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Front Matter

Elephant Editors

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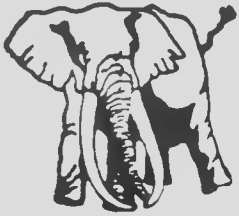
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Ahmed remains the symbol...



This representation of the legendary Ahmed was drawn by Susan O'Neill Ratigan and is based on photographs taken at Marsabit, North Kenya, by Jeheskel (Hezy) Shoshani in June 1973 and incorporated with other reference material. The final layout of the front cover is by Gary H. Marchant.

Ahmed, Kenya's most celebrated elephant was, and still is regarded as a national monument. His estimated height is 10 feet (3.05 m). He had the largest tusks of those seen in recent years; his right tusk was 9 feet 9 inches long (2.97 m) and the left 9 feet 4 inches (2.85 m). Each one of his tusks weighed about 148 pounds, approximately 67 kilograms. During Ahmed's life, the average elephant tusk weighed about 70 pounds, while 100 pounds was considered large. At present the average tusk weight is much less. A worldwide protest to save Ahmed's life was ignited by a report that two American hunters were after his huge ivory. This protest included more than 5,000 letters and cards delivered to the East African Wild Life Society. Thereafter, Ahmed was totally protected from human harassment:

- 1) by the mere fact that he was in a protected park - Marsabit,
- 2) by a decree from the late president of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta,
- 3) by daily monitoring of his movements performed by two askaris (soldiers),
- 4) by "the close proximity of two younger bulls".

This last statement is perhaps a legend rather than an observation.

In the Presidential Decree, the late Jomo Kenyatta described Ahmed as "...this individual animal which captures the imagination and concern of all mankind." It was further stated in the Decree that "...under no circumstances may (Ahmed) be hunted or harassed by anyone."

Early in 1974 Ahmed died at about 55 years of age. The death was "natural"; that is, he was not the victim of the "Ivory Rush" as was initially feared. Ahmed is preserved in the National Museum of Nairobi, Kenya. The great elephant remains the symbol of conservation for this and future generations. For additional information, see article on Ahmed in this issue.

* * * * *

Elephant⁺ is the official publication of the Elephant Interest Group (EIG), an international non-profit organization established in June 1977, to promote interest in, and to collect and disseminate information needed for education, research and conservation of elephants. The EIG is associated with the Department of Biological Sciences at Wayne State University and works in cooperation with the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)/Elephant Specialist Groups, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). All support, financial and otherwise, is provided via contributions from individuals and institutions worldwide. Pertinent articles, information and news are contributed free by our readers. Elephant is distributed from the Department of Biological Sciences, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202 USA.

⁺ The first two issues of Volume 1 were entitled Elephant Newsletter. Subsequently, the word "newsletter" was dropped from the title, and this publication is known simply as Elephant.

CONTENTS

Cover - Ahmed. See explanations opposite

	<u>Page</u>
A note from the editors.....	1
Contributed articles/reports	
Tenth Anniversary of the Elephant Interest Group.... Kenneth C. Wylie	3
"Ahmed", the logo of the Elephant Interest Group: encounters in Marsabit and notes on his model and skeleton... Jeheskel Shoshani, Jesse C. Hillman, and John M. Walcek	7
On the mounting of a skeleton of an Asian elephant, <u>Elephas maximus indicus</u> (Linnaeus, 1758)... C.J. Savanurmah and C.G. Dhaduti	33
Fetuses of African elephants (<u>Loxodonta africana</u>) in photographs..... Martin S. Fischer and Uschi Trautmann	40
Mount Elgon's elephants are in peril..... Ian M. Redmond and Jeheskel Shoshani	46
Chemical composition of the temporal gland secretion of an Asian elephant (<u>Elephas maximus</u>)..... P.S. Easa	67
Reviews	
"Anatomy and histology of the Indian elephant" by D. Mariappa George W. Overbeck, Jennifer Balke, and Eugene W. Foor	69
"Elephant Memories" by Cynthia Moss..... John F. Eisenberg	70
Captive elephant population of North America: 1987 Sandra Lash Shoshani	73
Elephant notes and news (including Elephant Workshop and ERRATA).....	76
Recent correspondence.....	101
Financial report and acknowledgments.....	111
Information from the Elephant Interest Group Questionnaires.....	116
Elephant Interest Group - Membership List.....	117
Elephant Bibliography (1980 - Present).....	123
Junior Library (1930 - Present).....	139
Addendum: A message from Cynthia Moss.....	144
Request for Elephant Post Mortem Samples.....(tear off sheet)	
Elephant Interest Group Questionnaire.....(tear off sheet)	
Membership and Order Form.....(tear off sheet)	

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