

**In this issue...**[40th Celebration in Amboseli](#)[Maasai Olympics](#)[The Trouble with Males](#)[History of the T Families](#)[Amboseli Book - Chapter 8](#)[A New Genocide](#)**Quick Links**[Homepage - Elephant Trust](#)[Recent posts...](#)[More about us...](#)[Donate...](#)

Purity Waweru asks...

Care to Donate now?

(Purity is our very efficient office manager in Nairobi)

Pat Derby**June 7, 1943- February 15, 2013***Pat with Seventy-One in the beautiful hills of the PAWS sanctuary*

News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

January-February 2013

Greetings!

We ended the year with some good news and some bad news. Just after the previous issue of the newsletter was sent out, we had two events that we report in articles below. Both were happy events-the first on December 19 was the 40th Anniversary celebration of our project in Amboseli, and the second on December 22 was the Maasai Olympics.

The bad news is that we lost more elephants to poaching including one of our big matriarchs-Jemima. Her daughter and their calves are missing and presumed dead. The family is without a leader. When an elephant is killed the toll is much greater than the statistic of "one elephant poached in December" reveals. The carcasses of the others have not been found and won't be now, but that was three more dead elephants that never get counted.

Throughout Africa poaching is out of control. The only ray of hope is that the situation is getting a great deal of attention in the press and by governments. We were very pleased to hear Hillary Clinton's speech at the State Department describing illegal wildlife trade as a serious security problem. We are seeing some action and we are also just beginning to see reaction from China. A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy here in Kenya made a statement about ivory trade and laws in China. It didn't dispel our fears of Chinese demand exceeding the number of elephants in all of Africa, but it did show that the Chinese government is aware of the concerns. We, of course, would like China, and all countries for that matter, to stop all trade in ivory both domestic and international. That is our goal and we won't stop fighting until it is realized.

*With best wishes,**Cynthia Moss**Director**Amboseli Trust for Elephants***40th Anniversary Celebration in Amboseli**

When we started planning for the 40th Anniversary of the Amboseli Elephant Research Project we soon realized that we would have to have two events so that we could celebrate with as many people as possible. In the end we had one event in Nairobi, which we reported on in the last issue, and one in Amboseli. Both events were co-hosted with KWS.

Elephants lost a fierce and determined champion with the death of Pat Derby on February 15. We at ATE lost a good friend and supporter.

Pat and her partner of 37 years, Ed Stewart, founded the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS; www.pawsweb.org) to rescue retired and abused animals used in entertainment. They set up a sanctuary in Galt, California where they housed bears, tigers, leopards, and many other species. When Pat successfully raised a young elephant calf called Seventy-One and then added more elephants, she was determined to find a place where the elephants could have the space they needed. In 2000 PAWS was able to acquire 2300 acres of rolling hills in the gold district of central California. The opening of that sanctuary was a dream come true. There are hills and ponds and grass for them and there is no better place for a captive elephant to be. Many abused and lonely elephants have been sent there to live out their lives in peace and dignity. That is all thanks to Pat and her vision.

Rest in peace, dear friend, knowing that you accomplished something extraordinary and that it will continue on with the good people you have put in place.

What can CITES Do?

**IVORY + TRADE =
ELEPHANT
GENOCIDE**
KILL THE DEMAND
STOP THE KILLING

The Conference of the Parties (CoP) of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, is meeting in Bangkok from 3 to 14 March.

The plight of elephants will be high on the agenda.

A stalwart Kenya delegation will be joining the 28 countries of the African Elephant Coalition to lobby and debate for a total cessation of commerce in ivory and support for the African Elephant Fund to help countries fight poaching and to get better data on numbers of elephants alive and dead.

But wasn't the Ivory Trade banned by the CoP in 1989?



The one in Amboseli, which Soila Sayialel organized, was for the Maasai community surrounding Amboseli National Park. All the Group Ranches were represented, and huge mutual thanks and respect were expressed for 40 years of good neighborliness towards the ATE team and especially the Amboseli elephants.

Like us on Facebook 

Maasai Olympics

On 22 December the first annual Maasai Olympics were held at the Kimana Sanctuary in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem. There were five men's events (spear throwing, rungu throwing, running and jumping) and two girls' events (200m and 1500m races). Over 1000 people attended. The guest of honor was Olympic gold medalist and world record holder in the 800m event, David Rudisha. Three other world class athletes joined him to mentor the Maasai participants: Ruth Waithera (200m), Billy Konchellah (800m) and Steven ole Marai (800m).



The games stem from a wise group of elders called the "menye layiok" (fathers of the warriors) who hope to maintain Maasai culture but at the same time discourage the killing of lions and elephants. In sport the warriors can show their skills and prowess without destroying their heritage while promoting education and conservation amongst the entire community.

Yes, but...

CITES, bowing to pressure from some southern African states, approved two huge one-off sales of stockpiled ivory to Japan and China in 1999 and 2008...

That glut of ivory fuelled domestic trade and craft work in those countries and throughout the Far East...

Growing GDP especially in China has given buyers the ability to buy more and more ivory...

The demand for ivory has skyrocketed and the killing of elephants has more than tripled since the last one-off sale in 2008...

The 'banned' ivory trade is now becoming the business of organised crime threatening economic and social security throughout Africa and Asia...

There is no way that a legal trade could be supplied naturally by the remaining elephant herds...

There is no social or political means to control an ivory trade, especially in war-torn countries where 'blood ivory' is financing conflict...

The only answer is to render ivory worthless in the eyes of the consumer by burning existing stocks now and in the future...

Only Elephants Need Ivory The Rest Is Genocide

ATE has been supporting the Kenya Elephant Forum (KEF) by providing fact sheets for the delegates, the public and the media. See [the ATE website](#) for copies of the text.

Mothers Matter: Early maternal care effects last for decades

Our new paper, headed by our Science Director, Prof. Phyllis C. Lee is the first to show the very long-term effects maternal experience has on elephant survival and reproduction.

Young mothers produce smaller-than-average calves due to their inexperience and lack of physical resources (they are still growing themselves). Calves born small stay small for life, and have a higher risk of dying at every age. For males, who must wait until their 40s to successfully reproduce, being born small can limit lifetime reproductive success.

Our results also suggest that old experienced family members might mitigate these effects by making wise choices about finding resources. Basically, smart (old) matriarchs can minimise the risks to small calves, another amazing example of how elephant family life underpins survival and success for all elephants.

ATE was one of the main sponsors of the Olympics and we asked that the money particularly go toward the girls' events.

The enthusiasm of the crowd was contagious. Everyone felt that it was a huge success and we are hoping this will be an annual event which the warriors and young women will work towards throughout the year.

[Visit the ATE website](#)

The Trouble with Males -- Vicki Fishlock

I will never forget the day I first met Butch. Katito, Norah and I were getting towards the end of a long, hot morning in the field. Big groups of elephants were out West towards the swamp called Longolong. Spread out over several square kilometres it took us hours to log and identify everyone.



I had only been in Amboseli a couple of months, and I was still mainly focused on learning all the elephants. By this stage in the day I was hitting overload: so many elephants, so many names, so many ears. We drove up to yet another bunch of elephants and I said, "Wow, he looks butch". Norah couldn't understand how I knew his name and I thought she was teasing me. It took us a while to sort it out: mainly because I had to find his photograph to believe that the butch elephant I was looking at was truly named Butch!

Butch

upon a group of females and calves we immediately key into the age structure, size of the group and the area the elephants are using. They "cheat" us sometimes, by turning up in unexpected places, but by and large these cues, coupled with nice holes and notches are enough to trigger a memory.

The big bulls - those in their 30s and 40s - are usually distinctive and tend to make a lasting impression. It helps that they weigh five tonnes or more; there is something pretty awe-inspiring about being close to animals of that size and power. But the many younger males cause us endless distress.

When we first come to know these younger males, they are still in their families, following their mothers, which makes them easy to identify by context. As they get older and approach independence, they're usually found at the edge of the family with other males. Straggling behind, the males of several families are often all mixed together, along with males who are already independent. Some males become "transitional" before they are fully independent: they go and spend time with other families, or regularly leave their own family and return over periods of several days. You can see the same male every day for a week - twice he might be on his own, once with some other males, and then with a different family on every other occasion.

Under these circumstances it gets very confusing telling one young male from another, but it's worsened by the fact that many of these males aren't distinctive at this age. They may have subtle holes or notches, but facially and tusk-wise these lanky teenagers have a habit of blending into one "HYM" (Horrible Young Male) in your mind. (They are like the LBJs of the bird world-"little brown jobs" that are almost impossible to recognize.) Then, just to confuse us completely, they will suddenly disappear off with some of the older males to one of the bull areas, and we won't see them for months or even years at a time. Right now we have 222 males aged



Typical young male with smooth ears and symmetrical tusks--definitely an HYM

Meaningful Movements



In 2002, Joyce Poole and Petter Granli developed an online searchable [Gestures Database](#) that describes the appearance -- written descriptions and photographs -- and contextual use of the displays and gestures of African (and Asian) elephants. The database provides a detailed description of the varied elements in the behaviours of elephants so that they can be recognised and understood in the realtime field context.

The descriptions are based on the long-term observations of elephants and inspection of thousands of photographs as well as descriptions in published material (see Amboseli book Chapter 8 summary to the right).

Elephant-Proofing Wells

Many of you will remember the saga of the two calves we rescued from Maasai wells last year. (See the video of the rescue of Zombe's calf [by Clicking Here.](#)) Although we haven't had any reports recently we remain concerned about the wells and would like to make them calf-proof. ATE has fixed several wells in the past and it has been a success. We need to fix four more at a cost of \$1200 each. Please help us protect the calves by funding these reconstructed wells.



between 12 and 20 in the population and too many of these are HYMs.

We rely very heavily on ID photos for these males, which is why we have recently appealed for (and gratefully received) new camera equipment. Vein patterns never change on ears, so taking good pictures is essential. Then, when they return looking completely different and "all grown up" we can carefully match our photographs and still know who is who. By this time we hope they've acquired a few good notches on their ears and that their tusks are showing their proper adult form so we can finally learn who they are. By which time, we're struggling with the next lot of lanky teenagers...

I'm trying not to think about what it will be like in 15 years when the 118 males born in our baby boom are all getting to this difficult HYM age at exactly the same time!

The History of the T Families



The TD Family with Tallulah leading and Theodora second from last

I first met the "T" families on September 9, 1973. I found them in one of the woodland areas of Amboseli called Ol Tukai Orok, which means "place of the dark palms" in Maa, the language of the local Maasai people. At that time I was studying the elephants only on a part-time basis. Two years later I was to set up a permanent camp in these very woodlands. On this day I was trying to photograph as many elephants as possible to build up a recognition file. I had not seen these elephants before, but they seemed very relaxed and tolerant of my vehicle, which meant that I could attempt to record the family structure and take some photos.

I set about counting the group and got 13 after several attempts and double checks. It is more difficult to count elephants than one would imagine-it is easy to miss the ones that are hidden behind the bulk of the nearer ones. There appeared to be four medium-to-large adult females, three young adult females and six calves. Of the older females two were particularly striking: a large female with up-curved tusks and a slit in her right ear; and an old, very dignified female with long straight tusks.

To read the whole history of the T families [click here.](#)

Amboseli Book Chapter Summary: 8. Signals, Gestures and Behaviour of African Elephants

Chapter 8, *Signals, Gestures, and Behaviour of African Elephants* (Joyce H. Poole and Petter Granli) shows that African elephants, like other intelligent, long-lived, and highly social animals, communicate with one another through a number of sensory channels: visual, tactile, auditory and olfactory. Much research has focused on communication by sound and smell. Previously, surprisingly few systematic studies had described elephant visual and tactile signals except where specific behaviours explain or reveal underlying patterns of social or sexual behaviour.

Elephantine visual and tactile signals, gestures and behaviours are extremely intricate and highly varied. Some are visually dramatic and powerful, even terrifying to the casual observer. Other gestures are exquisitely understated, requiring a highly trained eye to discern the subtle shift in movement and posture. Poole and Granli document the many signals, postures and gestures used by elephants and introduce the many behaviours that researchers use to understand and describe the social, emotional, and cognitive aspects of elephant life.

Please mark the following on your calendar and tell your friends:

"Battle For The Elephants"

27 February, 2013 at 9 PM MST

Writer and director, John Heminway

Producer, John Heminway, JJ Kelley and Katie Carpenter

Executive Producer, John Bredar

Filmed by Toby Strong with Robert Poole and JJ Kelley

Editor, Maggie Noble

Investigators, Bryan Christy and Aidan Hartley

<http://www.pbs.org/programs/battle-elephants/>

<http://heminway.net/battlefortheelephants/>

John Heminway and his team filmed Soila and the Amboseli elephants for part of this important film on the plight of elephants today.

Wish List

First we want to thank Charlotte Phillips for the digital Canon Rebel camera and two Canon lenses she delivered to us. We are now, and finally, in very good shape in terms of cameras.

We now need two pairs of binoculars for a research assistant and community officer. These do not have to be as expensive as Zeiss and Leitz. Good pairs of Nikons or others would do. We hope there is a donor out there who can help us.

We would also like to contribute funds towards the repeater beacon for the anti-poaching scouts. The beacon is essential for communicating between the camps and the patrols. It will cost several thousand dollars and we plan to contribute a third of the cost if we can raise the funds.

Give a Gift that Lives Forever

Include ATE in your bequest and estate planning. For a brochure on how to do that, contact Betsy Swart in our US office at: eswart@elephanttrust.org.

YouTube Chanel

The Amboseli Trust for Elephants has its own channel on YouTube. Check out our latest videos [here](#).

Archive of Past Newsletters

Previous issues of the ATE newsletter can be found on our website: [Newsletter Archive](#)



Two females, Eliot and Eudora from the EB family, greeting after a separation

Years of careful observation have shown that certain relationships -- mother-infant, mother-daughter, male competitors, sexual partners, friends -- are associated with particular distinct behaviours, most of which can be reliably identified as true displays or signals. In other words, they are behaviours used by elephants to transfer information and reduce the observer's uncertainty about the actor's or reactor's future behaviour.

As well as signals, there are also movements, postures, and gestures that are not necessarily intentful, but may be a consequence of an elephant's state or situation. Many such behaviours also convey specific information to observers (both human and elephant) and may function as true signals (for example, Waiting or Periscope-Sniff).

And then, there are some postures and behaviours that elephants just do in particular situations (like Testing-Semen). Such behaviours may or may not act as signals to other elephants, but they are interpretable by humans as measures of behaviour and are, therefore, admissible in a comprehensive 'ethogram' (a complete description of a species' behavioural repertoire).

The general context of the behaviours are shown in bold below, with their main observable components:

- **Aggression:** Threat, Escalation, Submission, Retreat, Post-Conflict Display
- **Ambivalence:** Displacement, Apprehensive
- **Social Integration:** Affiliative, Spatial proximity, Movement initiation and leadership
- **Mother-Offspring:** Suckling, Reassurance and protection
- **Group Defence**
- **Sexuality:** Advertisement/Attraction, Sexual Monitoring, Sexual Solicitation, Courtship, Post-Copulatory, Male-Male
- **Play:** Solicit Play, Lone and Object Play, Social Play
- **Generally Attentiveness**
- **Death**

The complexity is not fully captured in the above list. For example, the 'Threat' sub-component of 'Aggression' includes the following signals: Turn-Toward, Advance-Toward, Ear-Spreading, Standing-Tall, Ear-Folding, Head-Shaking, Forward-Trunk-Swing, Throw-Debris, Head-Nod, Parallel-Walk, Tusk-Ground, Bush-Bashing. Only years of study can tease out the components of the complex choreography of the life of elephants.

A New Genocide? -- Harvey Croze

Sometime in the future, hopefully before it's too late, we will come to view these days in which we are pursuing a husbandry that effectively, systematically and cynically exterminates a highly-intelligent, self-aware, socially communicative, empathetic co-inhabitor of this planet in the same light that we now regard our earlier extermination of indigenous populations of fellow humans.

I don't mean to trivialise the horrors of the slave trade; I mean to amplify those of the ivory trade.

Take the word *genus* to its latin root and let it include kinship by dint of shared human qualities of intelligence, sociality and compassion, and you can easily call what we are doing to elephants nothing short of *genocide*.

And like genocide -- that most disgraceful fall from our humanity -- the killing of

elephants can only be stopped ...

By changing the mindsets of those who believe they need to kill someone else to to improve their own lot;

By educating ignorant consumers who, like some myopic holocaust contemporaries, appear oblivious to the misery the supply chain causes;

And by rejecting a blindly utopic application of economics that ignores the realities of distorted markets and coldly seeks to commodify every last bit of our living planet.

Nearly half a century of research shows clearly that, in so many ways, like Cetaceans, like the Great Apes: *elephants are us*. We pretty well stopped the slave trade; we can surely do as well to stop the ivory trade.

We have so much work to do. Please help us in any way you can.

*Cynthia Moss
Amboseli Trust for Elephants*

