

Vocabulary

hyrax – A furry mammal found in Africa and Southwest Asia. Despite its smallness (about the size of a rabbit), it is the animal most closely related to the elephant.

infrasonic – Relating to a frequency that is lower than the human ear's ability to hear. Elephants communicate using infrasonic sounds.

ivory – A type of dentin (tooth material) found in elephant tusks. It has been prized since ancient times for its texture, color, and smoothness and has been a principal reason for the killing of elephants.

matriarch – A female who dominates a group or a family. Matriarchs exist in elephant populations.

poaching – The act of hunting game or fish illegally. Poaching has had a severely harmful effect on elephant populations.

Important People

Carol Buckley – Executive director of the Elephant Sanctuary, a home for retired zoo and circus elephants (see Important Places)

Hannibal – Famous Carthaginian general and foe of ancient Rome. During the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.) he crossed the Alps with an army accompanied by war elephants.

Joyce Poole – Researcher at the Amboseli National Park in Kenya who specializes in the study of elephant communication.

Things To Think About

Elephants, as the documentary shows, clearly feel emotions and form friendships. Have you seen evidence in other animals that they may feel such emotions as happiness or sadness? Do you know of other examples of animals who become attached to one another?

Researchers are now learning that elephants have a complex communication system. What other animals are able to communicate with one another?

What does knowledge of animal communication teach us about animal intelligence? Does ignorance of animal communication cause us to underestimate animal intelligence?

Based on the information in the documentary, do you think that it might be cruel to have elephants perform in circuses? Have you seen performing elephants? Do you think the practice of performing elephants should be discontinued? What other animals perform for human entertainment?

Internet Resources

<http://www.elephants.com> – Web site of Carol Buckley's Elephant Sanctuary.

http://www.elephants.com/poole_address.htm – A speech given by Joyce Poole at an elephant managers workshop.

<http://elephant.elehost.com/index.html> – A rich site called the "Elephant Information Repository," with information on all aspects of elephants and many links to other sites.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/animalmind/consciousness.html> – From a series on animal consciousness, some speculations about animal communication with a tape of Joyce Poole.

<http://www.kws.org/amboseli.htm> – From the Kenya Wildlife Service, an excellent page on Amboseli National Park.

<http://www.kenyalogy.com/eng/parques/amboseli.html> – Another fine Web site on Amboseli National Park.

<http://www.save-the-elephants.org> -- The Web site of an organization named "Save the Elephants."



SAVING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES

THE ELEPHANT

Misunderstood by most, the elephant is actually one of the most intelligent mammals on earth. On a preserve in Tennessee, Carol Buckley provides ease and comfort to retired circus elephants while in the Amboseli National Park in Kenya, Joyce Poole studies the elephant's language and struggles to keep this miraculous animal from vanishing off the face of the Earth.

MAJESTIC AND INTELLIGENT

Unlike some endangered species, the elephant is an extremely well-known animal, and the human-elephant relationship goes back to ancient times. Nevertheless, people do not know as much about the elephant as they might think. For example, elephants do not take well to captivity, and although they perform splendidly in circuses, they do not necessarily enjoy it. Humans have likely underestimated the intelligence of the elephants also—only recently, for example, have we begun to grasp the sophisticated communication system that they use. The elephant's magnificent tusks, so well adapted to the animal's environment, are also one of its greatest misfortunes. The ivory of which they are composed has long been a precious commodity—and a major reason that the elephant population on the globe has declined so dramatically.

Important Places

Amboseli National Park – Covering 150 square miles, the most popular national park in Kenya; especially known for its herds of elephants and black rhinos.

Elephant Sanctuary – An 800-acre shelter for retired circus and zoo elephants located in Hohenwald, Tennessee (some 65 miles southwest of Nashville). Founded in 1995.



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Other Resources

For students:

- Buckley, Carol. *Travels with Tarra*. Tilbury House Publishers, 2002.
- Douglas-Hamilton, Oria. *The Elephant Family Book*. Picture Book Studio, 1990.
- Levine, Stuart P. *The Elephant*. Lucent Books, 1998.
- Moss, Cynthia. *Echo of the Elephants: The Story of an Elephant Family*. Quill, 1994.
- Payne, Katherine. *Elephants Calling*. Crown Publishers, 1992.
- Redmond, Ian. *Eyewitness: Elephant*. DK Publishing, 2000.

For adults:

- Alexander, Shana. *The Astonishing Elephant*. Random House, 2000.
- Groning, Karl, and Saller, Martin. *Elephants: A Cultural and Natural History*. Konemann, 1999.
- Douglas-Hamilton, Iain, and Douglas-Hamilton, Oria. *Battle for the Elephants*. Doubleday Transworld Publishers, 1992.
- Moss, Cynthia. *Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family*. University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Payne, Katy. *Silent Thunder: In the Presence of Elephants*. Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Poole, Joyce. *Coming of Age with Elephants: A Memoir*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1996.
- Scigliano, Eric. *Love, War, and Circuses: The Age-Old Relationship Between Elephants and Humans*. Houghton Mifflin, 2002.



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