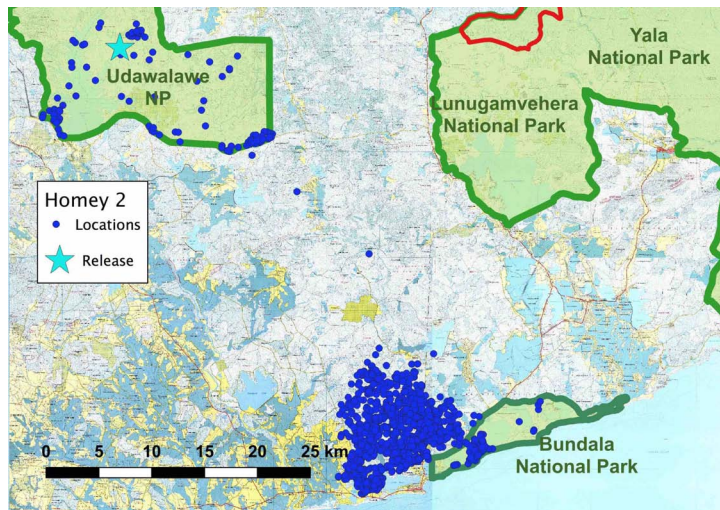
Homey 1

Tracked period: 214 days
19.3.2006 – 19.10.2006

Capture: Hambantota

Release: Yala NP

Left the park after 3 days
and went back to Ham-
bantota in 5 days.



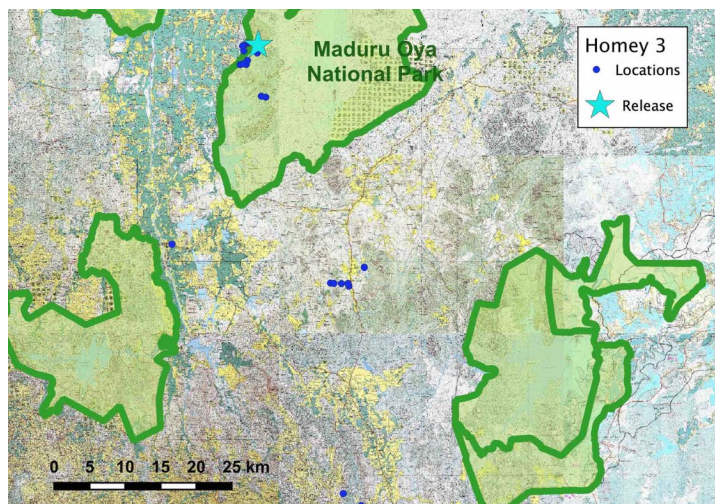
Homey 2

Tracked period: 284 days
23.10.2006 – 3.8.2007

Capture: Hambantota

Release: Udawalawe NP

Left the park after 39 days
and returned to Hamban-
tota after 41 days.



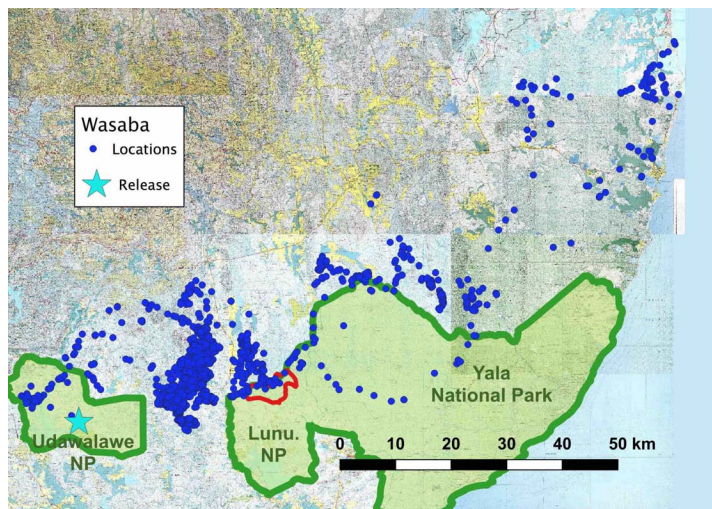
Homey 3

Tracked period: 17 days
6.8.2007 – 22.8.2007

Capture: Hambantota

Release: Maduru Oya NP

Homey left the park after 3
days and came 66.4 km
south after which he was
driven back north where
the collar stopped working.
Subsequently Homey was
known to raid surrounding
villages and was found
shot dead close to the park.
He was responsible for
injuring 2 people and the
deaths of 3 people after
translocation.

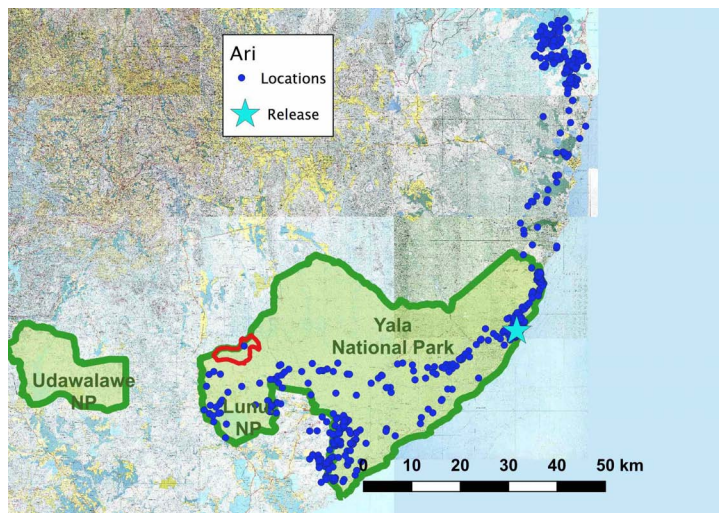


Wasaba

Tracked period: 585 days
1.7.2006 – 26.2.2008

Capture: Wasgomuwa
Release: Udawalawe NP

Wasaba left the park after 13 days. He walked over an area of over 2000 km², also crossing Yala NP, and finally settled outside any protected area.

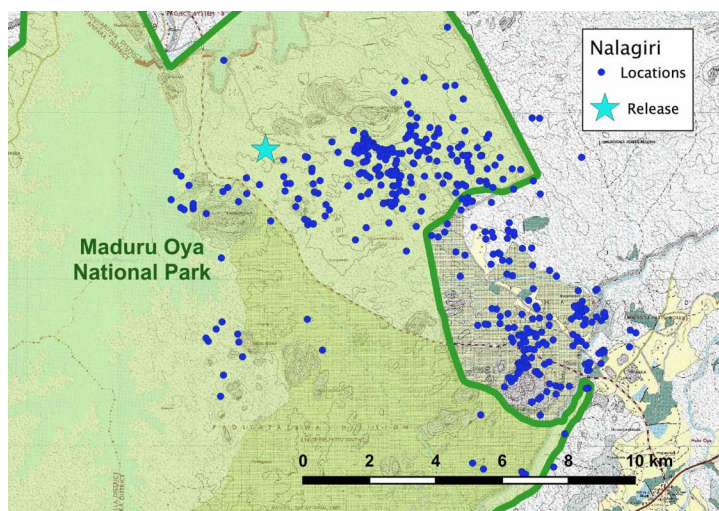


Ari

Tracked period: 226 days
18.5.2012 – 30.12.2012

Capture: Anuradhapura
Release: Yala NP

Ari left the park after 13 days. He went in and out several times and was last outside any protected area close to Pottuvil.

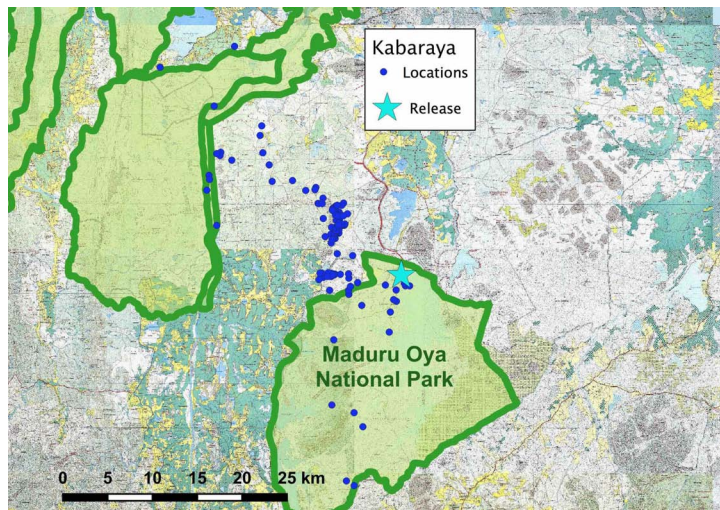


Nalagiri

Tracked period: 160 days
29.6.2009 – 6.12.2009

Capture: Puttalam
Release: Maduru Oya NP

Nalagiri left the park for the first time after 55 days, after that going in and out frequently. The collar stopped working in December. In January 2010 Nalagiri was found shot dead.

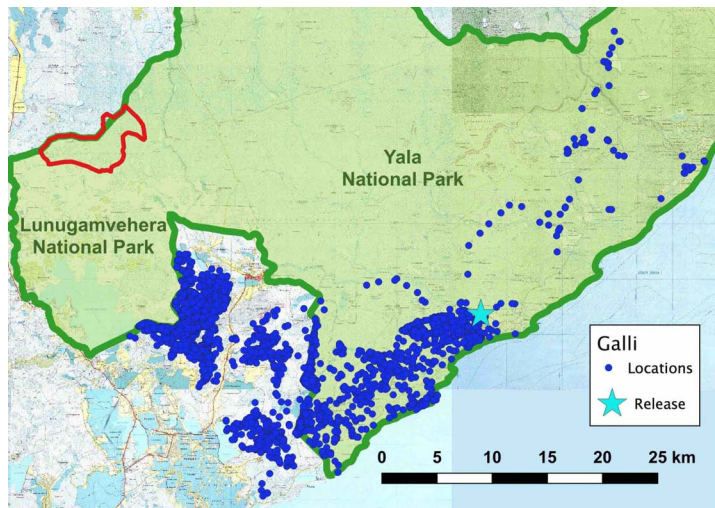


Kabaraya

Tracked period: 92 days
15.9.2010 – 16.12.2010

Capture: Anuradhapura
Release: Maduru Oya NP

Kabaraya left the park after 8 days. He spent most of the time outside protected areas. The collar stopped functioning due to a technical failure.

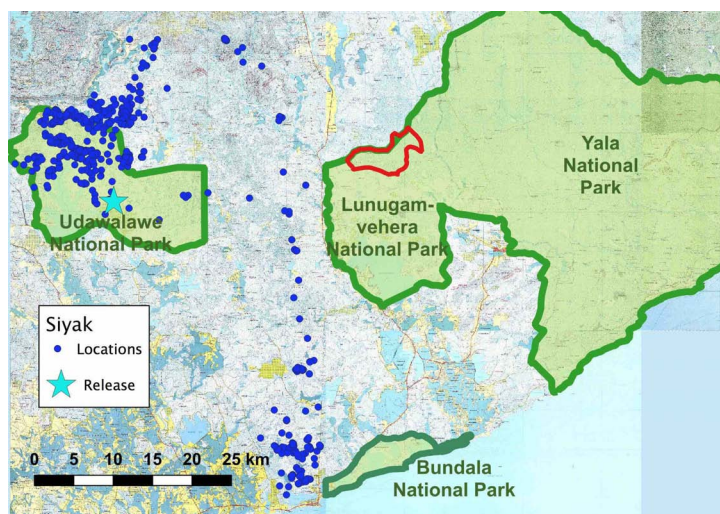


Galli

Tracked period: 739 days
10.9.2007 – 19.9.2009

Capture: Galgamuwa
Release: Yala NP

Galli left the park after 263 days. He settled outside in between the Yala and Lunugamvehera NPs.

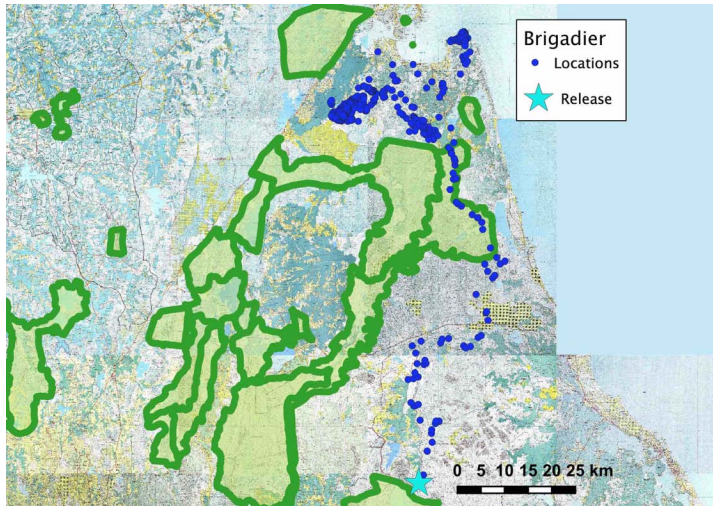


Siyak

Tracked period: 100 days
19.7.2007 – 26.10.2007

Capture: Northwest
Release: Udawalawe NP

Siyak left the park after 1 day. He walked in and out of Udawalawe NP several times, also once going down to Hambantota. Siyak may have been responsible for the death of one person after release.

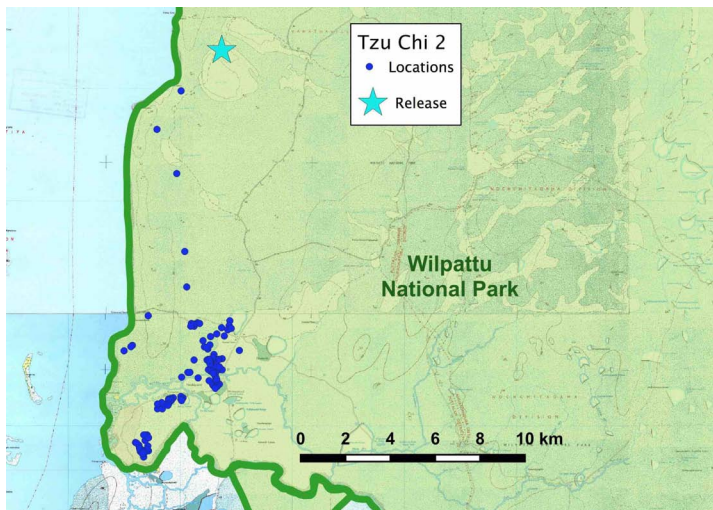


Brigadier

Tracked period: 178 days
30.4.2010 – 25.10.2010

Capture: Telehera
Release: Maduru Oya NP

Brigadier left the park after 1 day. He swam out to sea at Sampur, where he was rescued by the navy. He settled in Jayanthipura, where he caused conflict and died from falling into a well. He may have been responsible for the death of one person after release.



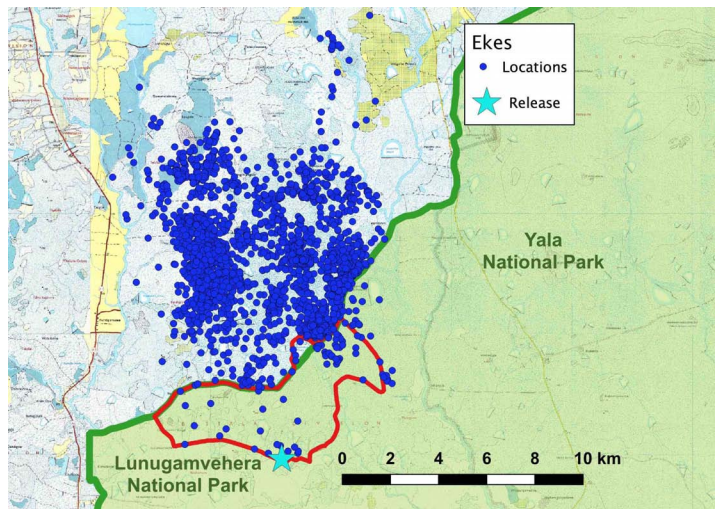
Tzu Chi 2

Tracking period: 55 days
23.6.2010 – 17.8.2010

Capture: Kataragama
(after the first release, see next page)
Release: Wilpattu NP

Tzu Chi remained inside the NP where he was shot dead after 55 days.

Elephants released to the Lunugamvehera Holding Ground

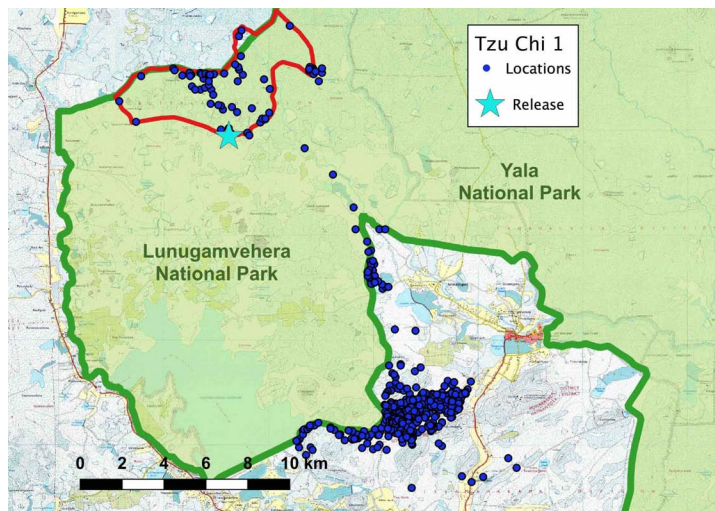


Ekes

Tracked period: 1009 days
12.1.2009 – 18.10.2011

Capture: Nimalawa
Release: Lunugamvehera
Holding Ground

Ekes left the holding ground after 1 day. Settled just north of the Lunugamvehera NP.

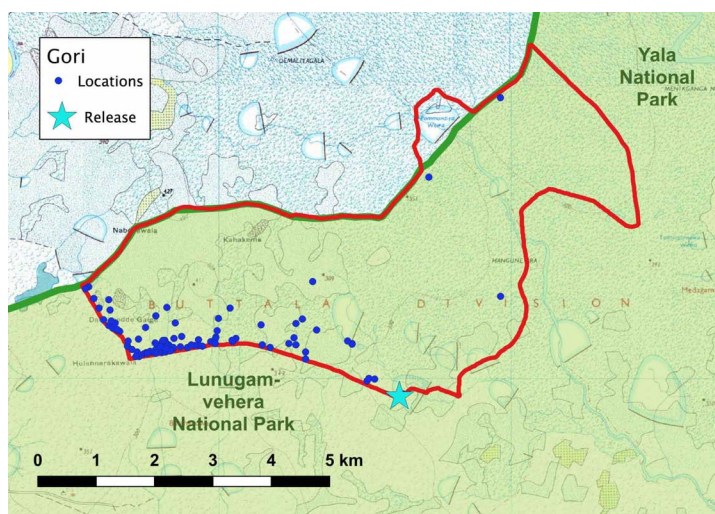


Tzu Chi 1

Tracked period: 279 days
15.9.2009 – 21.6.2010

Capture: Hambantota
Release: Lunugamvehera
Holding Ground

Tzu Chi left the holding ground after 44 days and the park 1 day later. Settled southeast of the Lunugamvehera NP.



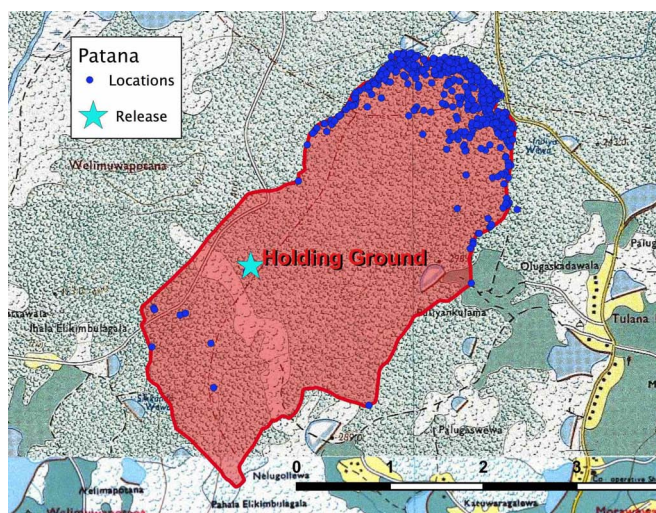
Gori

Tracking period: 34 days
3.11.2009 – 8.12.2009

Capture: Hambantota
Release: Lunugamvehera
Holding Ground

Gori remained in the holding ground for at least 34 days. His collar ran out of battery.

Elephants released to the Horowpotana Holding Ground

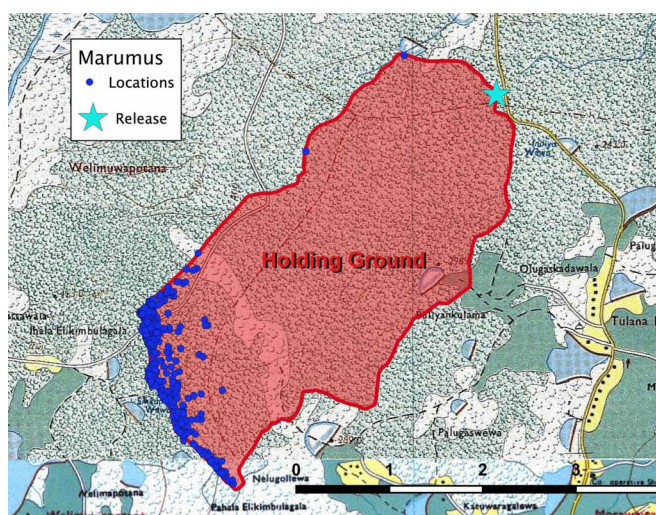


Patana

Tracked period: 107 days
26.11.2016 – 13.3.2017

Capture: Anurdhapura
Release: Holding Ground

Patana remained inside the holding ground during the tracking period. The collar fell off after 107 days.

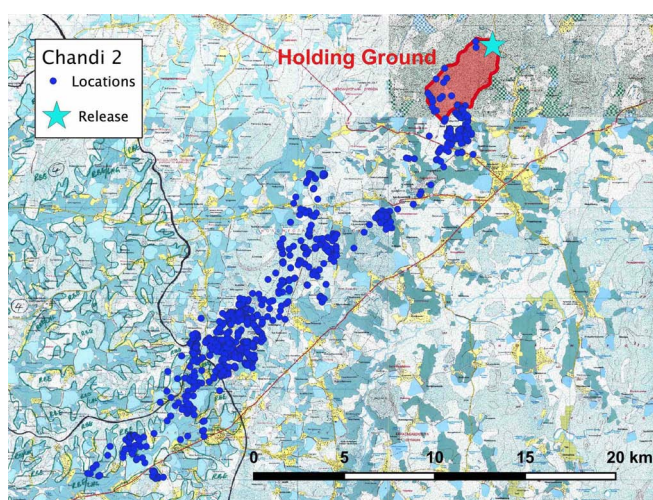


Marumus

Tracked period: 106 days
22.11.2017 – 8.3.2018

Capture: Ethiliwewa
Release: Holding Ground

Marumus was originally captured in Ethiliwewa (south) and released to the holding ground. He escaped and was recaptured in Kahatadasdigiliya and put back in the holding ground with a collar. Marumus died inside the holding ground after 15 weeks.



Chandi 2

Tracked period: 54 days
17.12.2017 – 9.2.2018

Capture: Galgamuwa
Release: Holding Ground

Previously in 2017 Chandi was translocated to the Horowpotana holding ground (not collared), escaped and came back to Galgamuwa. He was captured again after 4 months, collared and translocated to the holding ground. Chandi escaped after 3 days. He was heading towards Galgamuwa, when the collar failed. He reached Galgamuwa about 4 months later.

Impressions from translocations



Brigadier tied up



Nalagiri being collared



Getting ready to pull Silundu on the truck



Chandi being pulled onto the truck



Tzu Chi on his way



Ekes being released



Homey back "home" in Hambantota



Ravana shot dead after translocation