

Care for Elephants



NEWS

ZEN Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery, Harare – 08/2020

Dear supporters,

2020 has flown by in a flash of madness and mayhem! Never would I have imagined such turmoil, polarity and anxiety within the global population. When the Covid 19 pandemic started to rear its ugly head, I was fairly cynical about it all. Then I became ill and the reality actually set in. I was hospitalised in intensive care for a week, having very nearly died, simply as I was initially unable to get treatment of any kind. The country was ill prepared at that time and no one really knew what to do. Thankfully, I recovered but it certainly gave me room for much reflection, not least on the work that I do.

ZEN is a calling, an intrinsic need to make a difference ... but of course, it is about **LOVING** elephants! However, it is not just enough for me to love elephants. I am driven to make a difference and help those that I can. This being said, the previous season of rescues took a tremendous toll on my physical and mental health. I struggled with the deaths, the long and lonely hours, the fear and the unknown. To this end, I have had to change my modus operandi and my attitude.

It is simply not possible to do this job with a sense of detachment. If I were to do that, the Team would collapse and we would not be able to do our jobs properly. I have had to learn to delegate more, whilst keeping my eye firmly focused on the animals. This has been a tremendously hard transition for me to make. I am a hands on, active person! I like to do it all myself!

Now, I have spent more time handing over tasks to committed handlers, management and staff, all of whom have risen to the occasion. What a relief that is! Going into the next season will be easier, I believe, as we all have our lanes now and won't drop dead from exhaustion!

My mum sent this to me recently, and if you don't mind, I am sharing with you all:

*When you have come to the end of the light you have,
And you must step into the darkness,
Be sure of one of two things ...*

*Either you will find something firm to stand on,
Or you will be taught to fly.*

I intend to stand firm AND fly!! I hope that you will all continue this journey with my Team and I, but more importantly with the little lives that we try to rescue, rehabilitate and release.



The following is a little report on the Elephants that YOU support.

I realise that Zimbabwe has its many faults and things are not perfect here, but we are trying to make a difference in many ways, great and small. Our ZEN Release project is going so well, with many interactions with wild elephants and great protection of the 34 000 hectare landscape. The circle is starting to complete, which fills me with enormous pride for what our entire Team has managed to achieve.

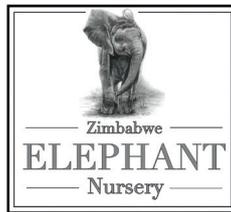
However, without you all, none of this would be possible. I know that Covid is taking a heavy toll on you all personally, as well as conservation initiatives world wide, but if we can stay connected, we will get through this current crisis.

Sending you all much love and elephant hugs

Roxy Danckwerts

ACT NOW: www.FutureForElephants.org





Care for Elephants



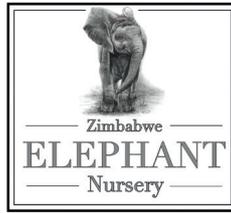
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KADIKI und BUMI

These two little orphans are a testament to how far we have come in our management of small calves. Both arrived late November 2019, victims of drought and heat. Not only that, but both were seriously compromised with wounds and sunburn. We pulled them through by their bootstraps, willing them both to live and thrive. It was round the clock care of dressing wounds, applying ointments, coaxing medications and above all, getting them to drink their life sustaining milk formula. Bumi suffered terribly from teething, but Kadiki managed to sail through that period. However, Kadiki had to have two tail amputations, after the first attempt failed. The pain was very hard for her to cope with.

Currently, these two little souls are the best of friends and have started spending much time with the bigger elephants in the main herd. Bumi is somewhat circumspect about this and is a very sensitive little elephant. Kadiki is right in there, climbing under and over large tummies, splashing in the water and chasing ducks.



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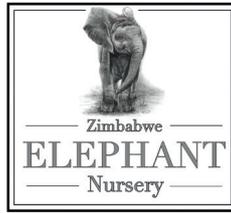


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COCO

Coco is always recognisable by the wrinkles on her forehead, which make her look perplexed. She is a quiet little elephant, who suffered such terrible trauma as a young calf, when her mother was killed by a bus. Coco took a long time to settle down and learn to trust humans again. She also has tremendous problems with her digestive system, unable to digest the milk formula which the other elephants are consuming. The only formula she is able to manage is the neonatal mix, which is incredibly expensive. We also supplement her with a lot of coconut oil, to ensure that she is getting enough calories in her diet. Coco will also be moving to *Panda Masuie* this year, and she will be guided and protected by Marsie, who is a gentle mentor for her. I suspect that the three bigger females at *Panda Masuie* will immediately “adopt” Coco into their little group, where she will have a chance to make friends with Pookie and Lizzie, who are only slightly older than she is.



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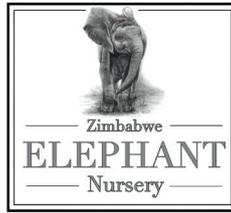


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LIMPOPO

Limpopo continues to be our little clown! He has grown dramatically in the past six months and I think he is going to be an enormous bull. He has made friends with newcomer, Johnnie Walker, who was a rescue from the *Mana Pools* drought. They sleep side by side in the new stables that we have built and are firm buddies. Kukurukura, our big gentle bull, is kind to these two little boys, often playing with them and allowing them to rough and tumble around him. Limpopo is still very attached to the handlers, having come in as a newborn. We find that these neonate arrivals take a lot longer to rehabilitate into wild elephants, than those calves who have had some wild experience.



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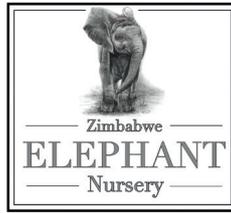


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MARSIE

Marsie will also be shortly leaving the Nursery for our *Panda Masuie* release site. She is more than ready to start her next journey, a few steps closer to a wild life. Marsie is a playful and fun young elephant! The new female calves rescued from *Mana Pools*, late last year, will often turn to Marsie for protection or advice, when Moyo's trunk is full! She is a little butterball, with an enormous appetite! We have purposefully kept her quite wild, since her rescue. As she was a slightly older calf on rescue, we thought it sensible not to let her lose her wild instincts, nor become too familiar with humans. We are hoping that this will stand her in good stead for her final re-wilding.



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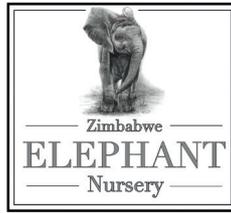


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UNITY

Unity is very closely bonded to Moyo. For that reason, we are unable to move her to the release site this year, and intend waiting another year before she moves to her next stage. Although Unity is big for her age, her tusks have not yet erupted and she is often mistaken for being older than she is. She is a milk guzzler of note and screams very loudly when her milk is late! She recently suffered from a large malignant tumour on her trunk, which we were able to successfully treat and eradicate in nine days, using a herbal oil. We have used this oil before in other elephants, but had some concerns that Unity's lesion had grown so large very quickly. However, she has fully recovered and is now back her normal boisterous self!



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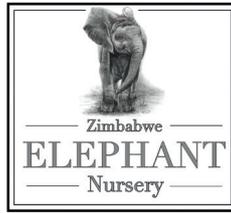


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KUKURUKURA

Kura, as he affectionately known, is a fine young giant! He is growing incredibly fast and is a much beloved member of the Nursery. It has been decided that Kura will stay at the Nursery in a Sanctuary type of position, as we do not feel that it is in his best interests to try and release him at *Panda Masuie*. He has a previous injury, a severely broken back leg, which hampers his movement considerably. He has a severe limp and a slight scoliosis of the spine, which will probably get worse as he gets older. He would never cope in the wild, nor in the harsh terrain of our release site. Kura is very happy here at „*Wild is Life*“, playing an important role as playmate to the young bulls and giving Moyo some balance. He is so gentle with the young calves, amazingly so, and he welcomes each new arrival with beautiful rumbles and trunk blows.



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MOYO

Madam Moyo continues to be the little Matriarch of the Nursery herd. She is an incredible elephant and each day she teaches us all something extraordinary. We have increased the size of her stable, as elephants really need to be moving about, even at night. It is very important for their general circulation. I have been spending a lot of time in the bush with the herd, during these past winter months. Moyo is just the best companion for quiet contemplation.

She can be feisty and gets a bit stressed if one her charges gets up to no good! She will rumble quietly, break up arguments, comfort anyone who is upset and gently guides the little ones through their daily routine. She also has a great sense of fun and humour, most especially during mud baths! She hurls mud around, swirling her great trunk with vigour, knowing full well that she is covering the handlers in mud and dust!