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To whom it may concern

I have been informed that a Whatsapp message has been forwarded by Ms. [REDACTED] (Mavinhalla) to the Collector, Nilgiris District, the Deputy Director, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and the SPCA Members with a paper attached (Gajah 44: 30-32 available online at the review's website) I had published with two co-authors in 2016. The Whatsapp message requested that an elephant named "Rivaldo" be "rehabilitated" to the Theppakadu Elephant Camp and my paper was supposed to inform on Rivaldo's condition.

I must first inform that I am a conservation biologist who collaborates among others with the Wildlife Institute of India. The paper mentioned in Gajah had a simple result: if Rivaldo is left alone and not fed by people, he goes back to the jungle. In other words, the elephant is no problem at all as long as people don't interact with it. Simple care should therefore be taken that people don't feed him and I am distressed to see that the paper was used contrary to its purpose – to avoid another capture.

"Rehabilitation" in an elephant camp is actually capturing a wild, sexually active, capable tusker. By coincidence I have seen Rivaldo on the 10th Sept. 2020. He had several injuries from which he had recovered years ago. He was not in the area for four-months during his musth and must have been roaming widely looking for females. He is in good shape, sufficient enough for him to survive maybe a few decades in his jungle environment.

Elephant populations are usually small. The Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve elephant population is the largest in the world but even then, it's genetic make up is threatened among others by global warming. Therefore it is unwise to remove bulls in general and if my opinion was solicited, I would definitely advise against removing Rivaldo for this reason.



Dr. Jean-Philippe Puyravaud