

International Elephant Research Symposium, Fort Worth, Texas, USA December 2-5, 2004

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(Web supplement)

International elephant research symposium organised by the International Elephant Foundation, was conducted in the city of Fort Worth, Texas, USA from December 2-5, 2004. The venue of the seminar was the Radisson Plaza Hotel. Altogether 30 papers were presented orally and five papers as posters. The symposium icebreaker was held on the evening of Thursday, December 2nd at 5.30 pm. After a brief opening remarks, the symposium started on the 3rd December at 8.30 AM and the presentations continued up to 6 PM. Same schedule was followed on the next day also. About seventy delegates participated in the symposium from different countries including India and Sri Lanka. Majority of the papers were dealing with captive management and veterinary aspects of Asian and African elephants. Research on human-elephant conflict being undertaken in the Asian and African countries formed another topic of the discussion. Five oral papers were dealing with genetics and demographics of elephants, 9 papers dealt with veterinary medicine, 5 papers were on the reproductive aspects, 4 papers on behavioural aspects, 5 papers on the development of calf and management and 6 papers were on *in situ* conservation and management problems of elephants.

Four delegates from India participated in the symposium and three papers were orally presented by the Indian delegates. The paper presented by me was jointly authored with Dr. G. Christopher; a former Research Fellow of Kerala Forest Research Institute, was based on a project work completed in the Kerala Forest Research Institute in 1996. The paper was entitled "*Man-elephant conflict in the southern Western Ghats: a case study from the Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala, India.*" The paper dealt with the details of human-elephant conflict occurring in the Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary and the mitigation measures practiced. The paper was well received and some points were clarified by the delegates.

Mr. Vijay D. Anand *et al.*, who was representing the A Rocha India, Bangalore presented a paper entitled "*Understanding the habitat usage pattern of the Asian elephant (Elephas maximus) and the resultant human elephant interaction through rapid trail and village surveys. An experience from Bannerghatta National Park and its environs, Southern India.*" Another oral presentation from India was by Dr. Bhupen Sarma and S.C. Pathak representing Dept. of Surgery and Radiology, College of Veterinary Sciences, Assam Agricultural University, Guahatti, Assam. The paper was entitled "*Atipamezole as reversal agent to medetomidine-Ketamine anaesthesia in Asian elephants.*"

A paper presented by Rasmussen, L.E.L. *et al.* entitled "*Translation of basic behavioural and chemical signal research into a practical repellent system for the Asian elephant*" showed a new approach to long-term resolution aspects of human-elephant conflict. The system uses both olfactory chemicals and physical barriers to stop elephants from entering crop fields and controlled experiments have proved the efficiency of the system. This system has good potential in controlling the movement of elephants in the

wild and in captivity (Fig. 1^w). The system prepared by Rasmussen is said to be very efficient for preventing elephant passage through an area. It works both mechanically and by chemical means. More trials are needed to ascertain its efficiency and its viability in the patchy forest areas of India and about the cost effectiveness. After the presentations, a visit to the Fort Worth Zoo was also organized and the whole programme was spread over three days.

The symposium was attended by the board members of the International elephant Foundation and its President Mr. Michael Fouraker, Director of the Fort Worth Zoo also. The symposium was well organised and all the presentations kept high standard. By attending the symposium, an opportunity was obtained to meet the prominent elephant researchers of Asian and African countries. It also gave an opportunity to familiarise to the veterinary and captive management practices of the Asian and African elephants in USA. The city was in Christmas celebrations mood during the period and all the streets and buildings were decorated with lights and other decorations. The travel support and assistance for participation was provided by the International Elephant Foundation, Azle, Texas 76098, USA through a Fellowship.

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^w See figure in the web supplement at www.zoosprint.org

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launched 'Vulture Monitoring Programme'. Prescribed proforma for the data collection was circulated for the same. A systematic status survey is urgently warranted which can be collectively done by the State Forest Department and NGOs

5. Since all scavengers including Vultures are important in our environment, all concerned should work for the protection and increase in their population.
6. The favored niches of Vultures need to be identified and protected.
7. The house expressed gratitude for to the Dept. of Animal husbandry for declaring moratorium on the use of 'Diclofenac' for treating cattle.
8. All panjarapoles should be listed and kept under watch for Vulture population monitoring.
9. Dead bodies of Vultures should be sent to the institutions like one at Pinjore and to SACON for research. Procedure should be made easier to facilitate the same.
10. A chronicle on Vulture may be published by BCSG under 'Vulture Monitoring Programme'
11. Like Vultures an eye should be kept on other so called 'Common Birds', by the birdwatcher community before it is too late.