



In this issue...

[Consumptive Utilization](#)

[Born to be Wild](#)

[History of the SB Family](#)

[Quick Links](#)

[Homepage - Elephant Trust](#)

[Support our Work](#)

[Elatia](#)



**ATE's Katito Sayialel and Vicki Fishlock ask you to help us in our important work**

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**Soila Sayialel  
1963-2018**

We are very sad to report that former ATE deputy director, Soila Sayialel, passed away in August after a brave battle with cancer. Soila's death has been an enormous shock to her family and friends. During her life she made a huge impact in Amboseli for the elephants she loved, and her passion made her friends all around the world.

Soila joined the project in 1987 as a research assistant. She was a young, shy girl, but she soon proved a fast learner. She had been brought into the project by her sister-in-law, Norah Njiraini, and they formed an excellent team.

Both women knew the elephants as individuals, collecting data on their behavior, their movements and their births and deaths. Norah and Soila, along with Soila's younger sister, Katito, became indispensable to the Amboseli Elephant Research Project.

In time Soila took on another role in the project, one that she was perfectly suited to. She became our link to the surrounding Maasai

## News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

July - September 2018

### Greetings!

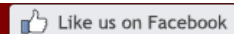
*Most of the flooded roads in Amboseli have finally dried up after the exceptional rainfall in the first half of the year. There are, however, still large lakes and pans of water, and most wonderfully, thousands of flamingoes. The great swaths of pink brighten every day. As one safari guide stated: "This is the year of Amboseli." The Park and surrounding areas are looking gorgeous and the animals are in excellent condition. For us who have lived through droughts, it is a joy.*

*At the same time, there are pressures on the wildlife from loss of habitat and land being sold and fenced. We work closely with the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, a grass roots Maasai organization that is trying to save the ecosystem. We have hope for Amboseli.*

*A new and very unwelcome pressure came up recently. The Cabinet Secretary in charge of wildlife appointed a task force to look into the consumptive use of wildlife in the form of cropping (killing) species such as zebras, wildebeests and gazelles for their meat and skins. For this newsletter, I have asked the co-founder of the Amboseli Elephant Research Project, Dr. Harvey Croze to write a piece about cropping. He had experience in the '70s with one of the schemes tried before in Kenya. Here also is a [LINK](#) to an excellent opinion piece by a hunter turned conservationist. Luca Belpietro runs a very successful conservation project in the Amboseli ecosystem. I recommend reading both these articles.*

*We at ATE are totally against any kind of consumptive use of Kenya's wildlife.*

**Cynthia Moss  
Director  
Amboseli Trust for Elephants**



### Consumptive Wildlife Utilization in Kenya: Been There, Didn't Work by Harvey Croze

Consumptive utilization of wildlife, or, in plain words, killing wild animals for profit, has been proposed, tried and rejected at least three times in Kenya. Biology, economics and society just didn't conspire to make it work.

Over a half century ago, in 1961, cropping of zebras and wildebeests was tried in Narok District, political domain of the famous Maasai Mara. A UN Food and Agricultural (FAO) study concluded in 1967 that past and present cropping schemes failed due to insurmountable problems of harvesting, processing and marketing.

community. This was not an easy role for a young Maasai woman.

We remember her describing her first meeting with Maasai leaders and elders. She said she was shaking all over and could barely speak, but nonetheless she did it, and went from strength to strength after that first terrifying meeting.



Eventually, Soila was highly respected in the community, putting her in the position of being a strong advocate for elephants. In taking on the role of community liaison, Soila also became a role model for young women and girls in Amboseli. They saw that she could drive a Land Rover, rise in her job, and gain the respect of the elders. Later, when she was no longer with the project, she devoted her time to helping the young women in her community.

We are certain that Soila's name will echo for many years to come through the Amboseli Ilkisongo ecosystem, and that the people she inspired will achieve great things.

#### Thanking our Generous Donors

Emily Ambler  
Deidre Bainbridge  
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Leanne Lachman  
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Eliza Mathieu  
The Maue Kay Foundation  
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Kristy Peacock  
Sonia Reid  
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Elizabeth Steel  
Pamela Stockton  
Georgene M. Tozzi Foundation  
Allison M Wilcox  
Susan Zellerbach

#### Return of the Prodigal Daughters



Barbara, the matriarch of the BB family, returned to Amboseli National Park in August with her family, including these



attributes afforded by Kenya's wildlife on which the tourist industry was (and still is) dependent. In other words, let's try to have the cake and eat it too.

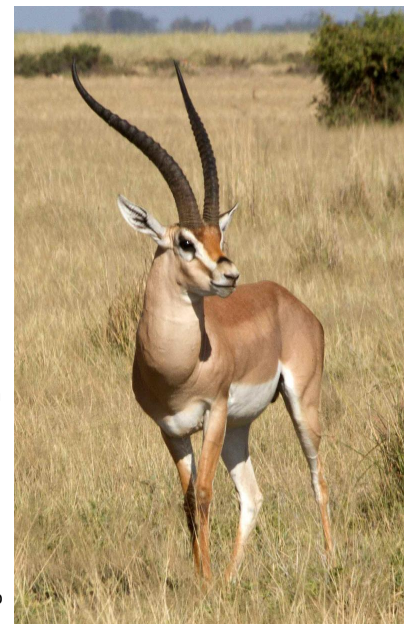
The second project produced a series of reports on the mechanics of wildlife cropping, essentially manuals on how to put wildebeest into tins, but nothing to demonstrate sustainability. A joint UNDP/FAO review mission in 1974 concluded that the project put an undue emphasis on game cropping, a misguided attempt to export North American hunting ethos to the complexities of Kenya's semi-arid ecosystems and rapidly changing social ethos.

In order to salvage some of the previous project work and infrastructure, UNDP and FAO with the Kenyan Wildlife Management and Conservation Department re-jigged the RMK into a third effort, the Kenya Wildlife Management Project. The KWMP ran from 1975 to 1977 in the 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> Kajiado District, in which, far to the south along the Kenya-Tanzania border, lies Amboseli National Park.

The new project fielded fresh international and national staff, with new economic and ecological objectives based on integrated land-use planning and sound ecological science that considered a host of controlling and modifying factors driving semi-arid ecosystems - soils, water, primary production, herbivore population dynamics, livestock disease, human wildlife conflict, Maasai culture, as well as other consumptive activities (game ranching and hunting).

The KWMP conclusions on consumptive utilization were wide-reaching and mostly negative. The 1980 Final Report cautiously observed that cropping of medium-sized herbivores (wildebeest and hartebeest) could be successful in theory. But there were too many negative, unknown or uncontrollable factors to make it workable, profitable and sustainable in practice, given socio-economic and biological realities. For example...

Marketing of a trial crop of 675 wildebeest, Coke's hartebeest, Thomson's gazelle and impala from the previous RMK project was bedeviled with problems, including infrastructure failures, Maasai disinterest in consuming protein other than from domestic stock, a scanty high-end demand within the capital city, and, crucially, the naturally fluctuating herbivore numbers that made it impossible to establish a stable market supply.



Economic analysis of the experimental cropping showed only small profit margins. A cost-benefit model predicted that income from meat and skins would not provide Maasai ranchers more livelihood than from cattle. In particular, given Kajiado's popular Amboseli and Nairobi National Parks, wildlife-based viewing tourism would produce much higher revenues than cropping.

Inequitable distribution of revenues to landowners from wildlife-generated, or indeed most any enterprises, remained a perennial problem. The KWMP proposed a system of fairly distributing benefits from a Wildlife Utilization Fund fed by wildlife-viewing revenues. The scheme was never implemented.

Natural population fluctuations of wildlife arising from the year-to-year unpredictability of rainfall and forage led KWMP to conclude "...it has not yet been proved that wild herbivore populations can tolerate the additional long-term mortality required to make a cropping scheme economic on a sustainable basis."

The KWMP highlighted a number of ancillary negative impacts of wildlife cropping, among them: damage to Kenya's conservation image to a growing wave of international tourists; traumatized animals who run away instead of posing for those tourists; Maasai landowners wondering why wildlife - their traditional protein hedge against extreme drought - should be sold short by

Nonetheless, in 1966 the Kenyan government, assisted by the UN Development Program (UNDP) and FAO had already embarked on a Range Management in Kenya (RMK) project with dual objectives: increasing meat production from rangeland resources (meaning wildlife) while at the same time ensuring the continued aesthetic and economic



In the past few years a number of our families have been spending more and more time outside the Park. They return from time to time spending a few weeks with us or sometimes just a day or two. Whenever this happens we are excited to catch up with them to see who has had calves or if anyone has died. This year when the BBs, VAs and UAs returned Norah and Katito recorded 17 calves, some of which were born in 2016! That's how long the families had been away.

Although we miss these family we also love that elephants in Amboseli still have the space to change their strategies. Flexibility and space are essential for their survival. We at ATE are doing everything we can to keep this ecosystem open to the elephants and other wildlife.

## Ways to Support Us

### Follow an Amboseli Family with Elatia



We have chosen six Amboseli families for our Elatia program: the AAs, EBs, FBs, GBs, OAs, and PCs. You can choose one or all of the families to follow. Regular updates include photos and videos, and news of what is going on in the family.

To learn more about Elatia go to [This Link](#). If you have any problems, Tal has made a tutorial for signing up, [Click Here](#). You can also contact her directly if you have any questions on: [info@elephanttrust.org](mailto:info@elephanttrust.org).

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### Name a Baby Elephant



Would you like to have an even closer relationship with the Amboseli elephants? The best way to do so is to name one of many calves in the population.

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. 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](#).

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outsiders for their gain.

Although several decades have passed since the 'consumptive utilization' experiment, few of the fundamental drivers have changed: rainfall is still, if not even more, unpredictable in semi-arid ecosystems; herbivores continue to live close-to-the-bone without the capacity for extraordinary offtake that we have bred into domestic stock over millennia; and market demands remain skewed and unpredictable.

What has changed drastically is the absolute numbers of herbivores 'on offer'. Wildlife populations have been reduced through poaching and habitat alienation by up to 70% since the publication of the KWMP Terminal Report in 1980. Simply put, the resource base upon which cropping is being premised today is far diminished from that of nearly four decades ago when the sustainability of cropping was already a nonstarter.

All of which virtually guarantees failure of a sustainable consumptive utilization scheme today. What is needed is comprehensive semi-arid ecosystem and wildlife population rescue programs based on non-consumptive, community-based enterprises that tap fairly into the huge revenue streams from Kenya's wildlife-based tourism industry. Anything else is whetting the knife for a last go at the golden goose.

[Forward to a Friend](#)

## Born to be Wild

This month, we want to give a special shout-out and thanks to The Maue Kay Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable foundation, founded by John Kay and Jutta Maue Kay to support activities on behalf of wildlife, the environment, and human rights around the world. The Amboseli Trust for Elephants is proud to be a recipient of Foundation's generous gifts.



The origin of the Maue Kay Foundation is a fascinating story. Most of our readers will know John and Jutta as the founders of the iconic rock band Steppenwolf. John was born in East Prussia, Germany and grew up trapped behind the iron curtain. His first distinct memory is a daring nighttime escape with his mother to West Germany, where he heard his first rock-and-roll and was deeply moved by it. In 1958, he moved to Canada and continued his love affair with music, performing as a folk and blues singer throughout

North America before joining the rock band The Sparrow. He met his future wife, Jutta—a devotee of rock and blues, as well as a human rights activist—in 1965 and the two became part of the fascinating musical scene from Haight Ashbury to LA's Sunset Strip. In 1967, they formed the band Steppenwolf, which quickly became one of the world's foremost rock n' roll bands, releasing such standards as "Magic Carpet Ride" and "Born to Be Wild."

In 2004, John and Jutta translated their "born to be wild" theme into action to protect animals, the environment, and human rights around the world. Through the Maue Kay Foundation, they travel the planet to investigate problems and aid people trying to solve them. Their projects are many and varied, ranging from saving elephants and orangutans, to funding schools in Tanzania and Cambodia.

To learn more about their projects, you can contact The Maue Kay Foundation at [info@mauekay.org](mailto:info@mauekay.org) or at The Maue Kay Foundation, 1187 Coast Village Road, Suite 324, Montecito, CA 93108.

Thanks, John and Jutta, for all you do and for reminding us to always "stay wild".

[Watch our films on YouTube](#)

## The History of the SB Family

The SB family was first recorded on April 6, 1974. It was a momentous day for them because my colleague Harvey Croze and I darted the matriarch and put a radio collar on her. It was early in the study and we wanted to find out what the range of the elephants was. As it turned out this matriarch was probably a good choice. We called her Sona because of the beeping sounds that we picked up on the radio receiver.

Sona was a big, handsome female. That first day we could not figure out who was in her family nor how many. She and others were associated with another matriarch who we already knew-- Jezebel of the JB's. The next time we saw Sona we were able to get a better idea of her associates. She was with a female who belonged to the JA family, Juliet. The other females that were close to Sona were also

### 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. To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please contact Betsy Swart:  
Email: [eswart@elephanttrust.org](mailto:eswart@elephanttrust.org)  
Tel +1-508-783-8308.

photographed. There was one other adult female, one young female about 10 years old, and two calves.

We saw Sona several times during 1974 both from the air when radio-tracking and from the ground. On August 18 1974, we found Sona in small group of five elephants. We were able to get good photos and work out who was who in the family.



Sona (rt) with radio collar in 1974; on the left is Sadie at 10 years old

In those early days of the study as we found new families, each was assigned a letter of the alphabet and then everyone in that family was given names starting with that letter. Later when we had reached 27 families we had to start going through the alphabet for the second time. There was already an 'S' family that became the SAs and Sona's family was called the SBs. The second adult female in her family was named Sara.

To read the full history of the SB family [Click Here.](#)

Visit our [Website](#)

*In terms of the elephants and the ecosystem we've had a time of peace and plenty. We just wish it could always be like this--buckets of rain and relative safety. We know that hard times will come again and at ATE we are always keeping that in mind. We are working closely with the local community, the Kenya Wildlife Service, and our NGO partners to secure the Amboseli ecosystem. We want Barbara and the other "prodigal daughters" to be able to roam throughout their present range. We need your help. Any donation would be appreciated.*

**Cynthia Moss**  
Director

