

Dr. Stephanie Schuttler,
Mammologist
North Carolina Museum of Natural Science
Podcast length: 15:19



LESSON PLAN

SYNOPSIS

The Walking Classroom's Laura Fenn visits with [Dr. Stephanie Schuttler](#), a Post-Doc Research Associate and mammalogist at the [North Carolina Museum of Natural Science](#). Stephanie shares her research on forest elephants and their family groups.

VOCABULARY

Review key vocabulary (included definitions are limited to the context of today's podcast)

- **mammalogist:** (noun) a scientist that studies mammals to understand how they live in the environment, behave, and how to protect them in the future.
- **cooperatively:** (adverb) working together for a common purpose or benefit
- **matriline:** (noun) a line of descendants from a female ancestor

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT & DISCUSSION

1. Based on what Dr. Schuttler shared about studying forest elephants, what are some difficulties scientists can face when researching an animal? How can the animal's habitat be a problem?
2. Female Savannah elephants work cooperatively to raise their young. Can you think of other examples of groups that work together cooperatively? What are some benefits of working together towards a common goal?
3. Dr. Schuttler said that you don't have to be the best, but if you have a passion and willingness to work hard, you will get there. How can this apply to your life? What are you willing to work hard to achieve?

BOOK SUGGESTIONS

Consider reading aloud or making some of these titles available to students to reinforce and extend some of the concepts covered in today's podcast.

[The Elephant Scientist](#) by Catilin O'Connell

Learn about the scientist who studied elephants in the African habitat and the observations she made.

[Elephant Talk](#) by Ann Downer

Read about the complex system of communication that elephants use as they "talk" to one another and what scientists hope to do with the discoveries they've made.

[The Scoop on Animal Poop](#) by Dawn Cusick

Dr. Schuttler explained how she was able to use elephant dung in her research. Read about animals that have found some creative ways to make the most of their waste.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

The following activities are ways to build on and extend some of the topics discussed in the podcast. We strongly encourage you to always preview videos prior to showing them to your students.

[Elephant Voices](#) <http://bit.ly/1RmI5Rg>

Elephantvoices.org

Listen to elephant vocalizations to better understand how elephants "talk".

[Do Elephants Ever Forget?](#) <http://bit.ly/1H6r8Tx>

Wonderopolis.org

Students learn about the truth behind the common saying, "An elephant never forgets!"

[The Secret Language of Elephants](#) <http://cbsn.ws/1NWEzro>

Video from CBSNews.com (15:04)

This video gives a good idea of how researchers try to learn more about how forest elephants communicate.*

**Note: 5:07 is a recommended stopping point. You are encouraged to preview the remaining film yourself if you would like to show your students additional footage.*