

## Episode 52: Chimp Eden

### Summary

Nick and Wendy recently visited a chimpanzee rescue sanctuary in South Africa called Chimp Eden. In this episode they talk about the sanctuary and the chimps who live there.

### Transcript

Nick: Today Wendy and I are coming to you from South Africa, where we just arrived a couple of days ago. And this is the beginning of a longer trip that we're doing in the region. And we hope to bring you lots of interesting conversations about some fascinating places that we visit along the way. And to that end<sup>1</sup>, yesterday we did our first real tourist activity since we've been here, and it was to visit a place called Chimp Eden. So, Wendy, what's that all about?

Wendy: Chimp Eden is a sanctuary for rescued chimpanzees. And it's run by the Jane Goodall Institute. Jane Goodall is a scientist who has worked with chimpanzees for many decades and has really done a lot to educate the public about their situation and, uhh, and about, uhh, how they really do need our help, because many of them are suffering in different ways. So the ones in Chimp Eden, the ones who we visited yesterday, there are 32 chimpanzees living there at the moment, and they all have their own different backstories. So some of them are orphans<sup>2</sup> whose parents were killed by poachers<sup>3</sup> who were hunting them for their meat. Some of them were kept in zoos and other roadside attractions for entertainment. Some were being kept illegally as pets, and some of them were research subjects and they had to endure<sup>4</sup> some pretty horrible, umm, testing done on animals in research laboratories.

Nick: Yeah and what's interesting is that, as you said, each of them have their own story, and you can - when you hear the stories - you can see the differences from the different situations that they came from and that they were rescued from and how that has created, unfortunately, different problems for those individual chimpanzees, uhh, which we'll get to in a minute. But just getting back to the bush

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<sup>1</sup> to that end: with the aim of achieving that, with that goal in mind

<sup>2</sup> orphans: people (or animals!) with no parents

<sup>3</sup> poachers: people who kill animals for a variety of reasons. See also: Episode 22: Turtles in Panama.

<sup>4</sup> endure: survive, undergo, be subjected to (something negative)

meat trade, I mean I wasn't even aware until yesterday that people ate chimpanzee meat, umm, which is a bit disturbing. But what I did find interesting was that we learned how in Central Africa, which is the natural habitat of chimpanzees, there are different views among the traditional people who live there about chimpanzee meat. And so, for example, there are some places in that region where people believe that if you eat chimpanzee meat that you will become as strong as a chimpanzee, umm, because a chimpanzee is about eight-to-ten times stronger than a human of the same size. And so for those cultures and for those people, the chimpanzee meat is prized. But for some other cultures, they believe that eating chimpanzee meat will bring evil spirits, and so they avoid eating chimpanzee meat. So I just found it interesting that even within that, the traditional viewpoint, umm, and within the traditional cultures, there are two different views that are diametrically opposed<sup>5</sup> about chimpanzee meat.

Wendy: Yeah, yeah, I mean, you know, different human cultures have different views on lots of things including animals and, umm, unfortunately our views can often have a negative impact on the animals that we live with and live nearby.

Nick: OK, so we went to this sanctuary yesterday. Umm, there are 32 chimpanzees like you said and they're in two different enclosures<sup>6</sup>. And so that means they're two different groups. And so they live, to a certain degree, as they would in the wild, in terms of the social interaction within the group. And so there's an alpha male, for example, in both groups. Although in the first group, the alpha male has recently been overthrown, uhh, which is quite interesting. Basically, three of the other males kind of ganged up and fought the alpha male, and you can actually still see some of his injuries from that fight, and he's now no longer the alpha male but they haven't decided who the new one will be.

Wendy: Yeah, so it's up to the three who overthrew him, it's up to them to fight it out among themselves and decide which of them is going to be the new alpha male.

Nick: And I guess whoever becomes the new alpha male then has the pick<sup>7</sup> of the females who they want to mate with.

Wendy: Mmm-hmm.

Nick: Umm, and so we had two different viewing platforms where we watched them in their enclosures. Umm, and so as we said before, there are many different

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<sup>5</sup> diametrically opposed (colocation): completely different

<sup>6</sup> enclosures: fenced-in areas where animals are kept (enclosed). In this case the enclosures were very large and contained trees, but an enclosure could also be little more than a cage at a zoo.

<sup>7</sup> the pick: the first or best choice

stories and it was nice to hear the individual stories of some of the chimpanzees, and I think you were quite touched<sup>8</sup> by a few of those.

Wendy: Yeah, definitely. You really can see their individual personalities, and once you hear their own personal story, and their own history, then it becomes all the more clearer why they have certain personality traits and why they do certain things that they do. Uhh, so, there are many stories that I would love to share, but I'll just share one of them, uhh, which is the story of a chimpanzee named Cozy, and for me he was definitely the most memorable. And he didn't seem to like us very much. He was actually quite aggressive, and we had been warned before going over to that section that, uhh, Cozy probably would be aggressive, and that he likes to throw rocks and stones and, uhh, fistfuls of sand and anything that he can find, he will pick these up and throw them at visitors. And he did! He threw rocks at us several times and, umm, it was a pattern that we could see. Every time he did it, he would start by doing this little dance, and making noises, and then charging us, running up to ... close to the fence and then throwing something at us, and clapping, and then running away. He did it at least five or six times while we were there. And, umm, at first it was scary and intimidating and then, umm, after people saw that they probably weren't going to get hurt, then they started laughing and thought that it was funny. Uhh, but once we heard his story, I definitely didn't think that it was funny. Umm, Cozy has suffered a lot of abuse. So he started out in a research laboratory where he had to undergo all kinds of horrible experiments, umm, drug testing done by a drug company. And he was one of the lucky few who survived that, because most of the chimpanzees in the laboratories don't survive. But he was then sold to a travelling roadshow, like a travelling circus, basically. And he was forced to wear clothes, human clothes, and learn tricks and do things like, you know, standing on his toes like a ballerina and things like that. And then his owner died and so he was inherited by someone else who was part of this travelling roadshow. And she just kept him locked away in his ca ... in her caravan, for seven years. Still kept the same clothes on him, so he was wearing this really tight pair of jeans for seven years. And of course, he grew during that time and the jeans stayed the same size, and they actually, uhh, prevented his hips from developing properly because these jeans were so tight on him. And when he was finally rescued, his rescuers had to cut off the jeans with a pair of scissors because they couldn't remove them any other way, they were so tight. So after hearing his story, umm, I definitely understood why he was taking out his anger and his frustration on the humans who were coming to visit him, because he's had some pretty awful experiences with humans in the past.

Nick: And it also seemed that some of the other chimps get a bit tired of his behaviour as well, and so, yeah, it's just also another, I mean, it's something that's sad but it's another interesting thing that the interactions that they have with each other are also affected by their former lives, uhh, before they came to this sanctuary.

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<sup>8</sup> touched: emotionally impacted or affected

Wendy: Yeah, I mean they are a family group now, uhh, kind of out of necessity, because they've all been put in this place. And it is, you know, it's a happy ending for them. Compared to where they came from, uhh, this is a much better life. But, yeah, they're kind of thrown together with these other chimps and some of them they may get along with<sup>9</sup> better than others. And, uhh, I guess it's like humans too, you know, we, uhh, don't necessarily get to choose who our family is, and, umm, you know sometimes there's conflicts, but overall they seem to get along pretty well.

Nick: Yeah, and as you said it is a much happier ending for them although it is a little bit unfortunate that it is the ending. Umm, and so it's a rescue sanctuary but it's not a rehabilitation sanctuary, because the chimpanzees are kind of too far gone in terms of their interaction with humans and then they wouldn't be able to survive in the wild. And so they're not going to be able to be released back into the wild, umm, but this is the next best thing for them I guess.

Wendy: Yeah, so, umm, hopefully the situation in their native areas will improve, because that's another thing. I mean, even if they did get to the point where they could live independently and  fend for themselves<sup>10</sup>, they would probably just be killed by poachers or caught, you know, to be sold to zoos or as pets or things like that. So until the situation improves in Western Africa and Central Africa which is their homeland, then there's not much point in trying to release them back into the wild.

Nick: Yep, but at least they have a good home now at Chimp Eden and it was a really great experience for us to go and see them.

Wendy: It was, it was, and I highly encourage anyone who is in the area to go do it. Umm, it's pretty close to Kruger National Park which is the most famous national park in South Africa. So if you're planning to go there, a visit to Chimp Eden would definitely be a great addition to that trip.

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<sup>9</sup> get along with: get on with, have a good relationship with

<sup>10</sup> fend for themselves: live or survive without assistance

## Comprehension Questions

1. Why was there no alpha male in the first group of chimpanzees that Nick and Wendy visited?
2. What were the three situations the chimpanzee called 'Cozy' was forced into before being rescued and brought to Chimp Eden?
3. According to Nick and Wendy, what are the two reasons that prevent the chimpanzees from being released back into the wild?

## Exercises

*Use the words and expressions in the footnotes of the transcript to fill in the gaps.*

1. When she told her story about arriving in the country by boat as a refugee, everyone was quite \_\_\_\_\_. I even saw some people crying.
2. People who live in a war-torn country have to \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of hardship. It is very difficult for them to create a good life for themselves.
3. Rhinos and elephants in Africa are often killed by \_\_\_\_\_. They want the horns of the animals to sell on the black market.
4. She is the most popular girl in school, so she has \_\_\_\_\_ of the boys. She can choose whichever one she wants.
5. He doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ his mother-in-law. She is always pressuring him and his wife to have more grandchildren.
6. If teenagers move away from home to go to university, they have to \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time. They have to cook, clean etc.
7. When their parents died in a car crash, the twins became \_\_\_\_\_ at the age of five. Fortunately for them, their aunt and uncle agreed to raised them.
8. The two brothers both had the same upbringing but their political views are \_\_\_\_\_ to each other. As a result, they always argue about politics.
9. At some modern zoos, the animals live in \_\_\_\_\_ without fences. Instead, more natural barriers like moats and cliffs keep them confined.
10. The government has an ambitious spending program for the next five years. \_\_\_\_\_, it raised taxes, but that made the citizens unhappy.

## Discussion Questions

Discuss these questions with a partner or in the [English in 10 Minutes Listeners group on Facebook](#):

1. Have you ever seen a chimpanzee in the wild or in a zoo or elsewhere? If so, what was the experience like?
2. Do you think travelling circuses and zoos should be able to have animals like chimpanzees? Why or why not?
3. Would you eat chimpanzee meat? Why or why not?

## Answers

### Comprehension Questions

1. The alpha male was recently overthrown by three other males in the group and they haven't decided yet who will be the next alpha male.
2. He was in a research laboratory, and then was part of a travelling circus, and then was locked up in a cage as a type of pet.
3. They would not be able to survive in the wild because of their condition, and the situation in the regions where their natural habitat is means that they might not be safe from poachers even if they could survive among other animals.

### Exercises

1. touched
2. endure
3. poachers
4. the pick
5. get along with
6. fend for themselves
7. orphans
8. diametrically opposed
9. enclosures
10. To that end