



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



About
**SAVE
THE
ELEPHANTS**

About SAVE THE ELEPHANTS

Founded by zoologist Iain Douglas-Hamilton more than 25 years ago, Save the Elephants (STE) conducts pioneering research into the ecology and behaviour of elephants, providing hard data on the challenges affecting wild elephants and suggesting solutions for a harmonious future between elephants and humans.

At STE's research station in Samburu National Reserve in Northern Kenya, a team of researchers study wild elephants on a daily basis. Over 900 identified elephants have been recorded using the reserves along the Ewaso Ny'iro river over the last two decades, and our intimate knowledge of their family structures and history has opened a rare window into the world of elephants. At a second research station in the Sagalla community in Tsavo, southeastern Kenya, our Human Elephant Coexistence team is investigating ways for people to live in harmony with elephants in an increasingly crowded landscape.

To help end the poaching, the trafficking and demand for ivory, Save the Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network run the Elephant Crisis Fund. By the end of 2019 over \$22 million had been granted out to 78 partners across 37 countries.

Beyond the ivory crisis, STE works with world-leading partners to develop new technology to track and analyse elephant movements. The resulting systems are helping scientists and protected area managers across the continent to protect elephants and plan for their future, a critical concern in an increasingly populated and developed Africa. We pursue evidence-based conservation with grass-roots community engagement, create solutions and build broad collaborations to secure a future for the elephants in Kenya, and across the continent.

Mission

To secure a future for elephants and sustain the beauty and ecological integrity of the places they live, to promote man's delight in their intelligence and the diversity of their world, and to develop a tolerant relationship between the two species.

Trustees

Fritz Vollrath, *Chairman*
Marlene McCay
Pete Henderson
Ambrose Carey
Miles Geldard

Cover photo: The curled up trunk of Mercy from the Virtues family. Photo by Jane Wynyard
Photo (opposite page): An elephant and calf in Samburu National Reserve. Photo by Robbie Labanowski

Our Impact *in* 2019

JANUARY



Major ivory bust by Chinese authorities following 3 year undercover investigation by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), part-funded by the Elephant Crisis Fund.

MARCH



Elephants and Bees Project hosts **first ever Women's Enterprise Workshop** in Tsavo with support from Wildlife Works and Glassybaby.

APRIL



The first 3 young bulls are successfully translocated from Reteti Elephant Orphanage. Save the Elephants and San Diego Zoo Global are monitoring the rewilding to help them and future orphans reintegrate with wild elephants as fast as possible.

JUNE



New publications: Dr Lucy Taylor reveals older bull elephants increase the energy they put into reproduction; Dr Lydia Tiller suggests elephants can distinguish larger amounts of food merely by smell; and Dr Festus Ihwagi shows elephants move faster and straighter through risky areas.

JULY



STE **presents STE Applebe award to Westgate Conservancy's Community Warden, Stephen Lenantoye** for his role in linking communities and uniformed ranks.

AUGUST



Angola becomes the 19th country where farmers are trained by the Elephants & Bees team to **mitigate human elephant conflict using beehive fences.**



STE **attends the global Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Geneva.** Proposals that would have damaged the international movement against the ivory trade are defeated.

NOVEMBER



Revolutionary new technique for **counting wildlife from the air - The Oblique Camera Count** - published by STE, Dr Richard Lamprey and partners, showing how much traditional methods have been missing.

DECEMBER



9 elephants are successfully collared in West Pokot, Marsabit and the coast in an exercise jointly conducted with KWS and NRT to improve security of elephants and communities.



STE's Head of Human Elephant Coexistence, Dr Lucy King, gives **STE's first TED talk, telling the story of how the humble bee can keep peace between humans and elephants.**

Our HERD

Introducing some of our team



Nancy Odweyo

Maureen Kinyanjui

David Lolchuragi

Nancy Odweyo

Our Head of Awareness, Nancy Odweyo, is passionate about elephants, nature and people. She joined Save the Elephants in 2014 as an intern and has steadily risen through the ranks. When she's not in a classroom, inspiring impressionable young minds with the wonders of elephants, she's hard at work behind her desk keeping our generous education donors updated on the work and students they support.

Together with her team, Nancy works with more than 30 schools in Northern Kenya creating conservation awareness and mentoring the next generation of wildlife ambassadors. With most of these learners living in or around elephant rangeland, it's important they understand the fundamental importance of wildlife and nature from a young age.

“More and more, I am fascinated by how effective conservation education can be as tool, and how impactful and incredibly meaningful the work is. I feel lucky to be at the heart of a program that actively interacts with both people and conservation.” - Nancy Odweyo

(Read how our Elephant Scholarship Programme is changing lives on page 21)

Maureen Kinyanjui

How can community livelihoods be improved while still fostering tolerance for elephants who are prone to raiding crops? That's a question Maureen Kinyanjui is exploring in Sagalla, Tsavo - an area where a year's crop can be wiped out in a single night by a hungry pachyderm.

Farmers around Tsavo often rely on crops that elephants like to eat, making them highly vulnerable to elephants whose usual food supply is affected by illegal grazing in the parks and changing weather patterns. In her capacity as the Community Livelihoods and Education Manager in Tsavo, Maureen is helping introduce alternative forms of livelihood, such as basket weaving, to the surrounding communities in an effort to reduce their dependence on income from subsistence farming.

With her Master's degree in Conservation and Rural Development, Maureen is working towards Save the Elephants' vision of a future where humans and elephants can coexist harmoniously.

“To engage communities in elephant conservation, we need to encourage them to think beyond their basic needs. With improved livelihoods, they will have more space to focus on conservation.”

- Maureen Kinyanjui

(Read more about the Elephants and Bees Project on page 19)

David Lolchuragi

Born and raised in Samburu, David Lolchuragi grew up around wildlife - including elephants - which inspired his interest in conservation.

A Research Assistant based at our research centre in Samburu, David is an integral part of our Long Term Monitoring team and works in the field under the watchful eye of our Head of Field Operations, David Daballen.

Armed with binoculars and a GPS tracker, David spends his time studying elephant society. From observing unusual behaviour to checking who's new in the reserve, David records every detail into an ever-growing database. The data he collects helps us understand elephants better and how to protect them.

“For the two years I have been working with Save the Elephants, I have come to appreciate elephants' intelligence and individuality. This has totally changed my perspective and how I look at elephants. They are more than just animals. They have personalities and different survival stories.” - David Lolchuragi

At the end of the 2019 nature sent out a great, unexpected pulse that is shaking up our relationship with the natural world. Along with blue skies, we have time to ponder how things might be if we ever relaxed humanity's chokehold on the planet.

Our research in 2019 revealed how bull elephants put ever more effort into mating as they age, an unusual trait in mammals. We began investigating how orphaned elephants raised by humans adjust to life in the wild. We showed how elephants streak when in dangerous areas and meander more when safe. We developed new algorithms to measure anomalies in movements to warn rangers when elephants appear to be in danger. And we experimented with a novel aerial oblique camera count that roughly doubled estimates of zebra and giraffe, and increased the count of elephants in Tsavo, Kenya's largest population, by almost a third.

Live tracking data, meanwhile, gets ever more powerful for conservation. STE's tracking systems were the seed on which our partners Vulcan built EarthRanger, a protected area management software now being used to manage 50 conservation areas across Africa.

We are supporting the elephant protection work in many of these sites through the Elephant Crisis Fund that we run with the ever-reliable Wildlife Conservation Network. The ivory poaching threat continues to morph in response to demand, enforcement, and now the COVID crisis. Central Africa remains the area of greatest concern. Although fewer carcasses are being reported there, this is likely because most of the exposed elephants have been wiped out, leaving only hard-to-kill remnants or the lucky few in the strongholds.

While keeping up the pressure on ivory poaching trafficking and demand, we have also been working on the long-term challenge to foster coexistence between elephants and mankind, both continentally and locally. In Tsavo, our Human-Elephant Coexistence team are working with local government to persuade farmers to grow crops that elephants don't eat, and expanding use of beehive fences and other novel ways of keeping elephants out of farms.

Finally, "The Elephant Queen" has arrived! This award-winning film made in Tsavo has enormous power to lift spirits and win hearts and minds for elephants. We're delighted to be partnering with the directors to deploy a mobile cinema for the film's most important audience: the people who live alongside elephants.

Thank you to all of our partners and supporters who have made this work possible.



IAIN DOUGLAS-HAMILTON
FOUNDER



FRANK POPE
CEO



Members of the Hardwoods family. Photo by Robbie Labanowski

CHAIRMANS' LETTER

Flying with Iain over a very green and luscious Samburu early in 2019 not only demonstrated the success of his recent ankle operation, but also the promise of ample grazing for both livestock and wildlife.

Some climate change models show East Africa getting wetter, to the potential future benefit of both elephants and herders. By the end of the year locust swarms were massing on Kenya's northern borders, about to head south. However the climate may be changing and whatever the impacts, STE is well placed to investigate using its ever-growing data sets and deep insights into the savannah elephant's demography, ecology and behaviour.

While the ivory crisis slowly abates, the next big crisis for elephant survival looms: the scramble for space and resources. Here our research into elephant movements is proving invaluable in defining landscapes that benefit both people and nature. Both species need to respect each other's space.

Human respect for elephants can be fostered through education, community outreach and economic tools. Elephants' respect for humans and their tempting crops will probably always have to be enforced by fencing, whether the fence uses electricity, bees, chilli-peppers, or other methods inherently repulsive or scary for elephants. This, too, is an area of considerable research interest to STE as part of our efforts to encourage co-existence and mitigate conflict.

With elephant numbers recovering, local farmers will need additional and ideally equally ecological ways of defending their crops that will have to be discovered, tested and implemented.

So, as in years past, STE has its work cut out. In addition to fighting the ivory trade and stopping the poaching of elephants we are now once again gearing up to defend the elephant in its natural, peaceful and sustainable recovery after a long, painful and life-threatening decade.



FRITZ VOLLRATH
Chairman

The
ADOPTERS

How social bonds have helped save elephant lives



Orphan Habiba leads the remnants of the Swahili family. Photo by Jane Wynyard

When poaching and drought wiped out a quarter of Samburu's mature female elephants a decade ago, our focus turned to their surviving orphans. Without older females to guide them, these orphans would be less able to find food and water, navigate across dangerous landscapes or even protect themselves from predators.

Sadly many young calves did die - the tragic knock-on affect of poaching. Others, however, were more fortunate. Teenage daughters prematurely stepped in to guide some orphans. Other orphans became explorers, not fully committing to any group, while still others found friends among other families or even teamed up with fellow orphans.

Several senior females proved to be surprisingly generous. Wise old females such as Cinnamon from the Spices and Alpine from the Flowers, allowed orphans into their families. Despite being from unrelated herds, these females nurtured the orphans alongside with their own young.

While we still don't know why some matriarchs are more welcoming to orphans than others, we have learnt that the complexity of elephant society makes it resilient. Deep social bonds and a long memory for interactions appear to help them regroup after traumatic times such as those experienced during the poaching crisis.

A new phase of our research into orphan behaviour has begun as we work with the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary and San Diego Zoo Global to study the rewilding process of rescued calves. We hope to shed light on how wild elephants adopt the orphans, and help them successfully reintegrate back into the wild.

(To find out more about orphan rewilding see page 16)

Taking on
THE IVORY TRADE

Major arrests mark progress but poaching still a problem

Elephants are now less at risk from ivory poachers in most of Southern and Eastern Africa, but they are still in serious danger in other parts of their range, especially in the troubled regions of Central and Western Africa.

Poaching has remained relatively low in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, and appears to have reduced in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Mozambique. The status of Africa's largest elephant population, in Botswana, is still unclear following reports of increased poaching in 2018 but as yet there is no evidence of a significant reduction in elephant numbers.



Seized ivory and weapons in Odzala Kokoua National Park, Congo. Photo by Frank af Petersens



A herd moves through Northern Kenya, where poaching has been largely brought under control. Photo by Jane Wynyard

The situation in Central Africa is much worse. It is difficult to know in detail what is happening there, except in a few closely observed parks, because counting forest elephants is so difficult, and patrols seldom find poached carcasses. However, we believe that poaching pressure is still intense.

After limited progress against ivory traffickers, this year saw a breakthrough with a series of arrests of major ivory traffickers in African counties and China which has helped to disrupt their networks and made their members more cautious.

These are important successes, but large quantities of ivory are still being shipped from Africa to Asia, often in the same containers as pangolin scales. Several large seizures were made in 2019. Because of the law enforcement clampdown in China, ivory mostly seems to be moving through Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam, on its way to China. We continue to investigate the changing dynamics of the trade to help guide our strategy.



Elephants in Lower Zambezi, Zambia where the ECF supports several projects. Photo by Francois D'Elbee

*Eyes on GABON***Saving the world's last forest elephants**

Gabon in Central Africa is home to over half the world's remaining forest elephants, populations but they are under siege from poaching and other environmental pressures. But there is hope.

The country was estimated to harbour a population of 50,000 forest elephants, but certain areas have seen an 80% decline in numbers. Minkebe National Park in Northern Gabon, on the border with Cameroon, lost 25,000 elephants between 2004 and 2012.

The Elephant Crisis Fund is supporting the National Agency of National Parks to prevent poaching gangs that cross the border from Cameroon every week, penetrating deep into Gabon's forests to kill elephants, extracting approximately one ton of ivory every month. If they don't succeed, Gabon may face local extinctions in places such as Minkebe.

The forests in which these elephants live are also threatened by illegal logging, while illegal gold mining poisons many of Gabon's river systems with mercury. Even the trees in Gabon are under stress from the changing climate. This is the front line, not only for elephants, but for an entire ecosystem.

Traffickers are using ever more sophisticated methods to hide ivory, adapting quickly to increased law enforcement efforts, and have become more challenging to pursue. Increasingly they are stockpiling and hiding ivory in safe houses, and switching to other commodities such as pangolin and gold.

Fortunately, there is a new cause for optimism about Gabon's forests. Norway will pay Gabon for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and degradation, and for the absorption of carbon dioxide by natural forests. If other African countries follow suit in identifying the value of their forests and securing them from poaching and logging, then there is genuine cause for hope for forest elephants and the ecosystems they inhabit.



Forest elephants remain under threat in Gabon. Photo by David Greyo

Eyes on
GABON

Ivindo National Park in Gabon. Photo by Lee White / Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux

Giving
**ELEPHANTS
 A VOICE**

Meet the Elephant Movement Analysts



Benjamin Loloju (rear) and Nelson Mwangi, Geographic Information Systems specialists mapping elephant movements. Photo by Jane Wynyard

When Iain Douglas-Hamilton began radio-tracking elephants in Tanzania in 1968 it transformed our understanding of how far some elephants travel, and how different their individual movements can be. Today, with the original VHF beacons now joined by GPS sensors, accelerometers, and satellite uplinks, the revelatory trickle of data has become a torrent.

Although born of research, the tracking technology soon proved a critical tool for running anti-poaching operations. Our real-time system for visualising tracking data has evolved into EarthRanger, Vulcan’s Domain Awareness System that is now deployed across 50 African protected areas. Alert algorithms monitor data streams for problems with these sentinel elephants, built on fundamental understanding of elephant behavior.

One of STE’s largest teams is our Geographical Information Systems (GIS) unit. Twelve people make maps to help understand elephant movements with relation to everything from the minute to minute decisions of a crop-raiding elephant to the generational changes in ranging behavior of an individual family as the landscape changes beneath their feet.

Ever more data is flowing into our systems from both within Kenya and across Africa, not just from tracking collars but from multi-spectral satellite photographs and other sources. From this white noise of data our research team work to understand how elephants make decisions, and how they are responding to the changes around them. These movement maps – presented to community elders, road and rail developers and politicians – are giving elephants a voice.

Journey

BACK TO THE WILD

Reteti orphans settle into their new home

The first six young elephants from the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary have been released back into the wild, where they are adapting to their new surroundings. The orphans, all aged between three and five years, are increasingly integrating with local wild elephants. All six elephants were hand-reared by dedicated Samburu keepers at Reteti after being orphaned as babies.

Their new home is the 100 km² fenced Sera Rhino Sanctuary, which also encloses a number of wild elephants. The orphans were released in two cohorts, first Vargas, Sosian, Lingwesi in May 2019 and then their stable-mates, Shaba, Pokot and Mpala in November.

The tracking data show that the orphans’ range overlaps with the “wild” elephants with whom they share waterpoints and are often in close contact. The orphans have developed an affinity for one wild family, but it is a gradual process. The six orphans tend to stick together, but when they separate they usually revert to their original release cohort.

We trained two local research assistants to monitor the wild and orphaned elephants. Camera traps together with tracking data allow observation with a minimum of human interaction, to maximise the orphans’ chances in the wild.

Save the Elephants and San Diego Zoo Global have partnered to study the rewilding in collaboration with the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary, Namunyak Community Conservancy, Sera Community Conservancy, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Northern Rangelands Trust.



Four of the orphans photographed during an aerial patrol in Sera in January 2020. (Left to right) Sosian, Lingwesi, Mpala and Vargas. Photo by Jane Wynyard

The Mating Secrets of AFRICA'S BULL ELEPHANTS

Matt the bull gains immortality

Before Matt – a celebrated African savanna elephant from Northern Kenya - died from natural causes last year at the age of 56, he gave us a treasure trove of data about the mating secrets of bull elephants.

Males of many species – humans included – slow down in their pursuit of females as they age. Not so African savannah elephant bulls. They increase the energy they put into reproduction as they get older.

The research was carried out on Matt and 24 other bulls using observations and GPS tracking data from our long-term monitoring project in Samburu and Buffalo Springs National Reserves. The results showed that as they age, male elephants move more while in musth, a periodic state of intensive testosterone-fuelled sexual activity.

The oldest male in the study group, Matt's mating tactics were legendary. Huge in body and with spectacular tusks, Matt roamed further than any other elephant we have tracked in Kenya, travelling as far as the Tana River in the east and Oldonyiro in the west. Every year after the rains he would visit Samburu National Reserve where he dominated the competition for females in oestrus.

Today, Matt's genes are spread far and wide in the elephant population through the many calves he sired in Northern Kenya. Matt was also immortalised on the cover of the *Journal of Animal Ecology* which published the research in a special issue on tracking animals - a fitting tribute to one of Kenya's most well-known and most energetic elephant elders.



Matt in his prime and immortalised on the cover of the *Journal of Animal Ecology*. Photos by Sarah Jacobsen and George Wittemyer.

Artificial Intelligence for ELEPHANTS

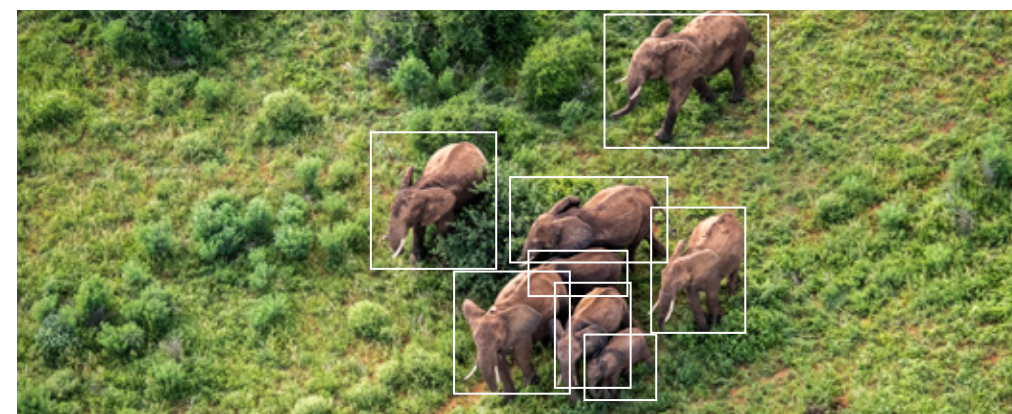
How machines will help protect herds

Can Artificial Intelligence (AI) help us understand and protect elephants? Speech processing, facial recognition and many forms of forecasting have been transformed as computers learn to scour incoming streams of data for significant patterns. Now, it is showing promise for improving how we study elephant lives, as well as the state of their populations and ecosystems.

The ability to identify individual elephants has been key to understanding their rich social world, and to shedding some light on their complex consciousness. But the technique of using ears and tusks to recognise individuals is still only used systematically in a handful of locations, and AI could change that. Working with WildMe, a group that have created algorithms to recognise individual zebras and humpback whales, we've taken the first steps towards training computers to help in this work.

We're also working to transform the way elephants and other wildlife are counted during aerial surveys, alongside our partners Dr Richard Lamprey, Vulcan and the Kenya Wildlife Service. A landmark paper that STE co-authored in *Biological Conservation* showed just how much observers in hot, cramped cockpits have been missing. When AIs are able to help analyse the hundreds of thousands of photos, aerial survey looks set to become cheaper as well as more accurate.

Movement data analysis in real-time offers another opportunity. With the volume of data streaming in from tracking devices across the continent steadily rising, we have developed algorithms that can remotely detect signs of stress such as increasing nocturnal activity and streaking in near-real time, giving protected area managers a valuable head start. We have no time to lose.



Automatic identification of elephants in aerial photos and camera traps promises to transform some areas of elephant research and conservation. Photo by Robbie Labanowski

Supporting
**COMMUNITY
 EMPOWERMENT**

The renovation of the Kileva Primary School permaculture garden has transformed its ability to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to supplement school lunches. As a result, more and more farmers like Charity are starting to grow alternative crops, using the dryland farming techniques they learnt from the demonstration plot. Agriculture in elephant conflict areas is challenging but by promoting crops that are non-palatable to elephants and boosting community livelihoods through eco-enterprises, we are helping them with the challenges of living with elephants.

2019 was also the year we expanded our 'toolkit' of eco-friendly elephant deterrent research in Sagalla, trialling methods such as elephant watch towers and 'smelly ele-repellent'. Moving further afield, our Mobile Unit team has ventured as far as the Chyulus, South Rift, Marsabit and Mount Kenya, building both beehive fences and collaborations. Together with Wildlife Works and Tsavo Trust, we are continuing to monitor collared elephants at risk in the Tsavo ecosystem, with more than 350 hours of aerial and ground observations clocked. Using the STE Tracking App, this monitoring enabled the detection of an arrow wound injury on great tusker elephant, Wide Satao, leading to a successful medical intervention in May.



(Clockwise from top left): Beehive fence farmer Charity; Women from the Enkii Women's Group; the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust; Occupied beehive. All photos by Naiya Raja except for top left image by Sebastien Gleize.



(Clockwise from top left): Growing spinach and kale in old tyres - photo by Victor Ndombi; Collared crop raider, Sagalla - photo by Ewan Brennan; New co-existence mural at Kileva School garden - photo by Naiya Raja; STE's latest elephant scholar from Tsavo, Violet - photo by Maureen Kinyanjui

Met Charity Mwangome, a community health worker, widow, grandmother to Isaiah, and one of the very first beehive fence farmers in Sagalla, Tsavo. Charity is a pillar within her community, buzzing with hope and endurance.

2019 was the year we celebrated our first Women's Day event in Sagalla, hosting business skills and workshops at the Elephants and Bees Research Centre. Seventy women attended. The team successfully raised funds for the construction of a Women's Enterprise Centre in Mwakoma, which will help women to support themselves financially. As a safe space, it will enable women like Charity to come together to learn and practice elephant-friendly bio-enterprise skills.

The Scholarship Graduates

THREE STEPS TO SUCCESS



(left to right) Vivian and Rose (photos by Alfred Ngachi) and Peninah (photo supplied)

Three students, three different paths with one thing connecting them all: The Save the Elephants (STE) Scholarship Program!

Since 2001, our Elephant Scholarship Program has mentored and shaped more than 200 motivated students, many of whom are already becoming young leaders in their communities. Among these promising alumni are Vivian Alinta, Rose Lempate and Peninah Lekaura – each a testament to the transformative power of education.

Vivian joined the scholarship program in 2011. After enrolling in a two-year diploma course in Community Development & Social Work at the Mount Kenya University, she joined the Samburu Youth Education Fund (SYEF), providing scholarships, mentorship and entrepreneurial opportunities to women and young people. Vivian is now working with close to 50 scholars from the Fund, providing tutelage, guidance and much-needed counselling. She is also empowering 30 women helping them add value and benefit to their beadwork enterprise.

Rose’s scholarship journey led her back to where it all started – at STE. Rose joined the scholarship program in 2007 and went on to Kenyatta University to pursue a BSc in Environmental Education. She has since put her knowledge to test, interning with the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife (AFEW) and volunteering for a youth organisation in her hometown Maralal. Last year, Rose joined the education team at STE where she is helping with conservation education and scholarship program activities.

Peninah’s love for sciences and hard work in primary school saw her enrolled in our scholarship program in 2009. Driven by her love for animals, she won an internship opportunity with the Samburu Country Veterinary Department. In September 2019, she graduated in the top five of her class with a BSc in Veterinary Medicine at the University of Nairobi and earned a fully funded master’s scholarship. Peninah is currently pursuing a MSc in Animal Nutrition & Feed Science and hopes to intern with the STE veterinary unit in future.

We are incredibly proud of all of our scholars. Indeed, they will play an important role in future of elephants and wildlife conservation as future decision makers, conservation ambassadors and agents of positive change.

Do you want to help make a young Kenyan’s dreams come true by sponsoring an elephant scholar or supporting STE’s education programme?
If so, please email us at scholarship@savetheelephants.org

Remembering STE’s conservation ambassadors

STE wishes to honour two great teachers from its partner schools who lost their lives in 2019 and 2020. Mr Samson Leariwala from Ngutuk Ongiron Primary School was killed in a road accident in September 2019. Mr Francis Ewok from Daaba Primary School died of cancer in January 2020. Both teachers were brilliant educators and true champions of conservation and we are grateful for their incredible and inspirational work.



STE’s Daud Abdi (left) with teacher Samson Leariwala who was tragically killed in a road accident last year.



Warrior hosts, Lekuye and Naiborke, prepare for a full moon celebration with guests at Elephant Watch Camp. Photo by Jane Wynyard

Our partner in conservation
**ELEPHANT
 WATCH CAMP**

Soon after Iain Douglas-Hamilton established our research centre in Samburu, his partner in life and conservation, Oria, created Elephant Watch Camp to introduce visitors to the elephants of Samburu whose lives we study.

Built from the arboreal flotsam washed downstream by the river or toppled over by elephants, this unique eco-camp provides elephant experiences unlike anywhere else in Africa. The guides - all warriors from the local community and graduates of the scholarship program we run together - enchant guests with intimate wildlife encounters and their consummate knowledge of Samburu's elephant society.

With just six tents, the Elephant Watch experience can only be enjoyed by a lucky few. Guests arrive with a desire to learn more about elephants, and to spend time with them. They leave with breathtaking insights and a profound understanding of the wild that will stay with them for life.

The Samburu people have a history that is deeply entwined with that of the elephants. Almost all of the team at Elephant Watch Camp are from the local villages surrounding the National Reserves, providing an unsurpassed introduction to this special nomadic culture that has safeguarded the region's stunning biodiversity for so long.

Visit Elephant Watch Camp to come and see STE's work for yourself, and to become one of the ambassadors for wildlife and nature that the world so urgently needs.



Heroic feats, praised in song, are woven into the tapestry of oral history by dancing warriors. Photo by Jane Wynyard

NEWS

A Tribute to Two Bulls

We pay tribute to two of Northern Kenya's finest bull elephants who lost their lives in 2019. Matt (aged 56) and Teresai (aged 41) died within weeks of each other. Matt, one of the largest tuskers in Northern Kenya, died from natural causes in October. Teresai's death in September on the other hand was a senseless tragedy that occurred after the elephant fell into an abandoned septic tank. Both Matt and Teresai survived the ivory poaching crisis that killed more than 100,000 elephants across the continent and were well known to Save the Elephants researchers who had studied their behaviour and movements for years. We also bid a fond farewell to Tim, another Kenyan elephant elder and great tuskler of Amboseli, who died of natural causes this year. We spent a year tracking Tim to understand his prolific crop-raiding.

(Read how Matt gained immortality on page 17)



(Left to right): Teresai and Matt

CITES

Save the Elephants – including the Elephant Crisis Fund team – took part in the global Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Elephants dominated the room once again as the fates of 500 other species were being debated in the two-week-long convention in Geneva. Proposals from pro-trade nations were also defeated as were plans to put all Southern African elephant populations onto the most restrictive 'Appendix 1' – maintaining the status quo on ivory. Adopting a ban on the trading of live elephants from Africa to non-range states was a major decision, reached after a vigorous debate.

Welcome Back Nancy Odweyo

We're delighted to have Nancy Odweyo back in action after a year of study in Scotland. Nancy, who now heads our Awareness Programme, was pursuing a Masters in Environmental Protection and Management from the University of Edinburgh. She graduated with a distinction in an award ceremony in November and is already applying her new skills to enhance conservation education and work with attitudes towards elephants in Northern Kenya.



Forest Elephants and Climate Change

Poaching of Africa's forest elephants may speed up climate change, according to a new study released by the Laboratory of Climate and Environmental Sciences. The research suggests that the continent's wide-ranging forests could lose as much as seven per cent of their carbon storage ability if elephants ceased to exist. 'The study comes out at a time when forest elephants are threatened as never before', STE's Founder and President, Iain Douglas-Hamilton said after its release. Our Elephant Crisis Fund continues to support organisations protecting forest elephants across Central Africa.



A Masters For Gloria Mugo

Congratulations to Gloria Mugo on receiving a distinction in her MSc in Applied GIS and Remote Sensing from the University of Southampton, UK. As a GIS Analyst on our Elephants and Bees Project, Gloria helps give elephants a voice through creating maps that communicate their needs and desires.



PhD for Lydia Tiller

Our Elephants and Bees (E&B) Research and Science Manager, Dr Lydia Tiller, was awarded a degree of doctor by the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), at the University of Kent, UK, in July. Her research looked at how land-use change in the Trans Mara district in Kenya drives human-elephant conflict and elephant movement. Dr Tiller, who joined the team in January 2018, leads our Tsavo elephant tracking project trying to gain a better understanding of elephant movement and elephant crop-raiding behaviour across the Tsavo ecosystem.



Elephant Tracking Milestone

Our intensive five year tracking project across the north of the Samburu-Laikipia ecosystem, funded by The Nature Conservancy, has been completed. The project helped guide regional anti-poaching operations, developed new techniques for remotely monitoring risk and created one of the most extensive wildlife datasets to feed into Kenya's Vision 2030 planning. It also fed into the development of a web-based domain awareness system platform by Vulcan called EarthRanger, that built on STE's original tracking system and is now in use in over 50 protected areas across Africa. The project was implemented by Save the Elephants in collaboration with the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).



Making it Count With the OCC

There's a revolutionary new technique for counting wildlife across large areas - the Oblique Camera Count (OCC). Trialled by Save the Elephants, Dr Richard Lamprey, KWS & partners in Kenya, the OCC could also signal the end of traditional, expensive methods using human observers. The new technology - using an automated high-definition oblique camera system, vastly improves the accuracy of multi-species aerial counts. Published in *Biological Conservation*, the work found that human observers missed 60% of giraffe, 48% of zebra... and even 14% of the elephants.



(Read more about AI & elephants on page 18)



Samburu's Baby Boom

Samburu experienced a baby boom in 2019. Our field researchers recorded a total of 48 births in 2019 compared to 21 in the previous year and just eight shy of the highest number of recorded births within the reserves in 2017. Out of the new babies, 19 were male and 27 female.



Photos on pages 25 - 28 by Edelmond Williams, Jane Wynyard, Matt Brierley, Naiya Raja, Scott Ramsay and Robbie Labanowski

2019 Scientific Publications

Bastille-Rousseau, G., Wittemyer, G. (2019) **A framework for defining individual movement tactics demonstrates the influence of heterogeneity in resource selection on population distribution of African elephants.** Ecology Letters 22: 1471-1427 (Front cover)

Branco M.S, P.S., Merkle, J.A., Pringle, R.M., King, L., Tindall, T., Stalmans, M., Long, R.A. (2019) **An experimental test of community-based strategies for mitigating human-wildlife conflict around protected areas.** Conservation Letters. 2019;e12679. wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/conl 1 of 8 <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12679>

Denninger Snyder, K.; Mneney, P. and Wittemyer, G. (2019) **Predicting risk of illegal activity using ranger patrol and intervention data.** Conservation Science and Practice 1:e81

Goldenberg, S.Z., Owen, M.A., Brown, J.L., Wittemyer, G., Min Oo, Z., Leimgruber, P. (2019) **Increasing conservation translocation success by building social functionality in released populations.** Global Ecology and Conservation 18:e00604

Ihwagi, F.I., Skidmore, A.K., Wang, T., Bastille-Rousseau, G., Toxopeus, A.G., Douglas-Hamilton, I. (2019) **Poaching lowers elephant path tortuosity: implications for conservation.** The Journal of Wildlife Management 1-10; 2019; DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.21688

King, L.E. (2019) **Elephants and Bees: Using Beehive Fences to Increase Human-Elephant Coexistence for Small-Scale Farmers in Kenya (Book Chapter). Chapter 11, inside Human-Wildlife Interactions: Turning Conflict into Coexistence.** Edited by Frank, B., Glikman, G.A. and S. Marchini. Cambridge University Press. ISBN - 10: 1108416063. ISBN - 13: 978-1108416061

Lamprey, R., Pope, F., Ngene, S., Norton-Griffith, M., Frederick, H., Okita-Ouma, B., Douglas-Hamilton, I. (2019) **Comparing an automated high-definition oblique camera system to rear-seat-observers in a wildlife survey in Tsavo, Kenya: Taking multi-species aerial counts to the next level.** Biological Conservation 241 (2020) 1082432 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2019.108243>

Parker, J.M., Goldenberg, S.Z., Letitiya D., Wittemyer, G. (2019) **Strongylid infection varies with age, sex, movement and social factors in wild African elephants.** Parasitology 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031182019001653>

Plotnik, J. M., Brubaker, D. L., Dale, R., Tiller, L. N., Mumby, H. S., & Clayton, N. S. (2019) **Elephants have a nose for quantity.** Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116(25), 12566-12571

Taylor LA, Vollrath F, Lambert B, Lunn D, Douglas-Hamilton I & Wittemyer G (in press) **Movement reveals reproductive tactics in male elephants.** Journal of Animal Ecology. 81 (1): 57-67 <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2656.13035> (Front cover)

Wittemyer, G., Northrup, J.M., and Bastille-Rousseau, G. (2019) **Behavioral valuation of landscapes using movement data.** Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B 374:20180046

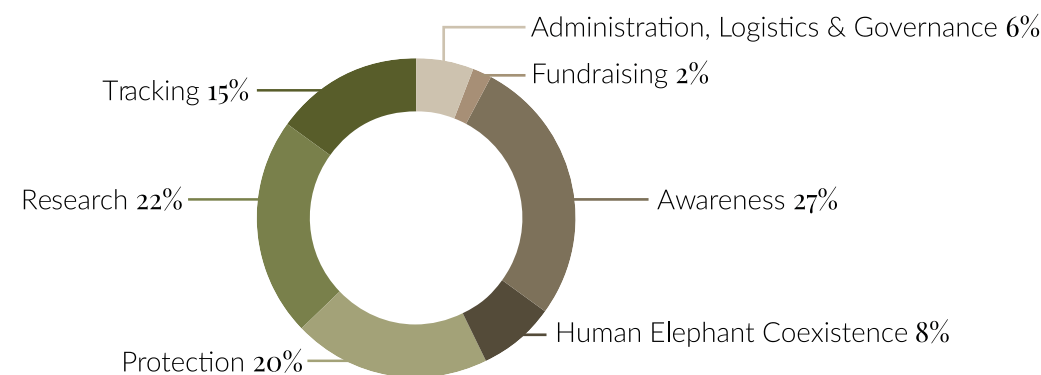
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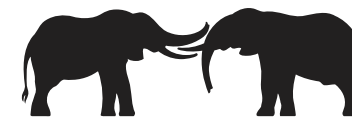
Statement of Revenue & Expenses

	UNAUDITED	AUDITED
	2019	2018
REVENUE (US\$)		
Donations, Grants, Royalties	5,193,761	2,547,120
Interest Earned	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE	5,193,761	2,547,120
EXPENSES (US\$)		
Programme Grants & Services	2,785,984	3,009,030
Administration, Logistics & Governance	187,159	192,197
Fundraising	56,115	195,976
TOTAL EXPENSES	3,029,258	3,397,203
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	2,164,503	(850,083)

An additional \$1.39m was donated to Save the Elephants via the Wildlife Conservation Network in December 2018 but did not reach STE accounts until 2019. This is reflected in the large difference in revenue between 2018 and 2019.

Analysis of 2019 Expenditure





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Save the Elephants is deeply grateful to all the individuals, organisations and companies who contributed financially to the mission of STE from 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019. We are thankful for every gift, each of which is an investment in the future of Africa's elephants.

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Elephant calves play together in Samburu National Reserve. The reserve recently experienced a baby boom. Photo by Jane Wynyard

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We thank all our donors, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous, for your dedication to securing a future for elephants. We would also like to thank Oria Douglas-Hamilton, Saba Douglas-Hamilton and the entire team at Elephant Watch Camp for their continued support of Save the Elephants. Last, but certainly not least, we thank all our wonderful volunteers who have donated many hours of their time to Save the Elephants over the past year.

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Thirsty elephants approaching the Gembokvlakte waterhole in Etosha National Park, Namibia.



Mondrian from the Artists and her calf, in Samburu National Reserve. Photo by Robbie Labanowski



Photo by Robbie Labanowski

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Photo by Robbie Labanowski