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Purity Waweru
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Binoculars Needed

Katito and Norah in the picture above are using their most important tools: high-quality, wide-aperture, coated field binoculars. But those seen above are now nearly ten years old and giving both women headaches and eye-strain.

Repairs would cost nearly as much as new units. We are looking for donors who would be willing to provide the project with three new 10x40s costing \$1,200 each.

Please contact us if you are interested (or have ideas), or contribute directly by clicking the [Care to Donate Now](#) link above.

Many thanks!

News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants July 2011

Greetings!

In this newsletter we're going to concentrate on an important event that occurred here in Kenya and the background to that event. On July 20, Kenya burned 4.9 tons of ivory as a message to the world that only elephants should wear ivory.

We are rapidly going back to the devastating poaching that was going on in the 1970s and 1980s when Africa lost half of it's elephants, going from 1.3 million in 1979 to less than 600,000 in 1989. Today there may be no more than 400,000 remaining.

Although there is poaching of elephants in Kenya, including Amboseli, the levels are still relatively low, but that is no reason to be complacent. The elephants of the Central African rainforests and the West African savannahs are being poached at a horrendous rate. Across Africa as many as 38,000 elephants are being slaughtered each year to feed the ivory trade. With only 400,000 on the continent, at that rate we will lose all the elephants in 10 years. We can't allow this to happen.

With regards,

Cynthia Moss
Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

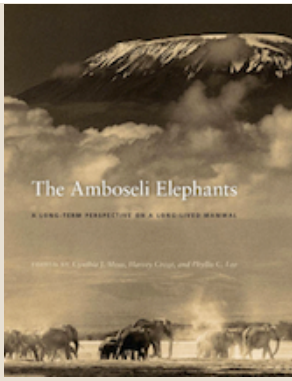
Kenya Burns Ivory -- Harvey Croze



Elephant ivory is worthless and should only be worn by elephants -- That was the strong message sent by Kenya to the world when President Mwai Kibaki set light to nearly 5 tons of contraband ivory in Tsavo West National Park on July 20.

In his address to the crowd that included officials from neighboring states, ministers, diplomats and NGOs, the President stressed that Kenya is committed to the war against wildlife crime.

He launched the first ever African Elephant Law Enforcement Day, including a Special Account and a Wildlife Enforcement Monitoring System in support of the African



Amboseli Book

The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal is still getting fine reviews and selling steadily. You can order your very own copy on [Amazon](#) or direct from the [University of Chicago Press](#).

Newsletter Archive

Want to browse past ATE Newsletter issues? You can visit the Archive at our website by clicking [here](#).

Elephant Action Plan to which ATE has been contributing.

The conflagration marked the 22nd anniversary of a massive ivory burning by Kenya in 1989 which aimed to bring attention to the plight of elephants in preparation for the meeting of the party members of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in October of that year. At that meeting a ban on international trade in ivory was passed and went into effect in January 1990. Since then, Kenya's elephants have recovered from the poaching of the 1970s from 16,000 to 37,000.

Africa's elephants are still down in total from an estimated at 1.3 million in 1979 to less than 600,000 in 1989. Today there may be as few as 400,000. And the threat to their survival is escalating as nearly 40,000 are currently being killed every year, largely to supply a growing demand for ivory among the newly-monied middle class in the Far East.

The stunning ivory-burning event this year took place under the auspices of the Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, an African-led effort to curb cross-boundary illicit trade. Only seven countries have joined so far, but it is a start.

You can see Kenya's Citizen TV's coverage of the event by clicking [here](#). There's also a glimpse of the ATE team listening carefully to President Kibaki's words.



*ATE Team at the Burning:
(L to R) Katito, Cynthia, Purity, Norah, Soila, Vicki.
Harvey, Ntawuasa.*

There are more images and summaries of the dignitaries' remarks on the [ATE Website](#).

Poaching & Ivory Trade: Background History and Facts



A poached elephant with bushes cut to try to conceal him; Kenya lost almost 90% of its elephants in a 16-year period

Then...

- In 1979 there were an estimated 1.3 million African elephants. By 1989 only 600,000 remained.
- The loss of more than half a million elephants in a decade was due primarily to killing for ivory. Natural habitat loss was a second important factor: human population had doubled in elephant range states since 1970.
- Major public awareness campaigns were launched worldwide to save the elephant and halt the illegal trade in ivory. The Amboseli Elephant Research Project played a crucial in making people understand more and care about elephants.
- In October 1989, at the seventh meeting of the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Convention of the Parties (CoP7), governments banned international trade in ivory, with effect from January 1990.
- Some Parties to the convention (France, UK, USA) had already begun to impose their own ivory import bans.
- In that same year (1989) Kenya made the bold gesture of burning its then stockpile of 12 tons of ivory in a spectacular display of solidarity with the growing community of concerned conservationists.
- Demand for ivory dried up; the price of ivory dropped significantly and rapidly from around \$300 per kilogramme to around \$3 per kg.
- Elephants in many parts of Africa were left in peace, and populations recovered. For example, Kenya had lost 90% of its elephants (167,000 to 16,000) in the 16-year period from 1973 to 1989. The population has grown back to some 37,000 today.
- In some areas poaching continued at a lower level, particularly in Central and West Africa where there were local markets for ivory. In addition, some ivory was smuggled out of Africa, mostly to the Far East.
- In 1997 at the CITES conference, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe succeeded in having their elephant populations downlisted by to a less endangered status.
- In April 1998, Taiwanese port police seized 190 tusks and 283 ivory pieces weighing 1.45 tonnes originating from Nigeria.
- The three southern African counties were allowed to sell stockpiled ivory to CITES-designated buyers. The first sale was in 1999; 50 tonnes were exported to Japan.
- A the conference in 2000 South Africa's elephant population was downlisted.
- In June, 2002, the largest shipment of illegal ivory since the 1989 ban was seized by Singapore authorities. DNA analysis showed the ivory had originated in Zambia. The shipment, via Malawi and Zimbabwe, was destined for Japan. It comprised 532 elephant tusks and more than 40,000 cut pieces of ivory, 6.5 tons in total.
- At the November 2002 CITES meeting, it was agreed that Botswana, Namibia and South Africa could export 60 tonnes of ivory, subject to conditions.
- This second CITES-negotiated sale occurred in 2008. Zimbabwe was also allowed to sell ivory and 108 tons went to Japan and China (46 and 62, respectively). Many predicted the sale might fuel an increasing appetite for ivory among the rapidly growing Chinese middle classes. That prediction appears to have been correct (see below).

Now...



A Kenya Wildlife Services vet treating an injured elephant; his attacker was after his ivory. Combatting poaching is a huge drain on KWS resources.

- Some 470,000 elephants remain in Africa today according to IUCN's African Elephant Specialist Group. Other authorities estimate the number to be considerably lower.
- An estimated 38,000 African elephants are killed annually to supply the ivory trade, according to Dr. Sam Wasser's genetic studies of confiscated ivory. If this rate were to continue, elephants could be gone from most of their former range in less than 15 years.
- Killing of elephants is increasing in East, Central and West Africa, as evidenced by increased poaching and increased seizures of ivory originating in Africa.
- Confiscations of illegal ivory have greatly increased. ETIS, the Elephant Trade Information System has shown "... that between 2007 (the last time data was collected) and 2009, over 2,000 seizures of illegal elephant material were recorded by authorities, a sharp increase from years past. The increased rate of poaching, coupled with the large quantities of ivory in individual seizures, suggests that criminal networks are behind the trade and manipulating local populations to increase their profits." (MediaGlobal, 21-11-09)
- Demand in China has escalated since the one-off sales. Ivory carving factories and sales of ivory items have increased. In 2009 an additional 37 stores were approved as new, official ivory retail outlets. If only a small percentage of the 1.3 billion Chinese purchase ivory, the effect on elephant populations will be devastating.
- Chinese companies are working throughout Africa. E. B. Martin, a leading ivory trade expert, said: "Chinese [throughout] Africa ... are buying up ivory, worked and raw. ... in Khartoum or Omdurman I found that about 75% of all ivory being sold was bought by Chinese." (Daily Nation, 11-11-09)
- Seizures of contraband ivory have increased alarmingly over the past three years mainly in Far Eastern ports, but also in Africa, Europe and North America. Some catches have involved hundreds of tusks and tonnes of ivory. There were 139 seizures in 2009 in China alone (Traffic Bulletin, March 1997-April 2011). Chinese nationals have been involved including diplomats.
- The 'China factor' notwithstanding, the fact is that the USA is the second most important importer of illicit ivory in the world (Care for the Wild International).
- A kilogramme of ivory sells for as much as \$1,500 in the Far East. On the ground in Kenya it sells for 3-4,000 Kenya shillings (\$40). Even a small pair of 10-kg tusks would bring a poacher the equivalent of \$400, more than casual workers earn in a year. A big bull carrying 100 kg of ivory would bring a fortune. The incentive is considerable.

View our videos on 

Elephant Threats: Growth, Greed, Graft and poor Governance –

Harvey Croze

Elephants are under threat from extinction. With nearly 40,000 African elephants being killed each year to feed an illicit ivory trade, the end of today's estimated 4-500,000 animals will take less time than it takes an elephant born today to reach sexual maturity.

The threats can be summed up in the four G's of human development: Growth and Greed, Graft and poor Governance. Indeed most wildlife populations and their ecosystems are under the same gloomy with-a-capital-G cloud.

Human population Growth is inevitable, we suppose. As elephants and other wild creatures loose ground to pernicious habitat encroachment, the challenge is to secure easements and corridors to allow seasonal movements into the ecosystems surrounding protected areas, as well as safe corridors between protected areas. That is a major preoccupation for ATE in Amboseli.

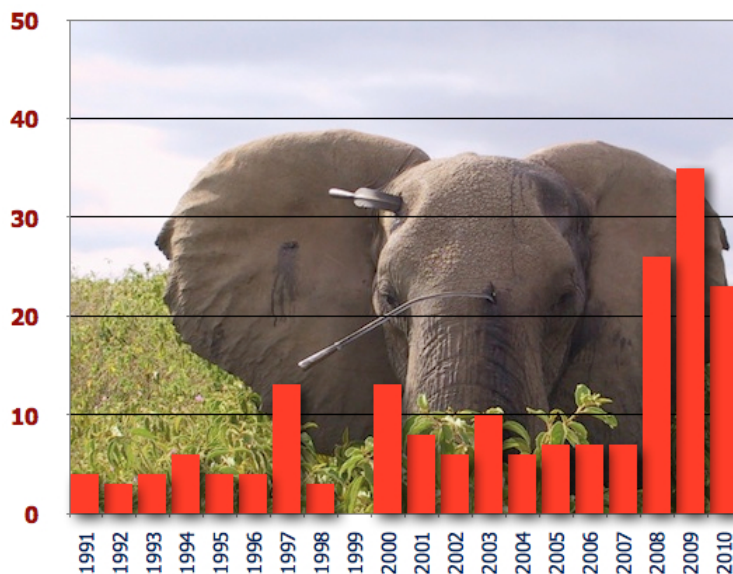
Global economic Growth, particularly of emerging economies in the Far East, feeds inexorably the second big G, Greed.



Echo's grandkids: what's their future?

Human Greed creates capricious demands for trophies and trinkets, such as the 40,000 *hankas* (signature stamps) that were part of the consignment burned in Tsavo last week. The *bau fa hu* ("suddenly wealthy") huge and rapidly-growing middle class in China has created a demand that has driven the price of ivory over the past decade from \$20 to \$1,500 a kilo.

That kind of incentive to the poor African on the ground, in a culture of *Graft and poor Governance*, completes the loop and would seem to make the demise inevitable.



Elephant spearing increased sharply in 2008 after the first sale of legal ivory to China

Odile, above, survived the recent upsurge in killings (and after treating by ATE and KWS even had a baby the next year). Others weren't so lucky.

Is there nothing we can do? Yes, there is, and ATE and other concerned NGOs and enlightened government officials are trying along three fronts, all E's, as it happens.

Education. We need to accelerate the flow of information about how special elephants are -- information gained through our on-going research -- to the public, especially the Chinese public, many of whom genuinely believe that ivory is somehow plucked from a living animal who goes on to grow more, like a sheep growing fleece.

Employment. The obvious link between a healthy wildlife ecosystem, tourism revenue and employment for local community members needs to be realized without the intervention of practitioners of graft who cream off the profits for themselves. But that requires good governance, which in turn requires a well-educated public that can vote and legislate protection of its patrimony from pillagers.

Easements. As part of the 'elephant survival package', the communities surrounding wildlife protected areas have to be taught about and given the means to enjoy payments for ecosystem services while protecting their chosen ways of life. Low-key, eco-friendly, high-quality enterprises -- not fast-buck mass tourism monstrosities -- are the only answer. ATE is working with fellow NGOs to fight uncontrolled development by profiteers that threatens to block wildlife movements.

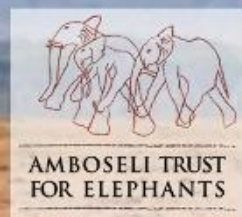
ATE 'being there' in the ecosystem, a bastion of concerned and knowledgeable watchers working hand-in-hand with the Maasai, KWS and other NGOs, will in the long run ensure the survival of the Amboseli Elephants. Please join us in the struggle.

[Follow us on twitter](#)

I know this has been a depressing issue of the ATE Newsletter, but we all have to face what's happening to elephants in Africa. We can't just sit back and bemoan the losses. We have to fight and we can all join the battle. For example, just last week a man in Philadelphia was arrested for illegally importing one ton of ivory. You can stop something like this from happening again. You can find out where ivory is being sold in your community and try to get it stopped. You can lobby for the sale of all ivory to be banned in your country. At the moment dealers are hiding new ivory as "antiques" which are allowed. Campaign, spread the word, sign petitions, lobby your government representative.

We at ATE passionately believe that we can win this Ivory War. As always, we plead for your support to help us raise awareness worldwide as well as fighting the poachers here on the ground. We are a small organization but we work hard with many partners to provide a loud voice for elephants and their ecosystems.

*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.

