

12-15-1980

## Opening Comments

Jeheskel Shoshani

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### Recommended Citation

Shoshani, J. (1980). Opening Comments. *Elephant*, 1(5), 1-2. Doi: 10.22237/elephant/1521731826

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**OPENING COMMENTS**  
**by Jeheskel Shoshani**

Members of the American Society of Mammalogists, Members of the Elephant Interest Group and all present -- Welcome to The Elephant Symposium.

This symposium was conceived about two years ago at the meeting in East Lansing, Michigan in June of 1977. Since then, preparations were under way which culminated in this event (preparation time, coincidentally, lasted as long as the gestation period for an elephant).

The symposium would still be a dream without the help which many individuals and institutions have given. I do not intend to read the long list I have in front of me, for the fear that someone might be forgotten, but I would like to mention the major contributors:

- The Department of Biological Sciences of Wayne State University (WSU)
- The Office of Research and Sponsored Program Services, also at WSU
- Many colleagues and friends in the Detroit area
- The ASM Local Committee at Corvallis, Oregon State University
- And, of course, the speakers and you -- the audience.

This symposium is one of many worldwide activities launched to bring attention to the plight of the elephants.

- The IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group and its Asian counterpart are constantly gathering data to be channeled toward elephant conservation.
- Co-chairmen of the African Elephant Group are Iain Douglas-Hamilton and Harvey Croze. Co-chairmen of the Asian Elephant Group are Robert D. Olivier and J. C. Daniel. Douglas-Hamilton and Olivier were initially scheduled to speak at this symposium but were unable to participate.

The two groups just mentioned are associated with the International Union of Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the New York Zoological Society (NYZS). The Elephant Interest Group is an inseparable entity associated with elephant conservationist organizations.

The purpose of this symposium is to present an overview of elephant natural history, biology, and behavior as well as to learn about some of the problems encountered in the past and in the present, in the wild and in captivity, that pertain to elephant management, research and conservation.

During the next three hours, we will be tracing the history and interactions between elephant and man; we will enrich our knowledge about elephant ecology and behavior, about possible management and conservation measures, and finally, we will learn about the input retrieved by studying captive elephants in terms of basic and applied knowledge.

Four speakers are scheduled to address us on aspects of these topics.

- In order to avoid a break in thought, each speaker will follow the previous one. Following the last speaker, there will be a panel discussion, scheduled for 40 minutes, which will be open for general and specific questions.
- A 15-minute film entitled "Capturing Baby Elephants" and provided by Jack Adams will be shown, as part of the 40 minutes. (As a last minute change, Adams and Berg's paper, "The repertoire of behavior of African elephants (Loxodonta africana) in captivity," was presented in place of Daniel C. Langhlin's paper "Captive elephants: past, present and future." The paper by J. Adams and J.K. Berg was published elsewhere, see Reference No. 836 in Elephant, Volume 1, Number 4. The papers by R.N. Racine and C.R. Ananthasubramaniam were submitted prior to this symposium but were not presented at Corvallis.)

With this introduction in mind, let me present to you the first speaker.