

# Do Elephants Call "Human!" to Alarm Herd Of Approaching Danger?

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Elephants flee the sound of local people whilst emitting the telltale 'human' alarm call rumble.

African elephants make a specific alarm call in response to the danger of humans, according to a new study of wild elephants in Kenya.

Researchers from Oxford University, Save the Elephants, and Disney's Animal Kingdom carried out a series of audio experiments in which recordings of the voices of the Samburu, a local tribe from North Kenya, were played to resting [elephants](#). The elephants quickly reacted, becoming more vigilant and running away from the sound whilst emitting a distinctive low rumble.

When the team, having recorded this rumble [[listen to the rumble here](#)], played it back to a group of elephants they reacted in a similar way to the sound of the Samburu voices; running away and becoming very vigilant, perhaps searching for the potentially lethal threat of human hunters.

The new research, recently reported in *PLOS ONE*, builds on previous Oxford University research showing that elephants call 'bee-ware' and run away from the sound of angry bees. Whilst the 'bee' and 'human' rumbling [alarm calls](#) might sound similar to our ears there are important differences at low (infrasonic) frequencies that elephants can hear but humans can't.

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