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Captive Elephant Population

Elephant Editors

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The book will generally survey the ivory trade throughout history, with attention to prehistory as well. Introductory material will include: the long-term associations between human beings and elephants (hunting for food and ivory, domestication for haulage, war, entertainment, etc), a comprehensive survey of the extermination of elephants in several regions such as North Africa and West Asia, the state of knowledge about elephants and how it has waxed and waned, and some careful comments on our evolutionary heritage. A consistent theme will be the exact economic circumstances that have encouraged the ivory trade -- especially in Africa -- and the nature of the correlations between the ivory trade and the violence that has usually accompanied it. The practical and esthetic uses of ivory and the nature of the various ivory markets will also be covered. Finally the book will summarize the current crisis, the legal and illegal trade, poaching, and the controversies regarding what must be done.

CAPTIVE ELEPHANT POPULATION

I. IN NORTH AMERICA

Following last year's information on captive elephants of North America and the interest this has generated, it was decided to include this kind of data whenever it became available.

The table below summarizes the information compiled from the computer printout as provided by the International Species Inventory System (ISIS).

| | <u>At zoos within the U.S.A.</u> | <u>At zoos within Canada</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| African elephant | 85 | 11 | 96 |
| Asian elephant | 115 | 4 | 119 |
| Total | 200 | 15 | 215 |

All in all, 215 elephants were held in ninety-six institutions (excluding circuses) in North America as of December 31, 1977. Most of these elephants are relatively young, between 20-30 years old or younger. Of the 215, 193 animals were females and 22 were males; 130 were wild-born and 14 captive-born. The place of birth of the remaining elephants was not given. Incidentally, in "Elephant Newsletter No. 1", there was an error in the number of institutions holding the 191 elephants as of December 31, 1976. The figure of 112 is of all the participating institutions submitting data to the ISIS, of these, only 38 zoos did hold elephants.

A letter sent to the editor by Toby Styles on September 14, 1977, indicated that in Canada there were 10 Asian elephants in six collections and 17 African elephants in three collections. Assuming that part of these elephants and the collections were already included in the ISIS, then, Toby Styles' figures bring the total number of captive zoo elephants in North America to 227 elephants held in one hundred and one institutions.

Information on circus elephants was sent to the editor on April 3, 1978, by Richard J. Reynolds, who wrote: "I feel strongly that the captive elephant population of North America should include the circus elephants, as their numbers are substantially greater than those in zoos." All together there are 270 elephants held in sixty-nine

circuses and private collections. These numbers were compiled by the editor from three issues of "The Circus Report" (references 369-371) sent by Reynolds. These plus the figures given above, bring the total elephant population in North America to:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Elephants held in zoos as given by the ISIS | 215 |
| Elephants held in Canada as given by Toby Styles | 12 |
| Elephants held in circuses and private collections as taken from three issues of "The Circus Report" | <u>270</u> |
| Total (held in one hundred and seventy institutions, as of January 30, 1978) | 497 |

II. ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

Several members have written requesting information about captive elephants held in European zoos. Complete up-to-date information from Europe is not available at the present. Below is the data from two European zoos; this information was included in the same ISIS computer printout for the North American zoos.

Stichting Koninklijke Rotterdamse Dier./Rotterdam/S, Holland/Netherland
5 specimens (1/4); 2 are 10 years old and 3 are 20 years old or more.

Kobenhavns Zoologiske Have/Copenhagen/Denmark
5 specimens (1/4); 2 are 10 years old or less and 3 are 20 years old or more.

All 10 animals are Elephas maximus.

For further information about the ISIS write to:

Janice M. Olsen
System Manager, ISIS
Minnesota Zoological Garden
12101 John Cake Ridge Road
Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124 USA

Other information regarding captive elephants was sent to the editor on April 9, 1978, by Marvine L. Jones in an unpublished typescript of 19 pages, titled "Asian elephants in captivity", and dated June 26, 1974 (reference 367). It is a very meticulous piece of work including detailed worldwide information. Following is the listing of those countries and the number of elephants that were held in them at the time that Jones wrote the paper. The elephants listed were designated either as "living" or "no other data". This listing does not include North America (Jones' paper does include the USA and Canada, but they were omitted as we have updated information for these countries).

| <u>Continent/Country</u> | <u>Number of Elephants</u> | <u>Number of Institutions</u> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Africa | | |
| Egypt | 2 | 1 |
| South Africa | 1 | 1 |
| Asia | | |
| India | 7 | 2 |
| Japan | 17 | 1 |
| Sri Lanka | 5 | 1 |
| Australia | | |
| Adelaide | 3 | 1 |
| Melbourne | 2 | 1 |
| Sydney | 3 | 1 |
| Europe | | |
| Anonymous | 3 | 2 |
| Austria | 4 | 1 |
| Bulgaria | 3 | 1 |
| Denmark | 10 | 1 |
| England | 10 | 4 |
| France | 7 | 3 |
| Germany | 89 | 13 |
| Holland | 25 | 4 |
| Hungary | 9 | 1 |
| Ireland | 2 | 1 |
| Poland | 3 | 1 |
| Switzerland | 8 | 3 |
| USSR | 10 | 4 |
| Yugoslavia | 3 | 1 |
| South America | | |
| Argentina | 1 | 1 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| Total | 227 | 50 |

Many elephants in Jones' paper were designated as "died", "killed" or "destroyed" so that the figure of 227 includes only those Asian elephants (Elephas maximus) that were living or that their fate is/was unknown, and that were held in fifty various zoos and circuses around the world, excluding North America, as of June 26, 1974.

In order to keep the above survey up-to-date, readers are requested to send to the editor any information regarding the number of elephants held in captivity, either in zoos, circuses, private or any other collections in North America or in any part of the world.

MISCELLANEOUS

ELEPHANT LIBRARY

The idea of establishing an Elephant Library was brought up and discussed with several members on Wayne State University's campus. It is introduced here so that other members can suggest or express their ideas in writing.