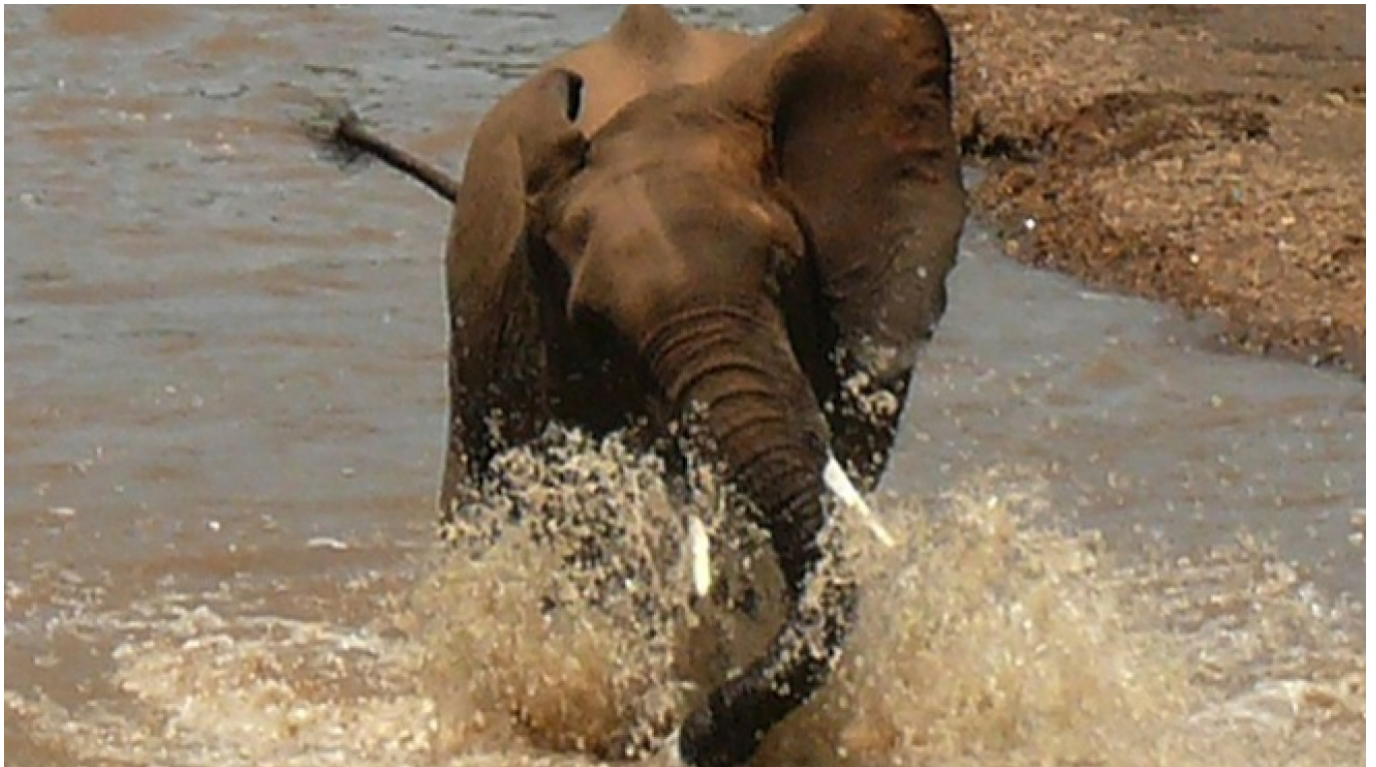


Thai Elephant Charges Through Jungle With Russian Tourists on Back

November 17, 2014



An elephant being ridden by two Russian tourists suddenly killed its handler.

Two Russian tourists in Phuket endured a terrifying ordeal after picking the wrong elephant to ride for a nice excursion through the jungle on Monday.

Meaw, an 18-year-old elephant, “trampled his handler to death and stormed into the jungle” with the pair of tourists on his back the whole time, the Phuket Gazette reported.

The elephant's nearly two-mile rampage through the jungle — with a Russian mother and her daughter — was only stopped with the help of tranquilizer darts.

“Officers shot him twice with the tranquilizer gun. It took about 30 minutes for Meaw to become dizzy,” the report said, quoting a police captain.

Waraporn Kasetkala, the manager of Phuwara Tour, which organized the trek, told the publication that Meaw's behavior was likely due to increased testosterone in connection with the animal's mating period.

“He is normally playful and kind. This is why we believe he must have been in musth,” Kasetkala said. Musth refers to “a period of heightened sexual excitement in bull elephants,” Phuket Gazette reported.

Meaw “will be kept under observation and will not go on any treks until we know that it is safe for him to be around tourists,” Kasetkala said.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/11/17/thai-elephant-charges-through-jungle-with-russian-tourists-on-back-a41419>