

Request for Information on Elephant Behaviour

Jeheskel Shoshani

Elephant Research Foundation, Bloomfield Hills, USA

My colleagues and I have been compiling the available data, information, and observations (published and unpublished) on elephant behaviours that indicate cognitive thinking processes beyond innate or programmed behaviours. We have collected much information and we are preparing a paper for publication incorporating these observations together with the accumulated knowledge of elephant brain. We are also trying to understand, in an evolutionary perspective, what physical and social attributes are required to make a tool.

Before submitting our paper, we thought that we might have missed some published material and there might be readers who would be willing to share observations to augment our knowledge on elephant behaviour. We ask readers to please send us any observations related to tool using and/or tool making in elephants. Please note that we already have collected many references on these topics (e.g., Chevalier-Skolnikoff, S. & Liska, J. [1993, *Animal Behaviour* 46: 209-219]; Hart, B.L. et al. [1994, 2001, 2002, in press, *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*]; Poole, J.H. [1998, *Etica & Animal* 9: 85-110]), but it would not hurt to send references, just in case we did not see them.

More importantly, we ask you to send us your unpublished observations of elephant tool using and/or tool making (if you have photos, that is even better). Depending on the content of your observations, we can either acknowledge your help, or should you feel that your contribution warrants co-authorship, we will evaluate the content of your contribution and discuss the options. Below are the information/data we request:

Brief description of the observation, location (as accurate as possible, with GPS if available), date, gender (F, M) and age (young, adult, sub-adult) of the elephant, place of observation – captivity (C) or in the wild (W), and source (complete

reference) or date, for unpublished observations. I provide below four examples.

1. Asian, ?, ?, Sad, Ad, DESCRIPTION: Uses planks and branches to place under feet to prevent from sinking in the mud. SOURCE: Sanderson (1962).
2. Asian, C, M, Ad, DESCRIPTION: Elephant fails to obey command to lower pillar into a hole until a sleeping dog in the hole is chased away, possibly to avoid hurting the dog. SOURCE: Pillai (1941).
3. Asian, W, F, Yg, Sad, Ad, DESCRIPTION: Modify branches to make leech scrapers, body scratches, and to chase away flies. SOURCE: Peal (1879).
4. Asian & African, W & C, ?, Sad, Ad, DESCRIPTION: Modify branches by shortening them or by removing side branches for a purpose — to drive away flies. SOURCE: Hart & Hart (1994), Hart et al. (2001, 2002); Braden (2003, attributed to I. Douglas-Hamilton and/or J. Poole).

Kindly send information to:
Jeheskel Shoshani at hezy23@gmail.com

Thank you.

Author's e-mail: hezy23@gmail.com