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A Note from the Editors

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A Note from the Editors

Dear members of the Elephant Research Foundation and Elephant readers,

After a long hiatus, the Elephant Research Foundation (ERF) is proud to present our readers with Elephant Volume 2, Issue number 4, and hopes that you share our feelings that it has been worth the wait. In the interim since Volume 2, Issue no. 3 was published (in 1987) we mailed newsletters, some distributed through other channels. During the years a team of volunteers continued to prepare material for the next issue of Elephant, and in the summer of 1999 a marathon ensued to sort and filter through voluminous material. A special heartfelt thanks to our volunteers is in order: Estelle R. Davidson, Jann S. Grimes, Joann M. Holden, Gary H. Marchant, Eleanor C. Marsac, M. Philip Kahl, and Jules L. Pierce. Standing out is Eleanor for her devotion and steadfast spirit of dedication to meticulous details (see for example, ELEPHANT/PROBOSCIDEA BIBLIOGRAPHY, E/P B); the numerous hours she helped us are a befitting memorial to her husband Jerry G. Marsac who died in 1989 (see Obituaries).

There have been significant developments in elephant-related issues on the international and national level in recent years. In 1989 the African elephant was transferred to Appendix I of CITES (meeting at Lausanne, Switzerland). In 1997 (Harare, Zimbabwe) elephant populations of Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe were transferred to Appendix II, subject to certain restrictions (details in article by Ronald I. Orenstein). Such a decision has enabled sale of a limited quantity of stockpiled ivory to Japan. The Parties to CITES [full names for abbreviations are given at the beginning of ELEPHANT NOTES AND NEWS (ENN) and the E/P B] are supposed to evaluate the status of species listed on the Appendices or proposed for listing, based on a number of biological and trade parameters. During the 1970s, numbers of the African elephant were estimated at over one million; ten years later, this number was reduced by at least a factor of around two (cf. articles in E/P B). Habitat fragmentation and poaching are major factors for this sharp decline. Research in the field and in laboratories has increased our knowledge tremendously: we better understand elephant biology, specifically the elephant's role as a keystone or super-keystone species; we have a better knowledge of elephant "secret language"; and recently we were able to learn of the mechanism of producing and perceiving infrasonic sound [see "Elephant 'Secret' Language" under ENN]. As always, elephants tantalize and enchant us and will continue to do so far into the future.

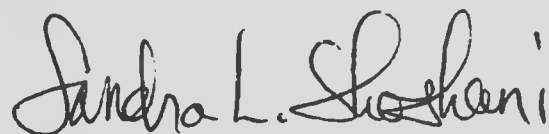
Among other noted developments is the establishment of the Elephant Listserver, initiated by Dan Koehl, an excellent mode of sharing information on the Internet (see under "Organizations" in ENN). The establishment of the Elephant Managers Association (EMA, December 1988) and organization of annual Elephant Research Symposia are historical landmarks. The publications of EMA (a newsletter "Gray Matters" and Journal of the Elephant Managers Association, JEMA) filled the vacant niche resulting from lack of publication of Elephant by ERF (see "Organizations" in ENN). The establishment of the "Elephant Resource Group of Oregon" by Dr. Michael Schmidt and his wife, Anne M. Schmidt (after a long and valuable service to elephants at the Metro Washington Park Zoo) is designed to pursue elephant reproduction research (see under "Organizations" in ENN). Other topics that were publicized worldwide, and briefly included in this issue (under ENN), include the "Tuli" elephants, and differences among "Free Contact", "Confined Contact", and "Protected Contact".

Although ERF has not produced Elephant for 13 years, we contributed to two books (Reference nos. 5123 and 5153 in E/P B), and continued to reply to correspondents and answer questions; see "Frequently asked questions about elephants" in Contents. The article by Grubb *et al.* elevating the Forest African Elephant from a subspecies to a species level is a distinction which may help its management and conservation. This and the three reports which follow constitute a cohesive four-part segment. Perhaps the most important section in this issue is the E/P B, which contains 3,409 coded and/or annotated references on living and extinct proboscideans; many of these references are cross-referenced. A separate Junior Elephant Bibliography stresses the potential of future scientists. Compilation of the E/P B is a vast task — without the collaboration and help of Iain Douglas-Hamilton, M. Philip Kahl, Don Marcks, Eleanor C. Marsac, Mary Dwyer Rigby, and Douglas Rigby, it would be impossible to include this section in its present form. Developing and updating the Elephant Necropsy Protocol, a precious source for research specimens and data, has been spearheaded by Susan Mikota. The summary tables in the article "Captive elephant population..." (see Contents) have proven very useful, please help us update them. A summary of recent accomplishments of ERF and legal matters concerning ERF is included in ENN.

To our friends and ERF members we note that in 1998 Hezy accepted a two-year teaching position at the University of Asmara, Eritrea (Horn of Africa), with possible renewal. Hezy's address in Eritrea is in "ERF: Membership list update" (see Contents). We are negotiating with various organizations as to where to house the Elephant Research Foundation Library and Scientific Collection (see under "Elephant and related ERF business" of ENN), and until this matter is resolved, the continuation of publishing Elephant is uncertain. To save time, money, and space, and yet to include as much material as possible, we opted to use 9-point in "Times" font; we apologize if it will cause inconvenience to some of our readers. Good news: as we submit this issue to the publisher, we learned that the book "Elephants:..." (Reference no. 5123) will be updated and republished early 2000 by "Facts on File".

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our supporters on behalf of all elephants, captive and wild, and continue to remain their obedient servants ...

Conscientiously yours,



Sandra Lee Shoshani
Associate Editor, Elephant



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