

Impact Report

Special Orphaned Elephant Edition

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Meet Lani, an orphaned elephant that you helped, from rescue to release—and now back into the wild.

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“An orphaned elephant’s journey back to the wild is one we all take together.”

—Azzedine

Lani’s journey began when she was less than a year old. Found alone by a river bank, she was severely malnourished, her bones protruded beneath her saggy skin.

A Journey of Trust

From their initial rescue to their release, trust is the thread that ties together an orphaned elephant’s journey back to the wild.

- ▶ From day one, the calf’s trust must be earned by their rescuers, then strengthened by the Keepers that care for them.
- ▶ The elephant then gains trust in themselves as they learn and grow, until they are finally prepared and confident enough to return to the wild.
- ▶ IFAW and our partners are trusted as the worldwide experts in elephant rehabilitation and release ...

... and there’s one more trusted and vital person in every orphaned elephant calf’s journey: YOU.

An orphaned elephant’s journey, from rescue to release, can take 10 years or more. We are so honoured to have your trust in this vital work, and in our mission to save animals and protect their habitats. Thank you.



On her first day at the Lilayi Nursery, Lani collapsed from exhaustion. So her Keepers stayed with her in her stable, feeding her bottles as she lay on soft hay. She was safe now, thanks to you.

Timeline to Success: Trust



- ▶ A calf is alone, lost, in a panic. When the call comes into our partners like GRI, they rush to the scene. Every second matters in those first frantic hours. And soon the calf is safe.



- ▶ As the days and weeks go by, comfort and nourishment are vital. Keepers will watch over the calf, even as she sleeps. The calf will nurse every 2 hours.

A Journey of Comfort

There is perhaps no emotional bond in nature that is stronger than that of a mother and her young. When an elephant is orphaned, that bond of comfort between mother and calf is broken. It leaves the orphan incredibly sad and understandably distraught.

You help us repair that bond of comfort.

The Keepers you support—that feed and care for the orphaned elephant in her time of great need—become like surrogate parents to the calf. Your support means there is always a nourishing bottle for her to drink and grass to eat, medicine when she is ill, and words of comfort when she needs it most.

Thank you for caring so much for the orphans and being their guardians during their journey back to the wild.



Lani quickly learned how to hold the bottle and feed herself. Thank you for providing this vital nourishment.



Lani leads her herd and Keeper on a walk in the wild. What a difference you had already made, from barely surviving to now thriving. But her story was still being written.

Special delivery: Did you know that the youngest orphaned elephant calves are brought bottles of milk every two hours? Each bottle is specially made for each orphan depending on their nutritional needs.

Timeline to Success: Comfort



► The Keepers feed bottles to the orphan until about age 2, and then start introducing more and more natural grasses and leaves. The Keepers start taking her on walks outside the fence. She eats grass and leaves and plays in watering holes.



► By year 8, the orphan is becoming more comfortable exploring outside the fence. She is getting ready to live her life as a wild elephant.



Graduation day! Keepers lured Lani to a truck to transport her to the soft release site in Kafue National Park, one step before life back in the wild.

A Journey of Gratitude

The best part of any wildlife rescue journey is the moment the animal is released back to the wild. An eagle flaps its powerful wings and takes to the sky; a dolphin rides an offshore wave back to the depths; a tiger jumps forward as its transport cage opens and he disappears back into the jungle.

But elephants do it a bit differently. We don't pick a moment for the elephant and then release her back to the wild—the elephant picks her own moment. With your generous support, we prepare her through years of care and guidance. And when we know she's ready, we'll affix a collar so we can track her to make sure she's safe.

And then one day, it happens: she doesn't come back. Most often, she's found a wild herd to travel with. She may visit us now and then, but she officially belongs to the wild.

The Keepers you support are both sad to see their elephant friends go, but also incredibly proud of the work that we've all done together. And all of us are deeply grateful to you for your support and the difference it makes for elephants and all animals.

Thank you again for making these beautiful journeys possible. It is said that a person's true nature is in how they treat the less fortunate; I hope you're incredibly proud of the lifesaving impact you make for these orphans.



Then one day, she and several of her orphan friends decided to leave and not come back. We monitored them and saw them with a wild herd. Success! You have given her journey the happy ending she deserved. Thank you!

Timeline to Success: Gratitude



► The orphan is moved to a fenced boma within a national park. She takes daily walks outside the fence and into the park, and even chooses to spend some nights in the park.



► At some point, usually in the 8 to 12-year-old range, the orphan will fully release herself to the wild, usually joining a wild herd.

Wild again, thanks to you.

The small group of orphans drank and played in the water as if they were wild elephants. And soon they would be.

Shortly after this photograph was taken, Lani and the six other orphans decided to leave. They formed their own little herd and went back to the wild.



Thank you for helping them complete their journey, and for making such a wonderful difference for animals every day through your support for IFAW.

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