



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS®

Annual Report

2023

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Front cover: 32 elephant calves were born in Samburu’s study population in 2023. © Robbie Labanowski
This page: The next generation in Samburu National Reserve. © Robbie Labanowski

CEO’s Letter

When Iain Douglas-Hamilton published his thesis for his doctorate from Oxford University, he recommended corridors, not culling, as a solution to the problems being caused by a compressed elephant population. 51 years on, and the need for securing ecosystem connectivity on a fast-changing continent is at the top of mind for both conservationists and governments.

Following Iain’s deployment of the first collar in 1965, tracking data from elephants now gives a voice for thousands of elephants across Africa. A key focus for Save the Elephants’ (STE) research team is the interpretation of these valuable transmissions from elephants. This year we launched a continental tracking unit, to help ensure that data from collars across the continent is being used to maximum effect.

If we are to coexist peacefully with elephants the first priority is good landscape planning that minimises the conditions that create conflict. We are learning about this process first hand as we implement community wildlife corridors in northern Kenya, and through our partnerships in other countries.

We continue to develop our Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox to help local people living among, and alongside, elephants. We share these sustainable solutions through our Training of Trainers project, and by supporting partners to grow and evolve them in different environments across the elephant range.

This represents an important stage in the evolution of how STE is helping elephants across Africa through the power of collaboration. Hundreds of passionate and experienced local organisations are already working across the continent, and by giving technical and financial support through the Elephant Crisis Fund, we have a powerful network focussed on securing a future for elephants.

We are thankful to all those in our network, from donors to colleagues to field partners, for their passion and commitment, and for allowing us to play our role.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Frank Pope'.

Frank Pope
CEO

Our Impact in 2023



87

SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED TO
STUDENTS




1000+

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS ENGAGED IN
CORRIDOR MEETINGS



**SIX PILOT TRAINING
OF TRAINERS
COEXISTENCE
WORKSHOPS
CONDUCTED,
91 TRAINERS
GRADUATED**




23

TRACKING COLLARS
DEPLOYED ON
ELEPHANTS ACROSS
KENYA



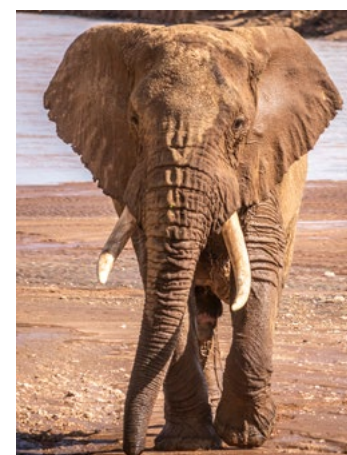


5830

STUDENTS ACROSS
KENYA BENEFIT FROM
STE'S SCHOOL FEEDING
PROGRAMME

7

OUT OF
10

TARGETED COMMUNITY
WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
NOW DEMARCATED

32

ELEPHANT CALVES
BORN IN SAMBURU
STUDY POPULATION,
INCLUDING RARE TWINS



135,000+

PEOPLE ACROSS
KENYA ATTENDED
FIELD SCREENINGS
OF 'THE ELEPHANT
QUEEN' MOVIE




10

NEW MAMA TEMBOS
RECRUITED IN 2023 TO
PATROL AND ADVOCATE
FOR CORRIDORS



500+

HUMAN-ELEPHANT
COEXISTENCE TOOLBOX
MANUALS DISTRIBUTED
GLOBALLY

58

RAPID RESPONSE
INTERVENTIONS IN
2023 IN NORTHERN
KENYA



\$3.5M

DISTRIBUTED TO 35
ELEPHANT CRISIS
FUND GRANTEES IN
19 COUNTRIES IN
AFRICA AND ASIA





About Save the Elephants

Founded by zoologist Iain Douglas-Hamilton in 1993, Save the Elephants (STE) conducts pioneering research into the ecology and behaviour of elephants and works to secure them a future on a fast-changing continent.

At Save the Elephants' research station in Samburu National Reserve, northern Kenya, STE 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 many decades, and STE's 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, the organisation's Human-Elephant Co-Existence team investigates solutions to the long-term challenges that elephants face.

STE partners with world-leading institutions to develop new technology to understand and protect elephants. Cutting edge tracking systems now help scientists and protected area managers across the continent defend elephants and their ecosystems, and plan for their future. Work on specialised camera systems combined with artificial intelligence, meanwhile, promises to revolutionise both fundamental research and wildlife population monitoring.

STE works to incorporate elephant needs into landscape planning to maintain protected areas and ecosystem connectivity, a critical concern in an increasingly populated and developed Africa. We pursue evidence-based conservation with grass-roots community engagement, building broad collaborations to secure a future for the elephants in Kenya, and creating tools and techniques for use elsewhere on the continent.

To create positive impact at a continental scale, Save the Elephants runs the Elephant Crisis Fund in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Network, providing flexible and responsive support to an alliance of organisations combating the ivory trade, promoting human-elephant coexistence, and protecting elephant landscapes.



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

Pat Awori
Ambrose Carey
Michael Davitz
Julie Hull
Marlene McCay
George Wittemyer
Fritz Vollrath, Chairman

Chairman's Letter

2023 was a difficult year for our founder Iain Douglas-Hamilton, but an impactful year for Save the Elephants (STE) with our research and science work progressing well.

In late January the team had a superb general meeting in Shaba, where Iain gave an overview of 50+ years of his elephant research. This was followed by a very productive in-person AGM at Saba Douglas-Hamilton's wonderful Elephant Watch Camp in Samburu.

But a few weeks later in early March, Iain and his wife, Oria, were attacked by a swarm of bees on their farm on the shores of Naivasha. Iain managed to keep the bees off Oria, but was stung so badly that he was left fighting for his life. This all came as a great shock, not least as for several years we had experimented intensively with elephants and their fear of bee-stings.

After six very difficult weeks fighting for his life in the Nairobi hospital, Iain came out on top. But the long battle in intensive care took its toll and the road to recovery will be long and demanding. So, without any warning, the board, CEO Frank Pope, COO Wainaina Kimani and the whole STE team had to cope without Iain's wise counsel and guidance while struggling with deep emotions and concerns for his health.

Thanks to our world-wide network of loyal supporters, STE has not only survived but – like the tusks of a great bull elephant - continued to grow and strengthen.



Fritz Vollrath
Chairman



Understanding Elephants



The Clouds family and a rainbow in Buffalo Springs National Reserve. © Robbie Labanowski



STE's Director of Field Operations, David Daballen, studying elephants in northern Kenya. © Frank af Petersens

Why We Study Elephants

Shedding light on the complexities of pachyderm society

In the heart of Samburu National Reserve, northern Kenya, as herds of elephants part around them, a dedicated team from Save the Elephants (STE) embarks on a daily journey of discovery. In their sand-coloured vehicles, adorned with elephant silhouettes, they serve as silent witnesses to the unfolding drama of elephant life. Armed with the STE WildTracks tracking app, tablets, notebooks, pens, papers, and binoculars, our researchers immerse themselves in the world of these intelligent and sentient beings.

We've been studying elephants in Samburu and unravelling the mysteries of elephant society for more than 26 years. With an intimate knowledge of over 900 elephants identified by ear patterns and tusk shapes, our researchers can start to investigate the intricate tapestry of elephant lives. From family structures to mating preferences, every observation builds data that helps reveal the complexities of elephant behaviour.

But their work goes beyond mere observation; it's a foundation for elephant conservation. Over the years they have charted the devastating impact of poaching, human-elephant conflict, and habitat loss. With each new insight, they help forge strategies to protect these elephants from harm.

FOR OVER 26 YEARS, SAVE THE ELEPHANTS HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERIES OF ELEPHANT SOCIETY.

One of their most fascinating recent discoveries? Elephants appear to have names for each other. Collaborating with Colorado State University, Save the Elephants is starting to decode the complex vocalisations of these magnificent creatures. In other areas, PhD researchers are working to reveal the decision-making processes of matriarchs and shedding light on the inner workings of elephant society.



Tracked elephant herd moving through northern Kenya. © Jane Wynyard

With over 200 peer-reviewed publications, STE continues to build on Iain Douglas-Hamilton’s original behavioural studies. But we’re not stopping there. With advancements in artificial intelligence and genetics, we’re poised to unlock even deeper insights into the lives of elephants.

Some research results in conservation applications, such as low-tech beehive fences or the high-tech tracking system EarthRanger. But perhaps the greatest power of our research lies in its ability to foster empathy. This work helps us to see ourselves reflected in the eyes of these gentle giants, reminding us of our shared responsibility to protect and preserve them for generations to come.



Zero Poaching

2022 marked the first year since records began over two decades ago, that not a single incident of elephant poaching was recorded within the official Laikipia-Samburu monitoring site, and, although not yet official, this trend continued through 2023.



STE’s research camp, Samburu. © Robbie Labanowski

Kenya Research Base

Located on the edge of Samburu National Reserve, our camp serves as the epicentre of our research in northern Kenya. Established in 1997, the camp accommodates 30 researchers and staff. We are grateful for the Samburu County Government’s support in allowing us to conduct our work in the reserve.

CASE STUDY

Poaching Survivors

The resilience of the Kerio Valley elephants

In the rugged heart of the Kerio Valley in Kenya’s North Rift, a resilient and wild herd of elephants are persevering against all odds.

Numbering 500 individuals, these survivors bear the scars of the ivory poaching that has torn through their population in past decades. The Kerio Valley elephants faced high levels of poaching in the 1990s and early 2000s. Since then, insecurity has been the norm.

Today, their existence still teeters on the brink, threatened by the encroachment of agriculture and settlements along the river valleys and the looming threat of fragmentation into isolated enclaves. The remoteness and persistent insecurity in the area have hindered conservation endeavours, rendering the Kerio Valley elephants enigmatic and elusive - until recently.

In 2017, Kenya Wildlife Service and the Northern Rangelands Trust asked Save the Elephants to deploy GPS tracking collars on the Kerio Valley elephants. Twelve individuals, both male and female, were collared. Their tracking data unearthed a trove of fascinating insights.

Elephants in Kerio Valley show some peculiar movement patterns, with some tracked males spending a lot of time with female herds - which is not typical. This could be due to perceived risk or other unknown factors.

The elephants here are also highly nocturnal, usually drinking from rivers under the cover of darkness to avoid potential human encounters. Some individuals continue to traverse the entire expanse of the Kerio Valley, spanning over 100 kilometres, while others spend a considerable amount of time outside protected areas.

As monitoring continues, we aim to glean deeper insights into strategies that can help the Kerio Valley elephants persist long into the future.

Protecting Habitats and Connectivity

Benjamin Loloju, STE's Corridors Manager, at a community participatory meeting at Lolkeresire on landscape connectivity and wildlife corridors mapping. © John Leruso

Securing Corridors

Preserving connectivity in a developing Kenya

As farmland expands into elephant habitats and infrastructure development fragments their territories, elephants face diminishing space, leading to increased human conflict. This is exacerbated by blocked corridors and erratic weather patterns, such as the recent severe droughts.

Kenya has a unique opportunity to pursue development without compromising its environmental foundations. Preserving the integrity of vital habitats and preventing fragmentation by safeguarding connections, or corridors between them, is a crucial component of this approach.

The data from our GPS tracking programme gives elephants a powerful voice in landscape planning. Since the deployment of the first elephant tracking collar in 1965 by our founder, Iain Douglas-Hamilton, using this data to help understand and protect elephants has been a core area of focus for Save the Elephants (STE). Originally developed as a research tool, tracking data became important for anti-poaching work, understanding conflict, and defining how elephants use landscapes.

Yielding positive effects in communities

Elephant corridors - natural links for wildlife between ecosystems - are only possible if local people are tolerant of elephants. Traditional ways of life and cultures are changing, and encounters between our two species have become increasingly aggressive. Last year, half as many elephants died in conflict incidents as were killed by poachers in the Laikipia-Samburu ecosystem during the height of the crisis between 2009 and 2012.

The future of major movement corridors is threatened by development of agriculture and infrastructure. Protection through community agreements and demarcation, with eventual legal gazettement to ensure their preservation, is crucial for long-term sustainability.

In northern Kenya, a partnership project between Save the Elephants and the Wyss Academy for Nature (WA) is making progress working with local communities to assess and secure corridors that will help preserve the space needed for both livestock and wildlife to follow rains and grass across the landscape.

Eight corridors are now defined and under the vigilant monitoring of Mama Tembos – women selected by their community to patrol and safeguard wildlife and livestock corridors. The six Mama Tembos have swelled to sixteen, and their members now span three community conservancies. Seven out of the targeted ten corridors are now demarcated with 164 markers constructed in threatened corridors.

**DATA FROM
OUR GPS
TRACKING
GIVES
ELEPHANTS
A POWERFUL
VOICE IN
LANDSCAPE
PLANNING.**



Corridor markers in northern Kenya. © Jane Wynyard

From railways to road crossings

Another crucial aspect of STE’s elephant habitat protection work is monitoring the impact of major constructions in Kenya, like the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Nairobi to Mombasa.



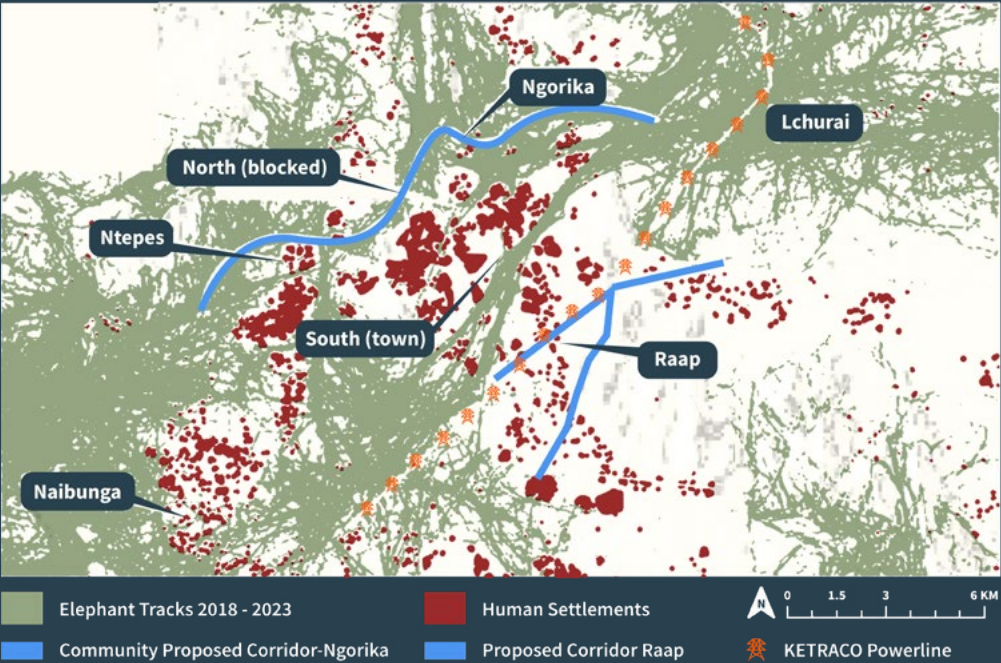
The SGR monitoring team at an underpass in Tsavo National Park. © Jane Wynyard

In 2016, STE deployed tracking collars on ten elephants during construction of the SGR to find out how elephants were responding to the development. Since then, in partnership with the Wildlife Research and Training Institute, we have been monitoring more than 30 elephants in Tsavo to assess how underpasses affect the movement of elephants and other wildlife.

This data not only reveals migratory routes but also highlights the importance of keeping underpasses open. Findings show that elephants and even giraffes use underpasses, emphasising the need for their preservation amid ongoing developments.

With further plans for development, such as Kenya’s Nairobi-Mombasa Expressway, tracking data becomes instrumental in informing the design of wildlife corridors during environmental and social impact assessments. This proactive approach aims to balance infrastructure development and conservation efforts in the Tsavo ecosystem.

Oldonyiro Corridor Map



CASE STUDY

Oldonyiro’s Vital Wildlife Corridor

A fragile connection for elephants

At the top of Oldonyiro’s dusty main street, just a stone’s throw away from the town’s bustling market and shops, elephants must navigate a precarious stretch of one of northern Kenya’s vital wildlife corridors.

This narrow passage, sandwiched between fenced-off land, is a crucial link for wildlife and elephants travelling from Samburu in the east to Laikipia in the west - one of many lifeline corridors that STE and the Wyss Academy for Nature are working to safeguard.

This corridor in particular is long, and pocketed with deep, eroded gullies and expanding human settlements. The constriction caused by the rapid expansion of Oldonyiro town has been exacerbated by advanced land degradation from overgrazing.



One of the many erosion gullies in Oldonyiro. © Jane Wynyard

Locals in Oldonyiro sometimes report hearing the desperate cries of elephants at night, attempting to save their young from falling down the treacherous trenches. Tragically, some small calves are occasionally discovered at the bottom of the erosion gullies, abandoned by their families after a long, anguished struggle.

“
I am so happy to see
that to this day these
animals continue
to use this corridor.
This is their land,
their home.

Lerosion
Oldonyiro elder

Lerosion, an elder living alongside the Oldonyiro corridor, shares a complex relationship with the elephants. Despite his fear of living so close to the corridor, especially when the elephants move at night, he hopes the community will unite to protect the pathway and prevent further encroachment.

Says Lerosion, “I am so happy to see that to this day these animals continue to use this corridor. This is their land, their home ... I hope my community all agree to protect this corridor ... This will let everyone know where to settle and not encroach the corridor. We shall know our boundaries with our wildlife.”



A Decade of Impact

The Elephant Crisis Fund over 10 years

Helping elephants and their allies across Africa

To create impact at a continental scale, Save the Elephants (STE) operates the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN), by providing flexible and responsive support to a network of organisations combating the ivory trade, promoting human-elephant coexistence, and protecting elephant landscapes.

In 2023 the ECF celebrated its 10th anniversary, and disbursed \$3.5M to 35 grantees in 19 countries in Africa and Asia. Highlights from last year include the incarceration of the last indicted members of the 'Kromah' wildlife trafficking network in the US, and support for a grassroots organisation in South Sudan, aiding the protection of the vulnerable elephants of Zeraf Game Reserve amid civil conflict and extreme flooding.



Elephants in Garamba. © African Parks/Jean Labuschagne

Collaborative efforts to end ivory crisis

When the ECF launched a decade ago, poaching was rampant across Africa. STE and WCN were in a position to provide world-leading expertise on elephant behaviour and conservation, in-depth knowledge of elephant populations across Africa, a network of conservation partners, and access to a strong, supportive donor base. Together, this new approach would be at the heart of a decade of collaborative efforts to end the ivory crisis.

It wasn't until the pivotal year of 2015, when China and the United States publicly declared their commitment to banning the ivory trade within their respective nations, that we began to glimpse a ray of hope. Over the following years, the world witnessed a profound transformation in the situation for elephants.

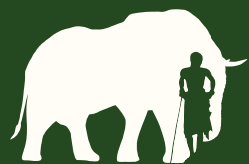
The ECF threw its funding behind awareness campaigns in China that played a key role in achieving the ban on ivory sales. It provided financial support for surveys aimed at exposing illegal activity in domestic ivory markets, leading to their closure, and funded the undercover operations that led to the apprehension and conviction of many major ivory traffickers. Consequently, criminals became increasingly cautious about engaging in the ivory trade.



A collaring operation in Kafue National Park, Zambia. © Kyle Reid

Rescuing populations from the brink

Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) partners have rescued several key elephant populations from the brink of extinction. They have also succeeded in securing vital protected areas for elephants. For many of these elephant populations, the use of tracking data from collared elephants – a technique pioneered by STE – has been pivotal in their successful conservation. STE has offered technical guidance when needed, creating a special unit to work with ECF partners across the African continent to help make the most of this critical source of information.



Promoting coexistence

Recent ECF grants focused on promoting coexistence between humans and elephants have yielded significant results, from safeguarding key wildlife corridors to developing innovative methods to deter elephants from villages and farms. These methods, included in STE's Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox manual, are being tested by ECF partners across the continent.

CASE STUDY

A Stalwart Ally

Safeguarding elephants and people in Zambia

Since 2015, the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) has supported Zambia's Conservation South Luangwa (CSL) in their efforts to steer wildlife and communities through multifaceted challenges. During the peak of the poaching crisis in 2018, we helped to fortify CSL's anti-poaching forces, doubling patrols to counteract imminent threats.

Amid the 2020 pandemic, emergency funding sustained the park's anti-poaching operations. Now, tackling the surge in human-elephant conflict (HEC), the ECF has remained a dedicated supporter, delivering both technical expertise and financial backing. One pivotal HEC grant enabled CSL to launch a Rapid Response Unit, and to implement mitigation solutions from STE's Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox, including organic elephant repellent and elephant safe grain stores.

In 2023, the ECF funded a second Rapid Response Unit vehicle, four female community scouts and one female wildlife police, as well as the construction of a 12km solar electric fence to protect farms from elephant intrusions.

Rachel McRobb, the CEO of Conservation South Luangwa says, *"The Elephant Crisis Fund's insightful and responsive approach to funding has supported CSL to adapt to the ever-changing elephant conservation landscape of South Luangwa for nine years, and we could not be more grateful for this support over a critical period for Zambia's elephant stronghold."*

“

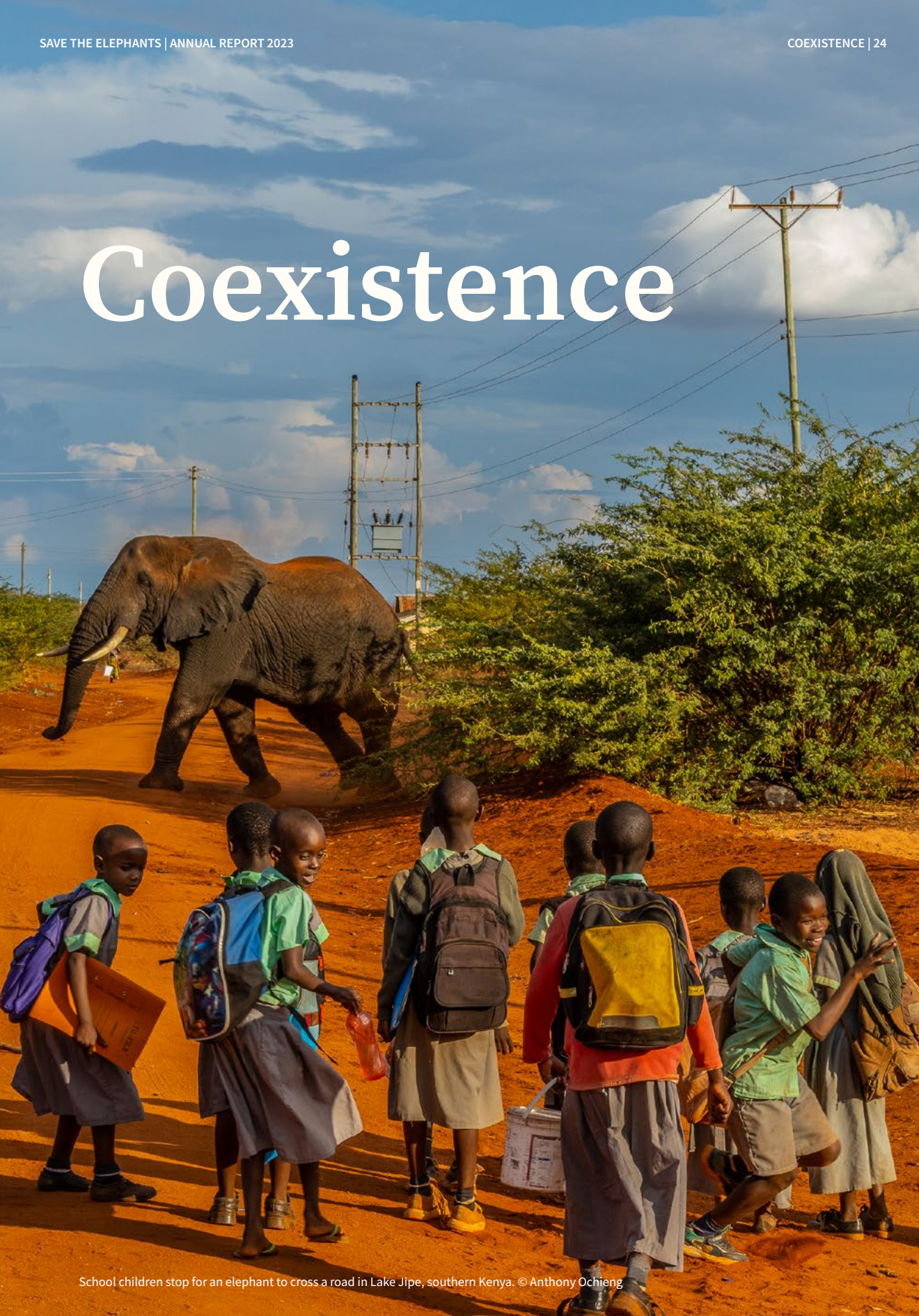
The Elephant Crisis Fund's insightful and responsive approach to funding has supported CSL to adapt to the ever-changing elephant conservation landscape.

Rachel McRobb
CEO, Conservation South Luangwa



CSL's Rapid Response Unit. © CSL Zambia/Tom Whittle

Coexistence



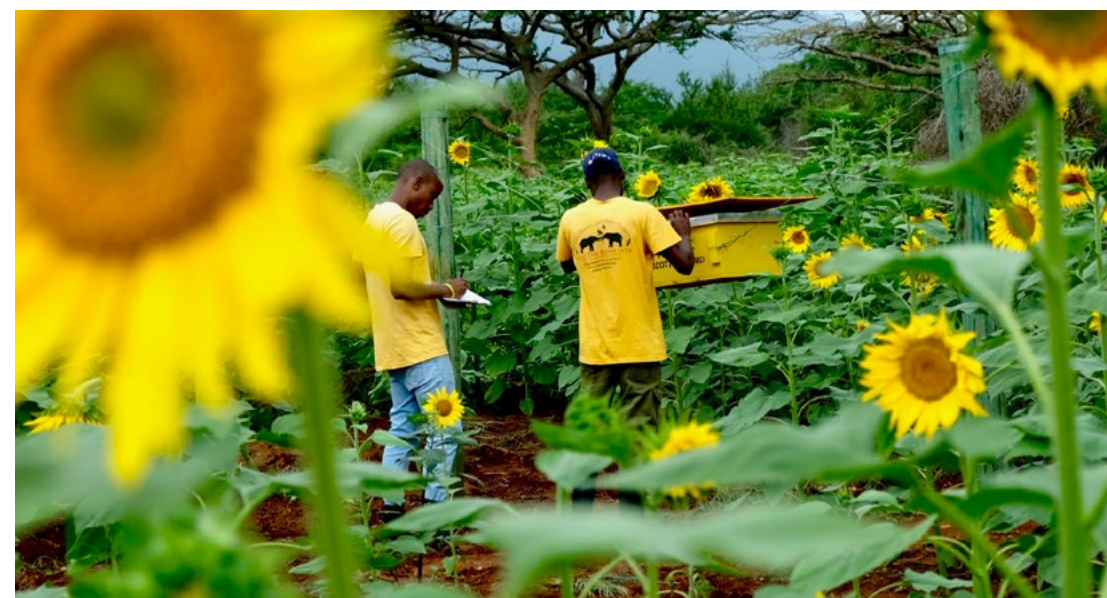
School children stop for an elephant to cross a road in Lake Jipe, southern Kenya. © Anthony Ochieng

Traditional Folklore and Elephants

How beehive fences inspired a toolbox of deterrents

For generations, people have coexisted harmoniously with elephants and other wildlife, preserving valuable indigenous knowledge held by rural communities. Although Africa is changing fast, it's crucial that the wisdom embedded in traditional folklore is not forgotten.

One tale from northern Kenya suggested that elephants fear bees. Our team of scientists at Save the Elephants, led by Dr. Lucy King, spent almost a decade conducting rigorous field research to prove the folklore to be true: that elephants would run away from disturbed African honeybees, and that beehives in trees would protect the tree from excessive elephant damage.



STE team monitoring a beehive fence on a farm in Sagalla, southern Kenya. © Jasper Scofield

By understanding the bioacoustics and behaviour behind this traditional tale, we used science to design a novel and natural deterrent to help protect rural community farms from raids by elephants: beehive fences. This simple concept of interlinking beehives to protect crops has now spread to 23 countries globally. To date over 14,000 beehives have been hung as elephant deterrents in 97 sites across Africa and Asia.

In our long-term beehive fence trial site in Sagalla community, southern Kenya, we have been testing beehive fences with 50 farming families, providing them with beekeeping training, supporting honey production, and encouraging them to plant crops less palatable to the elephants that frequently move in and out of Tsavo National Park. Over 80% of attempted raids by elephants were deterred in that time, often while boosting household incomes through honey sales. We also supported over a hundred farmers to adopt growing sunflowers as both a non-palatable crop and as a floral resource for the bees in their beehive fences.



**OVER 14,000
BEEHIVES HAVE
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AS ELEPHANT
DETERRENTS IN
97 SITES ACROSS
AFRICA AND ASIA.**

Although beehive fences are a powerful tool to prevent crop raiding by elephants, they require dedicated maintenance and a love of beekeeping to ensure that the colonies remain healthy and the bees produce plenty of elephant-friendly honey to pay for their upkeep. They don't suit everyone, nor fit into every conflict location, but their success inspired us to look for other complementary tools to foster harmonious coexistence between elephants and humans.

Rotating, combining, or alternating different tools to keep elephants away from farms as they migrate is at the heart of our new Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox - an important resource detailing more than 80 methods to help people live in harmony with elephants.

One Sagalla farmer, Jones Mwakima (pictured), started as a beehive fence farmer and with our help has now adopted over eight methods from the toolbox which he rotates throughout the year to keep his farm safe and productive. Jones, now a dedicated advocate, has become one of our most passionate trainers in the Training of Trainer workshops that we hold every month.

These workshops welcome NGO staff, community leaders, and project managers to STE's Tsavo Research Center for three intensive days of practical training. They are proving so popular that we are now attracting participants from all over Africa.

The success of our approach has led to the integration of the Toolbox into the Elephant Crisis Fund network, to address the challenges faced by elephants and communities in various parts of the continent.

By offering practical solutions, we aim to foster peaceful and productive coexistence with elephants, and by doing so secure a future for elephants and communities across Africa.

Tsavo farmer, Jones Mwakima, with his homemade noise cannon which features in STE's Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox. © Jane Wynyard



Our Coexistence Hub

Dr Lucy King's success with the beehive fence elephant deterrent in Sagalla village, Kenya, inspired the local community to donate an acre of land to the Elephants and Bees Research Center, now re-branded as the Human-Elephant Coexistence Centre. The expansion safeguards farms, hosting fourteen staff and employing eight from Sagalla. The centre conducts workshops, training NGOs, communities, and project managers for peaceful elephant coexistence. We remain grateful to the Sagalla community for welcoming us into their special village.



Elephant scholars at a Career Workshop at STE's Research Camp, Samburu. © George Mugera

Education Fosters Tolerance

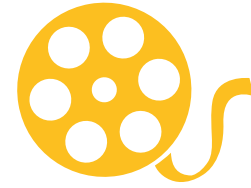
Education shapes the future not just of individual children, but of society as a whole. Sharing the science and awareness about elephants and how to live harmoniously alongside them is a priority for Save the Elephants. We collaborate with local schools to provide experiential trips to national reserves guided by STE's researchers to dispel fear and deepen appreciation. Outdoor games, tree planting and permaculture gardens serve as educational tools to deepen students' understanding of conservation issues. The Elephant Scholarship Programme further cultivates conservation ambassadors, providing mentorship and exposure to STE's research efforts. In 2023, 87 scholarships were awarded to students in northern Kenya.

The Elephant Queen

Winning hearts and minds - one film at a time

Recent research conducted by Save the Elephants (STE) highlights how wildlife documentaries improve attitudes towards conservation in rural communities. 'The Elephant Queen' mobile cinema has traversed Kenya for the past two years, captivating rural audiences with the compelling narrative of elephants and their vital role in the ecosystem. This study examined the film's impact.

Surveys and interviews conducted before and after the screenings revealed a significant shift in community attitudes towards elephants, particularly among the younger generation. Published in the journal, People and Nature, these findings illustrate the effectiveness of films in fostering awareness and tolerance towards wildlife in rural settings. This is especially crucial amid the escalating cases of human-elephant conflict (HEC) observed not only in Kenya but also across various regions in Africa. The award-winning 'The Elephant Queen' film was made by filmmakers Mark Deeble, Victoria Stone and Etienne Oliff.



SURVEYS BEFORE AND AFTER THE SCREENINGS OF 'THE ELEPHANT QUEEN' REVEAL A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARDS ELEPHANTS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION.



Athena and her herd projected on a large inflatable screen shortly before a community screen of 'The Elephant Queen'.
© Outreach & Education/The Elephant Queen

CASE STUDY



Daaba students were forced to drink from the livestock trough after elephants broke the community's only water source. © Jane Wynyard



Reinforcing the new wall in Daaba after elephants repeatedly broke through the structure. © Jane Wynyard

Elephant Proof Wall

Restoring peace to Daaba

In 2022, elephants destroyed Daaba's only water source, prompting the community to seek assistance from Save the Elephants. For several years, elephants had disrupted life in the remote village of Nakuprat Conservancy, damaging infrastructure in their quest for water.

Their latest destruction of underground pipes left over 1000 people without water. With no alternative, the community resorted to sharing troughs with their livestock, but elephants soon destroyed those too, forcing residents to trek long distances daily for water.

Despite efforts by NGOs, including Save the Elephants and Well Aware, to build and repair stone walls and reinforce them with sharp, deterrent rocks, the elephants persisted.

In September 2023, after yet another breach, Save the Elephants and the community joined forces to reinforce the wall with gabions and barbed wire - one of the tools in STE's Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox - successfully protecting the water supply from elephants. This enhanced protection has so far endured, fostering peaceful coexistence between the elephants and the community. The community have also allocated a dedicated water trough to the elephants.

Says Daaba area chief, James Nkayai, "Since Save the Elephants helped us to make the additions to the perimeter wall, we are now getting water peacefully and the community is now friendly to the elephants."

Says David Daballen, Director of Field Operations, Save the Elephants. "This story demonstrates how communities and elephants can peacefully coexist. Our solution has proven enduring so far, and the communities have prioritised the welfare of the elephants."



Savanna to the city

STE Ambassador Saba Douglas Hamilton has been part of the battle to safeguard Africa's elephants since childhood.
© Future For Nature

Inspiring global citizens to engage for elephants

The savannas of East Africa, with all of their wonders and their challenges, can feel far removed from the bustling cities and university campuses of the USA and Europe. All that changes when STE Ambassador Saba Douglas-Hamilton brings her unique symphony of words and passion to town.

Typically hosted in grand theatres or prestigious venues like London's Royal Geographical Society, and set against a beautifully illustrated backdrop of photographs and film, Saba enchants her audience with the sights and sounds of northern Kenya, its stoic nomads, iconic elephants, and the high-octane drama of the front lines of conservation.

Born and raised in Kenya, Saba has been part of the battle to safeguard Africa's elephants since childhood, alongside her family. The story of how the world came together to save elephants from the ivory trade gives vital hope in facing the other complex, global challenges such as climate change and habitat loss that elephants and biodiversity are confronted with today.

Saba's tours have inspired thousands to rally behind the cause of our living planet. Some choose to come visit the elephants that STE study by staying at her magical eco-camp in northern Kenya. Elephant Watch Camp provides a critical source of income and training for local nomads. Intimate elephant encounters are hosted by highly specialised local guides, opening a rare window into elephant society and inspiring visitors to help secure a brighter future for elephants and the people who live alongside them.



Nikki from the Artists dozes under the shade of Doum Palms in Samburu National Reserve. © Jane Wynyard

News

Unlocking the Mysteries of Cancer Prevention

Might elephant testicles help us to understand human cancers? In elephants they do not descend but remain deep inside the body and thus 'run hot', which can damage sperm production. Groundbreaking research by STE's Chairman, Professor Fritz Vollrath, suggests that, in order to fend off mutations in its sperm, the elephant has evolved to have more than twenty copies of the p53 proteins that defend cells against aging and also cancers. Humans (like all other known animals) have only one set of p53, limiting their defences against bad mutations. Unravelling elephant p53 is beginning to elucidate this intriguing protein and its role in supporting the health of all our cells.



A bull elephant in Samburu National Reserve.
© Robbie Labanowski

Remembering Edison

One of our best-known and most beloved bull elephant, Edison, died in November. His carcass was found to the west of Samburu National Reserve in northern Kenya, and we suspect his untimely death was another tragic case of the human-elephant conflict (HEC) that is challenging elephants across Africa. Edison's abrupt end marked the third death of our Samburu study bull elephants within the span of just under a year.



Edison after being re-collared in April 2023. © Alice Clark

Decades-Old Dung Plays Fresh Role

Elephant dung collected by STE researchers more than two decades ago has survived the test of time to play a key role in valuable new research about the intricacies of elephant diets. The old dung samples from Samburu, northern Kenya, lay dormant in storage until 2019 when researchers deployed them to show that elephants, like humans, vary their diets in relation to how they are feeling and the events in their lives. The study, in collaboration with Brown University, not only showed the importance of elephant dung but also its implications for elephant conservation.



STE's David Letitiya collecting dung samples in the field. © Tanya Onserio



A screenshot of the forest bull reacting to the BuzzBox in Liberia.
© ELRECO

Rare Footage Makes Global Headlines

In March 2023, camera trap footage from Liberia gained worldwide attention showing a critically endangered forest elephant reacting to simulated bee sounds from a concealed audio device known as a BuzzBox. The work, conducted by Elephant Research and Conservation (ELRECO), Save the Elephants, and BuzzBox™ creator Wild Survivors, brought to life BuzzBox's potential for reducing conflict between humans and elephants.

Back in the Field

Fresh from obtaining Masters degrees in Conservation and Rural Development in the UK, Save the Elephants' staff member, Kennedy Lemayian (left) and Elephant Watch Camp manager Bernard Lesirin (right) have returned to Samburu. Bernard returns to lead the camp to a new future, while Kennedy becomes STE's Human- Elephant Coexistence (HEC) Project Coordinator in northern Kenya. Welcome back!



© Kennedy Leneuyia



Participants at one of the six Trainer of Trainer workshops held in Sagalla, Tsavo in 2023. © Kent Ngibuini

Empowering Others

Save the Elephants’ Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox has evolved significantly since its 2022 launch. The colourfully illustrated manual is only the start. To share the techniques that have been collated, we have begun a Training of Trainers program. From March 2023 to the end of the year we conducted six workshops at our Tsavo Research Centre in Kenya, empowering 91 participants from eight partner organisations across Africa. Graduates leave with essential skills in implementing elephant-friendly deterrent methods.

(Read more on page 24 - 29)

Rallying for Elephants

In honour of STE’s 30th anniversary last year, a group of dedicated, longstanding supporters hosted fundraising events for us across the US. These events raised over \$75,000 for elephants. A big *ashe oleng* (thank you!) to Elizabeth and Seth Brennan, Julie and Tom Hull, Singer Rankin (World Women Work), and Lori Souder (Here Today Africa Tomorrow), who hosted the events. Without your unwavering support, we wouldn’t be able to do what we do!



Saba Douglas-Hamilton on stage delivering one of her much loved speeches as part of STE’s fundraising efforts.

Powerful Ways to Support



DJ Gunter (Left) and Carter Forbes (Right)

“We’ve been transfixed by wildlife since we were young enough to think we couldn’t make a difference in their conservation, and that urge to help never really went away. When we created Fahlo, our goal was to go beyond typical cause-based business. It’s one thing to make donations (or volunteer if you’re lucky) which are both amazing things, but our vision has always been to find a way to connect people directly to a cause they’re interested in, hopefully educating and inspiring them to dive deeper.

We partner with organisations like Save the Elephants to support their work protecting the species, preserving habitats, promoting peaceful human-animal coexistence, and many other important endeavours. By pairing our elephant tracking products - The Expedition Bracelet and Plush - with the ability to track real elephants on an interactive map, we’ve discovered a really special way to make a difference and have fun doing it.

Our entire team and thousands of our customers have become so close to the elephants they track. It’s genuinely incredible to see that passion within the community and the impact it has had.

Truly, anyone and everyone can fuel change in conservation work.

For those who haven’t been as curious about wildlife conservation, we hope that we’re able to spark that curiosity and excitement with every animal tracking experience. Especially for the elephants, the more accessible it is to get involved, the bigger the difference we make for many, many generations to come. We are forever grateful to be a part of that and to have such an impactful partnership.”

Carter Forbes and DJ Gunter
Co-Founders, Fahlo



A Fahlo plushie herd in Samburu. © Jane Wynyard



2023 Publications

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Hahn, N., Wall, J., Deninger-Snyder, K., Sairowua, W., Goss, M., Ndambuki, S., Eblate, E., Mbise, N., Kiambi, S., Wittemyer, G. 2023. **Staging Behaviors Identify Spatial and Temporal Risk of Human-Wildlife Conflict.** *J. of Animal Ecology* 60:1495-1506.

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Kuiper, T., Altwegg, R., Beale, C., Carroll, T., Dublin, H. T., Hauenstein, S., Kshatriya, M., Schwarz, C., Thouless, C., Royle, A., Milner-Gulland, E. J. (2023). **Drivers and facilitators of the illegal killing of elephants across 64 african sites.** *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 290(1990), 20222270.

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King, L., Raja, N., Kumar, M.N and Heath, N. (2023). **Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox.** *Advice, actions and tools to reduce conflict with elephants. A technical manual for trainers and community leaders. Edition 2.* Save the Elephants, P.O. Box 54667, Nairobi 00200, Kenya, (Translated into Kiswahili and French)

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Tucker, M.A., Schipper, A.M., et al. 2023. **Behavioral responses of terrestrial mammals to COVID-19 lockdowns.** *Science* 380:1059-1064.

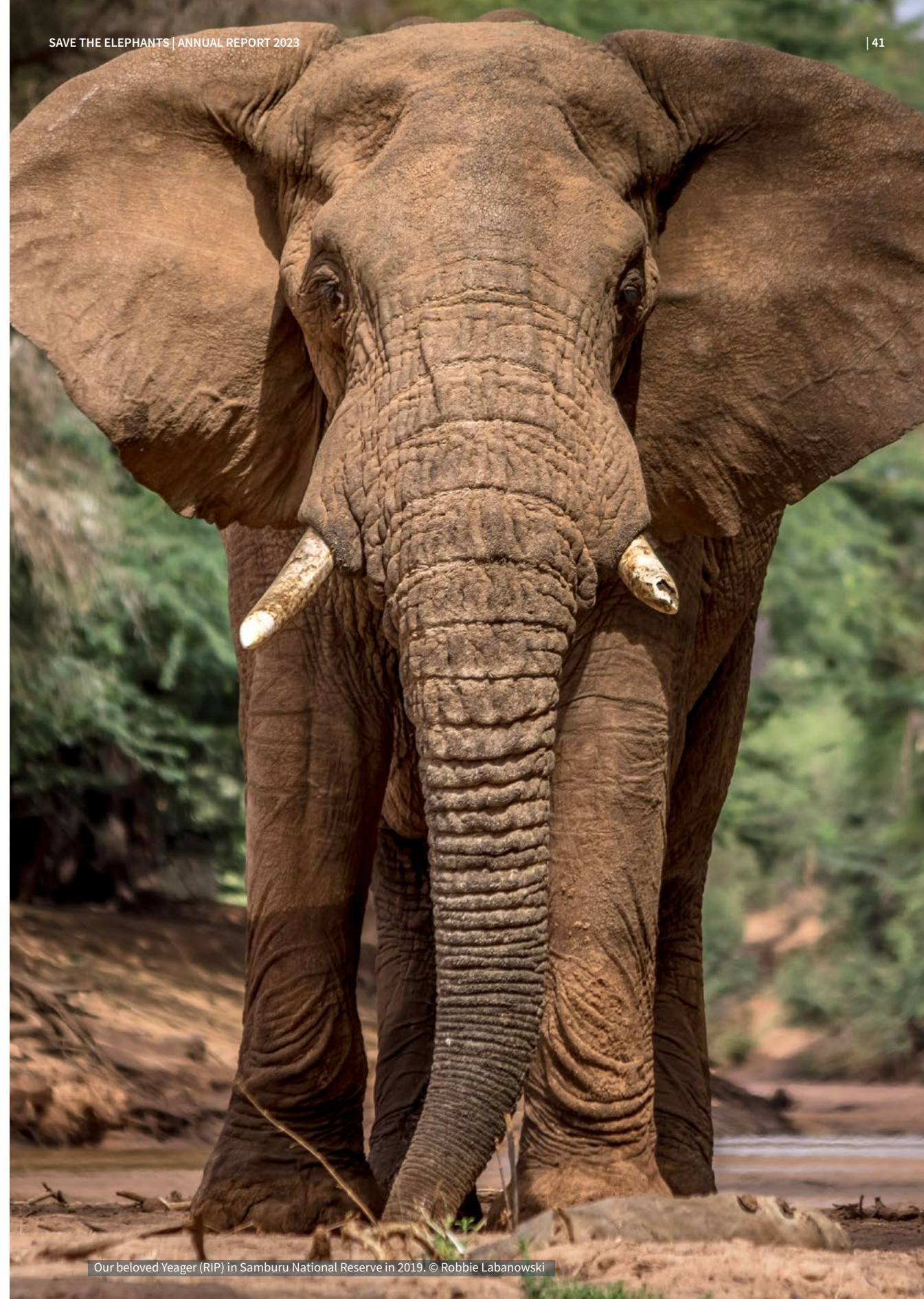
<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abo6499>

Vollrath, F. (2023). **Uncoupling elephant tp53 and cancer.** *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 38(8), 705-707.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2023.05.011>

Waebar, P., Roberts, M., Schuurman, D., Nijman, V., Wittemyer, G., Barber, C., Innes, J., Lowry, P.P., Wilme, L. In press. **Gaps in CITES policy undermine conservation of threatened species by providing loopholes for illegal trade.** *Bioscience*.

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Malasso, the bull elephant, inspects a tracking collar and stand near STE's camp in Samburu National Reserve. © Nina Constable

Finance

Statement of Revenue & Expenses

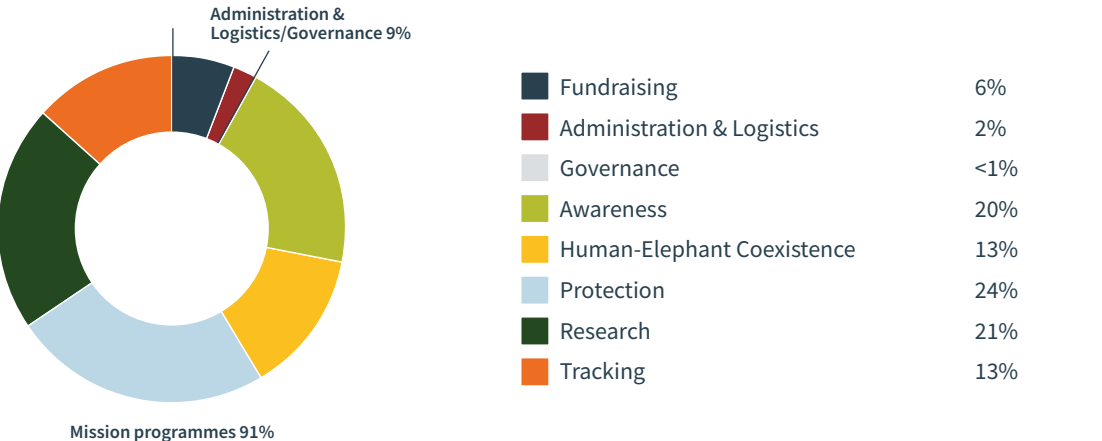
	UNAUDITED	AUDITED
	2023	2022
REVENUE (US\$)		
Donations	4,978,490	5,543,843
Interest Earned	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE	4,978,490	5,543,843
Cost of Generating Funds		
Fundraising	303,552	332,326
OTHER DIRECT CHARITABLE COSTS (USD)		
Administration & logistics	125,207	96,215
Governance	7,255	10,770
Awareness	1,013,164	1,027,808
Human-Elephant Coexistence	643,588	712,556
Protection	1,238,525	1,569,049
Research	1,078,929	921,688
Tracking	649,378	812,952
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,059,598	5,483,364
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	- 81,108	60,479

2023 accounts (unaudited) converted at a rate of £1 - \$1.24

Unaudited figures for 2023 are presented here. Variations may result from the auditor’s recommendations.

At the end of 2023, Save the Elephants (STE) held **\$2,788,385** in reserves, equivalent to 6 months of operating expenditure, as set by STE’s board.

Analysis of 2023 expenditure



Thank You

Save the Elephants’ donors, corporate partners and supporters

Save the Elephants is deeply grateful to you all for contributing financially to our shared mission from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

We are thankful for every single gift including those of you who chose to remain anonymous. Thank you for your dedication to securing a future for elephants.

Conservation Visionaries: \$100,000+

Caldwell Fisher Family Foundation	Heidi Charleson and Lou Woodworth
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We thank the following companies that matched employees’ gifts over \$1,000 made to Save the Elephants.

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Every effort has been made to list current and accurate information. If you see an omission or error, we would love to hear from you. Would you like to give feedback regarding this publication? Email donate@savetheelephants.org

Legacy Circle

We acknowledge the supporters from whom we have received a gift in their will this year, and express our appreciation to their family and friends for their thoughtful generosity. These gifts are an expression of their lifelong passion for elephants and we are truly grateful for their visionary support.

Estate of Edith Marjorie Clayton	Estate of Anne F. Lipscomb	Estate of Patricia Wilson
Estate of Peggy Garner	Estate of Jeanie Bernadette Lucas	Estate of Eleanora Worth
Estate of Janice Halls	Estate of Kathleen Pistone-Carucci	
Estate of John Charles James	Estate of Hazel Everett Stock	

We would also like to thank Oria and Saba Douglas-Hamilton and the entire team at Elephant Watch Camp for their continued support of Save the Elephants.

The Wildlife Conservation Network for their long-running partnership that supports our US administration and governance, and provides resources for our US fundraising efforts.

Thijs Bokkers for his invaluable pro bono support for our Salesforce system.

Leason Ellis and Millbank for pro bono legal support in the US.

Deborah Mumford at Alaco for administrative support in the UK.

And we want to thank all the wonderful volunteers who have donated many hours of their time to Save the Elephants over the past year. We couldn’t do this without you!



Playful elephant calves in Samburu. © Frank af Petersens

Elephants need you. Those born today could live more than 60 years but they face increasing challenges from human impacts.

Help us protect elephants and foster peaceful coexistence between our species.

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Leaving a gift in your will is a powerful way to change the world for the better for elephants. After taking care of your loved ones, please consider Save the Elephants.

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Please continue to give elephants a voice and protect them for generations to come.

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