



MEDIA RELEASE

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## ***Playful pachyderms charm agents on Southern Africa famil***

18 February 2019: **Unexpectedly close encounters with wild animals can stir some deep emotions – mostly notably fear. But for Endeavour Travel and Cruise's Jill Faircloth it led to some sweet tears.**

Travelling on an exclusive Travellers Choice educational tour of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana as guests of The Africa Safari Co., Jill stepped into Nehimba Safari Lodge in Hwange National Park to find herself almost face-to-face with a group of curious elephants.

"I just got such a shock to see them so incredibly close. And for a moment they stopped and we just looked each other in the eye," says Jill. "Let's just say there were tears. And I don't think I'll ever get over that moment."

It wasn't the agents' last encounter with the almost-always graceful creatures. On one evening the group watched male elephants jostling by the side of a swimming pool.

"They were just playing around when one of them accidentally fell into the pool," says Jill. "He was so embarrassed that after he got out he just walked away."

The nine-day tour included a night in the Zambezi Sands River Camp beside Victoria Falls, a ride on *The Elephant Express* train and a short voyage across the Chobe River travelling past hippo and crocodile to reach Chobe Water Villas in Namibia's Kasika Conservancy. Along the way the agents saw everything from lion and leopards to zebra, wild dogs and jackals.

What stood out most for Shane Wedding from Port Lincoln Travel and Cruise in South Australia was the relaxed and casual nature of Africa's extraordinary animal experiences.

"In Botswana, during a game drive along the Chobe River in Chobe National Park, we came across a lioness chomping on an elephant that had died," says Wedding. "Eventually she got up and just walked right past our vehicle, within a couple of feet, not paying us the slightest attention."

"At times like that, you don't think about photos, you just sit there in awe, totally in the moment."

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