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### Comments on the Newsletter

Last month we had messages about the ATE newsletter that made us feel very good. Both statements came from directors of NGOs who have a lot of experience in getting their own messages out, and so we felt particularly pleased by their praise.

"This is a totally inspiring, thoughtful, educational, and entertaining newsletter!!!" NB

"For what it is worth please know that I think your e-newsletter is by far the best I've ever seen that was done on Constant Contact." EM

### Archive of Past Newsletters

The ATE Newsletter started in August 2010. If you have missed any or if you want to

## News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants April-May 2011

### Greetings!

I'm writing this message from a barrier island on the Gulf Coast of Florida. It's lovely here but I'm still missing Amboseli and the elephants. That yearning to be with them never wains. However, duty calls. I'm on a book promotion and fund-raising tour, both of which are going well. I had a week in New York City where Board Member Lynn Chase and friend and supporter Marcia Gordon of Extraordinary Journeys, hosted a book-launch party at the beautiful River Club. (Additional support came from Board Member Bruce Ludwig and friend of ATE John Heminway.) About 100 people attended and it was great fun for me seeing so many friends. Some of the donors who came have been supporting the project for well over 20 years. That's loyalty that I truly appreciate.

On May 5, Kenya intercepted another huge haul of ivory. It is very worrying especially considering that only 10% of illegal shipments are estimated to be confiscated. It means tons of ivory are getting through, fueling the demand for ivory trinkets in China. I'm very concerned. I think we have to work on both the poaching on the ground and on changing the attitudes of the Chinese. If they would stop all sales of ivory the problem would be solved. Petitions and pressure might work. We have to try. If we sit back we'll lose Africa's elephants in a very short time. We can't let that happen.

With best regards,

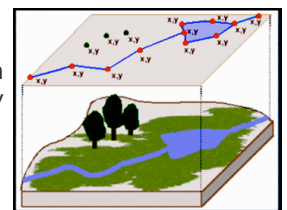
Cynthia Moss  
Director  
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

### Place and Purpose: GIS in Amboseli - Harvey Croze

In early April, Robert Ntawuasa, our aspiring IT expert, attending a course in Nairobi at ESRI-East Africa on the fundamentals of GIS, geographic information systems. [ESRI-EA](#) gave ATE a substantial discount, for which, many thanks!

So what is a GIS, and why is it important to ATE? A GIS is a suite of integrated computer programs to capture and combine spatial information in order to answer all kinds of questions about the environment: where things are, how they behave and interact, what happens if something changes or is changed?

By merging data of different types -- points, lines and polygons, and pictures -- from different sources (ground and aerial observations, maps, satellite images, and so on) you can get a composite picture that has far more information than any one of the source layers on its own.



Here's an Amboseli example. The map below is a composite that blends six data layers. On a basemap of topography and protected areas we added distribution of Maasai settlements (red dots) and water points (blue dots). Then, we overlaid a map of the occupancy of the VA family from data generated from the satellite tracking collar we put on Vicky in June 2008. Vicky and her family 'painted a picture' (orange dots) of their preferred paths between the Park and the Selenkay Conservation Area. Finally, the GIS calculated the

browse past newsletters, click [here](#).



## Echo Film wins Prizes

Our latest film, *Echo: An Elephant to Remember*, which was made after Echo's death, has been winning prizes at top wildlife film festivals

The Mike Birkhead Associates production filmed by Martyn Colbeck won four awards at the [Wild Talk Africa](#) 2011 Festival in March: Best Environmental Production, Best Script, the Editing Award and, to top it off, Best of Festival.

At the [Missoula International Wildlife Film Festival](#) in early May *Echo* also won Best Shot (a close up of Echo's eye as she lay dying), Best Presenter, a Merit Award for Script, and once again, Best of Festival.

Finally, *Echo* took a Gold World Medal at the 54th [New York Festivals](#) 2011 International Television and Film Awards.

## Big Thanks to In-Kind Donors

Several socially-responsible companies make non-cash donations to ATE, including:

**ESRI** (via Jack and Laura Dangermond) -- free ArcGIS software, training and support.

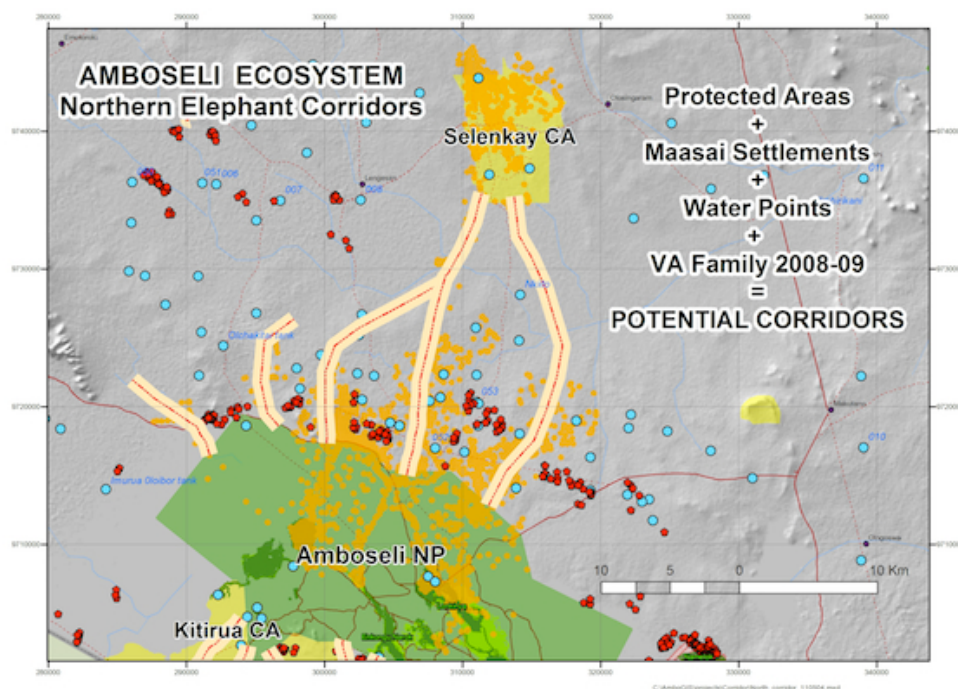
**ESRI-East Africa** (via Willy Simons) -- Free ArcGIS upgrades and support; 40% discount on training.

**Personal Systems Ltd** (via Waheed Sheikh) -- 40% discount on Mac hardware.

**AirKenya Express** (via Capt. Dino Bislet) -- 50% discount on Nairobi-Amboseli airfares for ATE personnel.

**Toyota East Africa Ltd** (via Bob Moore) -- Significant discount on new Landcruiser.

risk of encounter between elephants and people as the elephants move between the protected areas, and showed the best paths for corridors to be kept settlement-free.



Since 1982, when I first met Jack Dangermond, he, his wife Laura and their company [ESRI](#) has been supporting environmental research by donating their industry-leading software ArcGIS. Back then, Jack helped me jump-start the use of GIS throughout the UN's environmental activities (see [UNEP-GRID](#)) and more recently in 2002, he provided ATE with software and training so we could organize our long-term datasets in a coherent spatial reference (see a description of [AmboGIS](#) on the ATE website).

Integrated mapping of the Amboseli elephants over time is becoming ever more important for their future survival. Robert will be putting his new skills to good use in crafting plans and building the case for creating easements and corridors of safe passage for elephants throughout the ecosystem.

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## Advocacy for Zoo Elephants -- Keith Lindsay

The Amboseli Trust for Elephants has had a long-standing interest in promoting compassionate relations between people and elephants, both in the wild and in captivity. We have worked with zoos and animal welfare advocates, providing our expert advice to those who want to improve the conditions of captive elephants in Europe and North America.

ATE is supporting the efforts of Zoocheck Canada, which has been pressing the Board of the Toronto Zoo and Toronto City Council to abandon plans to spend C\$34m on a marginal expansion of their elephant exhibit. The zoo holds three African elephants in an outdoor space less than an acre. The area is already far too small and barren for the exercise, mental stimulation and social autonomy that are essential to healthy elephants, but it is the geographical location of Toronto that is detrimental. The city's high-latitude climate restricts the elephants to tiny indoor stalls for the many winter months each year, in addition to their usual nightly lock-up: the elephants thus spend almost three quarters of their lives confined. Zoocheck recommend replacing the exhibit with an imaginative, multi-media "Elephant LAByrinth" educational facility, and moving the elephants to a sanctuary in a warmer climate.



The only elephant adapted for northern climate zoos was the woolly mammoth



**Landrover Global Marketing**  
(via John Lloyd) -- Free field vehicle accessories.

**Propel Software Corp** (via David Murray) -- Free Internet accelerating software.

In order to consolidate information for the Zoo Board, Zoocheck hosted an Elephant Summit in Toronto on 16 April. Talks were given by Lori Marino (neuroscientist, Emory University), Ed Stewart (co-founder, PAWS), Mel Richardson (independent elephant veterinarian), Georgia Mason (animal behaviourist, University of Guelph), Julie Woodyer (campaigns director, Zoocheck) and Keith Lindsay (elephant ecologist and conservationist, representing ATE). The summit, attended by over 100 members of the public, was chaired by Erika Ritter, who has written on the often-paradoxical relations between humans and animals. Bob Barker, an untiring and effective advocate of improved conditions for elephants and a strong supporter of ATE, preceded the summit with a lively press conference.

The event received wide coverage by Canadian media, and a DVD of the presentations is being given to the Zoo Board and city councillors. A number of Board members are already convinced of the need to close the elephant exhibit and move the elephants to a sanctuary. While the outcome is awaited, we can be pleased that the expert presentations at the Summit made a major impact in educating decision makers on the realities of elephant biology and the challenges of keeping them in captivity.

[Visit our website](#)

## The History of the HA Family

Not all the families in Amboseli are big and successful. Some have struggled and failed and have become extinct; the BA, DA, GA, NA, NB, QA and TB families no longer exist because there were no females to continue. Other families hold on by a thread. The HA family seems destined to be tiny. Harvey and I first met the members on October 5, 1973. It was early morning and we found three elephants along the edge of the Enkongo Narok swamp. This small group consisted of a female and two calves. There were no other elephants in the immediate area. The female was large and handsome. The two calves were both females, one about three years old and the other just reaching puberty at approximately 11 years old. We were sure the younger calf was the big female's because she suckled from her; the older one was probably her daughter as well, but we could only guess that by their behavior.



Harriet & Hilda in October 1973

It was unusual to find such a small family and we wondered what their history was. Of course, I could never know. However, we did get to know these animals very well over the next few years. The family did, indeed, only consist of those three animals. They were assigned the code letters HA and we named the adult female "Harriet" and her older daughter "Hannah"; a few years later the younger calf was named "Hilda". We saw them two more times in 1973, only once in 1974, but then in 1975 I saw them frequently; and once I set up my camp in the Park in September 1975 I found them several times each month from then on.

After a few dozen sightings a pattern began to emerge. They proved to be western elephants, that is, in the dry season they were almost always found on the western side of the Enkongo Narok swamp. I also discovered, that although they were a small family, they formed a bond group with two other family units that used the same area: the FAs and KAs. It was my impression that Harriet formed a close bond with the matriarch of the FAs, Filippa. Over the next years I was to see them perform intense greetings ceremonies when they met up. The greetings with the KAs were not quite as emotional, but there was obviously a bond there as well. Often these three families would move together as one group.

To read the whole history of the HA family, click [here](#).

## Book Launch Party in NYC

In my introductory letter I wrote about the book launch party in New York. Here are a few photos from the event.



Elizabeth Hubbard getting her book signed; she named a calf and started donating yearly back in the early 90s



Lynn Chase introducing Cynthia



ATE's Executive Director Betsy Swart with new donor Donna Reynolds



Cynthia speaking at the River Club

*We have a lot of hard work ahead of us both in advocacy for captive and wild elephants and most crucially for generating public awareness about the ivory trade. Most of the people I spoke to at the River Club had no idea the situation regarding the poaching of elephants and the smuggling of illegal ivory is as bad as it is. We need to get the word out. What we need is a campaign such as the one I worked on with the African Wildlife Foundation in the late 1980s. "Only Elephants Should Wear Ivory" was our slogan. We won that time and got an international ban on ivory trade in 1989, but we never knew China would become rich so fast and want to buy ivory as a symbol of their new wealth. Help us get the word out; help us with our campaign.*

*Cynthia Moss  
Amboseli Trust for Elephants*



The Amboseli Trust for Elephants aims to ensure the long-term conservation and welfare of Africa's elephants in the context of human needs and pressures through scientific research, training, community outreach, public awareness and advocacy.

