Herd of wild elephants on the march in China

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A herd of 15 wild elephants is approaching a city of 6.6 million people in China. The group of Asian elephants has trekked nearly 500km from their habitat in a nature reserve in the south of Yunnan province, near the borders with Myanmar and Laos. China's official news agency, Xinhua, reports that there are three calves in the herd. The giant beasts are heading north to the outskirts of the provincial capital, Kunming. They have travelled along highways and through fields of crops over the past few months. A Chinese TV station said that over the past week, the animals guzzled down the water in a water tank and feasted on kilos of corn in farmers' fields. Their journey has been captivating the Chinese public.

Authorities are now attempting to ensure the herd does not enter Kunming city. Experts are coaxing the animals into taking detours that will get them to head back towards their nature reserve. It is unclear as to why the animals have migrated so far away from their original habitat. One reason could be a decline in the amount of edible plants in their reserve. Naturally growing supplies of the elephants' favorite foods, such as plume grass, have fallen. Another factor could be a rise in elephant numbers. Xinhua reports that the wild elephant population in Yunnan Province is around 300, up from 193 in the 1980s. A further explanation offered is that the leader of the herd could have simply led it astray.

Sources: channelnewsasia.com / *chinadaily.com* / *yahoo.com*

Writing

All countries should immediately stop destroying animals' habitats. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

herd / wild / elephants / nature reserve / borders / news agency / crops / corn / water / detours / migrated / habitat / edible / supplies / population / explanation / astray

True / False

1) Asian elephants have walked almost 500km and are near a Chinese city. T / F

2) The elephants started near China's borders with Laos and Myanmar. T / F

3) Three young elephants are among the travelling herd. T / F

4) The elephants have created very little interest among Chinese people. T / F

5) Authorities are creating detours to get the elephants to turn around. T / F

6) The elephants could have migrated because of a lack of plume grass. T / F

7) Elephant numbers have increased to 3,000 in Yunnan Province. T / F

8) A junior member of the herd could have led it astray. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**herd**	a.	natural surroundings
2.	**trekked**	b.	edges
3.	**outskirts**	c.	see to it
4.	**guzzled**	d.	off course
5.	**captivating**	e.	group
6.	**ensure**	f.	safe to eat
7.	**detours**	g.	gulped
8.	**habitat**	h.	marched
9.	**edible**	i.	diversions
10.	**astray**	j.	enthralling

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think of elephants?

b) What do you think of nature reserves?

c) What do you think of elephant calves?

d) Would you be worried if elephants were heading your way?

e) What giant beasts do you like?

f) What damage could the elephants do?

g) Should the farmers get compensated for the elephant damage?

h) What was the last thing that left you captivated?

Phrase Match

1. near the borders with
2. there are three calves
3. to the outskirts of the
4. feasted on
5. Their journey has been captivating
6. Experts are coaxing the animals
7. the animals have migrated
8. a decline in the amount of edible
9. a rise in elephant
10. led it

a. into taking detours
b. so far away
c. the Chinese public
d. astray
e. provincial capital
f. numbers
g. Myanmar and Laos
h. kilos of corn
i. plants
j. in the herd

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think about what you read?
b) What do you know about elephants?
c) What would happen if the elephants entered the city?
d) How interesting are elephants?
e) Should governments ban the destruction of animal habitat?
f) Have you ever been led astray?
g) Where do you think the elephants will end up?
h) What questions would you like to ask the elephant experts?

Spelling

1. ighpoapnacr a city of 6.6 million people
2. nearly 500km from their htatiab
3. heading north to the ursktoist
4. the ncivoarlpi capital, Kunming
5. the animals zuegldz down the water
6. tpatgvacnii the Chinese public
7. Experts are xanicog the animals
8. taking ruedsto
9. the animals have mgetarid so far away
10. delibe plants
11. A further aenlpaxitno
12. led it aysatr

Role Play

Role A – Elephants
You think elephants are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): gorillas, polar bears or Komodo dragons.

Role B – Gorillas
You think gorillas are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): elephants, polar bears or Komodo dragons.

Role C – Polar Bears
You think polar bears are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): gorillas, elephants or Komodo dragons.

Role D – Komodo Dragons
You think Komodo dragons are the most interesting animals. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their animals. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): gorillas, polar bears or elephants.

Speaking – Giant Beasts

Rank these with your partner. Put the most interesting at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Elephants
- Cows
- Camels
- Gorillas
- Rhinoceroses
- Polar bears
- Komodo dragons
- Hippopotami

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. g	5. j
6. c	7. i	8. a	9. f	10. d

Answers – True False

1 T	2 T	3 T	4 F	5 T	6 T	7 F	8 F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.