

WELCOMING NEW LIFE!

Ndarakwai is the name of indigenous cedar trees that tower over our camp near Kilimanjaro. There are also giant eucalyptus trees planted long ago by British colonists to deter mosquitos. Bwana Peter cut 4 of these huge eucalyptus trees to build a tall treehouse by the watering hole near camp. Hilltop spotters watch elephant movements and then radio our guides when a herd has finished grazing and comes in to drink and bathe.

In 2000, after a group of tuskers had left the watering hole, a tiny female baby elephant was left behind, her mother probably a victim of ivory poachers. The entire staff mobilized to milk Masaai goats and feed the growing orphan day and night with an improvised bottle. She not only survived, but Ncarsis is now a huge amiable mascot at Ndarakwai.

During the last PhotoAdventure in May of 2008, each day before lunch, our group of photographers rushed down to the treehouse and scrambled up to wait quietly as dusty pachyderms ambled in to the watering hole. In the extended family was a newborn baby who tried to mimic the adults but stepped on his trunk and got stuck in the mud and fell over on one side and then the other. Despite holding our hands over our mouths and not breathing, we couldn't help but laugh. The elephants' big ears flared out, and trunks went up sniffing, they nervously finished their drink, and moved back to the bush.

We named the little guy Baby Harry after our funniest, most mischievous workshop participant.

