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Ivory, Elephants, and Men (A Book Soon To Be Published)

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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).

| | At zoos within the U.S.A. | At zoos within Canada | Total |
|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| 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