

Look Who's Talking!



Why are scientists tuning in to elephant chats?

Many people have heard the loud trumpet sounds that elephants make. But did you know that elephants make a lot of other noises that humans can't hear?

Scientists have recently learned that each elephant has a unique voice. Unique means "one of a kind." Scientist Anne Savage told *Weekly Reader*, "Each person's voice is different. It's the same for elephants."

The scientists listened to the secret language of African elephants at Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida. To hear the elephants, they used special equipment. Each elephant wore a radio collar fitted with a microphone. Then the sound was recorded and studied using a computer.

Saving African Elephants

African elephants are endangered, or at risk of dying out. In the past, people have hunted the elephants for their ivory tusks. Today that practice is not allowed in most African countries.

However, some people ignore the laws and still hunt elephants. The huge animals are also endangered because people build homes and farms in areas where elephants live.

Did You Know?

African elephants are the largest living land animals. The average male weighs more than four cars!

An African elephant never sweats. Heat escapes through its large ears to keep the animal cool.

African elephants like to take baths every day. Then, they cover themselves in dirt to keep insects away.

The work scientists are doing at Animal Kingdom may help African elephants in the wild.

"If we can tell individual voices apart, we can keep track of each elephant over time," says Savage.

"We can tell when elephants are feeling nervous by the voices they are using. In the wild, that would help us know if they are in danger, so we can help them."