

Elephants For Africa

Conservation through research & education



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Elephant Tails

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Welcome from Dr Kate Evans

Firstly I must apologise for the time lapse between this and our last newsletter. It has been a very busy year with new personnel joining the ranks, two workshops and two conferences. We value your interest and support of our work and I should not have let the time lapse without giving you an update.

Here in Botswana, we are in the heat of summer and eagerly await the rains. The clouds have formed, we have heard thunder in the distance but no real amount of rain has fallen. As in anywhere in the world, water holds life in the balance here in the Delta; if the rains do not arrive, then the babies that will soon be born to the wildlife we share our lives with will perish. It

is the harsh reality of life here in the bush and as we enjoy watching the few baby impala and warthogs that have already arrived, we look to the skies in the hope that the rains will fall.

When we chose to live here in the beauty of the Okavango Delta we are also part of the bush, and there are inherent risks of living here and working with and amongst the animals. In October, whilst I was away in the USA giving lectures and fundraising, our friend and colleague, Nathan Jamieson, passed away after a tragic accident. In the short time we had known him he had become a good friend and we loved his contagious enthusiasm for life. He is sorely missed and we are only glad that we had the privilege of knowing him.

Kate

Dr Kate Evans and her husband, Operations Manager for Elephants For Africa, Simon Buckingham



Special points of interest:

- Nandipa uncollared
- Mphoeng moves to Bristol
- Mthondo is released
- Art for sale

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Enhancing Conservation Capacity in Botswana



During August Dr Kate Evans attended the 'Enhancing Conservation Capacity in Botswana' workshop hosted by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) and Cheetah Conservation Botswana (CCB).

The three days of the workshop were packed full of presentations, discussions and feedback sessions. The delegates ranged from field researchers, through to government officials in the Department

of Wildlife and National Parks, NGO representatives such as Conservation International and Kalahari Conservation Society as well as teacher at the University of Botswana and the Botswana Wildlife Training Institute. It was a very fruitful three days. With discussions continuing over lunchtime and supper as most of the delegates came from out of town and were accommodated on site. At the end of each day the delegates left the room exhausted, yet excited for what we were all involved with and the potential for the projects we will hopefully see off the ground.

People had wonderful ideas and points of view which could be freely expressed in an open workshop.

It was fantastic for Kate to meet people from all rounds of conservation within Botswana and she felt very privileged to be involved in the workshop and hope Elephants For Africa can play an active part in the future.

Public talk by Dr Kate Evans at the National Museum of Botswana, Gaborone Hosted by the Kalahari conservation Society



Whilst down in Gaborone for the 'Enhancing Conservation Capacity in Botswana' workshop, Kate gave a public talk. The talk was hosted by the Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS), at the National Museum in Gaborone. This was her first opportunity to give a talk in the capital city, and hope that it will not be her last.

The talk covered the work of Elephants For Africa and our future aspirations when it comes to research and education within Botswana. The talk was very well attended and the question session at the end was almost

as long as the talk, with some very thought provoking questions from the audience.

Elephants For Africa would like to thank KCS for organising the talk and publicising it so well. We hope that KCS and EFA have an opportunity to work together for the conservation of the African elephant in the future.

Nandipa is un-collared by Dr Kate Evans

On the 20th September, we un-collared the released female elephant, Nandipa, who we have been following since her release in September 2003; she is the first and only female to be released from the Abu camp herd and has shown great resilience and determination as she makes her way in the wilds of the Okavango Delta. Without the support of a herd, she has given birth to and raised two young male calves; Ntongeni who is four years of age and Nima who will turn one in December. In addition she has been a fantastic aunt to the young released male Pula (the only captive born individual to be released to date), For the first couple of years post-release Pula stayed with her and earlier this year has gone his separate ways as he goes through adolescence and independence and joins bull society.

Her collar, that was giving us downloads was starting to give irregular readings and therefore we knew we had to change or un-collar her. As she has adapted successfully to live in the wild, showing normal behaviours and reproducing and not going into areas of human habitation or seeking their company it was time that she was un-collared and became a totally free elephant.

We were extremely concerned about this particular event, not only for Nandipa, as collaring is always risky, but also for Ntongeni and Nima as they do not have any other herd members that would look after them during the time that

N a n d i p a would be immobilised. The vet, Rob Jackson, reassured us that he was certain it would be OK, however felt that Peter P, the helicopter pilot who has ample experience darting both male and female should have the last call. Peter assured us, that whilst all elephant collaring are individual, the calves would not go far and as soon as Nandipa recovered from the anaesthetic they would regroup.

The VHF component of the collar had gone

down a while ago so we were unable to track and relied on the GPS locations, however we did not get any over the weekend prior to the proposed collaring. Luck was on our side, as the sun was setting on the Sunday evening, who should be seen at the Seba Lagoon but Nandipa and her babies! The following morning, whilst Charlie and I were out in the research vehicle she was seen again seen at the lagoon. Simon got everything organised, dispatching Mphoeng in a borrowed vehicle of Seba Camp, got hold of Rob and Peter and got all the equipment we might need together. Charlie and I rushed back and everything was ready by the time they arrived, all we had to do was wait for Rob and Peter, who landed at 10 o'clock.

Whilst Rob loaded M99 into his dart gun, Peter, Simon and I discussed the scenario. Mphoeng had just lost sight of her when we took to the skies, but we had a fairly good idea about where she would be and as we



rounded the lagoon we spotted her in thick bush with her youngsters. Before Peter could start trying to encourage her into the open we needed to lighten the load and so Simon was dropped off at the vehicle with Mphoeng. Charlie was on hand in the research vehicle should we need her.

Nandipa is rather savvy to our human ways and is used to helicopters, so unlike a wild elephant who would run to the hills at the mere sound of a helicopter she stood her ground ears out, defiant, in defence of her calves against his loud intruding bird. I felt incredibly proud of her at that time, although a little anxious as I wanted her to move so that Rob could get a clear shot. After much coach-





Nandipa is un-collared continued.....

Ntongeni and Nima had gone into thick bush and we didn't see them so we approached very carefully. Thankfully it was a cool morning with a bit of a breeze so there was no chance of Nandipa overheating and we quickly got to work with Peter cutting off the collar, whilst Rob, Simon, Mphoeng and I took measurements of her feet, tusks, back length and height. Within seven minutes of her being down Rob was able to administer the reversal drug. As Peter and Rob moved away I said my farewells to Nandipa and wished her well as a truly free elephant. After three minutes of anxious waiting the drugs began to take effect and she began to slowly flap her ear and then she was up. A little unsteadily she made her way to her boys who had been hiding just around the corner. We collected the collar and took to the skies once more to check that all was well, once we saw that they were all together we left them in peace.

It will be hard for me, and the rest of the research team, not to know where she is and not to know that she is okay, but I hope we will see her from time to time when she visits the area and she will teach us even more about the incredible adaptability of elephants.



Mphoeng leaves Botswana for Bristol

This is my first international trip out of Africa, more so my first trip in a big airplane. I thought the Air Botswana planes which I took from Maun to Gaborone and then Gaborone Johannesburg were big. This was not until I saw the British Airways Boeing 747 it is very huge plane. It safely took me to the UK with only a few hiccups on the way, when I forgot to collect my baggage!!! From Heathrow I took a coach to Bristol, where Ben and Ruth Howes kindly picked me up and looked after me for a few days whilst I found my feet and looked for some accommodation in the city that would be my home for the next few months.

I have found a lovely house in the Bristol living with a family,

who have travelled to Africa and so we have experiences to share. I soon settled into the University and been attending lots of interesting courses and working with Professor Harris on my first year report and starting my Masters write up.

I am learning a lot about the culture of the United Kingdom, by experience the strangeness of Halloween and the noise of Guy Fawkes Night. It is also very strange for me to be surrounded by so many people all of the time. Botswana has few people and therefore we have lots of space.

All in all I am really enjoying my time here and learning a lot which will help me finish up my Masters degree in 2011.

Mphoeng Ofithile

I am really enjoying my time in Bristol and learning a lot which will help me finish my Masters degree.

Compassionate Conservation Symposium

1st-3rd September 2010 www.compassionateconservation.org



In September Dr Kate Evans was invited to give a talk on the re-released elephant programme at the first Compassionate Conservation Symposium hosted by Born Free and the WildCru unit of Oxford University. For Kate it was a real honour, if a little daunting, talk-

ing in front of so many eminent conservations, which she had been quoting most of her biological career. It was a very thought provoking symposium about our conservation techniques and how they apply to individuals and not just populations. It brought conservationist and animal welfare personnel together to discuss who we can conserve in a compassionate manner. Topics ranged from reintroduction of endangered species though to the exploitation of wildlife. It was a privilege to be involved in the beginnings of something that will hopefully change the ways of the world.

Elephant Managers Association Conference Pittsburgh

1st-3rd October 2010

Thanks to sponsorship by the Chicago Zoological Fund, Kate was able to attend the Elephant Managers Associate conference in Pittsburg. This year she gave a talk about our educational projects, rather than the research side of Elephants For Africa. It was very well accepted and both Pittsburg (www.pittsburghzoo.com) and Maryland Zoo, Baltimore (www.marylandzoo.org) have promised funds to help support us.



So a big thanks to them.

Chicago Zoological Society by Kate Evans

We have been sponsored by the Chicago Zoological Society (CZS) for the past two years and are keen to further strengthen our links with them. In October Kate spent a week in Chicago meeting various staff members to build up possible collaborative research projects.



Kate also gave a talk to the CZS members as well as to their staff at lunch time.

First Aid Course



Thanks to generous donations from private donors, three of the Elephants For Africa team were able to do a trauma 1st aid course run by Alison Brown in Maun.

Living where we are and doing what we do, there are inherent risks, but until now we have not had the skills necessary to look after someone until medical help arrives.

Unfortunately some of the EFA team had to put the knowledge to use when our friend, Nathan Jamieson, suffered a tragic accident in the bush. T

Thanks to Alison Brown for her superb training and constant support to all those that live and work in the bush.

**Gallery of
elephants
we have
met
recently**



Art donated

Words by Diana Perry

I cannot remember a time when I haven't been interested in animals and when I was nine years old I chose African Wildlife as a project in class at junior school.

Since that time I have avidly read books on Africa and it had always been my dream to visit this fascinating continent and see the animals I had seen in books and on T.V. in real life.

Finally when my fiftieth birthday loomed on the horizon and the subject of a celebration came to the fore, knowing how keen I was to go on safari, my husband organised for our family to go on the most wonderful trip imaginable.

Botswana totally fulfilled all that I had dreamt that an African safari would be and the nine days we spent there were amazing, from the moment we landed on the dusty airstrip and the smell of the hot earth and sight of the shimmering heat haze over the landscape reached us, along with the sounds of the wilderness. It was truly magical.

We were treated to the most wonderful memories of the wildlife roaming free and how honoured we were to

share time in the company of some of nature's most beautiful and awe-inspiring creations.

As part of the trip we were treated to a remarkable experience at

Abu Camp, where we were able to integrate with wild elephants and learn so much about these magnificent, sensitive creatures.

As the world population grows and encroaches more and more into wildlife habitat, experiences like ours will become more and more precious for future generations.

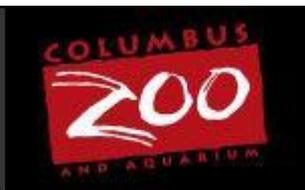
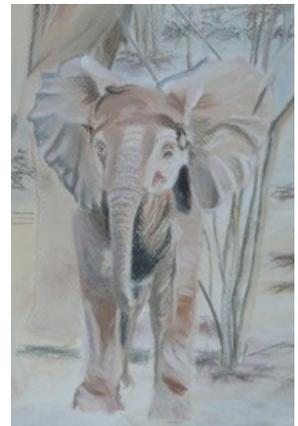
In our small way we wanted to give a little something back and we selected the beautiful image of mother and baby elephant which we encountered one day out in the bush, to be painted in pastels by our talented friend Katy West. We have donated this to Elephants for Africa in the hope that funds from this and any subsequent prints sold will help continue the work of Kate and her colleagues, which is so important if we want to preserve our natural world forever.

The auction ends on the 4th December o bid and support EFA please visit

<http://ktywest.co.uk/charity-auction/>



Bid for Art and support EFA



Partners

Chicago Zoological Society

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Gerald & Gretchen Tauenbaum, John & Martha Graham, The Horing Family, Diana Penny, Su Lees, Oscar Martinez, Marty Paul and all our other supporters.

Thanks to our funders



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Adopt an elephant

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Botswana
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info@ElephantsForAfrica.org