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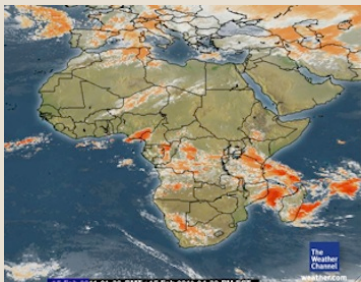
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30 mm of rain in Feb!



Rain from the Indian Ocean

A strong tropical anti-cyclone parked over Madagascar spun a line of rain clouds straight over Amboseli during the second week of February (orange clouds in radar image above). As often happens – who knows why? – the moon waxing to full dispersed the clouds once again. But the welcome rain provide relief from the heat and just enough moisture to pause the seasonal desiccation.

News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants February 2011

Greetings!

As far as the Amboseli Trust for Elephants is concerned we are declaring 2011 the Year of the Corridor. We at ATE have always known that the continued ability of the elephants and other wildlife to move in and out of the Park is the key to their future. Amboseli National Park is only 150 sq. miles (392 sq. kms), but the ecosystem over which the animals roam is over 5000 sq. miles (8000 sq. kms). Without the vast areas outside the Park the wildlife could not survive.

In truth it should be the Decade of the Corridor, because that's probably all the time we have left to secure the dispersal areas for the elephants. Harvey Croze describes below what ATE is already doing and our plans for the next few years to make sure there is a future for Amboseli's well-known elephants.

We need support for this important endeavor. I hope you will become one of our "sustainers". This program is proving popular and I want to thank all of you who have joined up.

With best regards,

Cynthia Moss
Director, Amboseli Trust for Elephants

Corridors: Route to the Elephants' Future - Harvey Croze

The Amboseli ecosystem is in danger. Traditional Maasai communal land is being rapidly subdivided into individual holdings. Land parcels too small and too dry for agriculture or livestock are being sold, often to hotel developers who want a quick return. With no enforced land-use planning, already concrete monstrosities are blighting the ecosystem and blocking elephant trails beyond the park.

The Maasai are caught in the dilemma of needing a secure financial future that a title deed promises and having to sell and alienate their patrimony in the process.

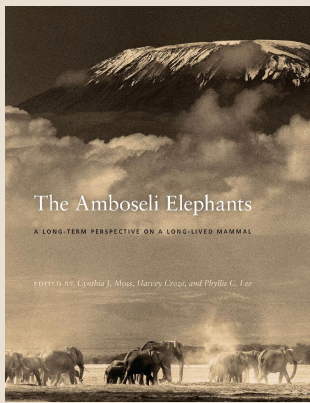
Do they have an alternative?

Yes, with the help of enlightened NGOs, such as the [African Wildlife Foundation](#), or eco-friendly enterprises such as the [Maasailand Preservation Trust](#) and [Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust](#), the Maasai landowners can pool their holdings into one unfenced trust area. With wildlife passing at will and livestock grazing controlled, just one low-impact, eco-friendly lodge can generate revenue for the whole community.

ATE is now earnestly turning its attention in support of such ecosystem efforts in three important ways:

1. Compiling key movement and occupancy data on elephants beyond the park borders in order to build an objective and clear picture of the requirements for corridors and easements throughout the ele's annual range in the ecosystem.

How? By rejuvenating our program of putting satellite and GSM tracking collars on individuals in key families to let them demark their own corridors over one or two seasons. And also by engaging, training and equipping a team of young warriors to be Maasai Elephant Scouts with three tasks: to provide data on elephant occupancy and use; to signal early warning of trouble in the ecosystem (poachers, human-elephant conflict); and to serve as goodwill



Amboseli Book

Harvey, Phyllis and I received our first copies of *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal*. It felt as good as we expected. Such an achievement, if we say so ourselves. It can be ordered from Amazon or direct from the University of Chicago Press. Visit [Publications List](#) on our website for links.

Become an Elephant Sustainer

By donating a little bit each week or month, you can keep the ATE program in the field and working for the Amboseli elephants. \$3 a week or \$10 a week -- the price of one or two lattes. Please consider it and contribute now via [PayPal](#) or with your credit card via [Click&Pledge](#). Many thanks to all our well-wishers supporters and Sustainers!

ambassadors for elephants among the community.

2. Providing expert knowledge to the Kenya Wildlife Service and eco-friendly entrepreneurs about the behaviour of elephants with regard to the use of trails in and out of the park, reactions to humans, protection of infrastructure such as dams and boreholes, and best practices for non-invasively steering the elephants gently around low-impact enterprises.

How? The deep understanding of elephant behaviour and individual family requirements from our 40 years of continuing research provides an unparalleled knowledgebase from which to deduce and predict elephant needs and reactions.

3. Engaging the Maasai community and negotiating space for elephants.

How? Our excellent field team is comprised of Maasai -- many newsletter readers have met Soila, Katito, Norah and Ntawuasa -- who are able to talk to the people, hear their concerns and understand their reactions. The team not only talks to the people, but also manages a donor-funded consolation scheme. They also guide the Maasai Elephant Scouts, providing employment and engendering further goodwill among the people.

Combining all the information into a comprehensive 'ecosystem overview' of elephants and land use will give us -- and our partners -- the ammunition to mount a campaign with donors for the big money that is necessary to secure the land and perhaps kick-start local, eco-friendly enterprises.

Can you help? Of course you can. Please consider becoming an Elephant Sustainer to keep ATE going. Or if you are privileged enough to be able to be a significant donor, let us help you direct your donation to an undertaking that will make a true difference to the future of the ecosystem.

[Visit our Website](#)

ATE Training Program

In 1990 the Amboseli Elephant Research Project initiated a training program for elephant biologists from around Africa. Training Coordinator, Norah Njiraini runs one-week or 10-day courses several times each year. The aim of these training courses is to teach biologists and managers who are involved in the study or conservation of elephants in other areas the research techniques developed by AERP through long experience and knowledge. The course includes how to work around elephants, photograph them for identification purposes, sex and age individuals; as well as advice on setting up a research project, data collection techniques, vegetation sampling, dung collection for genetic analysis and more.

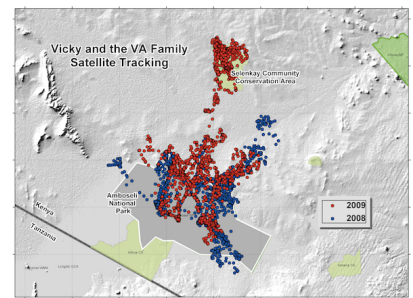
ATE's program has trained over 60 people from around Africa, including individuals from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Liberia, Chad and Cameroon, as well as many Kenyans. In addition we had two trainees from Sri Lanka who were setting up a research project on Asian elephants.

Norah has just completed a 10-day training exercise for two young men who will be studying elephants and their movements in the Kilimanjaro region. Both are being supported by the African Wildlife Foundation. One student is from Cameroon, Alfred Mbane, and the other from Tanzania, Emmanuel Kivuyo. Alfred is doing a Masters degree in the Biology of Conservation Department at the University of Nairobi. He will look at elephant use of the so-called "Kitenden corridor" on the Kenya side. Emmanuel will be working across the border in Tanzania. The corridor is crucial to elephants moving back and forth to the slopes of Kilimanjaro.



Alfred & Emmanuel sampling dung

Our new permanent researcher, Vicki Fishlock, who studied forest elephants in Congo Brazzaville, joined them for some of the days in order to get her eye in to the different size and shape of savannah elephants.



Vicky & VA family, 2008-09

Update on Poaching

The rate of poaching appears to have declined in the Amboseli area since the two poachers were killed just outside the Park in November. The Kenya Wildlife Service has put more people on the ground and is working hard to prevent any further poaching.



"Little Male" has grown up to be an amazing bull; he would be a prize for the poachers; help us save him

We owe a big thanks to the Big Life Foundation, Nick Brandt's organization, which has been very active in anti-poaching. They have bought vehicles and equipment and now have eight scouts' camps in the ecosystem. In addition they are supporting more scouts and camps across the border in Tanzania. We believe their presence and patrols are a big deterrent.

and get their tusks. Elephants are still being poached. There have been a couple of incidents to the East of the Park. We also know that ivory is still being bought and sold. We can't let down our guard. For ATE's part, Soila continues to keep her ear to the ground with a network of informers. With Soila's excellent relations with the local community, we sometimes get information that no one else gets.

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

The History of the FB Family

Freda of the FBs had one of the longest reigns as matriarch of any of the families in Amboseli. She was there when the family was first sighted on the second day of the project on September 2, 1972 and she continued as matriarch until she died in 2009. That made her very special to us. Freda's family is one of the best-known in the population. I have continuous records of its births and deaths, good times and bad times over the past 38 years.



Early ID photo of Freda

In those first days Harvey Croze and I were trying to contact as many groups of elephants as possible and photograph at least the adult members. We drove out to the western part of the Park crossing the causeway over the Enkongu Narok swamp. Just along the shore we found a group of cows and calves. Unfortunately, they were disappearing into the deep swamp, but we managed to get a few photographs. When we developed the rolls of film in Nairobi we identified two

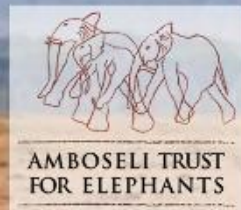
females -one adult and one sub-adult--we assumed belonged to a single family. On that first trip we had seen and photographed seven definite families each of which we gave a letter of the alphabet. The first group was called the "A" family; the sixth group was given the letter "F". We named the larger female Freda and the younger one Fay.

To read the full history of the FBs go to [The History of the FBs](#) on our website.

It has been a good and productive month for ATE: our new researcher has started and is getting to know the elephants, Norah completed a training course, we got our research clearance approved and renewed, we have in hand the first copies of our book, and we received some lovely out-of-season rain which has kept everything green. We have worries about poaching and space for the elephants but for this month we can be pleased that things are going well.

Please don't forget to sign up your friends and family for the newsletter.

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.

