

Pinnewala Elephant Orphanage - Sri-Lanka

Written by Sandra Meszar



I have always had a great fondness for elephants and I was very fortunate this year to be able to go to Sri-Lanka and visit the Pinnewala Elephant Orphanage. This Orphanage was set up in 1975 to look after seven orphaned baby elephants, though the orphanage's population has now increased to 70, making this the world's largest collection of captive elephants. The elephants here range in age from newborns to elderly matriarchs and include orphaned and abandoned

elephants, as well as those injured in the wild (often in conflicts with farmers). The most famous residents in the orphanage are Sama a three-legged elephant who stood on a land mine and a beautiful blind elephant called Raja.

About one elephant is born at the orphanage every year and the baby elephants here are without doubt the tiniest and cutest that you are ever likely to see. The adult elephants earn their keep by helping with various chores such as collecting food.



There are three daily feeding sessions. The youngsters guzzle enormous quantities of milk (Formula 2) out of oversized baby bottles,



whilst the older elephants stuff themselves with trunkloads of palm leaves. I was fortunate enough to be able to feed a couple of babies- extremely enjoyable!!



Twice a day the elephants enjoy a leisurely bath in the Maoya river which proves to be extremely amusing.

I found this visit to the Orphanage to be a wonderful experience as this is something that I have always wanted to do so I regard myself as being most fortunate to have achieved this ambition.