



## Wild Orphans

By Gerry Ellis



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### Wild Orphans By Gerry Ellis

Wild Orphans tells the emotional tale of eight baby elephants living in the nursery of the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust Orphanage at the Nairobi National Park in Kenya, East Africa. It chronicles their story over two long years, including memorable images of the rescue of abandoned baby elephants, their upbringing by dedicated 24-hour surrogate human "mothers," the lessons they learn, and ultimately, their release back into the wild. The stars of Wild Orphans are the "Orphan 8": eight babies who arrived at the orphanage during the summer of 1999, a time of prolonged drought and increased ivory poaching. They are: Natumi - Rescued from a well at just two months old after her mother was killed by hunters, she is the ringleader of the eight and is very possessive of the smaller babies; Icholta - Rescued at six weeks old after being abandoned by her herd. She is small for her age, with soft fuzz on her head, and is very gentle and friendly; Ilingwezi - Rescued at just one month, she was abandoned by her herd after falling into a deep gully. She is very sweet and playful; Idie - Four months old when rescued from a well, Idie grieved deeply for the family that abandoned her. Idie and Ilingwezi are now best friends; Nyiro - Found in a trench, he is sturdy and tough. As the smallest and most out-going of the group, he is a great favorite among the bigger elephants; Salama - Just three or four months old when abandoned by a herd that was fleeing poachers, Salama is tough, confident, and occasionally pushy; Lolokwe - He was rescued after falling into a well at just one month old. It is possible that he, Salama, and Nyiro all share the same father; Laikipia - She was rescued at four months after falling down a well. While Wild Orphans focuses on the adventures of these elephants, the reader will also be introduced to other orphans living in the nursery, their caregivers, older "graduate" elephants who return to teach the babies, and the greater story of the African elephant's plight. Never before has a photographer been granted this kind of access or spent this length of time photographing these orphans of Nairobi. Never before has their return to the wild been documented. Wild Orphans is certainly a landmark in nature photography and journalism, but it is also, perhaps more importantly, a story: One that will warm the soul and pull at the heart-strings of all animal-lovers.



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### Editorial Review

From Scientific American

This is the inaugural volume in a series of books featuring photographs and stories from the various field sites of GLOBIO's Wild Orphans project. Photojournalist Ellis founded GLOBIO to help children learn about biodiversity by illustrating the relation between an orphaned wild animal and the state of its ecosystem. (Orphaned wildlife are key indicators of the pressures exerted on biodiversity by poaching, habitat loss, toxins, overhunting and wars.) In this book, Ellis documents the story of eight baby elephants brought to the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Kenya during the drought-plagued summer of 1999. He chronicles their lives over two years, beginning with haunting photographs of the rescues of the abandoned baby elephants, through their upbringing by dedicated 24-hour surrogate mothers (all African men of almost superhuman patience and generosity), to their release back into the wild. It's an amazing project and a stunning book. More photos and information are available at [www.sciam.com](http://www.sciam.com)

*Editors of Scientific American*

From [Booklist](#)

Author and photographer Ellis had been documenting animal orphanages in Africa when the "Orphan 8" entered his life in 1999. These eight baby elephants arrived at the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust orphanage on the outskirts of Nairobi during an intense drought and increase in ivory poaching. Daphne Sheldrick (who penned the introduction) has pioneered a technique for raising baby elephants and rhinoceroses for eventual return to the wild. It involves 24-hour care and attendance by a dedicated group of caretakers: the little elephants are encouraged, cajoled, stroked, and continuously handled to encourage bonding, for without this bond they would die. The care and concern pictured in Ellis' heartwarming photos must be seen to be believed. The intimate text explains the reasons for many of the techniques used when rearing baby elephants and is often as evocative as the photos. The journey of the Orphan 8 to Tsavo National Park, where they are adopted by Malaika (herself a graduate of the orphanage), completes the story. *Nancy Bent*  
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### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Linda Poteat:**

Here thing why that Wild Orphans are different and reliable to be yours. First of all reading a book is good but it depends in the content than it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. Wild Orphans giving you information deeper and in different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no reserve that similar with Wild Orphans. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. You can actually bring everywhere like in area, café, or even in your way home by train. When you are having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of Wild Orphans in e-book can be your alternative.

**Erica Lewis:**

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**Tanya Wilson:**

The book Wild Orphans has a lot of information on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Mcdougal makes some research previous to write this book. This particular book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after reading this article book.

**Amy Smith:**

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Wild Orphans, it is possible to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

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