

12-15-1980

Elephant News and Information

Sandra Lash

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

Recommended Citation

Lash, S. (1980). Elephant News and Information. *Elephant*, 1(4), 204-210. Doi: 10.22237/elephant/1521731784

This Elephant Notes and News 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.

ELEPHANT NEWS AND INFORMATION

The items included in this section range from information received through correspondence and articles to a compilation on the situation in Uganda. Our goal is to bring attention to a variety of noteworthy items related to elephants which the reader may pursue in detail elsewhere.

I. ELEPHANT NUMBERS IN UGANDA DWINDLED BUT SITUATION IS HOPEFUL.

Compiled by Sandra Lash as inspired by a letter from C. Dietrich Schaaf.

In the months following the collapse of Idi Amin's regime in Uganda (April-May 1979), alarming reports of widespread killing of wildlife by both retreating soldiers and forces from Tanzania appeared in the press. In addition, facilities in national parks were looted and damaged, and park officials were unable to enforce conservation regulations. This destruction set back efforts to repair the devastation incurred by poaching of game in 1975 and 1976. Appeals to the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments were made by IUCN's Survival Service Commission and the World Wildlife Fund. On August 23, 1979, Uganda imposed a five year ban on hunting, similar to bans in neighboring Tanzania and Kenya.

In November 1979, a delegation of international wildlife conservation representatives visited Uganda. A dialogue was established with government officials and President Binaisa. It was decided to conduct an aerial survey of wildlife for future management plans. Other issues discussed were: expansion and creation of parks and wilderness areas, improvement of park facilities and personnel, elimination of poaching for commercial use, presence of industry within parks, wildlife education and re-establishment of a tourism industry. Since the above visit took place, an aid program for Ugandan wildlife has been developed by the World Wildlife Fund, African Wildlife Leadership Federation, New York Zoological Society and Frankfurt (West Germany) Zoological Society. Both ground and aerial surveys have been conducted; results were reported in May 1980.

Although poaching is considered to be a minor factor in the overall decline in numbers of African elephants (Parker, 1979), it has had severe effects in two countries: Uganda and Zambia. The histogram below has been compiled from surveys in three national parks where elephant counts were conducted in the past eight years. Biologist Robert Malpas, among others who have observed existing conditions, remains optimistic when he reports that numbers in Uganda are high enough to replenish themselves, given protection from poaching in the future (Price, 1980). For further information on the elephant situation in Uganda and other African nations, see "Minutes of the Elephant Specialist Group Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya on 24th/25th April, 1980 (and subsequent meeting during the IUCN/SSC Meeting held in Kilaguni)." In a letter to the editor dated 21st October, 1980, Eric L. Edroma, Chief Research Officer, Uganda Institute of Ecology, stated that there were probably less than 1,000 elephants in Kabalega Falls National Park but the situation had improved since April, 1980.

15

10

5

0

Figure
in Zam
(1980a)
in Luat
Areas c

L
R
K

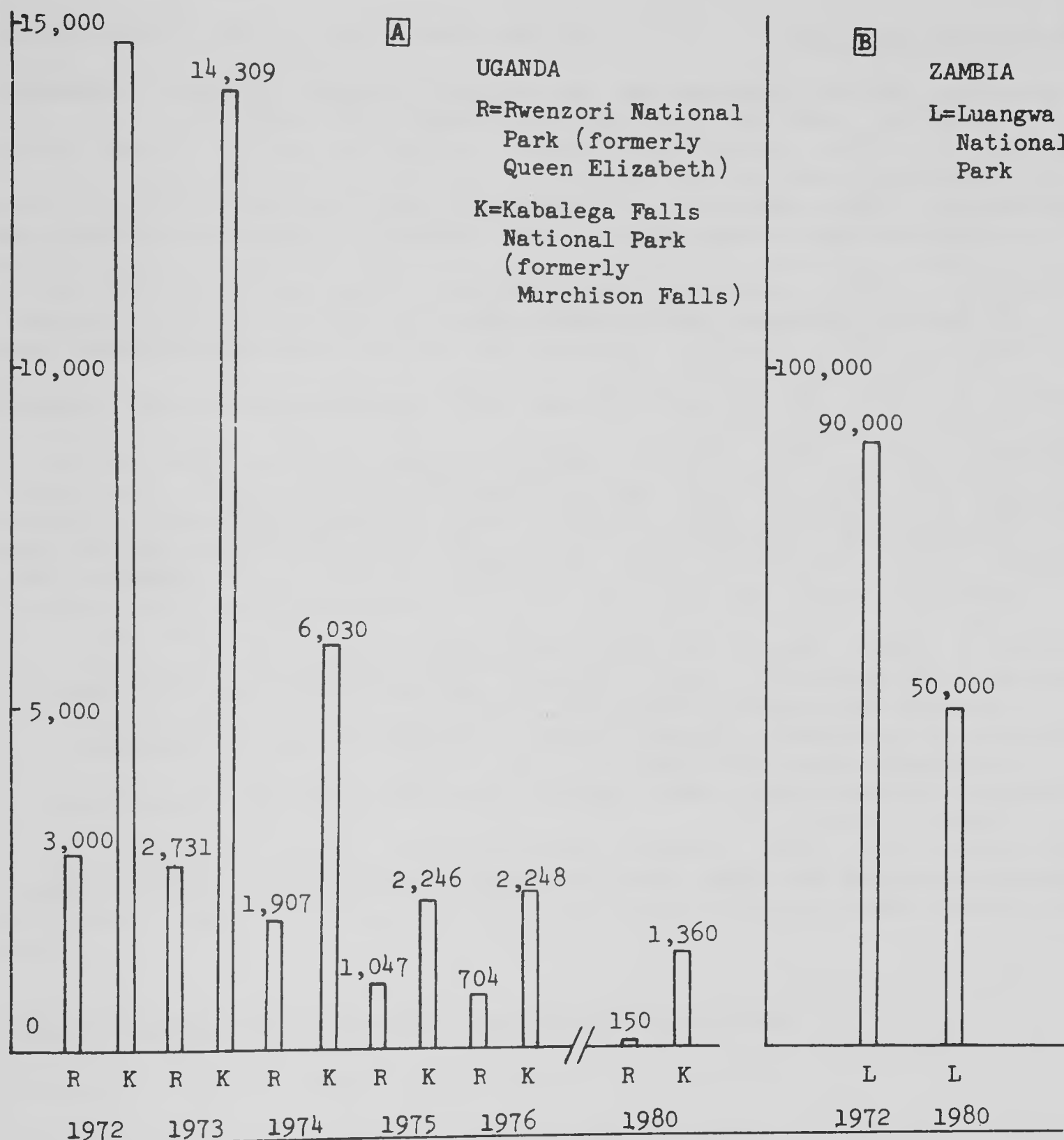


Figure 1. Known elephant numbers in two national parks in Uganda (A) and one in Zambia (B), 1972-1976 and 1980. Modified after Norris (1977) and Anonymous (1980a). See also Hanks, 1979, p. 149 for previous history of elephant counts in Luangwa National Park.

Areas of parks:

Luangwa National Park comprises 10,000 square miles (as of 1980).
 Rwenzori National Park comprised 767 square miles (as of 1967).
 Kabalega Falls National Park comprised 1,557 square miles (as of 1967).

References consulted:

- Anonymous. 1979a. IUCN and WWF call for halt to mass killings of Uganda's wildlife. IUCN Bulletin, August/September 1979, page 70.
- Anonymous. 1979b. Uganda bans hunting. Information Report, Animal Welfare Institute, 28(3):3.
- Anonymous. 1980a. Elephants in Uganda and Zambia near extinction: anti-poaching squads have little effect. Information Report, Animal Welfare Institute, 29(2):4.
- Anonymous. 1980b. Hope for Uganda wildlife. Focus, World Wildlife Fund - U.S. Special Report, Spring 1980, page 5.
- Anonymous. 1980c. Uganda's elephants face extermination by poachers. Detroit Free Press, May 9, 1980, 14D.
- Hanks, J. 1979. The struggle for survival: the elephant problem. Mayflower Books, New York, 176 pp.
- Hillman, A.K.K. 1978. Elephant survey in Kenya: about a fifty percent die-off since 1973. *Africana*, 6(8):18-20, 32-33.
- Norris, T. (compiler). 1977. Further facts on Uganda's elephants (East African Wild Life Society's Notes). *Africana*, 6(4):Centre Section page i.
- Parker, I.S.C. July 25-26, 1979. Testimony presented to the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C., 7pp.
- Price, S. 1980. Uganda. *Wildlife News*, 15(1):3-6.
- Shorter, C. (compiler). 1979a. Uganda: Uganda bans hunting - but can poaching be stopped? *Swara*, 2(4):22.
- Shorter, C. (compiler). 1979b. Uganda: brighter future for Uganda's wildlife? *Swara*, 2(5):21.
- Shorter, C. (compiler). 1980. Uganda: optimistic wildlife discussions. *Swara*, 2(6):21.
- Von Orsdol, K.G. 1979. Uganda's National Parks. *Swara*, 2(4):14-16.
- Webster, B. June 10, 1980. African elephants slaughtered. *The New York Times*, 2C.

II. C.A.R. ENACTS STRONG LAWS AGAINST HUNTING.

Reference: Monitor Agenda, 21 April 1980, and Reference No. 882.

In the Central African Republic, all elephant killing and the "collection, commercialization, import, export and transit" of ivory have been outlawed by the new government. C.A.R. was the "scene of wholesale elephant massacres" during the regime of monarch Bokassa.

III. ECOLOGICAL STUDY IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA/NAMIBIA MAY BRING NEW INSIGHT ON DESERT ELEPHANTS.

Reference: African Wildlife, 33(5):53.

Kaokoland's elephants (S.W.A./Namibia) may be the last true desert elephants in the world, according to J. du P. Bothma of the University of Pretoria. Some of the reasons for interest in these animals are summarized in these observations:

Some herds drink only once every four days during the dry season, in contrast to elephants elsewhere in Africa, which drink daily. The Kaokoland elephants cover vast distances (up to 60 kilometres per day) in search of grazing and are equally at home in the bare rock mountains, the gravel flats and the sand dunes. The elephants have an amazing climbing ability and can scale heights where humans have to progress on all fours.

This study, a project of the South African Nature Foundation representing the World Wildlife Fund, will also include the black rhinoceros and giraffe in Kaokoland.

IV. KNYSNA ELEPHANTS ARE SUBJECT OF DETAILED INVESTIGATION.

Reference: African Wildlife, 34(1):33.

"South African's Department of Forestry has initiated a long-term research project on the Knysna elephants. An estimated 13 are still to be found in the forest and their movements, nutrition and all possible population limiting factors are to be investigated." J.H. Koen, officer in charge, has requested any prints or slides of these elephants taken in the last 20 years. Contact address: Saasveld Forest Research Station, Private Bag X6531, George 6530, SOUTH AFRICA.

V. DURGA, OWALLA AND TSCHOMBAL RETURNED TO EAST AFRICA.

Information provided by Randall Moore and Joseph Engelhard, 1980.

Durga, Owalla and Tschombai are three of the nine elephants that were being kept at Morgan Berry's farm at the time of his death. All three are African elephants; all are about 16 years old. Durga and Owalla are females; Tschombai is a male.

In an effort to keep the three elephants together, Randall Moore purchased the African trio and transported them in December 1979 to Mexico. After two months of light training in Tamps, Mexico, the elephants were transported to Brownsville, Texas (where they were rough-broken for riding) and subsequently to the Wildlife Preserve in Largo, Maryland, where they were kept and ridden daily. The editor had the opportunity to visit the Preserve July 30, 1980, and ride Owalla.

Sailing with the elephants from New York, on October 19, to Mombasa, Kenya were Randy Moore and Sheri and Bill Reinert. The Reinerts are naturalists who joined the project recently. In Tsavo, Kenya, the elephants will be ridden amongst wild herds and be observed and photographed to record their reactions as well as those of herd members. Next, collars equipped with radio transmitters may be fastened to the animals' necks so that their movements in the wild can be monitored. A documentary film will be made of the entire project by ABC Sports, American Sportsman television program. Projected time for the completion of the project is approximately one year.

VI. ELEPHANT POPULATION IN INDIA HAS DECREASED.

Reference: The Washington Post, May 23, 1980.

J.C. Daniel, leader of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, reported that "the number of elephants in three states in South India namely Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu, was estimated at 8,523. In the northeastern India, the other important elephant-inhabited region, the situation was alarming, particularly in Meghalaya state (South of Assam) where elephant meat is eaten by local people." The study group also complained that despite an official ban elephants were being captured in Assam for commercial use.

(See also article entitled "The Status of the Asian Elephant in India" by J.C. Daniel in this issue.)

VII. ELEPHANT CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN SUMATRA MUST ASSIST FARMERS.

Reference: Conservation Indonesia, 4(2):11-12.

In Sumatra small scattered groups of 5-30 elephants make up the total population of about 300. Even with such reduced numbers, conflict occurs between farmers and elephants, as reported in the newsletter of the World Wildlife Fund Indonesia Programme:

A group of 13 elephants (two bulls, 10 cows and a small calf) recently spent several weeks around the Labuhan Meringgai area on the southeast coast of Sumatra, where

they caused considerable damage to agricultural crops, including bananas, coconuts, papaya, maize and rice, and even destroyed some houses. After repeated efforts, villagers, together with PPA (Indonesian Nature Conservation Service) staff, finally managed to drive the elephants back across the Penet River and into the Way Kambas Reserve (where there is now said to be a total elephant population of about 40). This is just one example of the problem, but there are many others.

The need for public support for nature conservation is often stressed by conservationists, but such support will not be forthcoming from farmers unless help is given in protection of their crops and other property from damage by wildlife. A proposed new PPA/WWF project on elephant management in Sumatra expected to start later this year aims to collect data on status and distribution of elephants and to evolve plans for their more effective management, including action to reduce crop damage. (JHB)

(For details on this proposal, see article entitled "The Asian elephant in Sumatra (Indonesia)" by W. bongers in this issue.)

VIII. TWENTIETH CALF BORN AT WASHINGTON PARK ZOO, PORTLAND, OREGON, USA.

In his letter of March 26, 1980, R.L. Henneous, Senior Elephant Keeper, wrote: "Our 20th calf was born October 5th with numbers 21 and 22 due late in '81."

IX. "JUBILEE" IN CHESTER ZOO, ENGLAND.

On May 8, 1977, "Judy," a female Asian elephant gave birth to a 200-pound (90.6 kg) male calf called "Jubilee." See Elephant, 1(3):37, for reference to "Judy." The Chester Zoo News and Guide (June 1980, pp. 4-7) reported that at the age of 3 years, "Jubilee" measured 5 feet and 6 inches (1.68 m) in height and weighed one half ton. Body circumference was 124 inches (314.95 cm); front foot circumference was 34 inches (86.36 cm). Please note that when the foot circumference is multiplied by 2, one gets an approximate height for the animal.

X. ELEPHANTINE SURGERIES

Until recently a captive elephant that broke its leg had little chance of survival. Advances in surgical techniques and medicine have been applied increasingly to this problem. Three cases of such surgery have been reported in newspapers in the Detroit area: 1) "Mandavu," a 12-year-old African at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, California, had a 10-inch stainless steel rod placed in her right rear leg, and "...may become the first elephant in captivity to survive surgery for a broken leg." The Detroit News, Thursday, October 23, 1980, 4A); 2) "Shirley," with the Circus Vargas, received a steel brace believed to be "...the first walking cast for an elephant." (The Detroit

News, Sunday, September 14, 1980)*; 3) "Sunderkali," a 32-year-old Asian who has led parades and wedding processions in New Delhi, India, underwent a massive operation in late June 1977, to reset two bones in her left front leg; six stainless steel pins, each a foot long, were placed in the bones with welded plates at each end; a plaster cast was made for the entire leg and thigh (The Detroit Free Press, July 3, 1977, 9C). Each of these cases was noted as historical. We wonder whether any of these animals is actually the "first" elephant survivor of surgery for a broken leg. Any information from readers on the state of these elephants and/or other elephant patients for such surgery would be greatly appreciated.

XI. MAMMOTH TISSUES FROM THE SOVIET UNION

A total of 2,058 grams of mammoth (Mammuthus primigenius) dry tissues were received from the Soviet Union on October 23, 1980. The samples were sent by Academician Yu. A. Ovchinnikov of the USSR Academy of Sciences to Morris Goodman, Anatomy Department of Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan USA.

The 2,058 grams represent material from three different mammoths: 1) "MUSCLES AND FAT FROM GROIN, The Yuribei female mammoth ♀ ad., Gydan Peninsula, Yuribei River, 1979, Geological age: C¹⁴ 10,000. The specimen was found by members of the expedition headed by Professor N.K. Vereshchagin"; 2) "MASTICATORY MUSCLES OF THE RIGHT CHEEK, The Taimir (Hatanga) mammoth ♂ ad., Taimir Peninsula, Bolshaya Rassokha River, 1978. Geological age: C¹⁴ 53,000. The specimen was found by members of the expedition headed by Professor N.K. Vereshchagin"; 3) "THIGH MUSCLE, the Magadan mammoth." (Same mammoth from which we received tissues previously. See Elephant, 1(3):42.)

The Yuribei sample was dry, not frozen, and weighed 1,022 grams; the Taimir (Hatanga) sample was also dry, not frozen, and weighed 1,011 grams; and the Magadan sample was frozen in dry ice and weighed 25 grams. Tissues have already been distributed to different investigators for biochemical, ultrastructural and immunological studies. We share Academician Ovchinnikov's hope "that these additional mammoth tissues will enable us to obtain some new results and this cooperation as a whole will serve as another brick in Soviet-American scientific relations."

*"Shirley" was euthenized on December 12, 1980. See also comments in the abstract by Shoshani et al. in this issue.

Fall 1
I. C
L
contri
1980.
contri
Martin
Joyce
Jack A
Africa
Four
Larry
Lynne
Elaine
Nancy
ASM L
Jean A
Micha
Larry
James
Sue B
Drue
Luann
Bob B
Charl
M. Pa
Sue a
David
Judith
Richa
Josep
Elain
Terry
Don B
Bodeg
(Da
Diane
Wille
Debbi
Herna
Briti
(Na
Linet
Greg
Irven
Ronal
Dona