

# LOVE IS IN THE AIR

## AT WEST MIDLAND SAFARI PARK



An Elephant at West Midland Safari Park appears to be totally besotted with her Keeper.

'Five' a seventeen year old African Elephant that arrived at the Park in Bewdley from an elephant orphanage in South Africa when she was just five years old, simply adores her Keeper, Lawrence Bates and she can regularly be seen giving him a kiss and a cuddle.

Whether this is a lasting love, the effects of St Valentine or the thought of spring in the air, it remains to be seen, but for the time being Lawrence has to get used to the extraordinary affection that is being lavished upon him.

Lawrence, 30, who lives in Kidderminster and Five have been an item for the past three years, ever since Lawrence first joined West Midland Safari Park in 2006.

West Midland Safari Park have three African Elephants - two females called Five and Latabe and one male called Jack - that share a substantial area totaling five acres comprising of a grassed paddock, sand paddock and purpose built elephant house.

Orphaned by the shooting of their mothers at a few days old, all three elephants were hand reared in a private elephant orphanage near Pretoria, South Africa, with others suffering the same plight. When the babies outgrew the orphanage, new homes were sought, hence their arrival at West Midland Safari Park.

The elephants are quite used to being in the limelight. Five is also the creator of many pieces of artwork, which wouldn't look out of place in any contemporary art exhibition and Latabe's football skills have earned her the reputation of being the champion of her league. Whilst all three elephants have developed a keen ear for rock music - which they share with their keeper.

West Midland Safari & Leisure Park, along with amusement rides, fully reopens at 10.00am daily from Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009 - including throughout half term - until Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Admission costs £11.50 for adults, £10.50 for children. A family saver ticket (two adults and two children) costs £40.00. Amusement rides charged extra in all cases. Further information is available from [www.wmsp.co.uk](http://www.wmsp.co.uk) or by telephone 01299 402114.

**E N D S**

**Photo Caption**

“Love is in the air” for Keeper, Lawrence Bates and African Elephant ‘Five’ at West Midland Safari Park, in Bewdley, Worcestershire.

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**Further information**

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