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Front Matter

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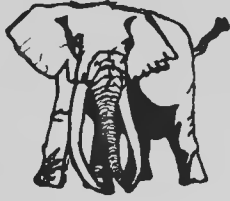
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Ahmed remains the symbol...



This drawing of the legendary Ahmed is based on photographs taken at Marsabit, North Kenya, by Jeheskel (Hezy) Shoshani in June 1973 and incorporated with other reference material. The final layout of the front cover is by Sherri DeFauw.

Ahmed, Kenya's most celebrated elephant, was and still is regarded as a national monument. He had the largest tusks of those seen in recent years; each one of his tusks weighed about 148 pounds, approximately 67 kilograms. During Ahmed's life, the average elephant tusk weighed about 70 pounds, while 100 lbs. was considered large. Presently, the average tusk weight is much smaller. A worldwide protest to save Ahmed's life was ignited by a report that two American hunters were after his huge ivory. This protest included more than 5,000 letters and cards delivered to the East African Wild Life Society. Thereafter, Ahmed was totally protected from human harassment:

- 1) by the mere fact that he was in a protected park - Marsabit.
 - 2) by a decree from the late president of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyata.
 - 3) by daily monitoring of his movements - a task performed by two askaris (human soldiers).
 - 4) by "the close proximity of two younger bulls = elephant askaris."
- This last statement is perhaps a legend rather than an observation.

In the Presidential Decree, the late Jomo Kenyata described Ahmed as "...this individual animal which captures the imagination and concern of all mankind." It was further stated in the Decree that "...under no circumstances may (Ahmed) be hunted or harassed by anyone."

Early in 1974 Ahmed died at about 55 years of age. The death was "natural", that is, he was not the victim of the "Ivory Rush" as was initially feared. Presently, Ahmed is preserved in the National Museum of Nairobi, Kenya. The great elephant remains the symbol of conservation for this and future generations.

* * * * *

Elephant is the official publication of the Elephant Interest Group (EIG), an international non-profit organization, established in June 1977. Some major objectives of the EIG are: to promote interest in and to increase our knowledge of elephants; to collect and disseminate information needed for education, research and conservation of elephants. The EIG is associated with the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)/World Wildlife Fund (WWF)/New York Zoological Society (NYZS)/Elephant Specialist Group, and the Department of Biology at Wayne State University. Pertinent articles, information and news are contributed, free, by our readers. Opinions expressed in the material contributed do not necessarily reflect those of the editor. Financial support is provided via contributions from individuals and institutions worldwide. Elephant is distributed to all interested parties. It is compiled and edited by Jeheskel (Hezy) Shoshani and is presently distributed by the Department of Biology, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA.

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