

ATE

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Cynthia Moss  
says...

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**Lethal Traps**

*Spike Trap*

These horribly cruel devices are the latest method the poachers are using to kill elephants. Please help us to prevent these deaths by supporting our scouts. We need to get them and additional men out in the ecosystem searching for the traps.

**Name Erica's Calf**

Erica's little male calf is doing well. I thought you might help me find a name for him. We've used almost every "E" name in the Names for Babies books, so

## News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

### September 2010

**Greetings!**

I have had many positive messages about ATE's first newsletter which went out in August. Thank you for your interest and encouraging words. I will now try to send a newsletter out each month.

I have started a new section of the ATE website called **Family Histories**. People have been asking me to do this for several years now. There are presently 58 elephant families in Amboseli. Each is unique and each has its own personality, its own history. It will take me a long time but I think these histories should be saved for both their scientific value and for posterity. See the beginning of the history for the AA family in the third article below.

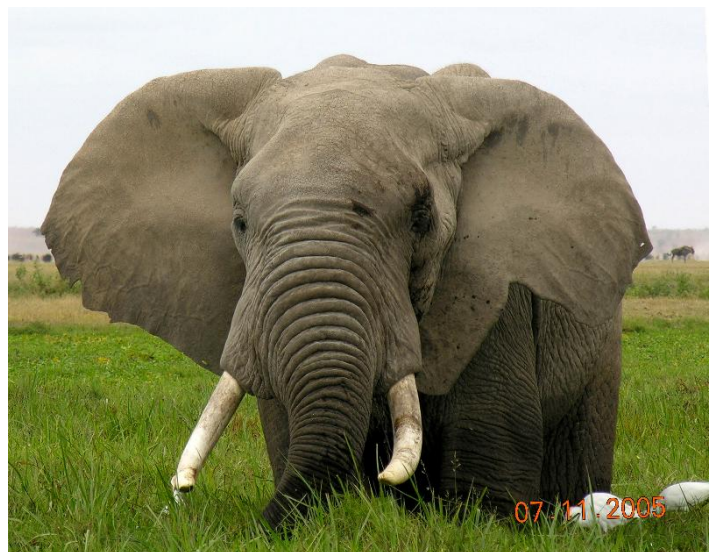
Please remember to go to the bottom of this newsletter and click on the Forward E-Mail button to sign up your friends. We need more people on our mailing list.

With thanks for your concern and support,

Cynthia Moss  
Director  
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

### Slaughter of the Bulls

In the previous newsletter I reported on the upsurge of poaching of elephants for ivory. The reality hit us hard in August with the death of three Amboseli bulls. On August 28th, the Field Assistants received a message that there was a dead bull out west of the Park near the Tanzanian border. At the same time there was a report of a dead male to the east near Kimana sanctuary. ATE Researchers Norah Njiraini and Katito Sayialel drove to Kimana; Robert Ntawuasa went to the west. Norah and Katito found a young bull who had been speared multiple times, his tusks hacked out, and his carcass covered with branches. They could not recognize who it was. The male in the west turned out to be Winston, a very well-known Amboseli bull. Putting together various reports it was deduced that Winston was shot in Tanzania and staggered across the border and died in Kenya.



*Winston*

The Kenya Wildlife Service wardens and rangers investigated both of the carcasses but too much time had passed to be able to track the poachers.

Winston was born to Willa of the WA family in January 1980. He was



it will have to be an unusual name. For each donation of \$10 or more you can submit a name. Once I get a good number I will chose the winner who will then receive a full history of the family, a current family tree, a photo of the calf and periodic updates for his lifetime.. You can make the donation through [our website](#) and submit the name or names through the [Visitors' Forum](#) or by sending an email to [info@elephanttrust.org](mailto:info@elephanttrust.org).



### Final Film about Echo

The BBC has made one last film about Echo. A retrospective of her life, it was made after her death and is called "Echo An Unforgettable Elephant." The film has already been broadcast in the UK to rave reviews. It will be shown in the US on PBS channels on October 17.

one of a sub-set of 14 calves I studied that year and so I spent many hours with him in his first year of life. When he was killed he was 30 years old and just entering the prime of his life. What a loss and what a waste.

At least Winston died relatively quickly which can't be said of Keyhole, a big bull fully in his prime at 40 years old. He was the son of Esmeralda of the EA family. Born in 1970, he

was just a two-year old when we first met him. He got his name because he had a keyhole-shaped slit in the bottom of his left ear. A few years ago he broke the same ear and that made him even easier to identify. Keyhole came into musth regularly and we feel fairly confident that he sired some offspring.



*Winston's Carcass*



*Keyhole*

The poachers have devised a new and very cruel way of killing elephants. They embed spikes or nails in a piece of wood, cover the spikes with a powerful poison, and bury it on an elephant path. We had been hearing about these spike traps for a while and several elephants have died from what appeared to be wounds in their feet. It wasn't until another conservationist sent us a photo of one of these traps found outside of Tsavo National Park that we realized how deadly they are.

Keyhole was reported limping badly in June. The Kenya Wildlife Service Veterinary Department was alerted and a vet came down and treated him. He did not improve and was treated again, but it did not help. It was obvious that he was in terrible agony: he could barely walk and his whole body was swollen. We are fairly sure he stepped on poisoned spikes. KWS decided to shoot him, but then he was found dead on August 18.

We can't bear to have another elephant die in this way. Please help us fight this despicable killing method. We need people out searching for these traps.



*SpikeTrap*

### New Research Project

We are very pleased to welcome back Beth Archie who carried out her Ph.D. research on genetics and social relationships of the Amboseli elephants from 2000 to 2003. In July and August, Beth Archie, now an Assistant Professor at the University of Notre Dame, came to Amboseli to start a new project that will help ATE understand patterns of infectious disease in the Amboseli elephants.

Currently, we know very little about how infectious disease spreads between elephant groups, or why one elephant is more susceptible to disease than another. This is in spite of the fact that infectious disease can pose major threats to the stability of wild elephant populations. Beth is working in collaboration with research scientist, Vincent Obanda at Kenya Wildlife Service, and together they are using dung samples to characterize the major elephant gut parasites in Amboseli--from worms to "enteric" bacteria, such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella*. Beth and Vincent will use their data to learn which elephants and social groups are susceptible to these infectious agents and how elephant social relationships and ranging patterns might drive the spread of disease across the population. Their results will give us a first look into patterns of infection in the Amboseli elephants and provide valuable information for managing future disease threats.



*Katito & Beth Collect Parasites*



*Wart Ear & Offspring at Swamp Edge*

## **The History of the AA Family**

The AA family holds a very special place in the Amboseli study, because it is the first family that was sighted and photographed on the very first day of the study on September 1, 1972. It has since become one of the best-known families in the population. I have continuous records of its births and deaths, good times and bad times over the past 38 years.

On that first day I was with my colleague Harvey Croze and we 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 Enkongo Narok swamp. Just along the shore we found a group of females and calves. Unfortunately, they were disappearing into the deep swamp, but we managed to count 13 animals and note that there were two calves less than a year old. Harvey took some photographs of the adult females. Two days later on September 3rd we came upon this group again and this time we were able to get better photographs and record the age and sex structure.

To read the whole history of the AA family go to: [Amboseli Trust for Elephants website](http://www.amboseli-trust.org/)



## Sex Change

Recently I spent some time with the EB family in order to get a photo of Erica's new calf whose birth I reported on in the last newsletter. I easily found them and got in a position to take the photos. I took several pictures of the calf exploring her environment, following her mother, and suckling. Then somewhat to my surprise I suddenly noticed that this calf was not a female as we had originally recorded but was very much and very obviously a male.



Elephant calves are not that easy to sex when they are infants but it's also not that difficult for experienced researchers. However, if we don't look carefully enough we sometimes get it wrong. A few calves have remained in the records with the wrong sex for as long as four years before we noticed the mistake.

I am happy to report that Erica's little male calf is doing well. I thought you might help me find a name for him. We've used almost every "E" name in the Names for Babies books, so it will have to be an unusual name. For each donation of \$10 or more you can submit a name. Once I get a good number I will choose the winner who will then receive a full history of the family, a current family tree, a photo of the calf, and periodic updates during his lifetime. (This will be a great bargain for the winner, because the usual donation required to name a calf is \$2500.) You can make the donation through [our website](#) and submit the name or names through the *visitors' forum* or by sending us [an email](#).

### *Erica's New Male Calf*

We have been going through some difficult and depressing times with the drought and now the poaching, but we will never give up. Spending time with the elephants who survived gives us new strength to fight for their future. We want Erica's little male to grow up to be a magnificent musth bull who will father many offspring. Please help us.

*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.

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