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News from the Amboseli Trust for Elephants

September-October 2013

Greetings!

The prime activities of the Amboseli Trust for Elephants are the research and conservation of elephants in the Amboseli ecosystem, but our interest ranges much farther to elephants throughout Africa and beyond. That interest also includes all the elephants, both Asian and African, that are held in captivity.

The results of ATE's 41-year long study have revealed much about the lives of wild, free-ranging elephants. We are still learning about these complex, intelligent animals, but what we do know now has changed the way people perceive elephants. Knowledge of their natural lives in the wild has most particularly altered our view of elephants in captivity.

Our stand at ATE is that we advocate when we feel that we can give an informed opinion. Aside from our statement on circuses we have not made blanket statements about all captive elephants. If there is a chance for an elephant to have a better life we feel morally obligated to speak up.

We are very pleased that advocacy for elephants has resulted in three important recent decisions. All have occurred in October. The first was the successful move of three elephants from the Toronto Zoo to the PAWS sanctuary in California; the second was a decision by the LA City Council to ban bull-hooks (used by circus trainers to subdue elephants); and the third was the huge decision to ban all wild animals in circuses in the UK.

There is a growing network of elephant advocates around the world and we want to thank them for the hard work they have put into the fight to earn elephants the respect and compassion they deserve.

Cynthia Moss
Director
Amboseli Trust for Elephants

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New ATE Website Goes Live

We are pleased to announce that we have launched our new website. We think you'll like the new design. At the moment you can find information on ATE and the Amboseli Elephant Research Project's history, our program and, of course, the Amboseli elephants. We are excited about expanding the features over the coming months. [Have a Look.](#)

Welcoming Tal Manor to the ATE Team

Kenya's First Lady Visits Amboseli and ATE

In our last newsletter we reported on Kenya's First Lady, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta's support of the Hands Off Our Elephants campaign. In September HOOE's founder and architect Dr Paula Kahumbu brought the First Lady to experience Amboseli and the elephants first hand. After many heart-breaking stories, including that of Qumquat and her family who have become HOOE icons, Paula wanted Her Excellency to experience elephants as they should be: wild, free and untroubled. She also wanted the First Lady to meet ATE's Research Assistant Katito Sayialel, as an example of how Kenyans can and do devote their lives to elephants and conservation. Having worked with ATE previously, we also suspect that Paula might have enjoyed the chance to revisit the elephants herself!

At the HOOE launch Her Excellency implored that "every single Kenyan and all friends of Kenya take up their responsibility to stop this crisis in securing a Kenya where the magnificent, magical elephant ... is free to roam unafraid and to continue to enchant ... humans around the world as they have done for



Cynthia Moss asks...
[Care to Donate Now?](#)



Tal at the Nairobi march for elephants at the DSWT orphange

We are delighted to welcome Tal Manor to the team. Tal has 10 years experience in elephant conservation and she specializes in media and GIS (mapping). Among other things she is making films and digitizing our priceless photo archive, which goes back to 1972. This is a huge and delicate task.

Tal has already proven her skills by producing several short films about elephants and our programs for [Our YouTube Channel](#) as well as the story of the school girls in the main section of this newsletter.

We are so pleased to be able to share more of our work through Tal's films, photographs and articles. To enhance the quality of our films and other media, we need to buy new equipment. Please see our wish list at the bottom of this column.

Welcome aboard, Tal!

Aerial Count of the Amboseli-Kilimanjaro Ecosystem

In October, ATE participated in a huge aerial survey, covering more than 25,000km² on both sides of the international border. ATE's Katito Sayialel was part of one of the flight teams.



Katito and her flight team

The count covered elephants and other large mammal presence, habitat assessments, water distribution, livestock and human settlement patterns and other land-use changes. This joint exercise was coordinated between Kenyan and Tanzanian government agencies: Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), Wildlife Division of Tanzania

thousands of years." She was indeed enchanted by the elephants, and by Katito who shared her love of all things elephant related over the course of a morning.



HE Margaret Kenyatta on left with Paula Kahumba behind, ATE's Katito Sayialel and the First Lady's Assistant Connie Gakonyo

Katito's decades of experience shone through as she explained elephant biology, family structure, independent males and complex social behaviour, all illustrated with her personal experiences and memories of the Amboseli elephants. Katito talked about how lucky we feel to

know the Amboseli elephants, and how our knowledge of them as complex, emotional and aware beings makes us passionate about fighting for their future.

We were honoured to host Mrs Kenyatta at our research camp, where she met local community leaders, government officials, KWS staff and other stakeholders. During a briefing on the landscape-scale conservation efforts in Amboseli, the First Lady heard from ATE's Resident Scientist Dr Vicki Fishlock, Olgulului Group Ranch Chairman Daniel Leturesh, Amboseli Senior Park Warden Julius Cheptei and African Wildlife Foundation's Programme Director Fiesta Warinwa. She was impressed by the multi-partner multi-level approach we take in Amboseli, which endeavours to place a viable future for wildlife and people at the heart of all our efforts for the ecosystem.

As well as our deep appreciation for Her Excellency's high-level support of elephants in the face of their current plight, we were delighted to have her name a baby elephant during her visit. Having spent most of the morning with the GB family, she was very taken with Garamba's young son, who at 18 months old is the embodiment of elephant toddlerhood, and who now bears the name Gakuo, in honour of the First Lady's father.

Contact Us

International Marches for Elephants by Betsy Swart

On October 4, 2013, nearly 40 cities around the globe participated in the International March for Elephants to educate consumers about the horrors of the ivory trade. We estimate that 25,000 to 40,000 elephants are killed *each year* for their ivory. One elephant dies every 15 minutes. Unless the slaughter is stopped, elephants could disappear within our lifetime.

I was in San Francisco on that day representing ATE and I walked with the 700-800 marchers as they made a peaceful procession through that city's Chinatown. We stopped at two ivory shops. At each store's entrance, a memorial service was held to honor the elephants who have died at the hands of poachers. I had a hard time keeping back tears as the names of several Amboseli elephants were read aloud and their stories told. I thought of how many times I had seen these elephants, peacefully grazing with their families in Amboseli or silhouetted against Kilimanjaro at dusk. It was hard to imagine that such beautiful beings could be callously killed, just so their tusks can be carved into ivory trinkets. I think the crowd felt the same. There was an aura of incredulous sadness on that beautiful, sunny

(WD) and Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA). NGOs, private sponsors and local community members also provided support. Other NGO partners included African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Tsavo Trust, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary.



How many elephants can you count in this photo?

This count, at the peak of the dry season, followed a similar wet season exercise conducted in April of this year. This is the fourth such count, but we are particularly interested to see if this year's results show a recovery of the large mammal populations that collapsed in the 2009 drought.

Where Do the Amboseli Elephants Go and Why?



Fulbright Scholar Mark Sowers has been working on the data generated by the five satellite collars we fitted in 2011. Mark is mapping the movements of Ida, Lobelia, Maureen, Vicky and Willow, and building this into a "risk map" for elephants in the wider ecosystem. After identifying wet season dispersal areas and movement corridors, Mark is analyzing how these fit with patterns of land use and human settlements, along with the distribution of water and other shared resources.

We will be sharing Mark's work with all our Amboseli partners, and his findings and approach will form a template for examining how Amboseli fits into the wider Natron - West Kilimanjaro - Amboseli - Chyulu - Tsavo ecosystem. The final report will also be freely available on our website.

day--a sadness that was combined with determination to stop the killing.

As a moment of silence was observed for our Amboseli elephant, Qumquat, who was gunned down by poachers last year, I dialed Cynthia in Amboseli on my cell phone. Holding the phone in the air, I was able to let Cynthia hear the Buddhist monk, one of the marchers, say a short prayer and then strike a gong for Qumquat. As the crowd stood with their heads bowed, the gong-sound echoed through the winding streets of Chinatown, symbolizing another life's unnecessary and untimely end.

The March--at all times respectful and peaceful--met with much interest, not only from tourists but from Chinatown merchants and residents as well. One young Chinese-American couple told me, "We did not know this" and they vowed to spread the word as they donned ATE "Don't Buy Ivory" wristbands.



ATE's US Executive Director Betsy Swart with Director of PAWS Ed Stewart at the San Francisco march

Thank you to all the volunteers who carried our banner through the Chinatown march and who distributed hundreds of wristbands and pamphlets. Thanks to the City of San Francisco and to the fabulous Bay Area animal welfare and conservation communities. It was, indeed, heartening to see hundreds of people uniting for the cause of saving elephants. It gave me hope that we can turn the current crisis around and stop the slaughter. If you would like to help educate your community or become an elephant activist in the city where you live, please contact me at eswart@elephanttrust.org

Follow us on [twitter](#)

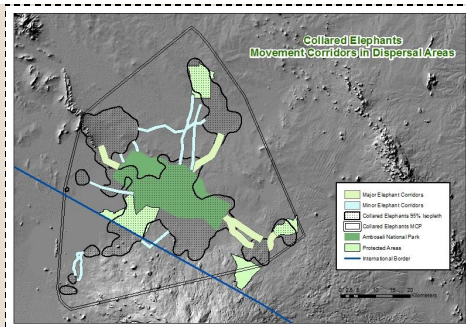
ATE's Sponsored Girls by Tal Manor

The continued existence of elephants in the wild can only be secured by achieving a sustainable and well-balanced relationship between wildlife and the surrounding human communities. Amboseli is predominantly surrounded by Maasai people, who are amongst the most iconic of East African tribes, with their distinctive dress, semi-nomadic lifestyle and traditional meat and milk diet. Maasai livestock are held in the highest regard, as a livelihood and a sign of wealth. Today's world threatens the traditional Maasai lifestyle as land is carved out, bought and developed, forcing increasingly settled populations which in turn places increasing pressure on natural resources.



ATE has long recognized the need for education, fostering young Maasai talent that will help the community respond positively and proactively to their changing environment. Since 2002 ATE has supported disadvantaged children and young adults through Kenya's education system by paying secondary school and university fees and providing stipends. ATE is therefore building strong relationships with communities, by helping young people in Amboseli to take charge of their own destiny. Over the years many of the students we put through school and university have become exemplary ambassadors for Kenya's wildlife. For our younger students, we have deliberately

chosen to support girls, as they often miss out when limited family money is preferentially spent on education for their brothers.



A map of the corridors showing where the collared elephants go when they leave the Park.

We are also using Mark's results to plan further collaring operations. If you are interested in supporting our elephant movement studies, please consider a donation towards this important research.

Name a Baby Elephant - Special Holiday Offer



This calf needs a name

ATE has a naming program for donors. Since it is a very special privilege to name a calf we ask for a large donation of \$2500. It is not like an animal adoption program where thousands of people might adopt the same whale or whatever. This calf becomes "your calf" and yours alone. The name remains for all time even after the individual may have died.

With your donation you receive photographs and a history of the your calf and its family. You will get periodic updates and be able to follow this calf's life over many years.



Eliot was named by a donor in 1988 when she was three years old; that donor has followed her over the last 25 years; you could do this too

In early October I went to visit two of the children supported by ATE's scholarship project: Abigail Saruni and Susan Emmanuel, who we are sending through the BEADS for Education programme (Link). The girls attend Top Ride Academy in Isinya, about half way between Nairobi and Amboseli. Driving up to the school compound I was immediately pleased to see lots of happy smiling children wearing their pink and red uniforms, and a massive painting of a Masaai man hugging an elephant, above the school motto which reads: 'Living in Harmony'. The school is well looked after and clearly makes the most of its low budget to maintain an encouraging learning environment. The clean compound is surrounded by flowery gardens with statues of wild animals placed amongst the neatly trimmed bushes. The head master, Mr Peter Waweru greeted me as I arrived and in true Kenyan fashion made me feel very welcome and appreciated for ATE's support of the children.

Susan is 11 years of age and comes from Oloitokitok, the small town 50km from Amboseli National Park. Her mother is one of two wives (this is common in Masaai culture) who together have 10 children. When asked what she would like to do when she finishes school, Susan very shyly answers 'I would like to become a pilot'. Her ambition is to learn to fly in Nairobi and join an organization which flies much needed aid to impoverished parts of Africa.



Abigail is 12 years old, and also one of many children (she has 11 siblings) from two wives. She comes from a small town near Isinya and dreams of becoming a doctor. She told me she wishes to work in a hospital because she wants to help people.

Both girls are intelligent and hard working students who consistently achieve good grades and are complimented by their teachers. These girls would never have this opportunity without external funding, and the teachers would like to see ATE support more children like Susan and Abigail in the future.

Susan (left) and Abigail are in Class 5

Like all our work, ATE's Scholarship Program is reliant on donations from the public. You could be a part of our initiative to change someone's life and help them achieve their ambitions; and it is a gift that you will forever be appreciated for. To watch a video about the girls [Click Here](#) and to find out more about our scholarship project email us at info@elephanttrust.org.

The History of the XA Family

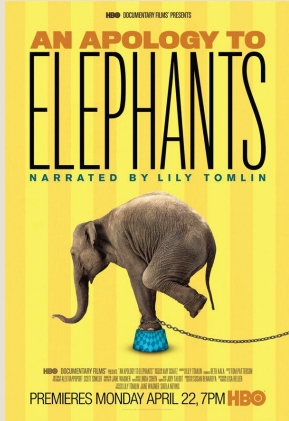
We saw the XA family two times in 1973 without realizing who they were or that they were a family we hadn't encountered before. It was on October 20, 1973 that Harvey Croze and I found a large aggregation of elephants including the TAs, DBs, IAs and others. Harvey took as many photos as he could of the oldest individuals. Six weeks later on December 5, 1973 our elephant colleague Iain Douglas-Hamilton visited Amboseli and took several roles of film of elephants and turned them over to us. We developed and printed contact sheets from both sets of films and saw that there were many elephants we did not know.

It was almost a year later on October 27, 1974 that we saw some of these females again. On that day we found a reasonable-sized group of 25, which we could stay with and carefully photograph. We had seen some of the individuals before

The program started in 1988 and some of those original donors are now following the offspring of their calves who have now grown up. Naming a calf creates a lifetime relationship with an individual wild elephant.

As a special Holiday offer we are asking for \$2000 to name a calf. Take advantage of this offer and write to us [by clicking here](#).

Two Elephant Films Win Awards



Two films we participated in have won major awards. The first was "An Apology to Elephants" an HBO film about elephants in captivity. It won an Emmy Award for best narration which was by Lily Tomlin. Cynthia Moss featured in this film throughout, talking about how elephants live in the wild compared to what they endure in captivity.

The second film was National Geographic's "Battle for the Elephants" which was produced and directed by long-time ATE supporter and friend, John Heminway. It won for best conservation film at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. Part of the film included the Amboseli elephants and an interview with Soila Sayialel.

The Court Case

The wheels of justice move very slowly. The case against Soila Sayialel and Robert Ntuawasa has come up for "mention" several times but the "hearing" (trial) has not yet started. The next court date is December 11. We continue to support Soila and Robert and remain convinced of their innocence.

Don't Buy Ivory Bracelets



and had already assigned them to families, but we found two new adult females. One was a big handsome female with a calf of about three months old; the other was a pretty, younger female. They were close to Remedios of the RA family.



Xanthippe, very handsome but suspicious, photographed in December 1973

I saw these individuals a few more times in 1975 along with another adult female I believed belonged to the same family. On most of these occasions they were seen close to the RAs. It wasn't until February 1976 that I hesitantly worked out who was in this new family. I gave them the letter X and named the older members. Despite being confused as to who was an X and who was an R, I assigned the following to the X family.

| | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| Xanthippe | Large Adult Female |
| Calf | 1-2 years old |
| Xavier | around 20 |
| Xala | around 16 |
| Xenia | around 10 |
| Xeta | around 10 |

To read the full history of the XAs [Click Here](#).

Find our books and DVDs on Amazon

Amboseli Book Chapter Summary, 12: Female Reproductive Strategies

In Chapter 12, *Female reproductive Strategies: Individual Life Histories*, Cynthia J. Moss & Phyllis C. Lee explore the implications of a female elephant having one of the longest reproductive lifespans among terrestrial mammals - she may reproduce for 40 or even 50 years. A mother elephant's reproductive success depends on:

- her age at her first reproductive event,
- how long she lives after this event,
- the number of young female helpers she has in her family,
- the size of her family, and
- whether she has a grandmother in the family when she starts to reproduce.

Among the females born in Amboseli (a total of 1087 at the time of this analysis), we found that the youngest age of first birth was just under 9 years, and the oldest was 21 years. The average female had her first calf at around 14 years of age and then lived to 41 years old, and produced a son or a daughter (in equal proportions) every 4-5 years.

A mother's ability to reproduce successfully over her lifespan depended on keeping her calf alive during its vulnerable first two years of life. During these two years, the mother was unlikely to become pregnant again.

We recently received a new order of bracelets. Think about ways to use these to spread the word and advocate for a ban on domestic sales of ivory products. If your group wants to help elephants, please contact Betsy Swart [at this address](#).

IGive

One of the ways you can support ATE is 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

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

Wish List

The following items would be of great help to our work for elephants. Please consider a donation towards this equipment.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| CANON 5D CAMERA MARK III | \$4000 |
| CANON LENS - EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM | \$1700 |
| CANON LENS- EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM | \$1500 |
| BATTERY PACK LP E6 - spare battery for camera | \$100 |
| SANDISK EXTREME PRO 64GB MEMORY CARD x 2 | \$340 per card |
| LACIE RUGGED USB 500GB x 2 | \$120 per piece |
| LACIE D2 QUADRA 2TB FIREWIRE 800 x 2 | \$200 per piece |



Alison at 50 years old with her three daughters; she also has two living independent sons and several grandchildren and great grandchildren

What helps a mother keep her calves alive? We found that mothers need experience with calves in order to be successful - calves born to older, larger and more experienced mothers had a higher chance of survival (85%) than did calves born to the youngest, inexperienced mothers (60%). We could show that part of the difference in calf survival was due to the smaller size of the younger mothers and their calves. But size was not the only factor. The young mothers may also have a smaller network of helpers and they may be less able to judge the signals of need or demands of their calves.

In addition, we found that grandmothers are a vital part of a mother's reproductive success: a grandmother's presence in the family meant that calves were more likely to survive the problems and perils of early childhood.

All our mothers had to work harder to look after sons than daughters; sons grow faster and need more milk and are simply more likely to encounter risks, like most young males!

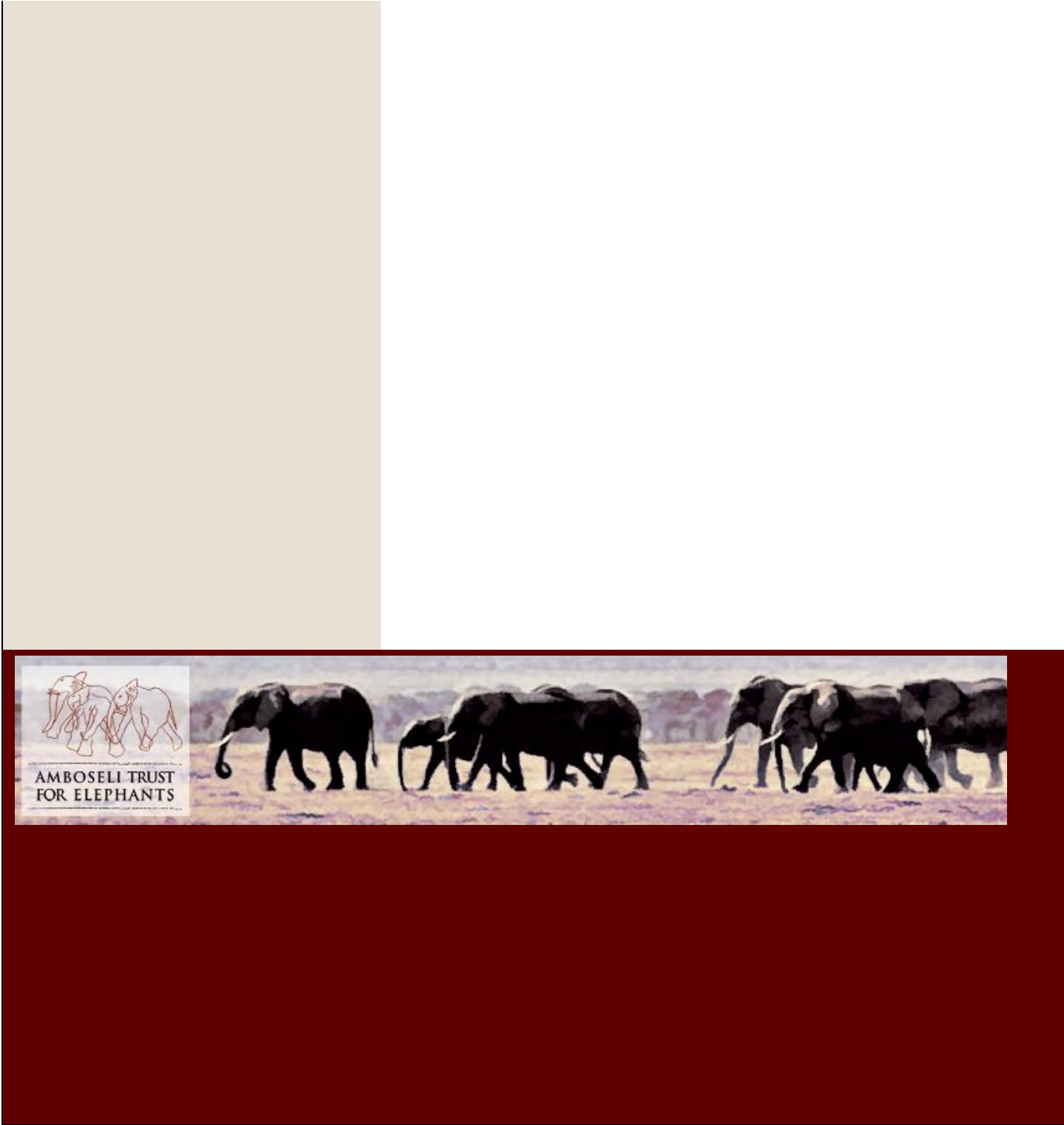
We did not detect a phenomenon similar to human menopause - our older females reproduced into their late 50s and even 60s. Reproduction slowed dramatically after 50, but female elephants most often carried on reproducing until the end of their lives.

Living a long time, gaining experience and knowledge, and having a large, supportive social network are the key elements contributing to elephant female reproductive strategies in Amboseli.

Visit our Website

While advocacy for captive elephants has seen some major accomplishments recently, we can't say that the poaching situation has improved at all. Although there has been tremendous media attention to the subject, there seems to be no decline in the demand. It is estimated that 96 elephants are being killed for their tusks each day. What we need are domestic bans on ivory sales around the world. Please help us fight for this outcome. By supporting ATE you are supporting an important voice for elephants.

*Cynthia Moss
Amboseli Trust for Elephants*



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