

The little Dumbo who couldn't fly

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HE'S a 100kg baby, who was plucked, dehydrated and distressed, from a well near a Limpopo mine after his herd abandoned attempts to rescue him.

He's Amanzi the baby elephant. And the latest addition to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre has its staff on their toes.

Two minders work 12-hour shifts watching over him and he is fed 500ml of milk every two to three hours.

When he arrived at the centre last week, Amanzi was allowed to suck their thumbs for comfort.

It seems everyone at the centre — including resident sheep Lammie, who acts as a "foster" mother to rescued animals — is showering the little elephant with affection.

Lammie also allowed him to suckle from her before he got used to being bottle-fed.

Hoedspruit became Amanzi's temporary home after animal welfare organisation Elephants Alive failed to integrate him with breeding herds after his rescue.

The centre's head curator, Chris Schneider, said Amanzi's condition had improved.

"We're taking it from bottle to bottle.

Lammie the sheep helped when Amanzi couldn't suckle

"It's interesting to watch Amanzi interact with the team caring for him. He associates some of us with food and others with companionship."

Caring for Amanzi is not cheap.

"We pay about R1 000 a bag for skimmed milk. Obviously, the bigger he gets the more milk he will drink. So it's not



ON THE MEND: Amanzi tucks into 500ml of milk every two to three hours

Picture: HES

going to get cheaper," said Schneider.

What will become of Amanzi once he is fully recovered from his ordeal is unclear.

"At the moment we're not

planning far ahead," he said.

In the meanwhile, Amanzi continues to gain strength from his regular feeds and by romping around his enclosure with Lammie.

"He tries to grab Lammie's tail all the time. She helped when he couldn't suckle. He would suckle on her.

"It's not easy, but it's worthwhile," Schneider added.