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## News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

January - February 2016

### Greetings!

*The new year has started with a rush of activities for all of us at ATE. It is a time when we update all the births and deaths from the previous year and also sit together and name the calves who are turning four years old. We like doing this although this year the task was daunting because we had to name the 184 living calves born in 2012--the big baby boom year. That's way over our average and a record number of calves for one year.*

*Except when our donors name calves, we don't assign names for the first few years because that is when we expect mortalities. Until they are four the calf has a code name based on his or her mother's name and year of birth. In the early days I picked names from "Names for Babies" books and even a Dictionary of Saints, but I soon ran out of common names and in 1987 we started using themes, such as African rivers, Amboseli plants, place names, pop stars, sweets, drinks and more. Knowing that we had to find 184 unique names this year, our Resident Scientist Vicki Fishlock, suggested the theme of African tribes. Many African countries have well over 100 different tribes just within their borders so she knew there would be enough names to chose from and she was right.*

*All these newly named calves and their relatives are thriving. We got the promised El Nino rains well into January and February with the result that the Park is so green it almost hurts ones eyes. There is abundant food and there is very little poaching or conflict with people. The elephants are relaxed, playful and very social. It is a joy to be with them. This is the way we want all elephants to live.*

**Cynthia Moss**

**Director**

**Amboseli Trust for Elephants**



**Help us assure a future for her**  
**[Please Donate](#)**

### Introducing our New Team Members

ATE maintains an office in Nairobi to back up the operations in Amboseli and to handle the financial side of the project. For the last two years, we had an accountant from outside and all the rest of us

an accountant from outside and all the rest of us handled various other aspects. Sadly for us the accountant has moved to England. Handling the other aspects was a burden for us in the field so to keep us running smoothly we have hired an office administrator and a bookkeeper. We are delighted with our new staff.

#### **Sylvea Nyamburu - Project Administrator**



Sylvi joined us in November and has already proved to be a huge help to the running of ATE. Not only is she providing backup and logistics but she has also taken over the management of our scholarship program (see her story on the visit she made to some of the ATE sponsored girls).

#### **Celestine Mmboga - Accounts Assistant**



## **Second Chances: A Visit to the Amboseli Orphans by Cynthia Moss**

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust rescues orphaned elephants, nurses them back to health both physically and psychologically, and eventually releases them back into the wild. There are three release sites, two in Tsavo East National Park (Voi and Ithumba) and one in the Kibwezi Forest (Umani Springs). It is a wonderful operation and we are thankful every day that they exist. We have sent several calves from Amboseli to the DSWT nursery in Nairobi over the years. Some are completely wild now. In early February, I visited Ithumba and Umani Springs to see how the Amboseli orphans were progressing. They are all in excellent shape and clearly thriving in the safe and friendly atmosphere that the staff creates for them.

### **Tsavo East - Ithumba** Lemoyian

At the present time there is only one Amboseli orphan at the Ithumba release site in Tsavo East. This is Lemoyian, a three-and-a-half-year-old male found in a well near the Tanzanian border. A very wonderful Maasai man, Muterian ole Saboti found him stuck in the well early on the morning of 9 October 2012. He watched as the mother tried to extricate her calf but without success. Soon many herds of cattle approached and the mother had to withdraw. Young boys started throwing stones at the calf and threatened to spear him, but Muterian wouldn't let them. Fortunately, he was eventually able to alert us and then he stayed with the calf until help arrived. He is a true hero for elephants. The calf was named Lemoyian after the name of the well. At Ithumba I watched Lemoyian and his best buddy Barasilinga come in for their milk and move on to the dam for a good splashing. Lemoyian had an easier time transitioning to human care than many orphans because he was so young when we rescued him he had no fear of people.



### **Umani Springs - Kibwezi Forest** Quanza



On October 28, 2012 the QB family led by the marvelous matriarch Qumquat was attacked by poachers near the Tanzanian border. Qumquat and two of her daughters Qantina and Quayee were killed. Her grandson disappeared. When the





Celestine was hired by ATE in February although she has actually been working on our accounts for more than a year now, because she was with the firm that did our accounting. She definitely knows the ins and outs of our payroll and taxes and all the many tasks that it takes to keep our accounts in order. She is an excellent addition to our team.

## New ATE Video: A Double Rescue



Although we try to remain as non-invasive as possible, sometimes circumstances unfold where we just have to step in and help. Young mother Kitty from the KB family gave birth to her first calf but away from the safety and help of her family, she struggled with new motherhood. Watch a film showing how ATE and our partners gave her a helping hand by clicking [here](#).

## Welcoming Back ATE Collaborators



*Prof. Karen McComb*

Collaboration has always been a key part of the ATE work ethic. Each piece of research grows from previous work and adds to our understanding

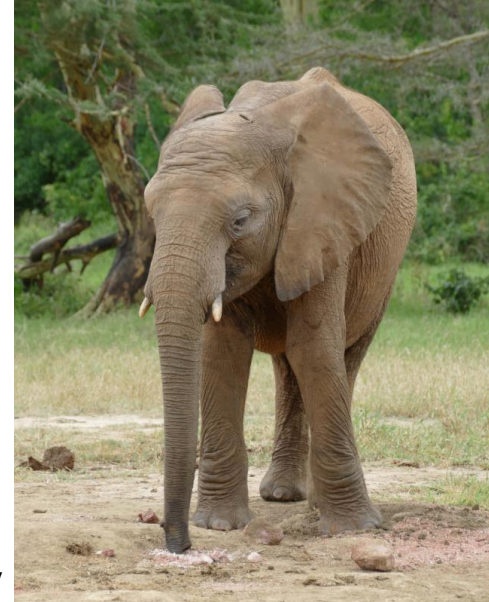


rangers found the carcasses the next day there was a small calf staying close to her dead mother and sisters. This was Qumquat's one-year-old female calf, Quanza. (Quanza

means first in Kiswahili--she was the first calf born in the baby boom following the 2009 drought.) Since no vehicles could get to the area, which was covered in lava boulders, Quanza had to be herded for nearly two miles. She was terrified and resentful of humans and to this day is still slightly distrustful. Nevertheless, I found her, now four years old, in excellent shape and clearly enjoying life in the lush Kibwezi Forest where she has been released at the Umani Springs site with her companions.

### Jasiri

In December 2011 we found Jemima, the matriarch of the JB family, with a new calf. Much to our surprise this calf was different from any we had ever recorded: he was very pale with blond tail hair and eyelashes. We are not sure he is technically an albino but he is certainly very light in color. Sadly, in December 2012 poachers killed Jemima, who had large thick tusks for a female. We found the family without her and some of the other members. It wasn't until three months later that Jasiri was found completely on his own in very bad shape but amazingly alive. We don't know how he survived for so long without milk - his name means brave one in Swahili; we admired his plucky spirit. He was rescued and sent to the DSWT facility where they nursed him back to health. Today, at four years old, he is a robust and active calf living the good life in the Kibwezi Forest where there is abundant shade to protect his delicate skin.



### Faraja



Two months after we had discovered Jemina's "albino" we found another light-skinned calf, this one the son of Fenella, the matriarch of the FA family. When he was seven months old we found the family without Fenella but with her calves present, a sure sign that something had happened to her. There had been some negative human-wildlife interactions in the area

this family used when they were out of the Park and we suspect she had been speared.

of elephants. Recently, ATE's Dr. Vicki Fishlock and Prof. Phyllis Lee published an opinion piece about elephant traditions in the journal *Animal Cognition* (more of that in our next newsletter!). We are delighted to welcome back Prof. Karen McComb and Dr. Lucy Bates to begin a formal examination of elephant culture, using the Amboseli population as a baseline. Amboseli's elephants are the luckiest in Africa, and the closest thing we have to an undisturbed population. This makes them incredibly important as a point of comparison to other populations who have been affected by poaching and other human pressures.



*Dr. Lucy Bates, with Norah Njiraini*

### Thank You

Our supporters have been generous over the last few months and we send a big thank you out to all of you who care about the Amboseli elephants and our work.

- Jane Beckwith
- Nancy Camp
- George and Leslie Conant
- Anne Cusic
  
- Christian Degner
- Joanne Delaplaine
- Mag Dimond
- The William H. Donner Foundation
- Fair Play Foundation
- Dorothy and Howard Fairweather
- Catherine Grellet
- John Heminway
- Kathryn Wilmerding Heminway
- International Fund for Animal Welfare
- Cynthia Jensen
- Patricia Joanides
- Bruce Ludwig
- Kristina McCormack
- Joan Mackenzie
- James Miller
- Susan Broderick Moore
- Mitch Newman
- TJ and SW Ocasek

There was no way this young calf could survive so we called in DSWT and thankfully, they were able to rescue him and take him to the nursery in Nairobi. We named him Faraja, which means relief in Swahili. On my visit to Kibwezi I found Faraja to be very outgoing and rambunctious. Apparently he is a bit of a naughty boy.

### Ziwa

The story of Ziwa makes me sad because he was rescued from a well with great success ([See our YouTube film of the rescue](#)) only to have his mother die 15 months later. Ziwa was the son of a female named Zombe from the ZA family. Zombe was found to be ill in December 2013 and was treated by the Kenya Wildlife Service vet, who's work is supported by the DSWT. Sadly, three weeks later she died. Her calf had loyally stayed at her side. Although he was already two years old it was decided to send him to the orphanage. He did well there and was eventually sent to the release site in Ithumba. Unfortunately, Tsavo East did not seem to agree with him and he had to be returned to the nursery in Nairobi. He recovered and was sent to Umani Springs in the Kibwezi forest where he is thriving. Lucky for Ziwa, the two older females at Umani treat him like a baby and pamper him. He soaks it all up.



Kibwezi is not so far from Amboseli. Maybe one day when they are big bulls some of the males will find their way back to their original home. It is common for bulls to go back and forth between Kibwezi and the Chyulu Hills, which are on the eastern side of the Amboseli ecosystem. To learn more about these orphans and the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust go to [the DSWT website](#).

Watch our films on [YouTube](#)

### A New Filming Project: Ageing in the Wild by Vicki Fishlock

Amboseli must surely have the most filmed and photographed elephants in the world. In the 20 years since the first film about Echo and her family was made, the elephants have starred in major TV series and had cameo roles in many more films and programmes, alongside the human cast of the project. It seems that the longer we spend with the elephants, the more fascinated people become with the project and our relationship with them.

At a time when it is crucial to highlight how intelligent, sensitive, sentient and wonderful elephants are, and how integral to the ecosystems they inhabit, the entire ATE team has been working hard on media awareness campaigns. In recent months this has included filming



*Deborah was matriarch of the DB family for 38 years until her death in 1978: a deep understanding of elephants only comes from tracking*



Estate of Elizabeth Perley  
Claire Proffitt  
Gordon R. Ray  
Rogers Family Foundation  
Carl Safina  
Jane Schosberg  
Richard Shanley  
Jerry Shuper  
Ann Smith  
Catherine Smith  
Gail Steckley  
Kevin Thompson

Ways to Support Us:

Follow a Family in Amboseli with Elatia



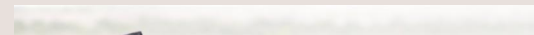
Olympia (R) of the OAs and her new calf; you can follow this family by joining Elatia

Our Elatia program brings you into the very heart of the Amboseli Elephant Research Project. You can follow one or more of the feature elephant families for only US\$30 per year for each family. Your contribution helps fund ATE's on-the-ground expenses, including our consolation program, fuel for the vehicles and basic repairs. Elatia supporters have also bought software and camera equipment for the field team, while following the small dramas that make up elephant (and our!) lives.

To learn more about Elatia go to [This Link](#). If you have any problems, there is a tutorial for signing up, [Click Here](#).

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Name a Baby Elephant



PSAs with Lupita Nyong'o and WildAid, and supporting them through their lives IFAW and other partners with getting outstanding quality material to make the most impact for elephants.

This work is valuable and important, but we are also delighted by the opportunity to get back to our roots - making biology and scientific research accessible through film. We are therefore excited to participate in a new project; a six-part series by Canadian production company Rotating Planet called Ageing in the Wild. This series examines the biological phenomenon of ageing, which ties so closely with the longitudinal and long-term approach of our work, and also looks at the relationships researchers develop with animals whose lives they track so closely for years.



Jordan and her new son: likely to have a starring role in the series

This approach ties in closely with our recently published research on the reproductive lives of Amboseli females; it took us more than four decades to gather enough data on births and survival to show how important grandmothers are in the survival of young elephants.

The project is entering the final phase of filming and we will tell you when it is coming to a screen near you. We hope many of our supporters will be able to see the finished film, and we are also looking forward to it. I can already reveal that the team captured some of the most delightful and heartwarming footage, including Jordan's brand new son falling over on a slippery mud pan after some unexpected rain interrupted our filming schedule.

 [Forward to a Friend](#)

Scholarship Girls

In 2002, ATE started a university scholarship program for young men and women from the Maasai community surrounding Amboseli. Most years we have had four or five students at university at one time. We pay the tuition for the full three or four year course plus a living stipend. We have been very pleased to be able to give this opportunity for higher education to bright young students from the Amboseli ecosystem.

Two years after starting our university program we decided to extend the scholarships to secondary school and in particular to girls. In traditional Maasai culture girls are married soon after reaching puberty, which means they rarely go on to secondary school. We knew there were girls in the community who desperately wanted to go on with their education and fathers and mothers who wanted them to go, but if a family had any money for tuition it would go first to the boys. We made a commitment to help these girls and it has proven to be very worthwhile.

Starting with two girls in 2004, we have now been putting girls through school for 12 years. With our small staff we were finding it difficult to follow up on each girl so we started sending our girls through a wonderful program called BEADS for Education, headed by Debby Rooney ([See the BEADS website](#)).

Debby suggested we start with younger girls still in primary school and then see them through high school. So we started with two girls in Standard 7, similar to Grade 7 in the



*This is Essien, the son of Eudora of the EBs. Just think, if you had named him in 2005 when this photo was taken you could have been following his life right up to today; he is now 13 years old and just going independent*

By naming an Amboseli calf you can have a special relationship with one of the elephants and his or her family in Amboseli.

Unlike our Elatia program where many people follow the same family, our naming program is a unique experience. The calf becomes "your" calf and yours alone and the name you give forms a part of the Amboseli dataset for all time, even

after the elephant dies years later. For more information write to us at [info@elephanttrust.org](mailto:info@elephanttrust.org).

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### 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](https://www.igive.com).

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### 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 [eswart@elephanttrust.org](mailto:eswart@elephanttrust.org); tel +1-508-783-8308.

US system. (Kenya has an 8-4-4 system). Attending Top Ride Academy, the two girls, Abigail Saruni and Susan Emmanuel, have moved on to Standard 8 and will be taking their big exams at the end of this year. We will then support them through secondary school and if they do well perhaps even university. Last year we added two more girls, Margaret Soila and Rebecca Naisimoi who are in Standard 7. We are still supporting two more older girls at other schools but we will eventually have all our girl students at BEADS schools.



*Sylvia with (left to right): Susan Emmanuel; Abigail Saruni; Margaret Soila and Rebecca Naisimoi.*

ATE's Administrator Sylvia Nyambura, who is now overseeing our scholarship program, visited their school in January. Here is her brief report:

*My visit to Top Ride Academy was very fruitful. I got to meet the beautiful, shy girls and also have a chat with the headmaster in regard to their performance. Top Ride is a very competitive school I found out. After checking the school's mean grade, I must say the girls are doing very well though there is always room for improvement.*

*The head teacher is very impressed with their performance and also happens to be the class teacher of Margret and Rebecca. I encouraged them to improve in their studies and understand that they have a golden opportunity.*

### Visit our Website

*We are having halcyon days in Amboseli right now with peace and plenty for the elephants. The El Nino rains have been generous and the elephants are taking full advantage of the abundant vegetation. All the bulls coming into musth are so fat that we've started counting their chins! We know it's not always like this, but this is a good time to prepare for the problems we know will come once again. In particular we are concerned with keeping the Amboseli ecosystem open to wildlife. In the longterm habitat loss is the biggest danger to the future of elephants. Please help us by supporting our work to save Amboseli.*

**Cynthia Moss**  
Director

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