



The University of Hong Kong
School of Biological Sciences

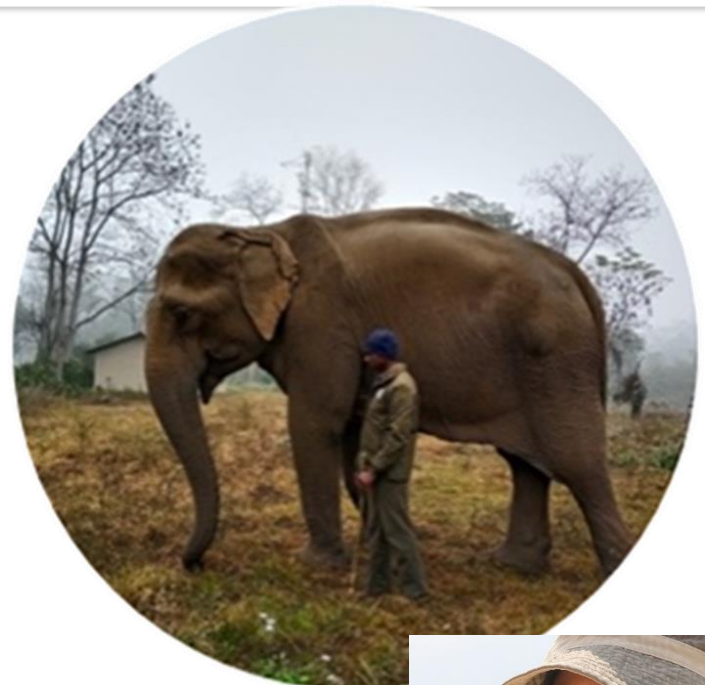
**Qualifying
Seminar**

Role of Behaviour, Temperament, & Perception in Captive-Elephant- Handler Interactions (*Elephas maximus*)

Date: 23rd May 2022 (Monday)

Time: 10:30 am

Venue: Zoom



About the speaker:

Sagarika Phalke is a PhD student at the Applied Behavioural Ecology and Conservation lab (ABEC) supervised by Hannah Mumby and David Baker. The focus of her research is on human-elephant interactions and the factors that influence them.



Abstract:

Research on elephants has shown that they live in multitiered kinship societies, exhibit individual traits or personalities, have complex emotional lives, and show high cognitive abilities. My PhD uses the opportunity created by the close interactions of humans and elephants in captivity to investigate cognitive bias, personality and inter-species communication.

I will present my initial results on a communication task, in which I explored responses by elephants to their handlers. I will also present my latest fieldwork and data collection from my subsequent chapters that use novel methods to adapt tests used in other taxa to investigate cognitive bias, personality and behaviour. The results of my PhD research will contribute to the fundamental understanding of animal behaviour in a highly social and encephalised species, as well as having an impact through applications to captive elephant management and welfare.