

Fact Sheet Lucy, the elephant at Edmonton Valley Zoo

Lucy's health

Lucy is a content and well-adjusted elephant with some manageable health issues.

Lucy has a respiratory problem due to an inflammation of membranes in her nasal region that compromises her ability to breathe properly.

At this time, the reason for the constrictions is unknown. Lucy's veterinarian Dr. Milton Ness, in consultation with a leading North American elephant veterinarian Dr. James Oosterhuis, has developed a plan to treat and clarify the cause of Lucy's breathing challenge.

Lucy's breathing issue is well managed at the Valley Zoo where she is calm and comfortable; however, a stressful move and relocation would be life-threatening given her breathing problems.

Lucy's other ailment is arthritis, developed several years ago. Lucy receives excellent care in managing this condition, including regular physiotherapy exercises and daily walks.

Lucy has some pad defects on her feet as a result of conformational defects -- Lucy was born pigeon toed and bowlegged. These issues put extra stress on her feet. Because of this, the elephant care team takes great care with Lucy's feet. They are checked and conditioned twice a day as a preventative measure.

In addition, the Valley Zoo is taking Dr. Oosterhuis' advice and increasing the sand covered area of Lucy's enclosure, further easing the stress on her feet.

The Zoo is also sourcing rubber matting for the large area of Lucy's enclosure to make it easier on her feet and joints while she plays and exercises.

Lucy's overall well-being

Lucy's veterinarian and other elephant specialists agree that Lucy needs to stay in Edmonton where she is comfortable, calm and well cared for.

Lucy is imprinted on people, meaning she gets her emotional support from people, not elephants. She has been at the Valley Zoo for 32 of her 34 years.

Lucy would miss her zoo family – the people who interact with her everyday – and her involvement with people if moved. This distress can affect her health and well-being.

“Stereotypic” behaviour

Some who do not know Lucy have said she demonstrates “stereotypic” behaviour, in other words, behaviour indicating she is lethargic or stressed. This is not correct. This misperception stems from zoo visitors seeing Lucy for only a snapshot in time. This behaviour is actually “anticipatory” behaviour. This means that Lucy will get excited and sway or stomp her feet when she is anticipating a favourite event or visitor.

Canadian Zoos and Aquariums Standards & Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) Regulations

The Edmonton Valley Zoo is accredited by the Canadian Zoos and Aquariums Association (CAZA). CAZA standards allow for keeping a single elephant in cases where it is justified. CAZA acknowledges that Lucy’s current breathing issue requires she stay at the Edmonton Valley Zoo.

Alberta’s Sustainable Resource Development department is responsible for granting zoo permits annually. They also acknowledge that Lucy’s unique circumstance requires that she stay at the Edmonton Valley Zoo.

The Edmonton Valley Zoo is a CAZA-accredited facility and holds a zoo permit from Alberta’s SRD department.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for the *Health of Animals Act*, which includes regulations for the humane transport of animals in Canada. CFIA recognizes that Lucy’s breathing issue makes it unsafe for her to travel and transporting her would contravene the *Health of Animals Act*.

For more information about Lucy, visit www.valleyzoo.ca/Lucy