

D-30 Endoparasites in faecal matter of the Sri Lankan elephant (*Elephas maximus maximus*)

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A survey of endoparasites present in the Sri Lankan elephant was carried out from February to June 1996. Fresh faecal samples of 86 elephants from the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, Dehiwela Zoological Gardens and domesticated elephants owned by private individuals were examined.

The faecal samples were examined by direct and concentration methods. The direct smear revealed the presence of a protozoan parasite - *Balantidium coli*. The sodium chloride flotation method revealed the presence of ova, which were initially classified as Strongyle ova. The Formol detergent sedimentation method indicated the absence of Trematode ova. Faecal samples from elephants at Pinnawala and Dehiwela were examined after administering anthelmintic treatment. The worms then expelled were identified as *Murshidia murshdia*. This enabled the Strongyle ova to be further classified as ova of *Murshidia murshdia*.

The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between the age group of the elephants and the prevalence of infection, the juvenile and infant elephants being more susceptible. No such relationship was evident with regard to the sex of the elephants. The prevalence of Strongyle and *Balantidium coli* infections was highest at Pinnawala. 81.8% of the elephants being infected, 52.2% of the domesticated elephants showed Strongyle infections, while a very low prevalence was shown at the Dehiwela Zoo. Prevalence of *Balantidium coli* infections was lowest in domesticated elephants. The intensities of infections were high in domesticated elephants and elephants at Pinnawala, and very low in elephants at the Dehiwela Zoo.
