



In this issue...

[Conservation Conferences](#)

[Risk Mapping](#)

[Conservation Hero Award](#)

[Walking for Elephants](#)

[Chapter 18 Summary](#)

Quick Links

[Homepage - Elephant Trust](#)

[Support our Work](#)

[Elatia](#)



Part of the ATE Team at Christmas in Amboseli: Vicki Fishlock, Cynthia Moss, Phyllis Lee and Betsy Swart
...they ask...

[Please Help Us to Help Elephants by
Donating Now](#)

****Breaking News****

Just as we were about to send out this issue of the ATE newsletter we heard that China has banned the importation of ivory for one year. It turns out that the first reports were a bit misleading. The ban is only meant for carved ivory items. It's not much of a concession nor will it affect the illegal trade. However, it is important that China is acknowledging that there is a problem for elephants resulting from the demand for ivory. We await a much bigger step than this one with a complete ban on domestic and international trade in ivory.

Nosey

News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

January-February 2015

Dear (Contact First Name),

The Chinese Lunar New Year was celebrated on February 19--the Year of the Sheep (or Goat or Ram). Whichever, it is considered a peace-loving and kind animal and one heralding a year of promise and prosperity. We certainly hope the peace and kindness will win through for elephants.

Here in Kenya the New Year has started out with many positive initiatives made by individuals and groups. Because the international media tends to focus only a few well-known conservationists, it leads to a false impression that Kenyans are not concerned about their wildlife and habitats, but this is far from true. There are many grass-roots movements that make us proud to live in this country. In this issue we will be highlighting two Kenyan conservation heroes and some upcoming events in aid of wildlife.

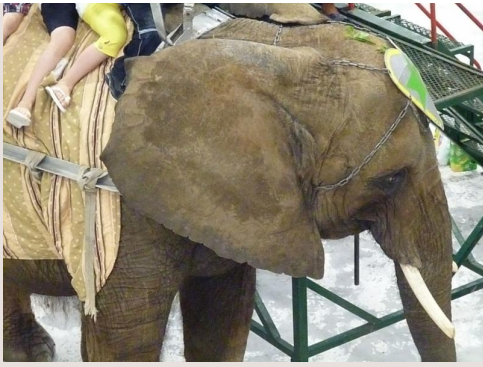
Amboseli continues to be peaceful. There were no elephants poached at all in the last quarter of 2014 thanks to our partners the Big Life Foundation, the Kenya Wildlife Service and the community with which the elephants share their range. In Kenya as a whole poaching has been reduced, but we are aware that the situation could reverse rapidly. The demand for ivory is stronger than ever and the price of ivory is very high leading to temptation and corruption. Elephants in many other countries in Africa are being wiped out. While we can still enjoy Amboseli with its relaxed and secure elephants, we can't ignore what is happening across Africa. We must all play a role in stopping the ivory trade.

*Cynthia Moss
Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephants*

[Like us on Facebook](#)

Conservation Conferences

Here in Kenya we've hit the New Year running already. We have been busy with visitors and conferences. The Kenya Wildlife Service has hosted three important conferences that we have attended. First, there was a two-day meeting in Naivasha bringing together government and conservation NGOs. Norah Njiraini attended on behalf of ATE. Next was the inaugural National Elephant Conference held at KWS headquarters in Nairobi. This two-day meeting brought KWS staff and all the scientists working on elephants in Kenya together. Vicki Fishlock presented our paper with Fulbright Scholar Mark Sowers on elephant movements, which she summarises in the first main article. Vicki and Cynthia were there for both days of the conference, and enjoyed re-connecting with many of our colleagues working in other ecosystems. And third was a productive meeting on human-wildlife interactions held in Amboseli, which Vicki attended.



Credit: Deb Robinson

We at ATE are concerned about the welfare of all elephants whether they are in the wild or in captivity. Our expert on captive elephants, Betsy Swart, runs our US office and is interested in receiving any reports you can send her of African elephants in captivity in your area.

The elephant in the photo is Nosey, who tours the US performing and giving elephant rides. If you would like information on how to help Nosey and other captive elephants please contact Executive Director, Betsy Swart, at [This Address](#).

News and Actions for Captive Elephants

Mexico has banned the use of wild animals in circuses and other traveling performances. The ban was the result of a cooperative effort between Mexico's Green Party and their conservative National Action Party, with efforts coordinated by the animal protection group, AnimaNaturalis. The ban is expected to be signed into law by President Enrique Peña Nieto.

The Netherlands has announced it will prohibit the use of wild animals in circuses and traveling shows. After almost a decade of lobbying by animal protection organizations, legislators agreed that appropriate conditions for animals cannot be maintained in traveling circuses.

The city of Oakland, California has banned the use of bullhooks to train and control elephants.

If you live in California, please call your Assembly member, asking him/her to support AB 96, the bill that would ban the sale of rhino horn and ivory. Though the state has prohibited the sale of ivory since 1977, a loophole made the bill unenforceable. AB 96 will close that loophole. The first hearing for the bill will take place on March 10, 2015.

Norah Trains Big Life Scouts



Our Training Coordinator Norah Njiraini just finished



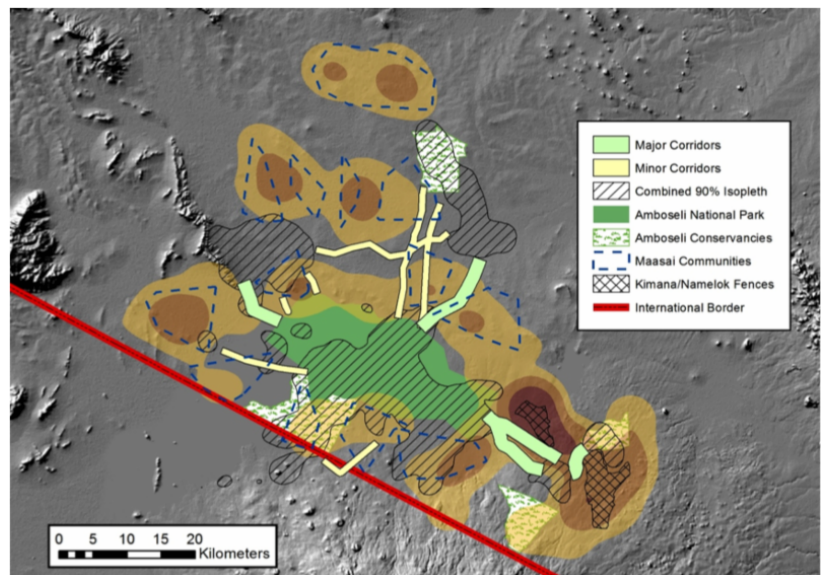
The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Prof. Judy Wakhungu, and the US Ambassador Robert Godec (seated together centre) were both on hand to open the conference

[Visit our Website](#)

Risk Mapping by Vicki Fishlock, Mark Sowers and Cynthia Moss

The growing interface between elephants and people is a challenge we cannot ignore if we want a future for wild elephants. Securing that future means finding ways for elephants and people to coexist in landscapes under pressure from expanding human populations. Making sure wildlife doesn't lose out in this struggle is the common goal uniting all the conservation partners in Amboseli.

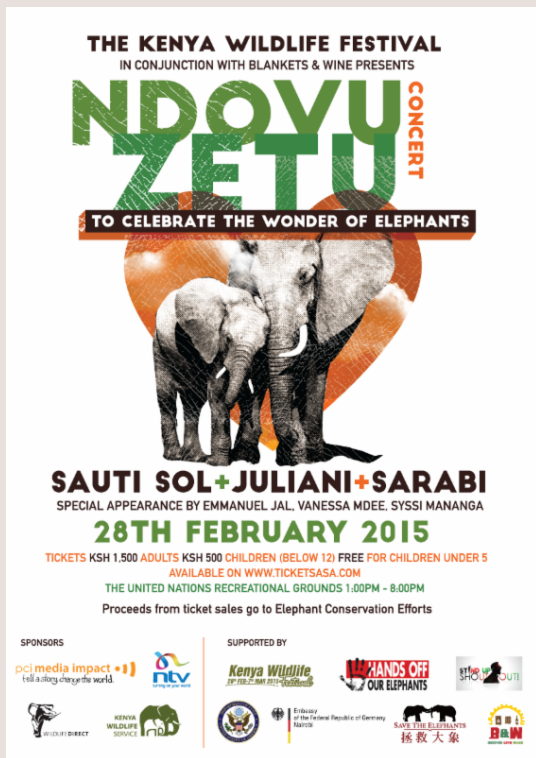
Understanding that interface from both a human and elephant perspective is important for conservation planning. At the inaugural National Elephant Conference, we presented a paper showing some of the data we gained from deploying satellite tracking collars in 2011, looking at how elephants respond to the human aspects of their landscape.



We deployed five satellite collars on Ida, Lobelia, Maureen, Vicky and Willow in 2011 to show the corridors and dispersal areas elephants use. This map shows those corridors - minor corridors (thin yellow lines) were used by only one female, or only once. Major corridors (fat green lines) were used either more than once, or by more than one female. All of the corridors come directly into the National Park except for one (used by Willow) which linked the Meshanani and Selengei areas. The hatched areas show the dispersal areas (outside the boundaries of the protected area) where our females spent up to 83% of their time in the year. Maureen's range extended into Tanzania, where she travelled up to 28km across the international border on a 38-day journey.

working with the most recent batch of **Big Life Foundation** rangers. During four day training periods, rangers learn about elephant biology and behaviour to be able to work safely around elephants, and learn how to identify, age and sex elephants to improve their patrol reporting.

It's just one of the ways ATE works to support our many partners, sharing our knowledge and expertise.



Kenya's Wildlife Fest

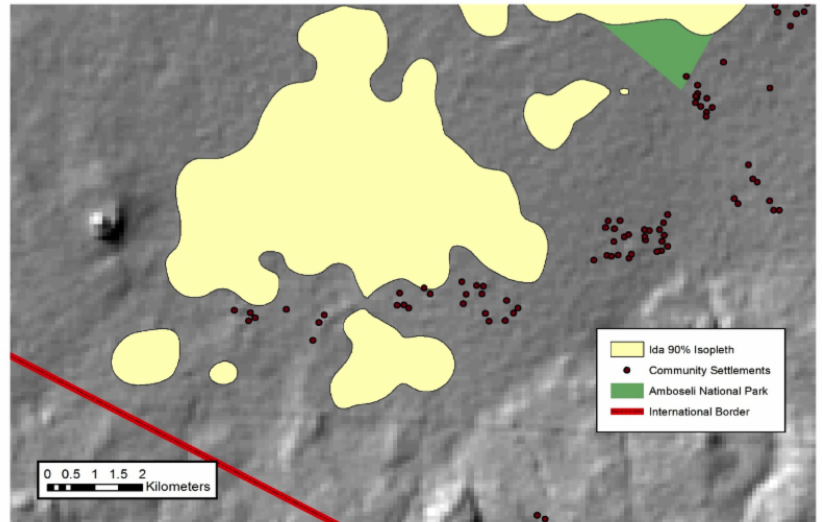
The Kenya Wildlife Service and conservation NGOs are celebrating World Wildlife Day by having a series of events over a week-long period. The kick-off will be a concert on February 28. We realise most of you don't live in Kenya but for those who do, join us at the UN grounds on Saturday.

Other events include a citizen science project counting giraffes and zebras in Nairobi National Park, bird walks, debates in schools, a sports event and finally ending in Amboseli with a ceremony to name or sponsor some of the elephants. The Kenya President is planning to attend the Amboseli event.

For more information go to the [KWS Website](#).

Successful conservation strategies include all the stakeholders, the actors who affect and are affected by those strategies. This isn't just about humans - elephants are stakeholders too, because they act on and respond to conservation plans. Our latest research is working on understanding what risks elephants perceive in living alongside people.

Amboseli elephants depend on an area many times larger than the National Park. Families use the permanent swamps in the Park as a dry season refuge, but range across community lands for much of their time. Each family has a different strategy of where to go, when to move there, and how long to stay. Human presence shapes those strategies, as well as where and when resources are available.



A close up of Ida's home range shows how human settlements shape elephant movements, even in the relative security of Amboseli. The red dots are homesteads (bomas) and the yellow shape is the outline of the area capturing 90% of Ida's location data. This level is used to define a home range, because it ignores unusual locations. The 50% isopleth (shape not shown) is conventionally used to define a core area, where animals spend most of their time. Home ranges are important because they include areas and resources that are not used year-round, but which are nonetheless important for an animal's survival and reproductive success.

Amboseli elephants are important to Amboseli, and to Kenya, but as a relatively undisturbed population, their strategies and behavior are also important to conservationists and managers across Africa. Understanding what Amboseli elephants do can help make informed conservation decisions for populations elsewhere.

Although we capture some of this information from the sightings of elephants in our core study area, we need to understand more about how elephants are using the landscape. Identifying these information gaps shapes our upcoming research strategies. These data support our conservation partners in Amboseli, for example informing the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust which has developed Kenya's first landscape management plan, shortly to be gazetted into law.

The full report containing these maps has been circulated to our conservation partners, but anyone wishing to obtain a copy can do so by contacting our Nairobi office: info@elephanttrust.org.

Watch our films on [YouTube](#)

Conservation Hero Award

Each year the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund honors individuals from all around the world with the Disney Conservation Hero Award. This year Amboseli's Daniel Leturesh, who was nominated by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, received one of the awards. In announcing the winners Disney wrote: "These recipients enable critical conservation work around the world, help protect animals ranging from terrapins to monkeys to snow leopards, and employ various innovative methods to educate and engage communities. What they all share is a passion for

How to Support Our Work

The following are the some of the ways in which you can support ATE:

Elatia: Follow a Family

ATE recently launched a program to enable friends and supporters to follow the Amboseli families along with us. We've called it Elatia, which means 'neighbour' in Maa (the language of the Maasai people). By joining the project you become a neighbour to an elephant family, sharing the ups and downs that constitute elephant family life. Joining Elatia requires a donation of only US\$30 per year for each family. Your contribution helps fund ATE's on-the-ground expenses. As an Elatia member, you will benefit from exclusive information about your family, including:

- An update about your elephant family every 2 months, including news of births, deaths, pregnancies, and any social dramas
- Photographs of your family
- Periodic short films about the family, so you get to see them in action!
- A family tree, showing every elephant we have known in that family since 1972

Elatia members get a user name and password, making this information exclusively for those who join. The Elatia Project is completely digital, so all updates will be viewed online through our website.

To join Elatia or to give a gift for someone else, go to [This Link](#). If you have any problems, we just made a tutorial for signing up, [Click Here](#).



iGive

One of the ways you can support ATE is by making your online purchases through iGive. If you sign up the Amboseli Trust for Elephants as your recipient organization we will get a small percentage of the sale. Connect with iGive.com.

Give a Gift that Lasts Forever

Designate the Amboseli Trust for Elephants as a beneficiary of your will, individual retirement account, or life insurance policy. Your legacy gift will enable ATE to learn more about the fascinating and complex lives of elephants and to assure their future.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please contact Betsy Swart at: info@elephanttrust.org; tel +1-508-783-8308.

nature and drive to share this passion with others."



Daniel Leturesh receiving a medal from Disney's Aaron Frank

On presenting the award, they stated, "Daniel Leturesh is the Chairman of the Olgulului Ol'rarashi Group Ranch (OGR) in Kenya, where he works with local communities to develop and protect wildlife lands to create benefits for local wildlife and local communities. Recently, he spearheaded a plan to protect four conservation corridors in OGR from development, including the Kitenden corridor,

which offers the only link for elephants and antelope between Amboseli Park and Kilimanjaro Park (in Tanzania). Daniel worked tirelessly with several agencies and the OGR people to develop plans beneficial for both. His efforts continue to instill and promote good practices in wildlife and environmental conservation."

We work closely with Daniel and are very proud of him. He deserves this accolade and many more because through his vision Amboseli has become a model of conservation involving all the stakeholders in the ecosystem.

Join Elatia and Follow a Family

Walking for Elephants

We were fortunate to spend some time with another one of our conservation heroes, Jim Nyamu, Director of the **Elephant Neighbors Center** in Kenya. Jim has walked all over Kenya and in the US from Boston to Washington DC, logging 4,474 kilometres, not counting the walk he is presently on in Amboseli and Tsavo.



The ATE field team with Jim Nyamu and his group of dedicated walkers and assistants at our camp

His goal, with his slogan "Ivory Belongs to Elephants", is to raise awareness and sensitise people to the plight of elephants. Every day on his walks he speaks to local people, gives lectures and shows films at schools, and meets with government officials and other groups. To date Jim has held 610 community meetings and has walked with children from more than 400 schools. Accompanying Jim were representatives from AMARA, a conservation education group working around Amboseli and Tsavo. We are shortly to provide AMARA with elephant films in Maa and Swahili to support their work.

Jim is planning a walk in California in May this year. We will keep you posted.

Chapter 18: Longevity, Competition and Musth: A Long-Term Perspective on Male Reproductive Strategies

by Joyce H. Poole, Phyllis C. Lee, Norah Njiraini & Cynthia J. Moss



Thank You

Our supporters were generous over the holiday season. We want to thank the following donors (in alphabetical order) for their interest in and concern for elephants:

Doug Aja
Jane Beckwith
Benevity Community Impact Fund
James and Emily Bost
Ann Cusic
The Estate of Patricia Doornbosch
Mag Dimond
Betsy Gifford
Chris Gordon
Donna Harpster
Kathryn Wilmerding Heminway
Karim Hirani
Cynthia Jensen
Leanne Lachman Charitable Foundation
Tom & Colleen Lee Family Fund (in honour of our Kenya Trustee Harvey Croze)
Joan Mackenzie
Maue Kay Foundation
T.J. Ocasek
Claire Profitt
REA (Rettet die Elefanten Afrikas)
Sue Anschutz Rodgers
Carl Safina
Jane Schosberg
Ann Smith
Keith & Elise Thompson

Thank you so very much.

Newsletter Sign Up

To sign up a friend for our newsletter, please click the box below.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



The magnificent Amboseli bull Dionysus who lived into his 60s

What are the most interesting elements of male behaviour? In Chapter 18, we (Joyce Poole, Phyllis Lee, Norah Njiraini, and Cynthia Moss) explore the mating tactics and reproductive dynamics of males when they were in the reproductive state of musth, and when they were in their non-musth state.

We start by providing a perspective on the musth state - when it occurs in a male's life, how often, and how musth affects a male's motivation to mate and fight. Musth remains a fascinating element of an elephant male's life. While many other male mammals, for example deer and camels have an annual "rutting" period when they compete with other males for females, few exhibit the kinds of behavioural variation that we see in the elephant's musth state. Musth is not seasonal; it is annual (or generally so unless conditions are terrible or the male has been injured or ill) but each male has a specific periodicity to his musth within any year. A male who comes into musth in April may be jostling with a number of other males also in musth, while one who comes into musth in August may have a clear field for access to any oestrous females.

We still know almost nothing about how males "choose" or change their musth periods. Some males have stable musth periods for decades, while others will gradually try to shift their period to those times when the most females are available. We do know from the paternity studies of Julie Hollister-Smith, Joyce Poole, Cynthia Moss, and Susan Alberts that the musth males are most often the fathers of calves. Musth gives males a huge advantage in competition with other males, and thus in access to receptive females. And older males, who have experienced more musth periods and are chosen by more females are indeed the most successful males in terms of leaving genetic descendants.

In this issue, it is revealing how many stories are about Kenyan conservation heroes and Kenyan initiatives. The country is a veritable hotbed of conservation advocacy and activity. Of course, everyone is not pro-wildlife. There are huge problems involving negative human-wildlife interactions such as crop damage and injuries and death to people and livestock and in turn death and injuries to elephants. These issues must be addressed and it is part of what we do at ATE. Once again though, we can't do anything in terms of mitigation unless we have financial support from our donors. Please continue to help us.

Sincerely,

*Cynthia Moss
Amboseli Trust for Elephants*

