

Orwa the adopted elephant

Orwa, an orphaned elephant has been adopted through the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust last year by the staff at Jenman African Safaris.



The two-year-old was rescued by the trust when he was found alone in an area called Orwa, in the South Turkana Game Reserve in Kenya. It is believed that his parents were sadly victims of poaching.

"When our staff at Jenman African Safaris heard about the trust and Orwa, we knew we had to do something, and pledged to 'adopt' him. He will continue to live at the trust and will stay there for as long as he needs, with us paying his annual adoption fee," says Garth Jenman, MD of Jenman African Safaris.

The sanctuary has 28 full-time keepers, who spend all their time with the elephants, acting as mothers and carers. They even sleep with them in their huts. This is because no baby elephant would ever find himself alone in the wild, so the keepers take on the role of the family. The orphans are on a rigid schedule of formula every three hours (similar to human motherhood) so the keepers are with them all day and night to ensure they get the love, attention and nutrition they need.



They wander out in the Nairobi National park by day with all the keepers and then back at 1700 for milk and bed. The keepers rotate regularly, to ensure the elephants get used to more than one keeper, in case any given keeper is on leave and the elephants won't respond to someone they haven't met or to whom they haven't become accustomed.



"Orwa had really come from a horrible situation - when he was rescued he was emancipated and near-death. The Trust team were surprised that he survived the first night... for many months afterwards Orwa was very depressed and stayed away from the other orphaned elephants and only bonded with his carers. But he has slowly started to thrive and come out of his shell!" says Garth.

Recently another two young abandoned elephants have been bought into the Trust. The one young female, named Murera, had been caught in a man-made poaching trap that had broken her leg; she was in immense pain and very distrustful of people. She was immediately introduced to Orwa at the Trust and the two have become great friends. Orwa helped Murera flourish and develop and become the beautiful elephant she is today.



For more information on the Trust or how you could get involved in "adopting" an elephant as Jenman African Safaris have, please visit - http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org/asp/orphan_profile.asp?N=264.