

# HOEDSPRUIT ELEPHANT REHABILITATION and DEVELOPMENT (HERD)

South Africa's  
First Dedicated  
Elephant  
Orphanage

“

*Every elephant  
needs a herd*



## A MESSAGE FROM ADINE ROODE

**"In my time spent working with Jabulani and HESC, elephants and the conservation of their species has become my life, my passion, my purpose.**

Rhinos are another great love of mine and their fight requires just as much dedication. With the elephants, I have been fortunate to become a part of their herd in many ways, just as the carers who spend night and day with them are. I have felt the sense of belonging with the embrace of their trunks, the vigour in the babies with each head butt during feedings and the very real the power of a fully grown elephant while sharing the ground with them, almost cheek to cheek.

Conservation and ethics are at the core of our approach, a combination of heart and soul and mind. I have learned so much from the past years of our work in elephant conservation, rehabilitating and rewilding and am driven and excited to create this on an even bigger, definitely more dedicated, scale with the establishment of HERD.

I am so grateful for each and every person that is walking this path with us and I invite you to be part of the journey with us and to follow our story as it unfolds. This is just the beginning. **This is South Africa's first dedicated elephant orphanage."**



[www.herd.org.za](http://www.herd.org.za)





## HERD - an introduction

The journey of the Jabulani herd has transformed organically and beautifully over the years, since the rehabilitation of young Jabulani and the greater herd of rescued elephants from Zimbabwe. It has evolved, through hard work, dedication and a cohesive vision, into one of South Africa's greatest conservation success stories; a story that continues to evolve with the successful integration of orphaned elephants into this unique and accepting herd.

**"Every elephant needs a herd..."** - A phrase that defines what we do and why we have consistently worked, together with Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC), to care for and unite elephants in need. It is also a genuine truth of elephant life, part of what makes elephants such a unique and profound species. The strength of their family bonds and social dynamics are vital to their wellbeing and survival as individuals and as a species.

It is our mission through the creation of HERD (Hoedspruit Elephant Rehabilitation and Development), to care for and rehabilitate orphaned elephants, to give them a new family, and a second chance of life with another herd. The orphanage lies adjacent to the Jabulani Herd stables on the Kapama Private Game Reserve, which allows us to assess and integrate each baby elephant into the herd according to their individual emotional needs.

In these documents, you will find outlined the purpose of HERD, why we need it, what our objectives and principles are, as well as a description of what it takes to care for orphaned elephants, by HERD founder and Jabulani Managing Director, Adine Roode.

JOIN OUR JOURNEY, BE A PART OF OUR HERD.

### Adine's role in the HERD

**Adine Roode is the driving force behind HERD, together with her highly skilled and experienced team of elephant carers.**

Wildlife conservation has been an integral part of Adine's life while growing up in Hoedspruit. Her passion and dedication to the cause have grown with her, as she worked closely with her mother, Lente Roode at the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC).

Adine is recognised in the conservation industry for her work in rhino conservation at HESC; however, her most significant work has been in elephant conservation, which began in 1997, when HESC successfully hand-reared their first orphaned elephant. It has been a two-decade journey walking with elephants, following Lente Roode's rescue of what has now become known as the Jabulani herd, from Zimbabwe in 2002.

Adine has been instrumental in the care and wellbeing of the rescued herd through the years, and in that time, has seen the unique acceptance of the herd to wild orphaned elephants.

With the growing numbers of orphans and displaced elephant calves in recent years, Adine has taken the next step, to build a dedicated elephant orphanage that can provide a unique adoptive family structure for baby elephants, which is crucial for their wellbeing and survival. A bold and essential step forward that the herd has paved for her to follow.



## South Africa's need for an elephant orphanage

**H**ESC (the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre), has through the years provided a safe and loving home for elephant orphans as well as other animal species that have needed rehabilitation or veterinary attention. Their team of animal curators worked closely with our experienced elephant carers to hand-rear and nurse the baby elephants until such time they were ready to be introduced to the Jabulani Herd.

The decision was made to build a custom-made elephant orphanage close to the Jabulani herd, which is an approximate 45 minutes drive from HESC. The orphanage is a well-controlled environment created with the sole purpose of caring for elephant orphans and maintaining minimal foot traffic, which is equally important to an elephant calf's delicate nature.

We are confident that the costs involved in creating this Orphanage at Jabulani will be justified over the coming years, as we have seen an increased number of elephant calves brought into our care.

We have successfully introduced four orphans between 2002 and 2018 that have been rescued by elephant conservation companies or national parks. Younger elephants must be weaned first, as the Jabulani herd females are not lactating and unable to provide them with essential milk that their bodies need for healthy growth and survival. That is where our hands-on care is vital at the elephant orphanage.

Being in the company of adults, sub-adults and juvenile elephants during their development stages is highly beneficial for baby elephants. It has a positive impact on their mental and physical health. Although the younger orphans will enter the Orphanage area on arrival, we will have the opportunity after assessing their health, to discern when they could join the Jabulani herd for days out on the reserve.

In the evenings, the babies will return to the orphanage, where we have built three special nurseries, each with an additional area for an elephant carer to sleep beside them, as they take shifts to ensure the elephants have 24-hour care.

Our carers are their nurturers, assisting and guiding the orphans to fit into the natural dynamics of the new social structure at the Jabulani herd. We have appointed assistants for the elephant carers who are looking after the orphaned elephants. Our senior carers train and oversee the assistants, guiding them in how and when to be a nurturer, a peace-maker and a rule-enforcer.

These appointments have created jobs for the local community – jobs that are set to be the start of a great new career, as the responsibility of carers extends for a very long time. Some carers might move on with the orphans when they join the herd, but some will stay with the orphans at the nursery.

Taking care of elephant orphans requires not only husbandry training and a healthy, safe and clean environment for elephants and humans alike, but also good emotional health. The carers' moods affect the orphans. When they feel low, it brings down the animals. If an elephant orphan is in the presence of someone who exudes happiness, they are likely to feel upbeat.

The carers deal with many ups and downs; the struggles and times of illness are draining and needs to be acknowledged. These moments can be overwhelming, but our carers know how not to let sadness or anger overwhelm them in a situation. Our carers are taught and continuously reminded of the importance of this. We monitor our team's emotional wellbeing regularly and make quick changes to the team dynamics if the need arises, always considering the emotional strain of watching over an elephant orphan.

The Orphanage consists of three elephant nurseries (bedrooms), with five communal areas that adjoin them; a kitchenette, a storeroom, a bathroom as well as indoor and outdoor playgrounds for the baby elephants.

The Jabulani elephant management plan has been adjusted to accommodate the new HERD Orphanage, and it will continue to run hand-in-hand with the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEAT)'s norms and standards of elephant management, as well as following the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines and standards.

# What it takes to Care for Elephants

By Adine Roode

**W**hen a rescued orphan comes into the orphanage, it is traumatised and in many cases dehydrated, sunburnt and possibly injured. Because of their high intelligence and complexity, they are very different to your usual wild animal. Their needs are diverse and nuanced and require a special kind of management, one with heart and soul and respect as well as milk and medicine.

## ELEPHANT CARERS

HERD has a sizable team of dedicated elephant carers, who assist in 24-hour-shifts to ensure that the little ones are never left alone or without a carer. The carers are the sole nurturers until the new orphans are strong enough to join the other elephant orphans and then the Jabulani herd.

Consistency of this core team is crucial, as the second loss of a 'herd' member can be extremely traumatic and can bring on a sudden change in the orphans' health. Our carers play a significant role in the nurturing of the orphans with sustenance, healthcare, love, guidance, and hugs too.

## STIMULATION

A stable sleep pattern and a good routine for baby elephants is essential for their wellbeing, along with the stimulation using toys, rubbing posts, frequent mudbaths and good exercise. Our carers make use of the natural environment to enhance and strengthen their natural instincts such as sand-dusting and gaining the strength of their trunks.

## FUNDING

Monetary funding is crucial for the daily operations of the orphanage during their critical formative years, as well as the potential long term financial impact of caring for a fully grown elephant if reintegration into the wild is not feasible. These potential reintegration projects would include the need for new land which will add additional costs to the HERD project.

## TEAMWORK

In addition to the people on the ground, you need people who don't deal with the day-to-day caring of the elephants to form part of your team. These are the people who strengthen your operation, who form part of your back-of-house. These are the individuals managing financials, media and communications and fundraising and who should be part of the management plan.

## MILK

A baby elephant's milk formulation is exceptionally delicate and needs frequent adjustment, with extra nutritional supplements as they grow, as their mother's milk would change naturally through the weaning stages and evolving needs. The gut of a baby elephant is extremely sensitive. When an orphan has diarrhea, it has a ripple effect. It starts by impacting their gut lining, which in turn changes their energy levels, impacting on their emotional wellbeing. They can move from hero to zero in a short period. Daily records of their feeding and bathroom habits are essential so to monitor whether they are excreting or urinating more than what they take in. Like human babies, they are very delicate and can quickly dehydrate.

## FAMILY

Elephants' complex social system and the value they get from being part of a family structure plays a major role in their wellbeing. The discipline and peer structure created by the herd not only benefits the orphan introduced to its new herd, but also the wellbeing of the herd by allowing them to 'show' and to fulfil their maternal instincts by adopting the new orphans.

## PLANNING

Consistent management planning is essential to the success of an elephant conservation project such as HERD. Our Objectives, our principles; international, national and provincial legislation as well as animal welfare and protection acts, have to be continuously reviewed in order to adapt and include any changes that arise. A solid management plan includes the long term responsibility of elephant care, including research of the species, ethics and the possible reintegration into the wild.

## ETHICS

Ethical business operations are imperative to the success of the HERD. The way we treat our people and the elephants must always enhance their mental and physical wellbeing. We educate and train our staff daily, knowing that their knowledge and learned passion for wildlife and elephant would be passed on through further generations. The HERD has immense value in the contribution of a resilient socio-ecological system where man and animal can share common resources and live harmoniously together, ensuring sustainable development of our wildlife, environment and communities.

# The HERD: Who Are We?

Our “Human Herd” plays an important role in each orphaned elephant’s wellbeing. Our highly dedicated, passionate and experienced team gives each baby elephant the best round-the-clock care to. They are well-equipped emotionally and physically to react to any situation that may arise at any time of day or night.

## Meet our Elephant Orphan Care Team:



**Tigere Matipedza**  
Jabulani Elephant Manager

Tigere is well respected as one of two elephant managers at Jabulani. He has been working with elephants since 1996 and has been key in the success of the Jabulani Herds wellbeing. Tigere oversees and manages the important integration process of the orphaned elephants to the Jabulani Herd and works closely with our HERD team to ensure a successful introduction and integration.



**Owen Dube**  
Jabulani Elephant Manager

Owen joined Tigere as one of only two elephant managers at Jabulani in October 2019, though he has been working with the Jabulani herd since 2005. He is exceptionally proud of his work and extremely dedicated to elephant conservation. Together with Tigere, they share the responsibility of ensuring the orphans at HERD receive the best possible care.

Our eight Jabulani elephant carers that will work shifts with the HERD team in caring for the baby elephants:



Israel Shambira



Joshua Dube



Stavros Chakoma



Herman Khoza



Samson Hwato



Godknows Chivero



Liverson Sande



Simbarashe Urure

Our three-full time trainee carers working under the supervision of our senior elephant carers on a daily basis at HERD:



Reply Mahlakwa



Khensani Ngobeni



Lissing Mathebula



## Meet Our Orphanage Operations Team

The management of the orphanage environment and surroundings is part of the task of caring for the elephant calves. The HERD operations team has been involved in the planning and construction of the orphanage and will continue to oversee the maintenance of the buildings and general operations, to ensure that they are of the highest standards.



**Adine Roode**  
Founder



**Schalk Human**  
Operations Manager



**Juan Ferreira**  
Environment Manager

## Meet Our Trusted Elephant Conservation Advisors



**Prof. Rob Slotow**  
University of KwaZulu  
Natal



**Prof. André Ganswindt**  
University of Pretoria



**Dr. Peter Rogers**  
ProVet Wildlife Servis



**Brett Mitchell**  
Elephant Reintegration  
Trust



**Dr. Johan Marais**  
Saving the Survivors



**Prof. Eddie Webb**  
University of Pretoria



## The Conservation Value of Elephants at Jabulani

### Jabulani HERD

**T**he Jabulani story started in 1997, several years before the lodge was built, at the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC), established by Jabulani founder, Lente Roode (mother of Adine Roode) as a cheetah breeding project. Over time, the Centre evolved into a wildlife conservation centre as species other than cheetahs arrived for rehabilitation.

Jabulani, an elephant calf of just four months, was brought into Lente's care, after he had been found injured, abandoned and stuck in the mud of a silt dam. At HESC, he was successfully rehabilitated and once weaned, introduced to the wild elephants of the reserve. However, they were not interested in him and he kept returning to the comfort and familiarity of HESC, which he clearly preferred.

In 2002, Lente was contacted to urgently step in and rescue a herd of elephants from an elephant-back safari operation in Zimbabwe. The elephants were to be culled during the country's land reformation process. Lente and her team managed to successfully move the herd of elephants and their dedicated carers to the reserve.

The idea was to introduce Jabulani to the herd as every elephant needs a family. Fortunately, Tokwe, the matriarch of the herd, accepted Jabulani lovingly and gracefully. Jabulani had finally found a family and the Jabulani herd had been created.

This was a significant moment in both our history and our future, as the original herd are all believed to have been orphans too. Their unique family structure would create a favourable environment for orphaned elephants in need of a herd. They have since warmly welcomed other orphaned elephants that we have introduced to them.

With the huge financial burden of having to care for the elephants and provide housing and income for their carers, it was decided to build a luxury lodge to help sustain the herd. Established in 2005, Jabulani has evolved into a soulful safari experience.

As the Jabulani Herd is not a wild herd, they needed a bit more protection. We therefore built them special and spacious stables providing indoor and outdoor shelter. It is into this loving and welcoming family and home that we hope to introduce the HERD orphans once they are older, stronger and ready.

## Reintegration & Rehabilitation

Our main objective at HERD is to ensure that each orphaned elephant brought into our care gets to experience a second chance at life with a herd that will accept them without prejudice.



The unusual family structure of the Jabulani Herd that are majority orphans themselves, presents a unique solution for orphaned baby elephants in Southern Africa, that vitally need to find a second herd to ensure their emotional wellbeing and survival.

Together with our highly experienced elephant carers, we can provide a safe and regulated reintegration process for the baby elephants and monitor their growth and development within their newly found herd, while documenting and recording invaluable data for research for the species.

In time, with the anticipated increase in the Jabulani herd's numbers, we suspect they may naturally split into two separate herds, as wild elephants do. Once that happens, given the right conditions and environment that will enhance their current wellbeing, the next step would be to integrate them onto a separate and secure wildlife reserve.

Elephants are a highly intelligent and emotional species, and the impact of forcing a division of their newfound herd would have a severe effect on their emotional wellbeing.

Our approved management plan allows us to adjust and improve under the guidance of our respected elephant advisors, as unknowns become clear.

## Our Purpose & Future

As South Africa's first dedicated elephant orphanage, our purpose is to ensure that we have the optimal environment to care for the growing numbers of orphaned or displaced elephants that are a result of increasing numbers of poaching of elephant mothers as well as man vs. elephant land conflict.

Our primary goal is for every orphaned elephant that is brought into our care at HERD, to be rehabilitated and integrated into a stable and nurturing elephant herd that will provide them with the love and emotional security they need to survive.



## Anti-Poaching Unit



We are grateful to be situated in the Greater Kapama Area and to be guarded by a dedicated anti-poaching unit, helping to ensure the safety of the elephants of Jabulani and the HERD.

HESC established its own Anti-Poaching Unit (APU), one that is now renowned in the greater Kruger area, and that works with the police as well as the CIS in the Kruger National Park, and several other anti-poaching units.

The Kapama APU patrols in the high-risk areas of the reserve and conducts daily foot patrols on the reserve looking for traps and poachers. It also conducts occupational safety inspections on a regular basis. In an effort to combat poaching, the Kapama APU has been using tracking dogs as part of its anti-poaching initiative. The canine unit is comprised of both Bloodhounds and Belgian Malinois dog breeds, who have been trained to track potential poachers.



# HERD - Key Objectives and Principles

## Key Objectives

1. To recognise and accept the responsibility for taking care of animals on behalf of broader society, and to acknowledge society's wish for and expectation of the protection and enhancement of vulnerable animals' quality of life, which is planned and sustained for their full lives.
2. To provide a safe rehabilitation alternative for elephant orphans that prioritises the long-term well-being of the elephants.
3. To provide a protected and supportive environment for the rescued Jabulani herd that promotes and enhances their overall well-being through rewilding (as much as possible) and understanding the ongoing need to provide direct care and supervision for their lifetime.
4. To take advantage of the availability of a habituated wild elephant herd, the Jabulani herd, which provides a stable and controlled environment and elephant social system into which orphan elephants can be reintegrated for their enhanced lifetime wellbeing.
5. To reintegrate the orphans into the habituated Jabulani elephant herd and/or other appropriate rehabilitation options that may become available in the future.
6. To establish a strategy and long-term plan for elephant rehabilitation through rewilding that includes ways to mitigate the long-term chronic stress of releasing elephants directly into the wild when, as orphans, they don't have a proper social structure. The focus is on building the orphans' ability to deal with a wild system independently, in such a way that allows them to develop that capacity at a reasonable pace, and within a stable and nurturing system. Thus, the rewilding of captive elephants that takes elephant biology and local context into account.
7. To base our processes and procedures on the best available evidence and expertise, find innovative solutions to the challenges faced to enhance the elephants' well-being, and, thereby, be the go-to entity in South Africa to rehabilitate orphan elephants.
8. To lead in the development and the best practice for sustainable, long-term, orphan elephant rehabilitation, and contribute to the development of ethical and responsible industry standards, and the development of norms and standards that are credible, a credited, endorsed by stakeholders, and set a gold standard.
9. Contribute towards the conservation value of elephants in a holistic way, by providing land to a flagship species that is not otherwise available. The conservation value lies not only in the conservation of the species, but promoting natural capital and natural land use for the benefit of people, while providing a safe rehabilitation context, and a sanctuary for partially rewilded elephants over their lifespan.
10. Develop and leverage the potential role of elephants in contributing to local development, in the context of the sustainable development goals, including sustaining life on land, improving social cohesion, enhancing environmental and natural resource education on the reserve and in local schools, reducing poverty through employment and economic development of SMMEs associated with the elephants in their context, reducing gender inequality and broader inequality through the empowerment of women, youth and the poor and disadvantaged, through our operations and our broader footprint outside the reserve.
11. Take a holistic approach to leveraging elephant goods (including dung) and services (including ecotourism, cultural value, existence value), that ensures the sustainability of the land-use and protection of the elephants on the reserve, but that also provides access with tenure to the local community to enhance the broader value of the current land-use relative to other options.
12. Expanding career opportunities and building a career path for elephant carers, as a critical resource for natural capital enhancement.
13. To provide opportunity for research and student training to enhance our knowledge and capacity for sustainable development.

# HERD - Key Objectives and Principles

## Key Principles

In addition to these objectives, there are several principles that will determine our approach in the short and long terms. These are the key rules for all strategies, planning and actions taken at HERD.

- a. In the short and long-term, the key focus is the rehabilitation and rewilding of elephants.
- b. For this to occur, attention must be on the social and sentient nature of elephants, their longevity, and the need for their learning and social development to take place in a protective, nurturing and safe context and environment. We acknowledge the importance of social learning, bonding and role building for orphans by creating a novel system of responsibly wilding or reintegrating elephants.
- c. It is unethical to release orphans into the wild without allowing them an opportunity to develop a robust social decision-making and behavioural system, within a structured support system, which people can, and have an obligation to, provide.
- d. To mitigate the impact of hand-raising and caring for orphan elephants, and the effect of this on the orphan, the herd into which they are introduced, and society as a whole, we must create sustainable, responsible and transparent mechanisms, which engage with broader society, to ensure the overall well-being of the elephants.
- e. This operation must be ethical, accredited and credible, with a fully constituted ethics committee and an advisory committee with the appropriate expertise.
- f. As animals are under the custodianship of people and the value of elephants exists for all of humanity, it is necessary to take on a custodianship role on behalf of broader society, and to ensure that people know the animals are being well-protected and supported in an ethical way, thereby enhancing global humaneness and humanity.
- g. As a species, we have a collective responsibility to ensure the protection of orphaned elephants throughout their lives. We must build and maintain a long-term strategy for rewilding orphan elephants that enhances wellbeing, and takes into consideration their longevity.
- h. We must enhance and expand the contribution of elephants to human social and economic development, and human livelihoods and well-being, especially locally.
- i. Do not cause unnecessary suffering or harm.
- j. There is no breeding of captive elephants.
- k. New orphans increase the well-being of the Jabulani elephant herd - the emotional well-being and behaviour - by improving the social structure of the herd, and providing the conditions for natural social interactions and processes. While the introduction of calves can play a positive role in of the Jabulani herd, the herd also provides the most humane way to reintegrate orphans into elephant society that is available.
- l. There is no promotion of the removal of any babies from the wild.
- m. It is not the first choice to take in captive elephants considering the risks posed by the complex social nature of elephants.
- n. There are clear and specific criteria for taking in orphans for rehabilitation, such as when orphans are the direct consequence of human interference and human-created problems, such as poaching of their mother. Elephants are only accepted as a result of confiscation, donation or rescue.
- o. All orphans accepted are approved by official government agencies and are properly permitted.
- p. We do not promote or drive the operation as a way to create a market for orphans. Orphans are accepted in their own interests, and, as such, do not to have any resale value.
- q. The Jabulani herd were rescued from a perilous situation and are being provided with a protected and comfortable environment that meets their biological and social requirements, within the limitations of being a previously tamed herd.
- r. We are committed to the Jabulani herd and ensuring their well-being for their natural lives.





## The Wildlife Conservation Trust

The Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) is a registered PBO (Public Benefit Organisation) that supports projects and organisations that dedicated their work to the conservation of endangered or vulnerable wildlife species through protection, rehabilitation and research, as well as facilitating projects with goals to educate communities about the importance of the environment and the conservation of it.

The WCT provided funding for the orphaned elephants while at Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre (HESC), and together with the team at HESC and Jabulani, identified the need to build this facility for the sole purpose of caring for orphaned and displaced elephants in Southern Africa. This decision follows an increase of elephant poaching in Southern Africa, and the equal rise of baby elephants that have needed a secure place of safety, rehabilitation as well as a feasible solution towards reintegration with another elephant herd, which is crucial to their survival.

All funding for the elephant orphanage is channelled through the WCT.

**For more information, visit [www.wildlifeconservationtrust.co.za](http://www.wildlifeconservationtrust.co.za)**

**To Donate, please use the following Bank Account Details:**

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