

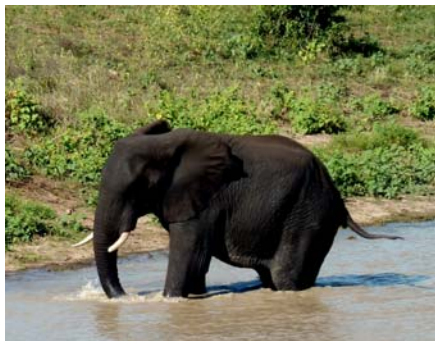
My First Day at Save the Elephants

By Summer Shaw

I began my first full day as a volunteer at Save the Elephants in South Africa with an exciting field trip. The whole team and I drove through the Timbavati Nature Reserve in search of the nearby elephants we were tracking. In no time, we came across a herd of approximately 100 elephants, including the elephant that shared my name, Summer! The elephants were moving really quickly and we initially thought that they were travelling to the watering hole.



However, after they passed the watering hole, we found out that they were actually going to join another herd! Unfortunately, we didn't have time to continue tracking the elephants to the larger herd but we were still able to see some amazing sights in the bush. I particularly enjoyed watching 3 elephants completely submerged in the river, splashing each other as they swam.



After we had finished for the day, we went to the local pub, Josmac's. Even on the way over there in the car, I saw zebras and giraffes just grazing on the side of the road. Josmac's itself was the most beautiful pub I have ever been to. I sat on a balcony overlooking the riverbank as the sun set, watching a swimming hippo and some crocodiles while sipping a local cider called Savannah. Halfway through the evening, the hippo even walked out of the water up the riverbank. I was told that the hippo wandered near the pub at night, which felt so surreal and completely different from my normal life at home.

Finally, on our way back, we saw a pride of 11 lionesses, including one white lion, sitting just off the road. I was so fortunate to be able to see both the elusive white lion, endemic to the Timbavati region, and a massive herd of elephants on my first day here!

