**For Immediate Release** September 27, 2007

# Edmonton Valley Zoo in Violation of Provincial Legislation Ailing Elephant Left in Isolation

Yesterday, the Valley Zoo sent Samantha to a US zoo on a minimum 5 year breeding loan. The move has left Lucy, a wild-caught Asian elephant alone at the Valley Zoo. This leaves Lucy to languish alone, contrary to accredited zoo standards and Alberta's own Zoo Regulations.

Today Zoocheck Canada filed complaints with The Alberta SPCA, The Edmonton Humane Society, Alberta Fish and Wildlife, City of Edmonton's Mayor and Council and the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums for their cruel treatment to Lucy and violation of the law.

The *General Exhibit Standards* within the *Government of Alberta Standards for Zoos* requires that **"All animals must be maintained in numbers sufficient to meet their social and behavioural needs**".

Julie Woodyer, Campaign Director for Zoocheck Canada has reported that "It is well known that elephants are highly social animals, particularly females, and thereby suffer when kept in an environment without contact with other elephants. Human caregivers cannot compensate for the lack of same-species companionship. For this reason, zoo associations world-wide advise that elephants should never be housed alone. Leaving Lucy without same species companionship is a clear violation of Alberta's zoo standards."

- The Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the US Association of Zoos and Aquariums both note in their standards that *"**It is inappropriate to keep highly social female elephants singly**"*;
- The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums standards indicate that "**Elephants are social animals and should not be kept alone**" and;
- The Best Practices by the Coalition of Captive Elephant Well-Being, 2005 requires that "**Asian elephants shall be held in groups no smaller than 5 adults**".

In addition to the violation of Provincial law, the zoo is in violation of The Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) mandatory standards that state that: "A member shall not knowingly engage in activities contrary to local, provincial, federal or international laws, as such laws relate to our profession; and a member will, to the best of his or her ability, cooperate with governmental agencies regulating animal welfare and animal transactions."

The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, a 2700 acre specialized elephant facility, has already agreed to allow Lucy to come down and join their group of Asian elephants. The sanctuary has offered to pay for the move and so there would be no cost to the Valley Zoo or the taxpayers. Lucy is listed as a non Species Survival Plan (SSP) population animal, meaning that other zoos will not be requesting Lucy for their breeding programs leaving the zoo in a position to move Lucy immediately.

Tove Reece, spokesperson for Voice for Animals said today, "We are calling on the City Council to take immediate action to bring the zoo into compliance with the provincial laws by sending Lucy to the Elephant Sanctuary as soon as possible"

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