
Monitor

Police Intercept \$178,000 Ivory

Ivory worth \$178,947 was intercepted by Tanzanian police here on Sunday before being smuggled to Dubai, the authorities said.

A police commander at Dar es Salaam Port said that 68 elephant tusks were stuffed in a container and were to be transferred to a cargo ship leaving for Dubai. A South Korean national, Mr Sung Man Chuo had been arrested for questioning while police are still looking for another South Korean and a Tanzanian freight clerk in connection with the same incident.

According to the police commander, the container belonging to Mr Sung was to have been shipped to Dubai by a German cargo liner *Deutsche Africa*.

Mr Sung entered Tanzania as a tourist and told Port Authorities that the container was stuffed with charcoal. The interception resulted from a tip-off by a person who trailed the container from Morogoro 182 kilometres (120 miles) west of Dar es Salaam, where it was loaded with the ivory.

This is the first incident since the newly-appointed Home Affairs Minister Augustine Mrema, promised to give 50 per cent of the value of the impounded contraband to the person who informs the police.

(AFP) *Daily Nation*, Nairobi, 17th December 1990

Botswana's Problem Elephants

In my article "Botswana's Problem Elephants" I stated that it was not known where a figure of an estimated 20,000 elephants in northern Botswana in 1979 came from. The relevant document (undated) has subsequently been unearthed. In 1977 Sommerlatte² estimated a total of 33,000 elephants in northern Botswana for the Africa-wide elephant survey. Subsequently two other persons considered that Sommerlatte's estimate was too high, claiming that he had extrapolated from high density areas to those of low density. These persons therefore suggested that Sommerlatte's estimate should have been about 20,000 or even, to err on the side of safety, 15,000 to 20,000. A figure of 20,000 was then transposed to the estimate for 1979 although Sommerlatte's original estimate had been for 1977. In fact the original estimate of 33,000 is a remarkably close fit to the 33,272 for that year predicted from the logistic equation given in my article.

That is not to say that the logistic curve that I presented should be taken literally. The object was to provide an illustration of

what might happen at the absolute maximum possible rate of increase of an elephant population; and the observed events appeared to follow this picture.

If one detects a lack of consistency between the suggestion that the numbers might stabilize at some higher level than presently exists, say about 135,000, and the statement that the effects on the environment could be catastrophic, then that is to say that with a total of 135,000 elephants one would expect to have a very different environment within reach of the permanent water than one would have with half that number of elephants, and that this environment on loose Kalahari sands would have very few trees or shrubs, or even perennial grasses.

I had overlooked the map in Smithers³ in which he shows the distribution of elephants about 1969 to extend westwards to the border with Namibia, whereas recent surveys have detected no elephants west of the Okavango River. The increase therefore may be due to an eastwards compression of the population caused by drought, because the area west of the river is waterless, or by interruption to movement due to the settlement that has taken place along the river in recent years. A north-south buffalo fence is to be erected east of the river to control foot and mouth disease which will restrict movement westwards anyway. The logistic curve is of course simply an exercise of the mind and the reflections on possible causes of increase lively speculation.

C.A. Spinage

References

1. C.A. Spinage, "Botswana's Problem Elephants". *Pachyderm* No 13(1990), pp14-19.
2. M.W.L. Sommerlatte, *A survey of elephant populations in northeastern Botswana*, UNDP/FAO Project Bot 72/020, Field Document No 2, 1976.
3. R.H.N. Smithers, *Mammals of Botswana*, Museums Trustees of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 1971.

Riddle's Elephant Breeding Farm and Wildlife Sanctuary, Greenbrier, Arkansas

On a peaceful 330 acre farm dotted with ponds, streams, and surrounded by woods, an unusual new Sanctuary has been established in central Arkansas. The only one of its kind, Riddle's Elephant Breeding Farm and Wildlife Sanctuary, Inc., a non-profit corporation, has been conceived by Scott and Heidi Riddle who between them have been working with elephants for 35 years.

The Riddle's Elephant Breeding Farm is dedicated to preserving both African and Asian elephants and keeping these already endangered animals from disappearing altogether from the face of the earth.

In their native environment, both of these species of magnificent animals have seen their numbers dwindle drastically due to poaching for their ivory but mainly because of local farmers