



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR RESCUE OF ELEPHANT CALVES

September 2017

Zimbabwe Elephant Nursery (ZEN) is a partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority are operating an elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) calf nursery for compromised calves.

The major objective of the nursery is to nurse and rear orphaned or injured calves and rehabilitate them for release back into the wild. The calves can be rescued from inside or outside protected areas.

PROCEDURE FOR CAPTURE OF THE ELEPHANT CALVES

- a) ZEN should be publicised to everyone inside and outside protected areas to ensure that the process of rescue and movement is transparent.
 - b) The rescue and uplift of elephant calves must be done timeously to avoid loss of life.
 - c) Any identified elephant calf must be less than 2 years old because in the wild calves are nutritionally dependent on the mother up to 2 years. (A calf with a tusk of two inches or less – do not assume the age of the elephant by height)
 - d) Calves may be rescued both within and outside protected areas
1. If there is any suspected orphaned, injured or lone elephant calf that is separated from the herd, a report should be made to the nearest PWMA office immediately.
 2. The Area Manager should make a report to the Regional Manager.
 3. The Regional Manager must report to the Head of Management services and Chief Ecologist.
 4. At the same time, the suspected orphan must be assessed and recommendations made on the calf condition. If the calf is injured, the injury must be assessed by both ZEN and PWMA personnel, before a decision is made to move the calf. The calf should not be left alone and should be guarded against predators.
 5. A decision on the rescue of any elephant calf must be made within 24 hours to save the life of the calf.

6. If the calf is rescued, it should NOT be fed any milk of any description. It should be given water only, until the appropriate advice has been given.
7. If any calf is identified for ZEN, the Chief Ecologist will alert ZEN to prepare for the capture and translocation.
8. The approval for the movement permit should be done between 24 hours.
9. All rescue and movement of orphaned calves should be done in the presence of PWMA personnel.
10. There is need for the PWMA to regularly monitor ZEN.
11. ZEN should submit quarterly reports to the PWMA.

Further Guidelines

Elephant Calves who would NOT be eligible for rescue

- 1 Calves over 3 years old
- 2 Small, milk dependent calves that are still with the mother and she is obviously suckling.
- 3 Calves who have open, visible and displaced fractures to the limbs (front and back)
- 4 Calves with gunshot wounds that have visibly gone through bone

Calves that ARE eligible for rescue

- 1 Calves under two years old (ie. Tusk of two inches or less)
- 2 Milk dependent – as above, but obviously abandoned or orphaned
- 3 No mother in evidence (the milk dependent calf will not be fed milk by the other herd females)
- 4 Calf with fracture but with no open wounds
- 5 Calf with snare wound
- 6 Calf with gunshot wounds that do not involve bone injury
- 7 Calf that is stuck in a water trough and has been abandoned by the herd
- 8 Calf that is stuck in mud and has been abandoned by the herd

CONTACT INFORMATION

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