

# LUFUTUKO

Sex: Female

Date of Birth: December 2017

Origin: Livingstone

Name Derivative: "The one Who Survived" in local language Tonga



In June 2018, six-month old Lufutuko ('Tuko') was found wandering frightened and alone near Livingstone. With support from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Game Rangers International rescued the little orphan, and safely transferred her to the Lilayi Elephant Nursery, where she received round-the-clock care from her team of dedicated keepers.

Tuko's initial recovery was slow. Her digestive system, like many new rescues, struggled to adapt to the Nursery's specialised milk formula, resulting in diarrhoea (which is expected in such a young elephant who is milk dependant), and her blood results consistently evidenced abnormalities. It was discovered that she was suffering with a piroplasma blood parasite, but at point of rescue her system was too weak to cope with the drugs required to treat this. Over time, with targeted nutrition, Tuko started to show a significant improvement in her appetite, digestion, behaviour and strength, and was soon introduced to her surrogate sisters.

Today, Tuko is a particularly playful young elephant, and is usually the first of the herd to go into the water and roll around in the mud. Often, she waits for the older elephants to lay down, then quickly climbs on top of them. However, once they are standing she will move off quickly, as she is very aware of their size and knows her limits when it comes to rough play. Her favourite activity seems to be attacking the water barrel! She waits for the others to finish drinking from it, to ensure that it is lighter and easier to move, then kicks it over and rolls it around the Boma. When there is no water barrel, she is often found with a branch in her mouth, whipping it around like a cheerleader's baton as she amuses herself between eating sessions.