



Rufunsa Rescue: part 2... Elephant Orphan takes to the Sky!

News update from the Elephant Orphanage Project – 15th Sept 2010

To Rescue, Rehabilitate and Release Zambia's orphaned elephants back into the wild

After transfer to Lusaka, little Rufunsa – the five month old elephant recently rescued from Feira near the Mozambique border, was kept in quarantine, courtesy of 'Lilayi Game Ranch', for a few days to recover from stress and to undergo health checks by ZAWA Head Vet Dr Matandiko. Following further review Dr Matandiko gave him the all clear to travel and join the other orphaned elephants at the Elephant Orphanage Project in Kafue National Park...

On Sunday 12th, with his Keeper at his side and amongst the many new friends he had made, Rufunsa was loaded into the Cessna Caravan provided courtesy of 'Proflight Zambia' and was flown the one hour journey to Ngoma airstrip, accompanied by Dr Matandiko who ensured there were no complications en-route. The EOP team were all waiting to receive the little ele who seemed in very good spirits and drank 1L of milk upon landing!



Chamilandu puts a protective trunk around little Runfunsa (middle) as he greets Tafika (right) and Batoka (far left)

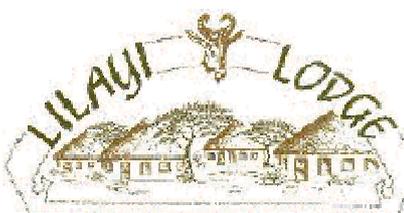
Chamilandu (the only female) was naturally the first at his stable, immediately aware and concerned for this new addition to their herd. The other younger ele's also crowded around to get a look and touch-by-trunk of the little ele, whilst Chodoba - the biggest and oldest elephant – shied from the stable as if Rufunsa was something very frightening indeed!

After spending a night in the stable next to Chamilandu, the two seemed to have bonded well through the gum-poles and at first light we were all excited to let Rufunsa outside to meet the others properly. It was a very touching sight to witness Rufunsa returning to an elephant society, as they all crowded to see and touch him. All the ele's were very gentle, though the Keepers stayed very close to his side, just in case the bigger ele's became too rough. After the initial excitement was over they all proceeded out of the boma to browse and little Rufunsa was by their side! The midday heat gave him the perfect excuse as he led the others into the nearby waterhole! As Rufunsa splashed and rolled in the muddy water with his new elephant family he looked totally at ease and happy again.



Unloading at Ngoma airstrip, Kafue National Park

After a short road transfer to the EOP Rufunsa was finally unloaded from his crate into the Elephant Boma, where he immediately began smelling the surrounds, clearly intrigued and excited by the strong smell of other elephant! After drinking more fluids and a brief nap, Rufunsa awoke to the sounds of the other elephant orphans returning to the boma...



Rufunsa (far left) enjoying a mud-bath with his new family



We now just hope that with the love and nurture from his new family (elephant and human) that Rufunsa will be able to overcome his tragic past and look forward to a healthy and natural future in the wilds of Kafue!

At this very young age Rufunsa is still incredibly vulnerable and it will be another two years before we can feel confident that he will be strong enough to survive! At least for now the signs are good and he is enjoying being part of a family again...

Rufunsa's safe rescue, quarantine and relocation to EOP would not have been possible without the tremendous support of the Zambian community. In particular we would like to send huge thanks to Keira, the Irwin family and 'Proflight Zambia' for the incredibly generous donation of air transport, which was vital to minimise stress to the little ele on the otherwise very long journey to KNP. We would also like to thank the Millar family and Lilayi Lodge Management and staff for their hospitality and support during Rufunsa's quarantine period.



We would like to thank and commend ZAWA for all their efforts towards this rescue. In particular many thanks to Dr Matandiko ZAWA Head Vet, Mambwe Ngoma, Solomon Chidunuka, Clement Tembo, Luckson Phiri, Rapheal Mvula, Peter Mwanza, Mable Shibata, Chrispin Tembo, Dr Francis Mkanda, Lackson Ngandu, Moses Skaunga, Dennis Shaala, Kapalou Kameya. Huge thanks to the community of Runfunsa GMA and to the individuals who found the little ele and brought him into the safe care of ZAWA at Feira!

Many thanks to all those who assisted us with Rufunsa's needs in Lusaka, in particular Nicola Carruthers, Andrea Lozanorellana, Judith McCord, Cecelia Millar, Richard Carruthers, Margo Naude, Isabelle Olivier, Luke Case, Rajen Ranchhod, Mark Harvey, David Bland 'Jacana', Chris Tett 'Bushtracks'.

Many thanks to Albert Coetzee 'Asapdigital' and Chris Meikle 'Zimbulk', who are currently coordinating extra emergency milk powder supplies to feed the hungry little elephant calf.

With an ever growing family of orphaned elephants at EOP we desperately need more funds to nurture these fragile babies and give them a second chance for a life in the wild.

To make a cash or in-kind donation to help Rufunsa and the other elephant orphans with milk supplies, veterinary and other vital support, please email us at elephantorphanageproject@gmail.com or donation's can be made online by clicking this link <http://www.davidshepherd.org/help-us/donate/> and choosing 'Zambia' from the drop down menu - 100% will go to the project.

Or call Rachael on +260-978-736025

For further information on the Elephant Orphanage Project, please contact:
elephantorphanageproject@gmail.com

A project of:



Supported and funded by:



Game Rangers International (DSWF Zambia) P O Box 30255, Lusaka, Zambia. Tel. 00 260 976068183 Email. Sportbeattie@hotmail.com
Trustees: Dr Jacob Mwanza (Chair), Sport Beattie, Robin Miller, Timothy Mushibwe, Adam Pope, Efi O'Donnell, Melanie Shepherd. Chief Patron: David Shepherd CBE FRSA

The David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, 61 Smithbrook Kilns, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 8JJ, UK.
Tel: 01483 272323 Fax: 01483 272427 E-Mail: dswf@davidshepherd.org Website: www.davidshepherd.org. DSWF is a registered charity no: 1106893.
Patron: HRH Prince Michael of Kent GCVO Trustees: Nigel Colne CBE, Nigel Keen, Bruce Norris, Avril Shepherd, Christopher Cowdray