

ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM



DEDICATED TO PROFESSIONAL ANIMAL CARE

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"ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM" IS A NON-PROFIT MONTHLY PUBLICATION DISTRIBUTED TO PROFESSIONAL ZOO KEEPERS INDEPENDENTLY, AND BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOO KEEPERS AS A SERVICE TO ITS MEMBERS. "ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM" INCLUDES NEWS AND OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOO KEEPERS.

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DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF AKF IS 20 JAN. '76

I COULD GO ON AND ON. TODAY WE DO NOT CONSIDER THE MOOSE ONE OF THE EASIEST SPECIES TO KEEP, YET DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY THE SWEDES KEPT AND TRAINED IT AS A RIDING ANIMAL, RED DEER WERE SOMETIMES TRAINED TO DRAW CARRIAGES HERE IN ENGLAND AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, WHILE A NORWEGIAN, OLAUS MAGNUS, HAS RECORDED SOMETHING ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE ABOUT THE BROWN BEAR. NOT ONLY WAS IT ONCE TRAINED TO HARNESS, PULLING LADEN SLEDGES, BUT AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY IT WOULD UNLOAD THE BOXES AND BALES AND STACK THEM INTO PILES. AS I SAID EARLIER, ARE WE LOSING THE ART OF KEEPING WILD ANIMALS?

THE SPECTRUM OF DEATH BY GARY K. CLARKE, DIRECTOR TOPEKA ZOOLOGICAL PARK

DEATH IS A PART OF LIFE.

ANYONE WHO WORKS WITH LIVING ANIMALS OVER A PERIOD OF TIME WILL EXPERIENCE DEATH AS A MATTER OF COURSE. DURING MY YOUTH VARIOUS PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WOULD BRING TO ME ORPHANED, SICK OR INJURED WILD ANIMALS. SOME OF THEM SURVIVED WITH TREATMENT AND CARE, BUT MANY OF THEM DIED.

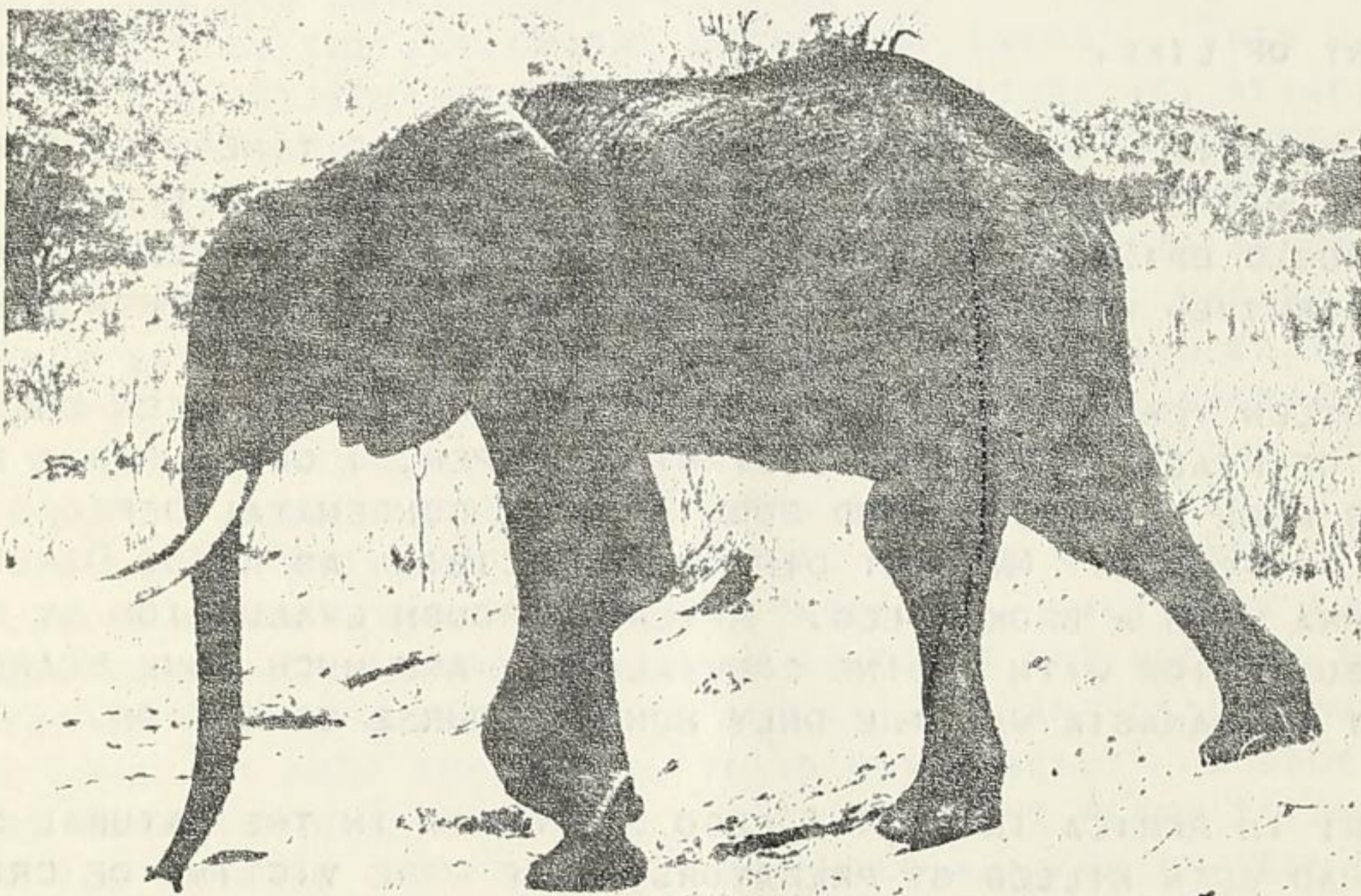
DURING MY EIGHTEEN YEARS IN THE ZOO PROFESSION, DEATH HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST ABSOLUTE OF REALITIES. AS A BEGINNING KEEPER, I CARED FOR A NEWBORN CAMEL THAT WAS WEAK FROM BIRTH AND SOON DIED OF CONGENITAL DEFECTS; THIS WAS VERY HARD TO ACCEPT. MY MOST DIFFICULT DECISION AS A ZOO DIRECTOR INVOLVED A ZEBRA WITH A BROKEN LEG. AFTER THOROUGH EVALUATION BY VETERINARIANS, CONSULTATION WITH EQUINE SPECIALISTS, AND MUCH SOUL SEARCHING, I DECIDED THAT EUTHANASIA WAS THE ONLY HUMANE COURSE OF ACTION.

WHILE ON SAFARI IN AFRICA IN 1974 I ALSO SAW DEATH IN THE NATURAL STATE. SOME ANIMALS HAD BEEN KILLED BY PREDATORS, SOME WERE VICTIMS OF DROUGHT, AND SOME, OF COURSE, WERE KILLED BY POACHERS. I CAN SWALLOW HARD AND ACCEPT ALL OF THE ABOVE INSTANCES OF DEATH. BUT I CANNOT ACCEPT DEATH AS I WITNESSED IT IN AFRICA IN THE FALL OF 1975.

IT WAS NOT SIMPLY A QUESTION OF A FEW POACHED ANIMALS, OR LACK OF RAIN IN TSAVO NATIONAL PARK--IT WAS A MATTER OF THE ENTIRE ENVIRONMENT DYING.

THE SADDEST DAY OF MY LIFE BEGAN AT SUNRISE WHEN WE SPOTTED THE CARCASS OF AN ELEPHANT THAT HAD DIED OVERNIGHT JUST OUTSIDE OUR LODGE. AS WE STARTED OUR GAME RUN INTO TSAVO WEST, WE NOTICED THAT IN JUST ONE YEAR THE PARK HAD LITERALLY TURNED INTO A DESERT. WE LEARNED THAT THE WORST KIND OF DESTRUCTION WAS TAKING PLACE--POACHERS WERE SNEAKING IN AT NIGHT AND CUTTING DOWN THE FOREST TO BE PROCESSED INTO CHARCOAL. THUS, THE ANIMALS' FOOD SOURCE AND HABITAT IS BEING DESTROYED ON A MASSIVE SCALE. RHINOS ARE EATING THE INADEQUATE VEGETATION THAT IS LEFT. THEN, WHEN THEY DRINK, WATER CAUSES THIS VEGETATION TO BLOAT AND BECOME IMPACTED, KILLING THE ANIMAL. THIS YEAR WE COUNTED NINE DEAD RHINOS IN A ROW IN WHAT IS NOW A VALLEY OF DEATH. IN FACT, WE SAW MORE DEAD THAN LIVE RHINOS.

THE ELEPHANTS HAVE BEEN DRIVEN TO THE POINT WHERE THEY HAVE COMPLETELY DESTROYED THE HUGE, ANCIENT BAOBAB TREES. IN THEIR DESPERATE ATTEMPTS FOR SURVIVAL, THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE HERD HAS BEEN LOST AND WE SAW MANY YOUNG ANIMALS WANDERING ALONE IN THE BUSH SEARCHING FOR FOOD. IT IS A TRAGIC SIGHT TO SEE THESE MAGNIFICENT ANIMALS THIN AND GAUNT,



STARVING YOUNG ELEPHANT WANDERING ALONE IN SEARCH OF FOOD. TSAVO WEST NATIONAL PARK, KENYA. (PHOTO BY GARY K. CLARKE)

NOT EVEN FLAPPING THEIR EARS.

SUCH AN EXPERIENCE LEAVES ONE FEELING VERY EMPTY AND HELPLESS.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

WHAT CAN I DO?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

PERSONALLY, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE MOST MEANINGFUL COURSE OF ACTION IS TO SUPPORT THE EAST AFRICAN WILD LIFE SOCIETY AS MUCH AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN. THE SOCIETY, FOUNDED IN 1961, IS A NON-PROFIT, NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY, ASSISTING THE THREE EAST AFRICAN REPUBLICS OF KENYA, UGANDA AND TANZANIA, IN THE WORK OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WILDLIFE IN THE REGION.

OVER THREE HUNDRED SEPARATE CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND COMPLETED BY AND ON THE SOCIETY'S INITIATIVE. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT EVERY CENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY GO DIRECTLY INTO CONSERVATION PROJECTS, AND NONE OF THIS MONEY IS USED FOR OVERHEAD, SALARIES OR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS. BASICALLY THE WORK DONE BY THE SOCIETY FALLS INTO FOUR CATEGORIES; EDUCATION, ANIMAL RESCUE, ANTI-POACHING AND RESEARCH. EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES LIST NUMEROUS PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY SPECIALISTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.

MEMBERSHIP IS ONLY \$10.00 A YEAR. THIS INCLUDES A YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO AFRICANA, THE QUARTERLY WILDLIFE MAGAZINE OF EAST AFRICA, AND AN OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION. THE SOCIETY ALSO OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF PRINTS, WILDLIFE JEWELRY, TIES, CAR AND BLAZER BADGES, GREETING CARDS, POST CARDS, CALENDARS AND BOOKS. THEIR ADDRESS IS:

EAST AFRICAN WILD LIFE SOCIETY
P.O. Box 20110
NAIROBI, KENYA - EAST AFRICA

I URGE YOU TO JOIN TODAY.

A DATE TO REMEMBER IS MARCH 21, 1976 AS IT MARKS THE START OF THE 41ST NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONFERENCE. THE CONFERENCE REPRESENTS ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS GATHERINGS OF CONSERVATIONISTS IN NORTH AMERICA. THE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES ON MARCH 25TH AND IS BEING HELD AT THE WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL IN WASHINGTON D.C.. INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY WRITING: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, 1000 VERMONT AVE., N.W. 709 WIRE BLDG., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005.