

Dallas Zoo

Animal profiles:

Vasha

Keke

9 pages

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1969

F from LP6 2003
Keke

1. Chacko
2. Tom
3. Pam
4. Cynthia
5. SUE V

Elephant Profile

Species: *Loxodonta Africana*
Common: African Elephant
House Name: KeKe
International Studbook # 70 (House Accession # 1826)
Institution or Owner: Lincoln Park Zoological Gardens
Completed by: Robin Bettenbender

Keke is an approximately 31 year old African female, which Lincoln Park Zoo originally purchased on August 11, 1971 from Ferndale: International Animal Exchange Inc. She was wild-born; birth origin unknown. Estimated age on arrival was approximately two years.

Keke was originally trained in a free contact program at Lincoln Park Zoo under John Lenhardt and later at the Greater Baton Rouge Zoo (GBRZ) in Louisiana under Alan Campbell.

Transaction History:

August 11, 1971 Lincoln Park Zoo: Purchase from International Animal Exchange Inc.
October 19, 1979 Loan to GBRZ: Donated to GBRZ on February 1, 1995.
September 25, 1997 Donation from GBRZ to LPZ.
November 2000, loan to Caldwell Zoo during construction

Behavior Characteristics

Dominant/Submissive:

date?

Keke is at present the dominant elephant to Binti (Binti is 10 years her junior). While at GBRZ, Keke was submissive to an Asian cow ten years her senior. When that cow left, Keke established her dominance over an Asian cow two years her senior. When housed at LPZ years ago, she and her Asian stall mate (Indu) did fine as youngsters, but as they got older there was a lot of spats between them according to former keepers. Indu was very close in age to Keke.

Aggressive:

Keke has never been aggressive as far as we know, however she can be very grabby with her trunk toward the bucket of re-enforcers during training. This has been addressed and the handlers are working at extinguishing this behavior. Note: Keke can get extremely worked up when separated from other elephants. This would be a time of unpredictability.

Adaptable To Change:

Keke appears to be pretty good when it comes to change. From all accounts, when she was brought back to Lincoln Park Zoo she did great except with sleep. Keke did not appear to have slept much for the first twenty days.

Nervous/High-strung:

Keke generally gets very nervous when separated otherwise she is on a pretty even keel. She does have a habit of acting confused when a difficult behavior is asked or when she doesn't want to do it.

Unresponsive To Commands:

Keke responds well to most commands and is generally a great elephant to work in PC. She is extremely food motivated.

Damages Doors Or Barriers:

From our experience here at LPZ in the past two plus years, Keke has not been known to be destructive. This does not mean if she gets a hold of something we've left out that she will not destroy it or eat it.

Runner:

If pressed too hard she will walk away, but can easily be brought back and calmed down to begin again. Keke will also do this if she is asked to do a behavior she is not in the mood to do or if she thinks she can get food from another source i.e. another elephant.

Mischievous:

Yes, she can try to get her way if she thinks the trainer is not paying attention.

Playful:

Keke will seldom interact with the other elephants. She will manipulate enrichment items to entertain herself. She extremely enjoys human interaction as well.

Pools:

Keke loves the pool.

Grinds Chains:

Yes. While in free contact they used either tow straps or covered the chains with fire hose. She has been known to get blisters on her pads from grinding the metal to extremely hot temperature with her feet. She also will grind her teeth with chains.

Removes Clevises:

Yes, they must be wired or use pinless clevises

Throws Objects:

She will throw dust or sand to get a keeper's attention. This is not meant as an aggressive move at all.

Particular About Food:

No

Other:

Keke is a good worker and it is easy to read her mood.

List and Briefly Describe any Situations or Objects that would cause a loss of control:

Stress or excessive noise and activity in an unusual situation are triggers. She can be brought back down with a calm voice and with the use of basic commands.

Behavioral Attitudes/Interactions during Introductions:

Keke displayed mild curiosity, more interested in her surroundings. Keke used her head to push Binti out of the way. Keke was also exerting her dominance.

Aggression:

Keke did display some aggression during the introduction with Binti as described above. She also exhibited some aggression toward an elephant she was living with when the matriarch left. Keke used her tusks to assert her position.

List Sex, Ages, And Species Of Other Elephants Kept With This Elephant:

1. Moved to Caldwell Zoo and housed with three females and one male.
2. Housed with 22 year old African female at Lincoln Park Zoo
3. At GBRZ with two Asian females, one ten years her senior and the other two years her senior.
4. Previously at LPZ an Asian female close to her in age, and a young Asian female.

Has Elephant Ever Inflicted Injuries On Herd Members? If Yes, Please Describe.

When the dominant elephant left GBRZ, she did use her ivory on the other cow to exert her dominance, but no injuries. She did this as well with Binti. No serious injuries are reported.

What Is This Elephant's Place In Herd Hierarchy? Dominant Or Subordinate.

Presently she is third in the pecking order behind the Caldwell Zoo elephants. Interestingly, she is dominant over Caldwell's male. Keepers believe that due to her long ivory she intimidated their male.

Has This Elephant Ever Been Separated From Herd Members? If Yes, What Was the Elephant's Reaction?

Stressed and excited. As stated before, when she was unaware of Binti's location she would get very excited, trumpeting, vocalizing. A reassuring trainer's voice generally calmed her down. During the relocation process Binti left LPZ first and there was about five days she was alone. A twenty-four watch was put into place for three days and she did well.

Is This Animal Emotionally Bonded To An Inanimate Object? If Yes, Describe.

NO

How Often Is This Elephant Worked or Taken Through A Series Of Verbal Commands?

One to three times daily. Their a.m. routine, which usually includes bath, footwork, and normal routines, as well as, blood-draw if necessary. We try to work with them again around mid-day and a bit in the evening.

Does Elephant Lie Down On Command? Right? Left? Both Sides?

Keke will stretch and lie down left most of the time, but not her right side.

On The Average How Many Oral Commands Are Given Before Elephant Gives Proper Response?

She usually responds to the first verbal command. She will at times "test" the trainer. If the trainer is inexperienced she will refuse the first time. She also gets distracted easily.

How Many Handlers are Presently Established in Working This Elephant?

There are five keepers that work her regularly.

How Many Handlers Have Unsuccessfully Attempted To Break In This Elephant? Please List Reasons Why.

None

Give The Number Of Known Aggressive Attacks On Handlers. Please Give The Date Of Each Incident, Status Of Handler (new, established), Possible Reasons For Attack, Handling Of Elephant After Attack, Etc. If In Existence, Please Attach Any Written Documents Of Each Incident.

None Known

Give The Number Of Any Inadvertent Or Non-Aggressive Incidents, Injurious Or Potentially Injurious To Handlers Or Bystanders. Give Brief Account Of Each Incident Or Written Documentation.

She will toss sand or feces at keepers to get their attention.

List All Previously Known Names This Elephant Has Had.

None

Is This Elephant Conditioned To Riding In A Trailer? If Yes, Please Indicate The Longest Distance It Has Been Transported At One Time.

Keke has been transported three times. The first was when she arrived as a calf, was from LPZ to GBRZ in 1979, she tore the top off the transport truck. The second was when she returned to LPZ in 1997. The third was her move to Tyler Texas from Lincoln Park Zoo. All times drugs were used. In September of 1997 she was given 4cc of azaperone im with an additional 3 ½cc two days later. In November of 2000 she was given zylazine 450 mg im.

Is The Elephant Conditioned To Footwork? If Yes, Circle Positions The Elephant Is In When Footwork Is Performed.

Standing: Yes, with foot resting on bar or pedestal.

Husbandry:

Footwork Tools That Are Routinely Used.

Hand Rasp:

Hoof Knife:

Exacto Knife:

List Others: Trained to soak all her feet individually in foot tub.

Approximately How Many Blood Samples Have Been Taken From This Elephant In The Last Year?

We were able to readily collect blood from her. The keepers have been doing the blood draws once a week for several months.

How Much Blood Is Taken Per Collection?

Approximately 3cc

Where Is Collection Site On Animal?

It is collected from the ear while standing.

How Many Times On the Average Do You Have To Stick The Animal To Get Desired Amount Of Blood?

Once.

How would you describe The Degree Of Difficulty In Obtaining Blood From This Animal?

Somewhat Difficult, due to poor veins.

How Many Times Has This Elephant Refused To Allow Blood To Be Collected In The Past Year?

None in the past ten months. Also trained for trunk wash.

If It's Had The Opportunity, Describe Any Breeding Behavior This Elephant Has Displayed?

N/A

If A Female, How many Times Has This Elephant Been Vaginally Palpated? Describe Her Response

Unknown

Is This Elephant Conditioned To Being Chained For At Least 12 Hours?

Not at present, she is in a "PC" program and we do not chain them; however, at Caldwell Zoo the keepers chain one leg to help separate the elephants for their training. When in "free contact" they were chained for a minimum of 12 to 17 hours daily (overnight).

Is This Elephant Howdah Broke To Give Rides? If Yes Amount OF Ride Experience.

NO

List Previously Known Locations, And Owners This Elephant Has Had.

1. Lincoln Park Zoo
2. Baton Rouge Zoo
3. Lincoln Park Zoo
4. Caldwell Zoo

1969 - BORN, est.

1979 - 10 YR

1989 - 20 YR

1999 - 30 YR

2000 - 31 YR

2003 - 34 YR

2004 - 35 YR