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Beautiful Marjorie, the matriarch of the MA family, and her 3-year-old son need your support

[Please Donate](#)

Thanking Our Generous Donors

This list represents the top donations we have received in the last quarter--that is, since the publication of our last newsletter at the end of June. Thank you for all donations, large and small, and for your ongoing support of the Amboseli elephants. We particularly appreciate the donations honouring Cynthia's 80th birthday.

Marie Carlson
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Fiona Hardee
Melissa Harrison
Elizabeth Ann Jackson
Penny Lacy
The Maue Kay Foundation

News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

July - September 2020

Greetings!

It's three months later and I'm still sheltering in place in Amboseli. However, there have been some lessening of restrictions. Nairobi and Mombasa are no longer under lockdown. The Park was never closed but all the lodges were. Now a few of the lodges are open and there are some visitors, mostly people living in Nairobi.

Kenya has done better than most countries in keeping its Covid-19 cases and deaths down. As a result, it was the first country to be awarded the recommended status of the "Safer Tourism Seal" by the Rebuilding Travel group. We hope to see more visitors, but we also realize that getting here may be the crucial factor. However, once a visitor is in Kenya, I believe going on safari is the one of the safest activities anyone could do.

The Parks and Reserves are teeming with wildlife. In Amboseli the amazing elephant baby boom continues. And the flamingoes are back in all their glory, both greater and lesser, adorning the lakes with amazing colour.

Our work in Amboseli has gone on throughout the pandemic and throughout the flooding (see the article below). During this period, we were pleased to celebrate the 48th anniversary of the Amboseli Elephant Research Project on September 1. As we begin the 49th year of the project, there are many threats looming on the horizon, particularly in regard to changing land-use patterns, but we will do everything we can to keep Amboseli's elephants and their habitats safe.

Cynthia Moss
Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

Like us on Facebook

Road Crisis and Appeal

The Amboseli Basin, an area of about 600 square kilometers with the

Jeanne Musgrove
Penelope Naylor
Joyce Poole
William Ralston
Joan Russo
Katherine Snowden
Mark Sowers
Tina and Gary VonderHaar Family
Foundation

Book Launch - Matbronze - 7th November



If you live in Kenya please come to our book launch on the 7th of November at Matbronze. We'll be launching *Impressions of Amboseli* with gorgeous paintings by Sophie Walbeoffe and text by Cynthia Moss. Some of Sophie's paintings will be exhibited in the gallery. Along with our book, ATE's good friend Rupert Watson will be launching his delightful book *Peacocks & Picathartes: Reflections on Africa's Wildlife*. Rupert, Sophie and Cynthia will be at Matbronze for the day, starting at 10am. Come and see us. There will be beer and wine.

A New Record!



One of the 203 fat, healthy calves born in 2020

Just as this newsletter was about to be sent out we hit a milestone. This year we have recorded 203 elephant births. The previous record for Amboseli was in 2012 with 201 births. With three months remaining, and December often a high birth month, we think we will well exceed the record.

Another Set of Twins

Park at its center, was once a giant lake. It was created after a major river was blocked when Kilimanjaro first erupted. That lake gradually dried up with only a portion still existing in wet seasons. That is, in "normal" wet seasons. We along with most of the rest of world are not having normal weather. Amboseli National Park has experienced serious flooding during several recent years including 2018-2020. We half-jokingly say the Park wants to return to being a lake.

One portion of the road to our research camp has flooded on several occasions. During these times, we placed sticks along both edges of the road so that we could tell where the road was underneath. In the past the water would recede as the dry season progressed. However, this year the water remains about a foot and a half deep. The weather prediction for the rainy season starting in October is alarming. We are due for very heavy rainfall. So, with the road still flooded we knew we were in trouble. In the wet season, this road is the only way to get to and from the camp.



Our oldest Land Rover crossing the flooded stretch



Our team placing the sticks

donation to help us stay in the field keeping watch over the elephants and learning more about their fascinating lives. (Remember, anyone donating \$250 or more will receive a copy of Cynthia's new book, *Impressions of Amboseli*.)

In conjunction with the Kenya Wildlife Service, and particularly with help from Amboseli's Senior Warden and its Engineer, we have contracted a company to build a causeway in the section that floods. KWS has had almost no revenue this year and so we offered to try to raise the funds for this construction. We need your help. Please consider a

[Find our Photos on Instagram](#)

Young Males: learning to manage risky environments as they leave their families

We've been hearing about how important old males are in elephant society, as ATE and allied researchers have shown, but much of what young males do, where they go, and who they associate with after leaving their family remains pretty poorly documented. Our recent exercise with the Kenya Wildlife Service, logistically aided by Save the Elephants, has now completed the collaring of eight young males ranging in age from 11 to 17 years old, which is the time they depart from their families to unknown places and fates. Our project aims to understand how young males, previously reliant on their mother and their matriarch's knowledge, travel through a physical landscape of risk: risk from human activities, from unknown food and water sources, and from "stranger" males.

For one of these young males, Jameson, we were able to document the transition to independence from his family, the JAs. Late in 2019, we started seeing him with non-mother fragments of his family, and then in February 2020, the collar showed him exploring the areas to the southeast of the park and then travelling deep into Tanzania around the edge of Kilimanjaro for a month or so. He returned to his family's core area briefly, but took off again to the south in June. By



In July we discovered a second set of twins for 2020. The mother is Pazia of the PA1 family. Both are males and they are so alike we wonder if they are identical. We will try to do some DNA analysis to find out. Pazia's older calf, Ptolemy, is feeling a bit left out.

Ways to Support Us

Follow an Amboseli Family with Elatia



This is part of the AA family resting in the sun after a morning feeding in the swamp. You could follow this family by joining our Elatia program. We have chosen six Amboseli families for Elatia: 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.

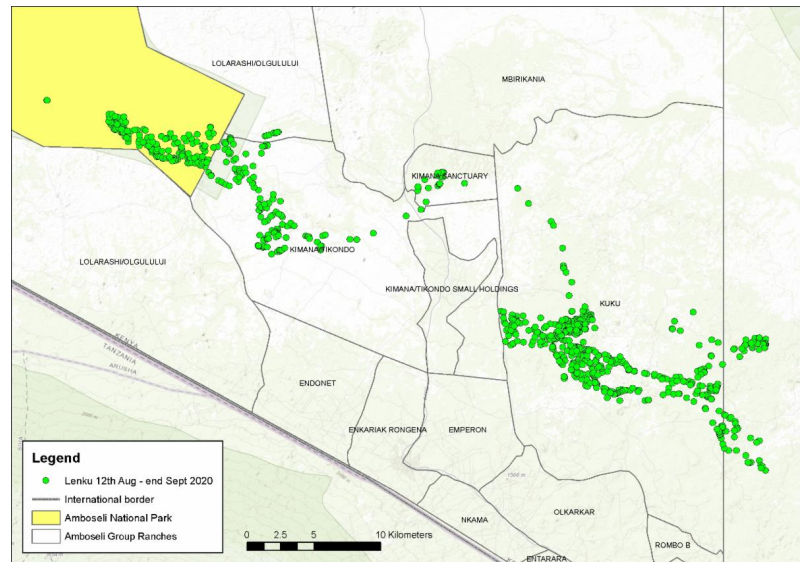
To learn more about Elatia go to [This Link](#). If you have any problems or questions please contact us directly on: info@elephanttrust.org

Name a Baby Elephant



There are presently many calves needing names and more coming up to naming time. One way to participate in the Amboseli elephant project is to name a calf. Unlike our Elatia program where many people follow the same family, our naming program is a unique experience. The calf becomes "your" calf alone and the name you give forms a part of the Amboseli dataset for all time. For more

the end of July, he was back in Tanzania. Recent maps show him moving back and forth over the international border.



Lenku's movements since he was collared

Another young male, named Lenku by the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism at the collaring on 12 August 2020, is apparently still moving with his family (TDs), but they are covering areas of high human density using a narrow corridor between farms to travel to Kimana Sanctuary--a vital protected area for elephants outside the national park. Recently, Lenku has moved even farther east almost to Tsavo National Park.

All the young males have gone to interesting areas, far outside our normal monitoring ranges, showing us how it is absolutely essential to keep the larger ecosystem safe for wildlife. We aim to follow our young males for the next two years to see if they settle into core areas, and if they develop friendships with other males - using observations of associations when we can get to them. One collared male has simply moved away and taken up residence in the northwest in areas we can't get to. This is, we now think, how males disperse and why sometimes we have gaps of as much as eight years between sightings.

[Watch our films on YouTube](#)

The History of the EA Family

On the very first day of the Amboseli Elephant Research Project, September 1, 1972, my colleague Harvey Croze and I took photographs of all the elephants we saw. One of them was an adult female with a neat V out of the middle of her left ear. There were others there but we couldn't get good photos.

Almost a year later in August 1973 we found the same female with a new calf, a male. It was one of the first birth records we ever made. The following month, we were finally able to get photos of other members of the family.

We saw the same family nine more times in 1973 and we were able to work out the



Evangeline in 1972

information, please write to us
at: info@elephanttrust.org

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

Tel +1-508-783-8308.

composition and structure. There seemed to be 13 members including three adult females. We assigned them the letter 'E' and named the biggest female--the matriarch--Estella. The next oldest was called Esmeralda, and the V-nick left female became Evangeline.

Estella.	F
3-year-old	F Elfrida
Esmeralda	F
3-year-old	M Keyhole
Evangeline	F
'73 calf	M
4-5-year-old	M Erasmus
7-8-year-old	M Ezra
10-year-old	F Eloise
10-12-year-old	M Ed
10-12-year-old	M M96
10-12-year-old	M M62
12-14-year-old	M Chunky

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

Visit our Website

Right now, the world seems so fragile--our health, our environment, our democracies. It is hard not to despair, but when I sit among the elephants in Amboseli I can forget our problems for a while. The elephants in Amboseli are doing so well this year. Each family has new lives and to me there is nothing more enchanting than a baby elephant. More than anything I want to keep these elephants safe. Please help me.

Cynthia Moss
Director

