

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0093-691X(17)30598-8

DOI: [10.1016/j.theriogenology.2017.12.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.theriogenology.2017.12.009)

Reference: THE 14379

To appear in: *Theriogenology*

Received Date: 1 December 2017

Accepted Date: 1 December 2017

Please cite this article as: Thitaram C, Brown JL, Monitoring and controlling ovarian activity in elephants, *Theriogenology* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.theriogenology.2017.12.009.

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1 Monitoring and controlling ovarian activity in elephants

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12 **Abstract**

13 Both Asian (*Elephas maximus*) and African (*Loxodonta africana*) elephants are important
14 keystone, umbrella and flagship species. Paradoxically, world population numbers of both
15 species are declining in many of their natural ranges due mainly to poaching, while over
16 population of elephants in some areas is resulting in serious human-elephant conflict, and
17 modifications of natural habitats that impact biodiversity. Understanding mechanisms of
18 reproductive control is vital to effective population management, and for that reason significant
19 advances have been made in endocrine and ultrasonographic monitoring techniques, particularly
20 in studies of elephants *ex situ*. However, there remains a need to develop new methods to control
21 ovarian activity, both for enhancing and inhibiting reproduction, to maintain population numbers
22 at levels that ensure species survival and their ability to safely cohabitate with humans and other
23 species. We present an overview of reproductive monitoring methods and how they have

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