



WILD FACTS CONSERVATION



Crew News August 2018

Hi Sharon

As you can see, this issue of Crew News we've gone large. Here at Born Free we LOVE elephants! And there's nothing quite like one... The biggest of all land animals, these gentle giants have no close relations - just two long-lost cousins linked by an ancestor 55 million years ago. Today these 'cousins' are the rabbit-like hyrax, and the gentle slow-moving dugong and manatee, the only vegetarian mammals in the sea.

In spite of their immense size and strength, elephants are highly intelligent, sensitive family animals. So let's go say jambo* to a jumbo!

From

Laura

Laura Gosset
Wild Crew

*This means 'hello' in Swahili, a language in East Africa



Giant wonders

Measuring up to 4m high (how tall are you?), a male African elephant can weigh 6 tonnes, as much as 80 people! Their ears are the biggest in the world, their trunk has 100,000 muscles but no bones, and their tusks are special front teeth which grow up to 2m long. These vast vegetarians spend 75% of each day feeding - devouring 300kg of grass, plants, twigs and bark, and guzzling 225 litres of water (like you drinking 500 glasses!).



Meet the EBs in Kenya

The EBs live in Amboseli National Park at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro - Africa's tallest mountain. This world-famous elephant family starred in a BBC TV series called 'Echo of the Elephants'. Echo was an older female, in charge of the herd, and under her wise leadership they flourished. Sadly this amazing 'matriarch' died in 2009, but today the large loving family has dozens of members including her sisters, daughters, grand-daughters and their calves.

Elephants are a keystone species, playing a vital role in their savannah and forest homes. They distribute seeds through their dung - an important fertiliser. They knock down trees so smaller animals can feed and other plants thrive, and dig for water in the dry season. No wonder they're known as nature's gardeners! Sadly people kill elephants for their ivory tusks, but Born Free works hard to protect them and end this terrible trade.



Meet Madhavi in Sri Lanka

This little elephant was just 18 months old when found alone. We're not sure what happened to her mum, but the calf was too small to survive on her own. Luckily she was rescued by the Elephant Transit Home and today the thirsty big baby drinks an incredible 40 pints of milk a day! Sweet as her name, shy Madhavi (which means 'honey' in the ancient Indian language Sanskrit) is gradually making friends. One day she'll return to the wild, where she belongs.

Sadly 'human-elephant conflict' is a growing problem in this small Asian country. With over 21 million people and 4,000 elephants, they compete for land, which can lead to problems. Elephants can wander close to human settlements and even raid crops. Born Free is working hard to help elephants and people live together - for example we have encouraged farmers to plant cash-crops like turmeric, which elephants don't like to eat. We also campaign to end Asia's cruel trade in elephant skin, used for jewellery.



You can help elephants this summer!

Sadly throughout the world hundreds of elephants live in captivity. They're kept in zoos - often alone in tiny cages, or trained to perform unnatural tricks in circuses. But as you know, in the wild these wise animals live in loving herds and travel vast distances. Imagine how captive elephants must suffer! They belong in the wild with their families. Please encourage your own family and friends never to visit a zoo, circus or animal show.

What do you think about Wild Crew?

Take part in our survey next month and YOU will receive a free wild gift! What would you like to read about in Crew News? What does Wild Crew mean to you? See our next issue for your chance to have your say.

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