



## **HIPG, WNPS and DWC Unite to Transform Care for Orphaned Elephant Infants and Strengthen Human–Elephant Coexistence**

In a landmark step for wildlife conservation in Sri Lanka, the **Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG)**, the **Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS)**, and the **Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC)** have come together to introduce a pioneering nutritional intervention for orphaned elephant calves undergoing rewilding care.

For the first time in Sri Lanka, a specialised elephant infant formula milk will be imported from Australia to support orphaned calves—particularly infants below eight to ten months of age—who require nourishment equivalent to their mother’s milk during the most critical stage of development.

This initiative will directly support 25 orphaned baby elephants currently under foster care at the Elephant Transit Home (ETH) in Udawalawa, where calves rescued from the wild are rehabilitated and prepared for eventual release. While older calves can gradually transition to supplementary feeding, infants depend heavily on milk nutrition. Survival during these early months determines not just immediate health outcomes, but long-term viability in the wild.

Until now, Sri Lanka has not had access to a formula specifically designed to closely replicate the nutritional profile of elephant mother’s milk. The introduction of this specialised formula marks a significant advancement in veterinary care and rewilding success. By strengthening early-stage nutrition, the partnership aims to improve survival rates and ensure healthier development before reintegration into natural habitats.

This collaboration reflects a practical, science-led approach—combining conservation expertise, corporate support, and government stewardship to address a long-standing gap in orphaned elephant care.

### **Beyond the Transit Home: Building Coexistence**

The partnership extends well beyond the ETH.

Through its broader conservation mandate, HIPG continues to invest in initiatives that reduce Human–Elephant Conflict (HEC) while strengthening rural livelihoods. These include:

- **Farmer education programmes** focused on compassionate and practical conflict mitigation techniques.
- Training and support for **women farmers**, equipping them with knowledge and alternative income-generation skills that reduce dependency on high-risk agricultural practices.

## Press Release

- Community awareness initiatives designed to promote safe and sustainable coexistence between people and wildlife.

By addressing both wildlife rehabilitation and the socio-economic realities faced by affected communities, the initiative recognises that long-term conservation cannot succeed without community resilience.

### **A Foster Model Rooted in Responsibility**

The foster care sponsorship of 25 orphaned calves underscores a deeper commitment—not merely to rescue, but to responsible rewilding. Each calf receives structured care, veterinary oversight, monitored nutrition, and gradual social integration before release back into protected habitats.

The partnership between HIPG, WNPS, and DWC signals a maturing conservation model—one that prioritises science-based care for vulnerable wildlife while investing in community education and empowerment.

Human–Elephant Conflict remains one of Sri Lanka’s most pressing environmental challenges. Real progress requires collaboration, innovation, and sustained engagement.

This initiative demonstrates that when corporate leadership, conservation advocates, and state institutions align around a common purpose, meaningful and measurable impact becomes possible.

Because protecting Sri Lanka’s elephants begins at the very first stage of life—and coexistence begins with shared responsibility.

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