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Ban the Ivory Campaign

Elephant Editors

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Wilson, Dinah L. (Sacramento Zoo): Is interested in any studies dealing with breeding behavior, mother/infant relationships, and training.

Wylie, Kenneth C.: Is interested in any data relating to the numbers of elephants still found in specific regions (to be compared with earlier populations).

AVAILABLE

Van Gelder, Richard G.: The Department of Mammalogy at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, has a large collection of elephants' skins and skeletons which are available for studies. The skeletal collection has recently been relocated and reorganized. Researchers are encouraged to make use of this material.

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE UPCOMING MEETING OF THE EIG

This meeting will be held during the 58th Annual Meeting of the ASA, Athens, Georgia, June 13-17, 1977. For exact date, time and place, please look for a notice to be posted or listen for an announcement to be made.

- I. Movie: "The African Elephant". This movie was originally scheduled for the EIG meeting but then arrangements were made to show it to all members of the ASM. It is a regular, commercial movie, 35mm., with sound and is one-and-one-half hours long. Most of the movie (about 2/3) is on elephants and the rest is about African wildlife in general.
- II. Latest news.
- III. Elephant symposium: This symposium is scheduled to take place during the 59th Annual Meeting of the ASM, in Corvallis, Oregon.* See Erratum later in this issue.
- IV. Slides or movie(s) members wish to show: Please bring with you any items regarding elephants you wish to share at the end of the meeting.
- V. Miscellaneous.

* A telephone conversation and a subsequent letter (April 13, 1978) from B. J. Verts, the Chairman of the Local Committee at Corvallis, Oregon, confirmed that "...there is a strong likelihood of the (Elephant) symposium being a part of the 59th ASM meeting."

BAN THE IVORY CAMPAIGN

As of this writing, the plight of the African elephant is being discussed and debated at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The final decision was just made. Various articles have been published dealing with the urgent need "to do something" in order to save the elephants (see references in the Bibliography). By this time, most of our readers are probably aware of the course of developments regarding the plight of the African elephant and the actions taken for its preservation. However, for the sake

of organization and as a point of reference, the editor finds it helpful to outline the major events leading to the present situation.

- I. ? - 1970's: Both Asian and African elephant population decline.
- II. The Asian elephant is listed as an Endangered Species in Appendix I of the 1973 Endangered Species Act. The same Act also implemented the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that was signed in March of 1973 in Washington, D.C.
- III. 1970 - Present: African elephant numbers continue to decline, but more rapidly.
- IV. June 14, 1976: The state of California has banned the importation of all elephant ivory by adding the elephant to the state's list of endangered species.
- V. Various conservation groups contribute input of data and support.
- VI. November 15, 1977: Anthony C. Beilenson, a congressman from California introduced a Bill (H.R. 10083) in the House of Representatives calling for a ban on all import of ivory into the United States (see below).
- VII. Conservation groups continue their input including testimony before the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Key evidence was given by Iain Douglas-Hamilton.
- VIII. January 16, 1978: The Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service has proposed to list the African elephant as a "threatened species". The proposal offers four options as follows: (1) A ban on imports except for research or breeding. (2) Permitting import of ivory and other elephant products only from countries that have ratified the CITES. (3) Permitting imports only from countries that can provide satisfactory evidence that they have adequate conservation programs for elephants. (4) Allowing imports from "middleman" countries (such as Hong Kong and Japan) only if they can demonstrate that their supplier countries meet the criteria of either Option (1) or (2) above.
- IX. May 12, 1978: The Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service has declared the AFRICAN ELEPHANT as a THREATENED SPECIES, adopting a modified version of Option (2) above. This Final Federal Rule will permit import of ivory and other elephant products into the United States only from nations that are parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. At the present there are 34 countries that are parties to the CITES. Only 7 of these 34 countries have wild elephant population. This Final Rule is published in the Federal Register, Vol. 43, No. 93, page 20499; it will be effective June 11, 1978.

The above information (IX,) was provided over the telephone by Gail Osherenko (Anthony Beilenson's Office), on May 15, 1978.

The following are selected comparative statistics reflecting the plight of elephants in their natural habitats. Numbers are close approximations:

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Kenya (all)	150-167,000	65-75,000	99
Uganda			
Kabalega Natl. Park	14,309	2,400	357,133
Ruwenzori Natl. Park	2,731	700	357,133
Rwanda			
Around Karisoke Research Center (1969)	125	10	T.V. Documentary*
Sri Lanka			
Gal Oya Natl. Park	100	91	299,160

* "Wild Kingdom", Channel 4 (NBC), February 28, 1978

There are 38 countries in Africa where elephants are known to exist. In about half of these countries the population trend is described as "decreasing" (See data by Douglas-Hamilton in this issue). Decimation of elephant population seems to be localized, i.e., their number is decreasing in some parts of Africa while elsewhere they are stable, abundant or even overcrowded because of constricting range. It has been estimated that in Kenya elephants are being reduced at the rate of between 10,000 and 20,000 each year (reference 133). Other comparative data on recent wild elephant population was not available as of this printing.

Estimates of the size of the ivory trade are based on sketchy information, but nevertheless they give an idea of the numbers of elephants involved. For example, in 1976 about 1,000 metric tons (2,204,000 pounds) of ivory were traded. About half of this went to Hong Kong, one third to Japan, over 100 tons to China, and 35 tons to the USA. If we use a low estimate of 18 pounds as an average weight of a tusk, then this 1,000 tons of ivory trade would represent 61,000 elephants (reference 375).

H.R. 10083 is a Bill that was introduced at the 95th Congress, 1st Session, by Anthony C. Beilenson, in the House of Representatives, on November 15, 1977, to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. A copy of this Bill was sent to the editor from Beilenson's Office (reference 356). The Bill is a 15 page document containing eight sections. "The purpose of the Bill (Elephant Protection Act) is to insure the continued existence of large and healthy populations of all species of elephants and, to this end to (1) eliminate the role of the United States in creating the world demand for elephant products, including but not limited to ivory, and (2) encourage other nations to join in a ban on a trade in such products." The Bill also includes Congressional Findings and Policy, Prohibited Acts, Administration by Secretary of the Interior, Civil Penalties (\$5,000-\$20,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both), Rewards (not to exceed \$2,500), Enforcement, Preemption, and Definitions.

The editor finds it necessary to emphasize that the large number of elephants and the overcrowded population pictured by the optimists' estimates should not delude us; caution and careful measurements as well as proper management must be undertaken in order to insure the elephant's survival for future generations. In this context, I would like to quote Iain Douglas-Hamilton from a recent article in *Africana* (reference 2). "...I must stress that high numbers in themselves are no more protection for elephants than they were for the passenger pigeon or the American buffalo." This quotation was part of the evidence presented by Douglas-Hamilton before the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee in Washington, D.C.

here in Detroit, the elephant issue is kept alive as much as we can. Several articles were written in local newspapers, radio interviews were given, and a display case was arranged in the Biology Science Hall on the Wayne State University campus. In the "South End", our campus paper, a short article (actually an excerpt from the newsletter) on elephants appears weekly in the section entitled "Potpourri".

Readers who wish to voice their opinion on any points of the above issue, are welcome to do so by writing to:

Keith M. Schreiner
Associate Director - Federal Assistance
Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240
telephone: 202-343-4646

Please send a copy of the letter to: Craig Van Note*
"Monitor"
1522 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20036 USA

*Craig Van Note is vice president of a consortium of U.S. conservation agencies.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES

KNOWN ELEPHANT NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA

by Iain Douglas-Hamilton

