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Captive Elephant Population of North America: 1980 Update

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CAPTIVE ELEPHANT POPULATION OF NORTH AMERICA: 1980 UPDATE

As in the past, we have summarized information about captive elephants in North America into table form. The information was generously provided by Nathan R. Flesness of the International Species Inventory System (ISIS).

	<u>U.S. Zoos</u>	<u>Canadian Zoos</u>	<u>Total</u>
African elephant	102 (15 male, 85 female) (2 unknown)	12 (2 male, 10 female)	114
Asian elephant	134 (12 male, 122 female)	1 (1 female)	135
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	236	13	249

All in all, 249 elephants were held captive in 69 North American zoos as of December 31, 1979. Of these, 18 were reported captive-born and 141 wild-born, the rest of unknown origin. The total known elephant population in North American can be summarized as:

Elephants held in zoos as given by ISIS	249
Elephants held privately in Canada as given by Toby Styles in 1977 (see newsletter No. 2, pp. 32-33).	12
Elephants held in circuses as given by Richard J. Reynolds III. (Of these, 13 were African; see Reference No. 801 in <u>Elephant</u> Number 3).	277
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Total (as of June 1, 1980)	538

Correspondence with our readers has elicited information and questions on captive elephant populations in other parts of the world. Colleen Subb, a senior zookeeper at the Wellington Zoo in New Zealand, sent the following survey for New Zealand, five Asian and one African females, as listed below:

Wellington Zoo	"Kamalan": Asian female; over 40 years old
Ridgeways Circus	"Sheba" (formerly called Nirvana at Wellington Zoo): Asian female; 14-15 years old
	Name unknown: Asian female; over 19 years old

- Auckland Zoo "Kashin": Asian female; 11 years old; from Minnesota, U.S.A.
- "Mashwa": Asian female; 16-18 years old; captured in Thailand.
- Whirlings Circus Name not indicated: African female; 6 years old; caught (Tony Ratcliffe) by Sea World of Miami, Florida, U.S.A.; held at Honolulu Zoo before being shipped to New Zealand.

Robert Kellogg and Susan Kasielke of the Los Angeles Zoo, have written (see letter of June 24, 1979, in RECENT CORRESPONDENCE) "We seldom see surveys with any mention of elephants in Mexico. There is a large population of circus and zoo elephants there, including many Asian males." Readers having access to such data (the more specific the better) would provide worthwhile information by sending it to the editor for publication in the next issue of Elephant.

According to a survey on elephants in the British Isles compiled by Mary-Elizabeth Raw between September 1976 and April 1978, there were 63 elephants in 13 reporting centers (zoos or parks). The report (sent to us by Marvin Jones) appeared in International Zoo News, 25/3(151):11-13. The numbers are summarized here:

63 elephants in 13 centers

11 ♂ 52 ♀

35 Loxodonta africana (7 ♂, 28 ♀)

28 Elephas maximus (4 ♂, 24 ♀)

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TULSA ZOO ELEPHANT WORKSHOP

Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA
by Kenneth Kawata

It is said in the zoo field that a zoo is not complete without an elephant. The elephant is an extremely popular and important zoo animal. What the general public does not realize is that an elephant can be immensely dangerous and that there are quite a few health problems, especially foot problems, in captive elephants. In recent years, there have been numerous symposia, workshops and conferences concerning primates, felines, and reptiles across the United States. Captive management aspects of such animals have frequently been discussed during these meetings. Yet, we never hear of an elephant workshop that would benefit elephant care personnel. The Elephant Symposia held in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Corvallis, Oregon, in 1979 did not really focus on captive maintenance of the elephant.