

Animal studies: african elephants essay sample



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Physical Characteristics -

African elephants are the largest of all land animals, adult males weighing between 1, 800 and 6, 300 kg (2 and 7 tons/ 4, 000 and 14, 000 lb.). Females are smaller, weighing between 2, 700 and 3, 600 kg (3 and 4 tons/ 6, 000 and 8, 000 lb.). Shoulder height ranges between three and four m (9. 8 and 13. 1 ft.). The African Elephant is Grey and their skin is deeply wrinkled with sparse hair over the body. Their head has one round dome.

The average Temperature for the African Elephant is around 96 - 98 degrees. African Elephants are societal creatures centred around the female and her offspring. Herds usually consist of about ten females and their young, with the " matriarch" of the herd being the oldest and also the leader of the herd. When the herd grows too large, it will split into two or more smaller herds. These smaller herds will occasionally combine to form larger, temporary herds in areas where there is plenty of food and water.

Permanent methods of identification -

Permanent - Brownish grey skin has folds and may be one inch thick in places. The African Elephant has a marked dip between its fore and hindquarters giving a concave curvature to its back. Ears are large and fan-like. The trunk has two prehensile protrusions at the tip. Large tusks are present in both sexes. Elephants are digitigrade with pads of fibrous tissue to cushion toe bon. Transporting an Elephant -

Before transporting elephants, make the following preparations:

1. Plan the journey
2. Prepare the elephant

3. Prepare the vehicle and the necessary equipment

4. Prepare the required documents

1. Plan the journey

Before travelling, the mahout should know following the essential details: the route to be taken, the approximate time of travel, and the destination point.

This information is essential so that the elephant is assured of having sufficient food and water while on the road. The easiest thing is to prepare banana tree stalks and other food with high moisture content, as this is more convenient to carry than ordinary food and water. Also the mahout or manager should ensure that there is a suitable and easy place for the elephant to board the truck and to disembark from the truck at the destination, especially if the elephant is hard to unload. If the elephant must travel far (more than one day), the mahout should know places to buy or find food and water.

Warning: It is essential to avoid travelling in strong sunlight because the elephant can suffer from such exposure even to the point of death.

Travelling at night is best.

2. Prepare the elephant

Before transporting an elephant, the animal should be given time, at least two or three days, to rest and to eat and drink to its satisfaction. For cow elephants and calves, it is not good for them to travel alone; it is best if they have an elephant they are familiar with as a travel companion. (The mother will not be apprehensive and will be easier to control.) Most importantly, in

moving elephants to a location with which they are unfamiliar, it is essential that the mahout should always stay very near the elephant and should never desert the elephant.

When transportation involves a vehicle, the mahout should know whether the elephant is familiar with climbing on and off a truck. If the elephant is difficult to load or the animal is fearful, other people must be called in to help in the loading. It is best if the elephant has been practiced and is comfortable getting on and off a vehicle, because if not the loading can be difficult: wasting a lot of time, putting the animal in great stress and possibly even wounding it with spears or elephant hooks.

3. Prepare the vehicle and equipment

If transportation is by motor vehicle, the mahout or manager must be satisfied as to the size and the condition of the vehicle, in order to assure a safe and punctual arrival. The mahout or manager should determine that the vehicle is legally registered and properly insured. The driver should have a valid commercial driver's license, either Class 2 or Class 3. The mahout should determine that the driver is even-tempered and, preferably, has experience transporting elephants.

4. Prepare the required documents

The manager, owner, or mahout should make sure they have in their possession the original Registration Certificate when they apply for travel papers. When travelling, a copy is sufficient and the mahout should be ready

to at any time present a copy of the Registration Certificate to any inspecting official.

Before travel, the manager, owner, or mahout must prepare the four following documents:

1. A guarantee of the suitability of the destination as an appropriate place for the elephant. This guarantee is issued by the Livestock Department. Before travel, the owner or manager must contact responsible officials of the Livestock Department at the destination.

2. The original Registration Certificate and a copy of the same.

3. A certificate guaranteeing that the elephant has been vaccinated in the elephant's home district. The owner, manager or mahout must get this certificate from the district Livestock Department.

4. A copy of the elephant owner's National Identity Card and the Household Registration Certificate. If the owner is not the person in charge while transporting the elephant, then he must prepare a Power of Attorney designating the person who will have responsibility, and that person must have copies of their National Identity Card and their Household Registration Certificate and of the Power of Attorney when they apply for travel papers.

Code of practice that best describes the care of this animal species - - To promote humane and considerate treatment of cattle, and the use of good husbandry practices - To ensure the welfare of cattle in all types of cattle farming enterprises; - To inform all people responsible for the care and management of cattle about their responsibilities; - To set an industry

standard by defining minimum acceptable cattle management practices.

Minimum standard of housing requirements for an Elephant -

- Sheds, pens, yards, lanes, ramps and other areas where cattle come together should be constructed and maintained so as to minimise stress, injury and disease. - Floors of yards, sheds, pens and loading ramps should have a surface that minimises slipping and is easy to clean. - Holding yards should be designed to minimise stress or injury. Cattle held in yards longer than eight hours should be allowed space to lie down. Depending on management requirements, cattle should be confined on concrete surfaces as briefly as possible. Prolonged physical contact with concrete floors predisposes cattle to lameness particularly in wet conditions when the horn of the hoof is softened. Artificial floors should be non-slip, non-abrasive and easy to clean and dry. Gravel tracks to and from paddocks, sheds or dairies should be constructed and maintained adequately to avoid foot lameness. Cattle with foot lameness should not be forced to walk on rough tracks. - Restraint facilities should allow for safe inspection and treatment of cattle. Races and crushes should be constructed to allow efficient handling of cattle without endangering animals or handlers. Head restraint facilities should allow for quick release and avoid choking. Walk-through bails are preferred; guillotine headbails are not recommended. - Cattle must not be driven to the point of collapse.

Signs of a healthy elephants -

- * Constant motion - ears flapping, tail or trunk swinging. * Eyes clear and bright; a small amount of clear discharge from the conjunctival sac is normal.
- * Mouth, tongue, and inside of the trunk a rosy pink.

* Tip of the trunk moist.

* Skin soft and resilient.

* Moisture present at the base of the nail, neither too far nor too lean. *

Appetite good, appears content

Common disease that effects an elephant -

Elephant Pox -

Elephant pox is one of the most dangerous diseases for elephants. Most often, it is spread to the elephants from rodents. It is lethal, and was until vaccination programmes, responsible for the death of many elephants. Even when treated, an infection leads to an enormous suffer for the elephants, and should be avoided at any prize.

Wedge Tailed Eagle:

Physical characteristics -

Adult birds are a dark blackish brown colour, females being a bit lighter in colour than males. The young are a lighter brown with reddish brown heads and wings. Newly hatched chicks are covered in white fluffy feathers called down, but feathers start to develop from the second week and it takes just a few weeks for the young to look like their parents. They become darker brown as they grow older. Females are larger than males, weighing over 4 kg, while males weigh about 3.5 - 4kg. The wings of a Wedge-tailed eagle are about 2.5 metres from tip to tip. The birds grow to about a metre in length. Permanent methods of identification -

The Wedge-tailed Eagle has long wings (wingspan 2.3 m), a characteristic long, wedge-shaped tail, and legs that are feathered all the way to the base of the toes. The bill is pale pink to cream, the eye brown to dark brown, and

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the feet off-white. Young Wedge-tailed Eagles are mid brown in colour with reddish-brown heads and wings. Transporting an Eagle -

* Length -

* no less than 20% (one fifth) longer than the longest bird to be carried in it.

* no more than twice the length of the longest bird to be carried

in it. * Width - 50% of the minimum length providing that if more than one bird is to be transported, the container should be wide enough for all birds to stand shoulder to shoulder. * Height - should be high enough for the birds to stand normally and no higher than 50mm above the bird's head when

standing in a normal posture. The exception to this is for small finches (cage 1) where the height will be 150mm. Height should be such that the birds standing on the floor cannot obstruct ventilation holes. * No bird should be transported in a container together with a bird of a different species. * Birds that fight should be shipped in separate containers. * The floor of the carry cage should be such that birds can obtain a secure footing. * Adequate ventilation should be provided by drilling or clipping holes 0.8-1 cm diameter in a line along both sides and both ends of the container at intervals not exceeding 4 cm. The holes should be near the top edge but care must be taken that they are not blocked when a cover or lid is in place.

* Ventilation holes must be clipped out or drilled out. (Holes which are made by perforating with a spike easily become blocked). * One side of solid timber or metal carry cases should have bird wire or welded fabric of a size that prevents the head of a bird from protruding, on a minimum of one half of the area of that side. * Containers should be darkened, taking care not to obstruct ventilation. * Birds in containers should not be left unattended or

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exposed to high temperatures, wind or rain. * To reduce undue stress, birds should not be confined in a carrying container for more than a minimum amount of time. * Food and water should be provided if transport is longer than two hours. Water should not be placed in a container during transport unless it is in a non-spill container. * Every vendor of birds should provide containers appropriate to the kinds of birds he offers for sale. Code of practice that best describes the care of this animal species - This code has been prepared from a consideration of the welfare of cage birds held in captivity. Its purpose is to define the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care that are appropriate to the various species of cage birds. Minimum standard housing requirements for an Eagle -

All cages should be kept in a state of cleanliness that is conducive to good health of the birds. Accommodation should provide: * protection from extremes of climate;

* A draught-free shelter incorporating suitable wind breaks; * Protection from predators;

* A means of escape from or avoidance of other cage birds; * A variety of different diameter perches with sufficient space for all birds; * An adequate number of feed and water stations to meet the requirements of all birds; * A choice of nesting and roosting sites and/or provision of suitable nesting material for all birds in the cage. Wet areas may present a health hazard and suitable floor drainage should be provided. Sign of a healthy Eagle -

* Activity Level

Look for a bird that is active and alert, and interested in what is going on.

Younger birds often sleep more than adults, but still usually wake up and are

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interested in new people and activity around their cage. Avoid birds that are puffed up, sleepy, or reluctant to move (signs of illness). * Eyes

Should be clear and bright, with no discharge or swelling.

* Nostrils

Should be clear of discharge or blockages. Scaliness around the nostrils can indicate a mite infestation. * Beak

The top and bottom parts of the beak should meet evenly, without gaps, and in good alignment. The top part of the beak should not be overgrown or overly pointy, and the edges of the beak should be smooth. * Feathers

Look for birds that have shiny, healthy-looking feathers with no downy feathers showing through. There should be no bald spots, except in Lutino cockatiels which often have a bald spot behind the crest. Baby birds take a while to become fully feathered but by the time they are weaned they should have all their feathers and are not fluffy anymore. However, young birds often have frayed feathers and a bit of a dishevelled appearance. * Feet

In young birds, the feet should be smooth and soft, while in older birds they are usually a bit more scaly in appearance. However, watch for overly scaly feet which can be a sign of problems. The feet should be free of bumps or sores. * Vent

The vent is the area around the combined opening of the urinary, digestive, and reproductive systems (just in front of the tail on the underside of the bird). This area should be clean and dry, free of matted feathers or fecal material. * Body Condition

This is a bit more difficult to assess since you need to be able to feel the chest of the bird. Get the seller to hold the bird on its back, and try to feel the keel bone, which is a long, thin, flat bone that protrudes from the chest wall (breast bone) of the bird and runs down the midline of the bird from the chest to the belly. In a bird in good condition, the keel can be felt but its edge is nearly even with the muscles on the chest. In an underweight bird, the keel bone is very prominent and in an obese bird it is very difficult to feel. You want a bird that is in good condition and not too skinny (although newly weaned birds are often a bit thin) or too fat. More detail on feeling the keel is available in "How Do I Assess a Bird's Body Condition?" * Breathing

Should be regular, quiet and not strained. Wheezing, clicking, shorting, or heavy, laboured breathing can be a sign of respiratory problems. Common Diseases of this animal -

Megaloschizonts:

Megaloschizonts of *Haemoproteus* cause clinically significant myopathy in pied currawongs within the Sydney region of New South Wales. This organism was initially reported as *Leucocytozoon* sp. *Haemoproteus* spp. infection occurred in juvenile, sub-adult and adult birds of both sexes, at any time of year, but it has not been seen in recent years. Infection in some birds may have been incidental; however, heavy parasite burdens in some birds resulted in lethargy, weakness and debility. If the breast feathers are parted, pale oval foci were evident throughout the pectoral musculature in affected birds. There is no known treatment for this protozoal infection and birds often die shortly after initial examination. The lifecycle of this protozoal agent is unknown. Upon post mortem examination of affected birds, discrete,

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pale oval foci measuring up to 1.5 cm long and 0.5 cm wide are scattered throughout the skeletal muscles, tongue, myocardium and ventricular muscularis externa. Histopathologic examination demonstrates that pale foci consist of central megaloschizonts, surrounded by necrotic muscle and an intense inflammatory response. Haemorrhage, necrosis, and inflammation are most severe around ruptured megaloschizonts. Pigmented oval Haemoproteus gamonts may or may not be evident within circulating erythrocytes of affected birds.