

Reid Park Zoo

AZA Corresp.

13 PAGES

* Corresp. w/ City RE: Expansion
Corresp. Related to breeding
Shaba.

* Interesting - using criticism over
northern zoos holding elephants as
argument for funds to expand
in Tusson.

**Reid Park Zoo
Elephant Management Plan**

Reid Park Zoo is committed to working closely with the Elephant SSP to develop an elephant program that will contribute to the North American population's management, as well as provide the best options for the elephants currently in our collection.

Reid Park currently has one 24 year old African elephant (Shaba) and one 34 year old Asian elephant (Connie). The highest priority set for us by the SSP is to do a reproductive assessment of our African elephant. We've been working to condition Shaba for the assessment, and are scheduled for Dr. Don Neiffer to visit in December 2004 to perform the exam. We have done urine samples for the past year, and are currently collecting blood regularly.

If Shaba is reproductive we would like to do AI attempts here, with the commitment that we will have a new large elephant exhibit and nighthouse built that will house any elephants born here. Reid Park Zoo is currently working on a new education facility, as soon as that is completed we will begin working on our new African section. The highlight of our new Africa area will be a 2 - 3 acre elephant exhibit with a modern nighthouse incorporating all of the recommendations of the Elephant SSP. We plan to be able to house at least 2-4 elephants, which would mean adding 3 to 4 more African elephants through breeding or transfers. Our estimate for construction of this facility is 5 to 6 years, which would work well if Shaba does become pregnant. (If Shaba became pregnant in 2005, the young elephant would be 3 - 4 when the new facility was completed.)

Based on her past behavior, we believe our Asian elephant will be an excellent aunt to any young born here, and we would like to keep her with the Africans in Tucson if possible. We're willing to do any testing on herpes that the TAG recommends, or any other testing that would assure us that this is a safe decision in the elephants' best interest.

We're committed to developing our elephant program to the current standards and working closely with the SSP in providing the best management program possible. We appreciate the comments and advice given to me by several members of the Steering Committee.

Background Information

Elephants are the most popular animals in most zoos. The North American elephant population is cooperatively managed by a group of experts called the Elephant Taxon Advisory Group (or Elephant TAG). They are working to insure that the North American population of elephants is well managed to provide a healthy, long-term elephant population, and to provide excellent facilities for the well-being of elephants, the safety of staff and elephants, and the education and enjoyment of our zoo visitors.

Currently there are about 158 African elephants in North American zoos. Many are older animals nearing the end or past their reproductive period. There are very few young animals in the population; we need to do much better at managing our elephant population if we are going to have elephants in zoos in 20 years. To accomplish a viable population, we need to breed all the potential breeding African elephants currently in North America. This will allow zoos to avoid inbreeding issues in the future (the more individuals that contribute to a population, the easier it is to avoid inbreeding).

For the well-being of elephants they also recommend keeping them in larger groups in large, complex exhibits. This allows for the animals to be more active, live in more natural groups, and remain mentally stimulated.

The Elephant TAG has developed a plan to achieve a viable elephant population, but it depends on zoos committing building new, modern facilities, and housing herd of animals. Since 50% of the births are male, facilities must be able to house bulls long-term. The guidelines for elephant facilities are:

- Facilities must be able to house at least two bulls
- Facilities must be able to house 3 – 12 individuals
 - ◆ Facilities able to house 3 – 6 will hold a bulls
 - ◆ Facilities able to house 6 or more elephants will be breeding facilities
- Facilities must have a restraint device to allow training and medical procedures
- Facilities must be able to manage elephants using protected contact, a training method that increases the safety of elephant keepers

The Elephant TAG is asking for a decision by June from all institutions currently housing elephants as to whether they are able to meet or commit to meeting these requirements. They are asking those institutions that are not able to meet them to plan to move their elephants to other institutions.

Reid Park Zoo's elephant facility

Shaba, our African elephant, is approaching the end of her reproductive period (Shaba is 25, and the recommendation is for elephants to have their first baby before 30). Elephant gestation is 22 months. The population management plan calls for her to have two calves during her lifetime. We need to proceed with plans to breed her, most likely through artificial insemination. If we are

to do that in Tucson, we have to commit to being able to house her calf, male or female, for the life of the calf. This will require a new, modern elephant facility.

Most of the recent criticism about zoos keeping elephants has revolved around northern zoos, where elephants have to stay indoors much of the winter due to weather. Tucson has an ideal climate for elephants, very close to habitats in Kenya and Tanzania where they are native. A new elephant exhibit will certainly drive attendance figures for Reid Park Zoo, and conversely the loss of our elephant exhibit is likely to result in a drop in attendance, as well as potential protests from our community.

From: Scott Barton
To: Neiffer, Donald
Date: 1/13/2005 8:36:24 AM
Subject: RE: elephant stuff

Hi Don,

We have all of these drugs, but we want to make sure we have enough. Shaba weighs about 6800 lbs, what would be the dosages?

We haven't been using leg restraints on her, but we started using a chest chain to keep her from moving up. We can work on a leg chain, but right now she gets pretty fidgety with it. We have a somewhat odd ERD, our challenge now is to keep her from moving side to side. I'll try to send you some digital photos so you can see it. Still, I'm pretty optimistic, she's been doing well.

Scott

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>>> "Neiffer, Donald" <Donald.Neiffer@disney.com> 1/13/2005 7:26:47 AM >>>
Hey Scott,

Regarding fasting: On the evening before the procedures, the elephant should only receive one half ration of hay and nothing else. Water can be provided ad libitum up to one hour before drug administration.

I am right handed, but I tend to switch arms when I am looking for the ovaries. I will need one person to be in charge of holding the sonosite, one holding the recorder, and one spotting for me so I don't fall on my ars. The person holding the sonosite will need to feel comfortable with recording images, changing viewing parameters (easy and I will provide instructions before we start).

Drugs:

Detomidine
Butorphanol 10 mg/ml
Atipamezole
Yohimbine
Naltrexone

Is the elephant used to leg chains/restraints? What about belly band?

Don

-----Original Message-----

From: Scott.Barton@tucsonaz.gov [mailto:Scott.Barton@tucsonaz.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2005 6:41 PM
To: Neiffer, Donald
Subject: elephant stuff

*E-mails regarding
reproductive assessment
of our African
elephant.*

Hey Don,

This is the new e-mail.

Now we're working on doing the conditioning with more people around, it's going pretty well. Tuesday a.m. our vet put his arm into her, she did pretty well but it was apparent that she knew it wasn't the usual one.

The keepers asked if there's any need to fast her or decrease her food the day before if we do the standing immobilization.

Have fun,
Scott

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From: Scott Barton
To: Neiffer, Donald
Date: 2/14/2005 4:54:39 PM
Subject: RE: elephant stuff

Hey Don,

Here's my contact information. Things are steaming along, you've added additional incentive to moving forward with the elephant exhibit. Our director came back from the meeting and started the discussion with the city manager and mayor and council, it's actually going well so far! We want to move ahead with AI, so I want to hear about the next steps (I guess monitoring blood weekly and working on leg restraints?) I spoke with Dr. Schmidt about it briefly at Wheeling (he was teaching at the elephant course). Figure out if you guys want to be involved with the AI, we could be planning for it sooner than later.

Thanks again for all of your help, it really couldn't have gone better. It gave a great boost of confidence to the team too. Send the receipts and we'll get the reimbursement to you.

Take care,
Scott

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From: Scott Barton
To: Neiffer, Donald
Date: 2/15/2005 4:30:45 PM
Subject: Shaba

Hey Don,

We just got the last 6 months of Shaba's urine tests, she's cycling normally. They said you can even tell the follicular and luteal phase on the last cycle. Let's make a plan to make a baby elephant.

Scott

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**AZA Elephant TAG/SSP
Space Survey – 2004**

Facility: Reid Park Zoo

Contact Person: Scott Barton

Date: 7 January 2005

	# African	# Asian
1.) Species and numbers currently housed:		
male		
female	1	1
2.) What is your current maximum holding capacity?		
male		
female	1	1
3.) What will your holding capacity be in 5 (- 7) years?		
male	2	
female	3	1

4.) Are you willing to house only males? **Yes** **No**
 Comments Not at this time, our facilities don't allow it

5.) Do you currently have an elephant restraint device (ERD)? **Yes** **No**
 If no, do you plan to install one in the next **1 yr.** **2 yr.** **3 yr.** **4 yr.** **5 yr. ?**

6.) Do you hold animals that you believe should not be transferred? If so, please list each:

Animal name	SB#	Reason
Shaba		We hope to do AI in Tucson with her, we plan to build a new exhibit in 5 – 7 years.
Connie	180	Great companion for Shaba

**AZA Elephant TAG/SSP
Space Survey – 2004**

7.) If you intend to breed your animals, will you be using natural breeding or AI?

Natural

AI

Both

8.) Do you have space to house all offspring in perpetuity? **Yes** **No**

We will in our new facility (5 – 7 years)

9.) If you hold reproductively viable animals, is there any reason they should not be considered part of the SSP management plan? If so, please list each:

Animal name	SB#	Reason

10.) The elephant TAG/SSP believes importation will be necessary to establish a self-sustaining captive population. Is your facility willing to contribute to this effort and if so how?

Once our new African elephant facility is built, we would be open to participating in an importation and holding new animals.

Asian Elephant Studbook 2004 – Reproductive Information

Bull House Name N/A Studbook Number _____

11. Management System:

a: Free contact b: Protected Contact c: Other, _____

Are you planning any changes to your management system? Yes No

If Yes, please describe _____

12. Semen Collection

a: Good quality b: Poor quality c: No sperm

d: Not done e: In training

Date of latest semen collection: _____

13. Transrectal Ultrasound Results

a: Normal for age b: Underdeveloped organs c: In training

d: Other pathologies e: Not done

Date of latest ultrasound examination: _____

14. Blood or Urine (circle one) Collected for Hormone Analysis

a: Weekly b: Bi-weekly c: Monthly

d: In-training e: Not done f: Collected, not analyzed

15. Written Assessment

a: Available b: Not available

16. Breeding History

a: Access to estrous female, but no penetration SB# _____ date _____

b: Last successful penetration of estrous female SB# _____ date _____

c: Last successful pregnancy resulting from penetration, SB# _____ date _____

d: Last successful pregnancy resulting from AI, SB# _____ date _____

e: Never given access to estrous females

17. Do you authorize release of this reproductive data to the SSP Reproductive

Advisor for inclusion in a database used by the SSP? Yes No

18. Additional Comments: (use back if needed)

Completed by: Scott Barton Date: 7 Jan 2005

Institution Name: Reid Park Zoo

Asian Elephant Studbook 2004 – Reproductive Information

Institution Name: Reid Park Zoo

Asian Elephant Studbook 2004 – Reproductive Information

Cow House Name Connie Studbook Number 180

1. **Management System** (for this animal):
a: Free contact **b: Protected Contact** c: Other, _____
Are you planning any changes to your management system? Yes No
If Yes, please describe _____
2. **Collection of Samples for Reproductive Monitoring**
a: Blood b: Urine **c: None**
3. **If yes to #3, Sample Collection Frequency**
a: Weekly b: Bi-weekly c: Monthly
d: In training e: Collected, not analyzed
What laboratory does the hormonal analysis? _____
4. **Demonstrates Estrous Cyclicity**
a: Yes b: No c: Irregular **d: Undetermined**
Are blood or urine sets available for assay? Yes No
5. **Transrectal Ultrasound Results**
a: Normal b: Ovarian cysts c: Uterine cysts/tumors d: Vaginal cysts
e: Other pathologies f: In training **g: Not done**
Date of latest ultrasound examination: _____
6. **Breeding History**
a: Exposed to bull SB # _____, but no breeding activity
b: Exposed to artificial insemination, bull SB# _____
c: Never exposed to bull or semen
7. **Births**
a: # of live births 0 b: # stillbirths 0
8. **Herd Social Rank**
a: Dominant b: Sub-dominant c: Middle d: Usually subordinate
e. Most subordinant f: Juvenile g: Varies with herdmate (cannot rank)
9. **Do you authorize release of this reproductive data to the SSP Reproductive Advisor for inclusion in a database used by the SSP?** Yes No
10. **Additional Comments: (use back if needed)**

We're currently working to monitor our African female: urine, blood, and ultrasound is scheduled this month. Following that we'll be able to do the same with the Asian if it's the TAG's recommendation.

Completed by: Scott Barton Date: 7 Jan 2005