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Echo's oldest daughter Enid with her daughter Elise (rt) and son Ektor relaxing in Amboseli. Here elephants are still allowed to be elephants, free to roam over vast distances and spared the slaughter of other areas in Africa. We are trying our hardest to keep it that way, but we need your help.

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World Elephant Day

On the 9th of August our Training Co-ordinator & Research Assistant Norah Njiraini attended a World Elephant Day event organized by Hands Off Our Elephants at Brookhouse School. The event hosted many of Kenya's conservationists as well as celebrities and Government representatives. The event's main 'icon' was Tim, one of our most beautiful Amboseli bulls. Our film, *Echo: an Elephant to Remember* was screened and had a very emotional effect on the guests. Norah was asked to give a short talk and media interviews.

News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants July-August 2014

Greetings!

As is so often the case, the two months since our last newsletter have been filled with both hope and gloom. There is no doubt that elephants are at a tipping point. Recent reports show that 100,000 elephants have been killed in the last three years. What is even more alarming is that the death rate is now higher than the birth rate. There are not enough elephants being born to replace the ones being poached for their ivory.

The news is discouraging but it doesn't make us give up. The most important way to save elephants is to stop the demand for ivory. This is the hardest part of our battle. Although the Chinese claim that ivory is their "cultural heritage" and they are not going to give it up, pressure is mounting and awareness is growing. It is a slow process, but I believe the Chinese will change their attitude eventually. The crucial question is whether that change will come in time to save elephants from near extinction.

In the meantime, there have been some positive developments that have given us hope. The US is one of the major sellers of ivory. The domestic sale of ivory was not illegal; it was only illegal to import or export ivory internationally. However, there was a loophole in this law that allowed "antique" ivory to enter the US. Now there are changes being made: both the states of New York and New Jersey have banned all ivory sales. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has banned the import of tusks taken in sport hunting. We hope the momentum will build and more state and national laws will be put in place in the US and other countries.

As a small research and conservation project we at ATE do everything we can to assure a future for elephants. Our most powerful tool is the Amboseli elephants themselves. What we can do is what few others can; to show people what natural, free-ranging elephants living in a relatively safe environment can be. We are saying yes to requests from every journalist, every filmmaker, every writer, every photographer, every advocate and taking them out to be up close and personal with the wonderfully relaxed, highly social, intriguingly complex Amboseli elephants. It is a powerful experience and no one yet has come away unaffected.

Cynthia Moss
Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

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Elephant Dramas: Emma's return
Vicki Fishlock



Norah poses with Dr. Paula Kahumbu, CEO of Hands Off Our Elephants, in front of a life-size picture of Tim, poster boy for the event

In her talk Norah outlined how ATE works on the ground to conserve Amboseli's elephants, and discussed how our films and books have brought elephant lives to millions of people living far from Kenya's spectacular wildlife. She was joined on the panel by Julius Cheptei, KWS Assistant Director for Southern Region, Julie Gichuru from Citizen TV, Philip Muruthi, Senior Director of Conservation Science at the African Wildlife Foundation and Beatrice Karanja, Awareness Campaign Manager for AWF. The panel spoke of challenges and opportunities for wildlife conservation in Kenya, and the importance of grassroots support for the future of Kenya's wildlife. We were proud that ATE was highlighted as an organization that uses information from local communities to help coordinate local conservation efforts.

Overall the event was a big success; it highlighted the necessity to support those protecting elephants as well as spread the word about the ivory threat to the rest of the world.

Training an Elite Elephant Protection Unit for Honeyguide Foundation, Tanzania

Amboseli elephants are amongst the most fortunate in Africa, protected on both sides of the border. Government agencies involved in wildlife protection are supported by Big Life Foundation in Kenya, and Honeyguide Foundation in Tanzania. In our last newsletter we reported on the training programme we are delivering to all the Big Life rangers. This month, we swapped sides of the border and delivered training to the Honeyguide team.



Emma on the right and her mother Ella fourth from right; all the EBs were together on this day before Emma disappeared

The choices elephants make about who to spend time with tell us a lot about their relationships with one another. We have tracked these choices since the start of the project in 1972, by noting which individuals spend time together and where. Elephant society operates on a fission-fusion basis, so elephants constantly make decisions about leaving (fission) or joining (fusion) friends and family members.

Over the hours and years we have spent with the Amboseli elephants, we have built up a good picture of how and when families break down into smaller groups. These smaller groups usually reflect the strongest relationships in the family, between sisters or mothers and daughters. Families vary in how sociable they are, both with other families and within the family, and these associations change according to the time of year. Immediately after the rains, elephant groups are large and boisterous, and this is an important time for socialising, learning from others and mating. In the peak of the dry season, as preferred food resources become scarcer, elephants minimise competition with one another and conserve energy by moving shorter distances and in smaller groups. They focus more on feeding than socialising, and the mood of groups tends to be quieter.

As well as seasonal variation in sociality, we have recorded very long-term changes associated with the characters and personality of individual elephants. Echo, our most famous matriarch, was a real home-body, keeping her family in the heart of Amboseli and only rarely venturing on long-distance migrations to feeding grounds elsewhere in the ecosystem. It was a strategy that served her well: her family grew from seven in 1972 to more than 40 members on her death in 2009. Losing a matriarch is traumatic for any elephant family, and the EBs have changed their patterns since losing Echo, travelling more frequently from the Park, and staying away for longer.

This year in the rains, Ella left early with her daughters and their calves, and stayed away almost four months. Ella is a lot less sociable than other members of the EB family, so we weren't surprised she left without the rest of the family, nor that her daughter Elettra was the first to rejoin Enid and the others. We soon realised however that Ella's oldest daughter Emma had not returned, and neither had Emma's two calves and Ella's seven-year-old son Eggnog. Even with fission-fusion, Emma's relationship with her mother and sister should have brought them back together from their long-distance wanderings. As weeks passed, we feared the worst.

One thing we have learned over the past four decades is that elephants can always surprise us. At the end of July, more than three months after Ella's return, we spotted Emma, her calves and Eggnog feeding in the Enkongu Narok swamp, as if nothing had ever happened. This a record amount of time for a female to be separated from her closest family members, especially with young calves to protect. Happily everybody is well, and we will never know why she got left behind.



Norah explaining how to age elephants from their jaws: elephant teeth erupt sequentially over the course of their lives, six in all, so the amount of wear and the tooth in wear can be used to determine the age of an animal.

The trainees; Abraham Lerumbe, Hillary Kalaiyai, Taiko Lokuya, Taraiya Lendetu and Meliyo Maanja, are part of a new, elite elephant unit. All experienced rangers, they have swapped poacher ambush for elephant observation. They are using their excellent knowledge of the terrain to begin gathering information on the elephants using their area. Trained by Katito and Norah, they will now be able to age, sex and observe elephants safely.

It was a pleasure to host this Tanzanian team and witness their amazement and pleasure in learning about the elephants. They were particularly impressed by Barbara (matriarch of the BBs), who showed off elephants at their best by being an excellent grandmother to her family's latest arrival. The team was very keen to share their stories with family and friends, and to put their newly learned skills into practice. We are proud to know that we have helped elephants in Tanzania by helping these men, and we are looking forward to accepting their invitation to visit their area and see them in action.

Some Words of Thanks

Our supporters help us in many ways and we want to be sure that these donors know how much we appreciate them. In this newsletter we thank:

Generous Donors from the US: We simply could not function without our supporter base Stateside. We are particularly grateful for generous contributions from Nancy Camp, the Joseph and Marie Field Family Foundation and the Maue Kay Foundation. Heartfelt thanks to all.

Brookhouse School, Nairobi: We are hugely grateful to Brookhouse for raising money to help pay for our new camera equipment. Our new Canon 5D is invaluable for both filming and stills photography. It is a versatile camera, which will serve our promotional and record-keeping needs.



As though nothing ever happened... Emma back with her family in the heart of Amboseli.

You can follow more elephant dramas like this by joining our Elatia project (see sidebar), getting insights into the elephant gossip that lies behind our scientific research.

The Ivory Trade: Culturally Indefensible, Economically Non-viable

Harvey Croze

The case against the ivory trade has recently received two powerful briefs from quite different sources. One is an expert group workshop convened by the international Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The other, a series of economic analyses of wildlife trade by world-renowned economist, Alejandro Nadal, professor at the Centre for Economic Studies at El Colegio de Mexico.



Although culture often underpins policy-setting concerning human interactions, it has been generally absent in wildlife protection debates. But in July, the CMS Scientific Council Workshop on the Conservation Implications of Cetacean Culture heard a series of compelling papers (including one on elephant culture from ATE collaborator, Karen McComb) that set out evidence to review and provide advice on the impact of the emergent science of cetacean social complexity and culture, as it relates to regional populations and to inform forward decisions about CMS conservation

Only elephants...

priorities. Here's the [report](#).

The workshop recommended among other things that: 'The role and dynamics of culturally transmitted behaviours [of great apes and elephants as well as Cetaceans] should be part and parcel of determining conservation measures; that the CMS should consider the impact of removing individuals from socially complex species may have consequences beyond a simple reduction in numbers; and that in any case a precautionary approach should be adopted.

The implications of including culture and the societal concomitants of a large brain into the criteria for conservation within an international convention are far-reaching. They go way beyond conservation for



Rebecca Fisher: A big thank you to Artist Rebecca Fisher for her donation of a personalised painting of Echo, the famous EB family matriarch. We auctioned the painting and received a very useful donation for our field operation costs.

Winthrop School: Our thanks to the Winthrop School in Australia for raising funds to pay the school fees for a one year for two of our Maasai scholarship students, Rebecca and Margaret. The children raised the funds by organising a "Bands for Maasai" day via their Roots & Shoots program.

WAYS TO SUPPORT ELEPHANTS!

Join Elatia

Follow the herd by subscribing to our Elatia program. On the alternate month to this newsletter, you will receive all the elephant gossip about your chosen family. With five families to choose from, and plenty of young calves to cause mischief, you can share the intimacy of family life through photos, videos and the observations of our world-class field team. Together we have over 100 years of experience watching elephants and we can't wait to share their stories with you. Annual subscription is only \$30 per family, and you can give Elatia membership as a gift.



Odessa and her son are just some of the elephants you can follow with Elatia

Find out more [by clicking here](#).

Name a Baby Elephant

economic gain or as a hedge against future environmental costs. The intrinsic value of elephants (and Cetaceans, and great apes), like that of people, lies in the right to exist as components of living neural networks that form a web of communication, understanding, and appreciation of self in the context of empathy for others: the essence of 'humanity'.

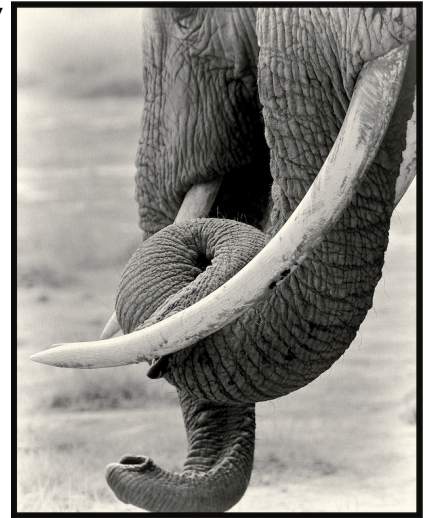
And for those still hung up on the notion that wildlife must pay its way, we are happy to report that the economic rug has been pulled out from under them. Prof. Nadal has brought to bear heavy-weight economic theory and evidence trashing the simplistic notion that if you allow a trade to feed a demand, then the market will decide, supply and demand will reach a happy equilibrium, and all will be well.

Not so, it seems. The proponents, largely from southern Africa, who continue to insist that it is possible to craft a workable mechanism for operating an ivory trade, have failed to realise that markets do not behave in accord with the simplified narrative of textbook economics. Prof. Nadal observes that those who propose legalising markets for endangered species have premised their case on literature that is "plagued by really very simplistic, naïve, plain wrong concepts and tools." They are speaking from "...an outdated backwater of economics."

Nadal's brief is impressively thorough, and the arguments are too complex to summarise here. His seminal paper on the subject, co-authored with Francisco Aguayo, can be downloaded from the [Leverhume Centre for the Study of Value](#). *Annamicus* also has an excellent summary of his arguments [here](#) against a rhino horn trade.

From Prof. Nadal's work we learn that there is no branch of economic theory, let alone practice, that can result in a positive, stable outcome from a proposed market beset with real-world complexities including: the vicissitudes of production from non-equilibrium wild herbivore populations; surrounding human communities who live in extreme poverty; management authorities infused with a culture of corruption stemming from the highest levels of their governance; and, most intractably, a growing and capricious demand from the Far East being served by a middle-man trading system rife with criminality.

The illusion of a mechanism able to balance supply and demand in such a milieu would be laughable, if it didn't require a product supplied by genocide.



... should wear ivory



Where ivory doesn't belong...

Find our books and DVDs on Amazon



For a special gift, consider becoming part of the project by naming one of the elephant calves. Unlike our Elatia program where many people follow the same family, our naming program is unique. This calf becomes "your" calf and yours alone, and the name given forms a part of the Amboseli dataset for all time, even after elephants die. For more information please write to us at [This Address](#) or go to [Our Website](#).

Wear ATE Bracelets



Our "Don't Buy Ivory" message is available in two styles: in English on elephant grey or in Chinese on red, considered lucky in both Chinese and Masai culture.

Please think about ways to use these wristbands to spread the word and advocate for a ban on domestic sales of ivory products.

The minimum order is ten wristbands for \$10/US. Please specify grey (English version) or red (Chinese version). Bulk orders of 100 wristbands will receive a discounted rate of 100 @ \$50/US. For discounted rates on orders over 100, please contact [our US office](#).

For cheque payments, please send to 10 State Street, Newburyport, MA 01950, or donate through [our website using Click & Pledge](#).

Shop with iGive

You can also support ATE by making your online purchases through iGive. If you sign up the Amboseli Trust for Elephants as your recipient organization we will get a small percentage of the sale. Connect with [iGive.com](#).

Give a Gift that Lasts Forever

Amboseli Book Chapter Summary, 16: *Decision Making and Leadership in Using the Ecosystem* by Hamisi Mutinda, Joyce H. Poole and Cynthia J. Moss

Free-living elephants must find food, water and mates in a large, ecologically unpredictable and socially dynamic landscape. As elephants compete for these resources, dominant families, parties, and individuals will access higher-quality food resources and in the case of males, a greater number of mates than those who are lower in rank.

Elephants must, therefore, make frequent decisions regarding when and where to go, with whom and how long to stay in particular groupings and areas. Conversely, they must decide which groups and locations to avoid as they attempt to maximize their intake rate and minimize competition both within and between groups, while simultaneously reducing encounters with predators, mainly human beings.



Matriarchs, who are the oldest and most experienced members of the family, have a strong influence over the decisions taken by family units. Although other members of the family might initiate movement or propose the direction of travel, the matriarch's own activity and behavior typically determines the group's departure time and direction.

This chapter explores:

- How matriarch leadership and rank influence group movements and dynamics of short-term group fission and fusion as families move between habitats.
- The pattern of trail use by families.
- How trail use relates to leadership, resource acquisition, and the mitigation of resource competition.

Watch our films on YouTube

As I conclude this issue of the ATE newsletter I want to encourage each of you to join our new program called Elatia. It is truly a wonderful way to become a part of what we do in Amboseli. You can chose to follow one or all five of our Elatia elephant families. You will receive regular news of your family or families. It's only \$30 per year but the reward of having intimate knowledge of an Amboseli family is priceless. It is also an excellent gift for friends or family. For more information [Click Here](#).

Cynthia Moss
Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephant

Designate the Amboseli Trust for Elephants as a beneficiary of your will, individual retirement account, or life insurance policy. Your legacy gift will enable ATE to learn more about the fascinating and complex lives of elephants and to assure their future. To learn more about planned giving opportunities, please contact Betsy Swart at [our US Office](#).

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To sign up your friends for our newsletter, please fill out the sign-up box on our Website: [Click Here](#) or go to the Join My List box on our Facebook Page, [Here](#).

