

## Appreciation

Professor Jeheskel “Hezy” Shoshani (1943 - 2008)

*By Simon Hedges*

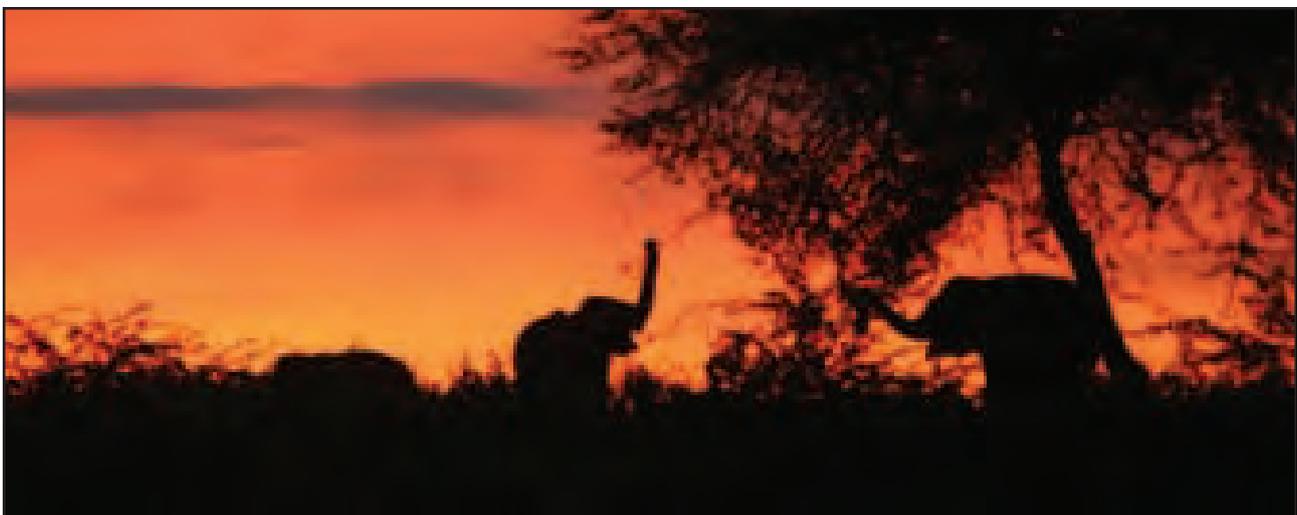
On May 20th, 2008, an explosion in a public minibus in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) seriously injured Professor Jeheskel “Hezy” Shoshani, 65, and he died later in hospital. A US citizen, Hezy, who was born in Tel Aviv, had been teaching in Addis Ababa for the previous year and a half as well as conducting elephant research in Ethiopia. Before that he spent eight years studying elephants in Eritrea. Throughout this period he also worked tirelessly to safeguard the region’s elephants.

Hezy was an internationally renowned elephant expert and one of the world’s most passionate protectors of elephants. He was also a much loved mentor to many students in Eritrea and elsewhere.

Hezy became interested in elephants after reading “Burma Boy” by Willis Lindquist. His primary research was on the evolutionary biology of the Proboscidea, especially their anatomy and physiology and how to apply this knowledge to our understanding of elephant behaviour and ecology. His identification of faunal remains found in excavations in Eritrea dating to 800–350 BCE were a major contribution to the prehistory of the Horn of Africa. Hezy published about 200

scientific and popular articles and was the editor of two books on elephants and their relatives: a popular book, “Elephants: Majestic Creatures of the Wild” (2000, Checkmark Books, New York, USA) and a technical volume (with Pascal Tassy), “The Proboscidea: Evolution and Palaeoecology of Elephants and Their Relatives” (1996, Oxford University Press, UK). Prior to his positions in northeast Africa, Hezy taught at Wayne State University in the USA for approximately 25 years. In 1977, he established the Elephant Research Foundation (an international non-profit organization) and was the editor of its publication, “Elephant”.

Hezy’s great friend Ian Redmond had the following message: “There is nothing I can say to soften the blow of such terrible news – we will all carry memories of Hezy’s infectious laugh, thirst for knowledge, and love of life.” I only had the pleasure of meeting Hezy once, at last year’s CITES Conference in The Hague, although we had corresponded over the years, but like everyone who ever met him I was struck by his sense of humour, his energy, and his dedication to elephant conservation. His untimely death is a great loss for all of us – and for elephants.



Elephants at sunset in southern Sri Lanka (May 2008)  
Photo by Prithiviraj Fernando