

5

Elephants care for the injured...



If elephants are in trouble, their friends and family help them. George remembers when he and other researchers tranquillised a female elephant so that they could fit her with a radio collar.

"The elephant was starting to get woozy, and was about to fall over," says George. "Other elephants thought she had been wounded and came to help.

They tried to hold her up, lifting with their tusks and pulling with their trunks."

Another time, George saw elephant family members visit a young female with a broken leg every day until she recovered. He thinks it's likely that the injured female would have died without their help and company.

"Being a good friend is very important to elephants," George says.

7

Elephants make long-distance calls...



Imagine you're wearing a blindfold. How many of your friends do you think you could identify by just their voices? Female elephants can recognise the calls of about 100 different relatives. They can even tell who's who from over two kilometres away!

Elephant families tend to split up into smaller groups for days or weeks when they travel or search for food. Their ability to remember each other's low-pitched rumbles lets elephants keep in touch until the next family reunion.

But elephants' caller ID also serves another useful purpose. "They're able to tell who's a friend or foe," says Joyce. If the group hears a strange elephant's call, they bunch up and prepare for hostile visitors. Spooky!



Elephant ears aren't just good for hearing—they also keep them cool by releasing heat.

6

Elephants feel sad when another dies...



Unlike most animals, elephants seem to grieve (become very sad) after a death. George saw a female elephant become inconsolable after she lost her baby. Sometimes, the mother lingered alone near the place where her baby had died.

"Other times, she would run around, ripping up bushes," he says. She stayed near the site for three months before finally rejoining her family group.

Elephants also behave oddly when they come across elephant remains. They become unusually quiet, and carefully sniff and feel the bones with their trunks. "I think they're smart enough to make the connection between those large bones and a once-living elephant," says Joyce.



Just like humans, elephants miss their loved ones when they die.

8

Elephants adopt orphans...



It's a sad fact that for many animal species, when a mother dies, her children don't have anyone to care for them, so they also die. Elephants are different. When a matriarch elephant named Tusklek died, her baby calf was left orphaned. Tusklek's adult daughter, Tullip, already had a young calf of her own, but she adopted the orphan anyway. "Because they have such strong

bonds and close friendships, it's just natural that they would adopt and look after calves," says Joyce.

What surprised her, though, was when she saw Tullip nursing a third calf, another orphan, that wasn't even part of her family. "They're so caring about each other," she says.

Being able to put themselves in another's shoes is a sure sign of these amazing animals' intelligence, and shows that the elephants' kind heart is as big as they are!

Did you know?

Elephants have a longer pregnancy than any other mammal – almost 22 months. And newborns weigh about 90kg – that's more than a grown man!