



IN DEFENSE OF ANIMALS

# Elephant Facts

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY ABOUT ELEPHANTS AND SPACE

“I am stunned that the AZA is not able to perceive the empirical evidence that elephants need much more space than what is currently allotted to them. In the form of routine problems captive elephant managers face every day, the evidence is unmistakable: foot diseases, arthritis, weight related diseases, infertility, heightened aggression, and other neurotic behavior.”

– *Joyce Poole, scientist who has studied elephant behavior and communication in wild elephants in Africa for over 30 years*

“... [I]n order to meet what we know today are the biological and behavioral needs of gigantic and intelligent elephants, this new kind of zoo should be about 1280 acres--or two square miles--in size, and be situated in a mild climate where the elephants can be outdoors most of the time. Only in a zoo this big can elephants roam freely and do what elephants naturally do... The gold standard for keeping any animal in captivity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is simply this: Can we meet that animal's biological and behavioral needs? If we cannot, then we should not keep that species of animal locked up inside a zoo.”



Free-ranging elephants roam 150 square miles (96,000 acres) at the relatively small Amboseli National Park in Kenya.

– *Dr. Michael Schmidt, former Chief Veterinarian and Senior Research Veterinarian for Oregon Zoo*

“In the course of a single year... the area covered by an elephant with a modest 300km<sup>2</sup> range would be over 70,000 acres. The environments provided by zoos – the relatively small enclosures (an acre is tiny to an elephant, even if it represents a large piece of urban real estate), the unnatural,

small social groups of unrelated animals (sometimes even total solitude) – are impoverished by comparison, and can never even marginally approximate the experience of elephants in the wild... In summary, urban zoos are no places for elephants. They are much better off in the wild, or as a second-best alternative, sanctuaries, but certainly not zoos.”

– *William Keith Lindsay, Ph.D. in zoology and natural-resource ecologist with nearly 30 years of professional experience in research, management, and conservation of African elephants*

“The last twenty years have produced a wealth of scientific knowledge about elephants. Surely, in recognition of their complex social behavior, zoos should be cooperating to produce fewer but larger captive elephant herds. This would undoubtedly increase the breeding potential of the captive population, as well as providing more opportunities for individual animals to display normal social behavior.”

– *Paul Rees, Ph.D., researcher in elephant behavior and ecology, University of Salford, England*

“Asian elephant annual homeranges are anywhere between 25000 Ha to 60,000 Ha (61,750 acres to 148,200 acres)... I have studied wild elephant ranging behaviour using state of the art technology like radio tracking and GPS collars using satellite downloads in a variety of habitats from India and Malaysia. I would think at the minimum, you should aim for at least a 100 Ha. (247 acres). Even this would be less than 1/200 of their natural home range in the wild.”

– *A. Christy Williams, Ph.D., Asian elephant researcher, Member IUCN Asian Elephant Specialist Group*