

12-15-1980

Tulsa Zoo Elephant Workshop

Kenneth Kawata

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/elephant>

Recommended Citation

Kawata, K. (1980). Tulsa Zoo Elephant Workshop. *Elephant*, 1(4), 183-185. Doi: 10.22237/elephant/1521731774

This Meetings / Minutes is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Elephant* by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@WayneState.

- 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 ♀)

----- .. -----

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.

In August, 1980, we invited zoo elephant care personnel in neighboring states to attend an informal get-together in Tulsa on October 11-12 to share experiences, exchange ideas and make contacts. The host committee consisted of Lynn Svoboda, Elephant Keeper; Mark Swanson, Lead Elephant Keeper; Larry Nunley, Large Mammal Supervisor; Ken Kawata, Curator; and David Zucconi, Director. The local chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) offered assistance to house some of the out-of-state attendees in the members' homes and to host a luncheon.

Despite short notice, a total of 53 people, including six spouses, attended, coming from 24 zoos and animal-related institutions and representing 12 states and Washington, D.C.

Speakers and subjects on the program were as follows:

Friday, October 10: Tulsa Zoo Classroom

8:00 p.m. "History of Tulsa Zoo Elephants" by Hugh Davis, Former Director. History of Tulsa Zoo's elephants, plus his observations on African elephants in the wild. Slides and film clips used.

9:00 p.m. Informal ice breaker

Saturday, October 11:

8:00-9:00 a.m. "Foot Care Demonstration" by Dr. Bill Russell, Tulsa Zoo.

9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Paper presentations, Tulsa Zoo classroom.

"Elephant Management at Dickerson Park Zoo" by Paul Price, Dickerson Park Zoo, Springfield, Missouri. Color slide presentation on the facility and management program.

"Elephant Hearing Study" by Katy Lake, Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita, Kansas. Research work by University of Kansas scientists.

"Foot Care of African and Asian Elephants" by Bill Neville, Denver Zoo, Denver, Colorado. Color slide presentation on how to improve foot conditions by sole and nail work.

"Elephant Handling" by Herb Melzacher, Henry Vilas Zoo, Madison, Wisconsin. Film on elephants found in various parts of Asia and Africa.

"Zookeeper/Laborer-Zookeeper/Animal Management" by Don Meyer, Jo-Don Farms, Franksville, Wisconsin. Zookeeper and laborer as a part of management decision-making.

"Elephant Management in Washington Park Zoo" by Doug Grove, Washington Park Zoo, Portland, Oregon. Color slide presentation on their facility.

12:00-1:00 p.m. Luncheon hosted by Tulsa Zoo AAZK chapter.

1:00-1:30 p.m. Paper presentations, Tulsa Zoo classroom.

"Elephants in Foreign Zoos" by Ed Rice, Oklahoma City Zoo, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Color slide presentation on overseas zoos.

"Memorable Males" by Ken Kawata, Tulsa Zoo. Color slide presentation on well-known male elephants in the U.S.

1:30-2:45 p.m. Panel discussion: "Elephant Training". Panelists: Benny Henry, Kansas City Zoo, Kansas City, Kansas. Don Meyer, Jo-Don Farms.

3:00-5:30 p.m. Tour of Tulsa Zoo. The group observed the Zoo's elephant show.

5:30-6:30 p.m. Panel discussion: "General Care". Tulsa Zoo classroom. Panelists: Dr. Bill Russell, Tulsa Zoo; Doug Grove, Washington Park Zoo.

7:00 p.m. Barbecue party hosted by the Workshop Host Committee.

Sunday, October 12:

The group was transported to the Oklahoma City Zoo where the Workshop was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

9:30 a.m.-12:00 noon. Tour of Oklahoma City Zoo.

12:00-1:00 p.m. Luncheon hosted by Oklahoma City Zoo.

1:00-3:00 p.m. Presentations and panel discussions. Oklahoma City Zoo Activity Center.

"Chemical Immobilization" by Ed Rice. Oklahoma City Zoo. Types, application and dosage of drugs.

Panel discussions:

"Safety". Panelists: Larry Nunley, Tulsa Zoo; Paul Price, Dickerson Park Zoo; Marianne Martinez, Rio Grande Zoo, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"Personnel". Panelists: Ingrid Schmidt, Rio Grande Zoo; Don Meyer, Jo-Don Farms.

"Reproduction". Panelists: Dale Tuttle, Dickerson Park Zoo; Doug Grove, Washington Park Zoo.

Originally, the idea of hosting a workshop was conceived by Lynn Svoboda, our zookeeper. It was "an eminent success," says David Zuconni. He also notes, "I attribute the large numbers of zookeepers in attendance to the fact that we operated on a shoe-string budget; there was no registration fee, almost all meals were provided. . . Three zookeepers, as a matter of fact, camped on the Zoo grounds during the two nights they were here." Moreover, he observes, "Although the exchange of information (and differences of opinion) was beneficial to all attendees, I believe that those zookeepers who represent small zoos derived the most benefit." Indeed, a former elephant keeper of a medium-sized zoo comments that during the workshop ". . . I learned more about the care and management of elephants than I had during six years of reading, rumors, and accosting other people." He goes on to say, "I hope that what you initiated becomes an annual event."

His view was shared by many. It was the consensus of opinion that, as a zoo director puts it in his letter, the Tulsa Workshop "will lead to many more such meetings in which the elephant problems that face us today will certainly be solved." Furthermore, a zoo mammal supervisor writes, "If there is any more thought or activity on this (an annual workshop) I would be more than willing to assist." On behalf of all the attendees, I would like to urge administrators of zoos and circuses across the U.S. and Canada to make a firm commitment and consider hosting future elephant workshops.