



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS

Annual Report

This report is dedicated to our founder
Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton (1942 - 2025)



2025



A calf holding on to the bumper of our research vehicle © James Mpapa

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CEO's Letter

Iain founded Save the Elephants on a simple conviction: that science, rigorously applied, could help secure a future for elephants. His life's work proved that. His death has been a profound loss — for our family, for this team, and for the wider conservation world. But the best tribute we can offer is to carry his work forward with the same rigour and ambition he brought to it every day.

And 2025 gave us much to build on. When US federal conservation funding collapsed unexpectedly, our Elephant Crisis Fund moved fast — deploying over \$1 million in emergency support to partners across Africa. Not one critical programme went under.

In Samburu, we recorded 188 new elephant calves, testament to years of patient protection. The Oldonyiro wildlife corridor became the first in northern Kenya to receive legal protection — a decade's work, now secured. And *A Life Among Elephants* drew standing ovations across the United States, carrying Iain's story to audiences who had never heard it.

In 2026 we will press further — deepening our tracking operations, expanding our Continental Tracking Initiative, and strengthening coexistence programmes where the pressure on elephants is greatest. We also intend to establish a research fellowship in Iain's name, supporting the next generation of African elephant scientists in the spirit he embodied.

Iain dreamed of a future for elephants — in perpetuity. Intelligent, wild, in landscapes kept intact, alongside people who choose to share them. We intend to honour that.

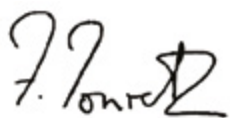
Frank Pope
CEO

Chairman's Letter

When Iain slipped away, at peace with himself and happy, we think, with his achievements, he left us with a mighty legacy. Ever the Gentleman and Scholar, Iain combined the best of both worlds, of rigorous questioning coupled with fairness and diplomacy. His scientific thinking was forged in the Oxford laboratory of the Nobel Laureate Niko Tinbergen and honed by Bodiacea and the elephants of Manyara. Science never left him, and discussions with Iain were always interesting as well as great fun.

Indeed, 'let's go and have fun and be with the elephants' was Iain's call whenever we had meetings where elephants were to hand. His fairness made him many friends both among other elephant researchers (which are not above quarrelling) and the wider public, including politicians. Here his diplomacy and candour enabled Iain to leverage his evidence-based insights in order to change minds, as well as hearts, always with the ultimate goal to support the elephants and their conservation.

This impressive legacy has now shifted fully onto our shoulders. It will be an effort, no doubt, to continue the work and keep the goals in a world that is so rapidly changing. But with Iain and elephants on our mind, and with data-driven science behind us, Save the Elephants and its team, advisors and trustees are well positioned to continue the legacy. One important stepping stone will be the Post-Doctorate Junior Research Fellowship that we are planning to establish in his name at the University of Oxford and Pembroke College with the aim to perpetuate Iain's love of the elephants.



Prof. Fritz Vollrath
Chairman



"My greatest hope for the future is that there will be an ethic developed of human-elephant coexistence."

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton
A Life Among Elephants

What Made Iain Extraordinary

Remembering his curiosity, integrity, and resolve

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton was an extraordinary man whose vision and courage forever changed the fate of elephants and helped define modern conservation. His legacy endures not only in the landscapes he helped protect, but in the **generations of conservationists he inspired and the institutions he built.**



Iain Douglas-Hamilton, and Charlie Knowles © Charlie Knowles WCN

Iain's path began with a simple but transformative act of curiosity. In the 1960s, as a young zoologist, he travelled to Tanzania to study elephants in Lake Manyara National Park. At the time, remarkably little was known about elephant society. Many viewed them as dangerous megafauna or anonymous herds moving across vast terrain. Iain saw something different. He saw families. He saw memory. He saw intelligence and social bonds that demanded both scientific attention and moral consideration.

Living for years in the field, often in isolation, he painstakingly documented elephant behaviour - identifying individuals, mapping their movements, and revealing the complexity of their matriarchal societies. **That early work did more than advance science; it shifted perception.** Elephants were no longer abstractions. Through Iain's research, they became beings with identities, relationships, and histories.

But events intervened. As ivory poaching surged in the 1970s and 1980s, Iain's role evolved. He could not remain solely an observer. The scientist became a defender. From the air, flying over East Africa, he witnessed the devastation firsthand - elephant carcasses scattered across landscapes that had once thrived. His research expanded beyond behaviour to population surveys, generating some of the first comprehensive data on the scale of elephant declines. Evidence replaced anecdote. Numbers strengthened advocacy. His voice, grounded in science and moral clarity, **became instrumental in elevating the global response to the ivory crisis.**

This was another pivotal transformation: Iain became not just a researcher, but **a global voice for elephants.** He carried the weight of what he had seen into international forums, helping shape the policies and public will that led to greater protections. His authority came not from rhetoric, but from decades in the field. When Iain spoke, it was with the credibility of someone who had lived alongside the very animals he was fighting to save.

Yet even that was not the final evolution of his role.

Recognising that elephants would require enduring institutional support, Iain founded Save the Elephants to ensure that rigorous science, long-term monitoring, and local partnership would

continue beyond any one individual. What began as a research effort grew into a globally respected conservation organisation - one that combines cutting-edge data, field presence, and deep collaboration with local communities and governments.

Through Save the Elephants, **Iain helped pioneer innovations in elephant tracking,** landscape-scale conservation, and human-elephant coexistence. But perhaps most importantly, he invested in people. He believed conservation must be rooted locally, built on trust, and sustained by those who live closest to wildlife.

Few captured Iain's impact better than Peter Lalampaa, a Kenyan conservationist and indigenous Samburu pastoralist, who said of him: "He was a giant of conservation, and so much of the work we do is built on the foundation that he laid." That foundation - grounded in trust, partnership, and unwavering commitment - has empowered local leaders and institutions to carry forward Iain's vision long into the future.

For me personally, Iain was a mentor, a friend, and a guiding force behind the early days and evolution of the Wildlife Conservation Network. He shaped not just what we do, but how we do it - with integrity, humility, scientific rigour, and **deep respect for both wildlife and the people who share their landscapes.**

What distinguished Iain was not only what he accomplished, but the qualities that shaped his work.

His curiosity never dimmed. Even after decades in the field, he remained eager to learn - asking questions, listening carefully, and embracing new technologies that could advance understanding.

His determination was unwavering. Through political shifts, funding uncertainties, and waves of poaching crises, he did not retreat. He adapted. He persisted. His courage was quiet but resolute. Speaking truth about ivory markets and the drivers of poaching required moral clarity and, at times, personal risk. Iain did so not with anger, but with conviction.

And above all, he possessed a deep sense of right and wrong. **He believed elephants had intrinsic value** - that their survival mattered not only ecologically, but ethically. That conviction anchored everything he did.

I will always carry with me the lessons Iain shared and the memories of time spent together in the field and around campfires - moments filled with curiosity, wisdom, and quiet joy. He had a way of making even the most complex conservation challenge feel grounded in something simple and human: care for the living world, and responsibility for the choices we make.

Today, elephants still face immense pressures - from habitat loss to illegal trade. But they are safer because Iain chose to follow his curiosity to Lake Manyara, because he refused to look away when crises emerged, and because **he transformed personal commitment into lasting institutions.**

His legacy lives in every young conservationist inspired by his example, in every aerial survey that informs policy, in every community partnership built on trust, and in every elephant family that continues its ancient journey across African landscapes.

We are profoundly better for having walked part of the journey with him. And the world's elephants endure - stronger, better understood, and more fiercely defended - because Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton chose not just to study them, but to stand for them.

Charlie Knowles

President, Co-Founder
Wildlife Conservation Network

A Life Protecting Elephants

For over six decades, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton transformed elephant conservation through science, technology, and global advocacy. His work shaped international policy and inspired action, a legacy that continues through Save the Elephants and partners worldwide. This timeline highlights key milestones in his extraordinary journey.

- 1966** Iain pioneers the first scientific study of wild elephant behaviour in Manyara, Tanzania.
- 1972** His Oxford doctorate reveals matriarchal leadership in elephant society, advocates corridors over culling.
- 1974** Establishes IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group to guide conservation policy.
- 1975** His book *Among the Elephants*, written with wife Oria, becomes an international bestseller, elevating global awareness.
- 1979** Completes census across 34 countries, setting a scientific elephant population baseline for the first time in many areas.
- 1988** Co-launches the African Elephant Database, tracking populations and continental threats. This reveals the elephant population collapse and helps drive the international ivory trade ban.
- 1988** Iain's data & advocacy spurs the US congress to pass the US African Elephant Conservation Act, leading to 35 years of funding from the US government for elephants, big cats, rhinos, apes and other endangered species.
- 1992** Publishes *Battle for the Elephants* with Oria, exposing Africa's elephant poaching 'holocaust'.
- 1993** Founds Save the Elephants to deepen scientific research and elephant conservation efforts.
- 1995** Pioneers GPS radio-tracking of elephants.

- 2007** Launches STE's Real-Time Tracking System with Dr. Jake Wall, developed in partnership with Google Earth.
- 2010** Wins the Indianapolis Prize, a major global award for animal conservation.
- 2012** Testifies to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on ivory.
- 2013** Partners with Paul Allen's companies to transform STE's Real-Time Tracking System into a new protected area management system, EarthRanger.
- 2013** Co-founds Elephant Crisis Fund with the Wildlife Conservation Network to combat a growing illegal ivory crisis.
- 2014** STE publishes evidence of record ivory prices in China. Iain warns the world that elephants could vanish in a generation.
- 2016** Kenya burns 105 tonnes of ivory.
- 2018** China bans domestic ivory trade followed by Hong Kong ban in 2021.
- 2019** Awarded Tanzania Wildlife Research Award by the Tanzanian Government.
- 2022** Returns to Uganda for cross-border elephant collaring mission.
- 2024** His film *A Life Among Elephants* wins DC Environmental Film Festival award.
- 2025** Awarded the Esmond B. Martin Royal Geographical Society Prize, the ECF wins the BBVA Worldwide Biodiversity Conservation award.

"If you had asked me, when I was ten years old, what I wanted to do, I'd have said I wanted to have an airplane; I want to fly around Africa and save the animals."

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton
National Geographic interview, 2008

In Tribute to Iain

© Michael Nichols

We received hundreds of messages to Iain, celebrating his remarkable life - from global leaders to close collaborators. Here's a glimpse of some of those tributes.

“(Iain’s) life’s work leaves a lasting impact on our appreciation for, and understanding of, elephants. The memories of spending time in Africa with him will remain with me forever.”

HRH The Prince of Wales



“Iain was a true force in elephant conservation, and an inspiration to our founder, Dr. Jane Goodall, who was able to connect with Dr. Douglas-Hamilton through their shared partnership with Wildlife Conservation Network.”

Jane Goodall Institute

“He was an amazing man - dedicated, passionate and totally fearless. I started my life and work with elephants with Iain back in 1968. I owe him so much and will miss him.”

Cynthia Moss

Amboseli Trust for Elephants

“We honor a life that didn’t just protect elephants, but empowered people protecting them.”

Uganda Conservation Foundation

“His courage, compassion and vision have inspired generations of conservationists (including us at African Parks) and shaped the future of wildlife conservation in Africa.”

African Parks

“Though gone from the earthly abode, Iain’s towering contribution to conservation leaves behind an indelible legacy.”

Rebecca Miano

Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for
Tourism and Wildlife

“Few people have shaped elephant conservation as profoundly as Iain. He brought science, courage and a fierce moral clarity to every aspect of his work.”

Joyce Poole

ElephantVoices

“His legacy in conservation is unmatched, and we remain committed to carrying it forward.”

Dr. Patrick Omondi

Director/CEO
Wildlife Research and Training Institute



Our Impact in 2025



1. Kenya Wildlife Service Vet, Dr. Sharon Mulindi treating an elephant © Rio the photographer
2. Bird's eye view of elephants in northern Kenya © Jane Wynyard
3. Royals' calves in Samburu National Reserve © Sarah Kunkel



4. Elephant in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, Mbele Bai, Congo © Chris Thoulless
5. Chui Mamas learn about beehive fences during a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop © Kirstie Ruppert San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
6. STE's Kennedy Leneuyia holding jar of honey © Jane Wynyard

About Save the Elephants

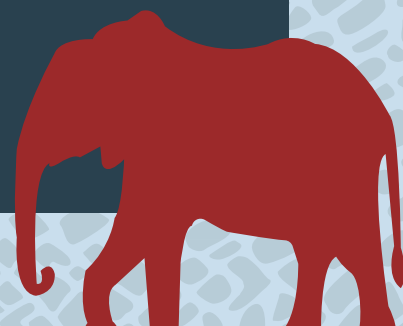
Founded by zoologist Iain Douglas-Hamilton in 1993, Save the Elephants (STE) conducts pioneering research into the ecology and behaviour of elephants and works to secure them a future on a fast-changing continent.

At Save the Elephants' research station in Samburu National Reserve, northern Kenya, STE researchers study wild elephants on a daily basis. More than 900 identified elephants have been recorded using the reserves along the Ewaso Ny'iro river for more than three decades, and STE's intimate knowledge of their family structures and history has opened a rare window into the world of elephants. At our second research station, located in the Sagalla community in Tsavo, southeastern Kenya, the organisation's human-elephant coexistence team trains communities across Africa in techniques for living alongside elephants.

STE partners with world-leading universities and institutions to develop new technology to understand and protect elephants. Cutting edge systems and analysis now help scientists and protected area managers across the continent defend elephants and their ecosystems, and plan for their future. Wildlife population monitoring is being transformed through the use of cameras and AI, while our investigations are revealing previously hidden realms of elephant communication.

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 initiatives with grass-roots community engagement strategies, building broad collaborations to secure a future for the elephants in Kenya, whilst creating tools and techniques for use elsewhere on the continent.

To help secure a future for elephants 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.



Iain with the STE team at a strategy meeting in 2023 © Jemima Scrase

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
Marlene McCay
Melly Rueling
Prof. George Wittemyer
Prof. Fritz Vollrath, Chairman

Understanding Elephants

Moi shortly after being collared in Samburu National Reserve © Jane Wynyard

Following the Giants

What elephant tracking reveals about a changing Africa

Following in Iain's footsteps, Save the Elephants continues a research legacy that has shaped elephant conservation for decades: closely monitoring known individuals and tracking their movements across vast landscapes. These long-term projects are giving us an ever-improving picture of how elephants live - and how the places they call home are changing.

Last year brought some **wonderful news from our long-term monitoring project in Samburu**. After the above-average rains of 2023, we documented an extraordinary baby boom among the elephants we follow. Because elephants have a 22-month gestation period, the lush vegetation produced by those rains created ideal conditions for breeding. Well-fed females came into estrus, bulls entered musth, and the result was a surge of newborn calves across the population. We recorded **188 new calves** in the reserve in 2025 compared with 37 in 2024.

Among the most heart-warming moments were births from females who themselves survived the darkest years of poaching. Elephants like Soutine and Frida - both orphaned as calves - have now grown into successful mothers, raising calves of their own. **Their stories are powerful reminders of elephants' resilience**, and of the importance of protecting them over the long term.



Baby elephant in a rush in Samburu © Robbie Labanowski

While these moments of joy inspire us, elephant tracking data across Kenya is showing us challenges as well as opportunities. By following collared elephants, we are mapping the routes they rely on to move between habitats. These connections are the lifelines that connect elephant populations, allowing them to find food, water, and safe breeding grounds.

Along the lower Tana River and in the Tana Delta, elephants first collared by Iain in 2009 have provided particularly important insights. Our long-term monitoring data shows that these elephants now depend heavily on small patches of remaining forest along the river for much of the year. **These forest refuges are becoming increasingly important** as surrounding landscapes change.

Yet the elephants do not stay there permanently. When the rains arrive, they disperse far into the interior, seeking food sources away from the river and often away from densely populated regions. Understanding these seasonal movements is vital due to the threat of expanding human developments. Without protection, this already vulnerable population risks becoming increasingly fragmented, with small groups of elephants isolated in shrinking pockets of habitat. To stay ahead of these changes, Save the Elephants is planning another operation in 2026 to fit tracking collars and better understand how their range is shifting - particularly as human–elephant conflict continues to rise.

Beyond Kenya, our Continental Tracking Initiative is helping partners across Africa **turn tracking data into practical conservation action**. In collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund in the Central African Republic, we are uncovering how forest elephants - now classified as Critically Endangered - move across large areas of rainforest and regularly cross international borders. Their survival depends on coordinated conservation efforts between neighbouring countries and precious baïs - forest clearings - that are rich in minerals and nutrients.

Across Africa, from Nigeria and Cameroon to Mozambique, we are also working with the Wildlife Conservation Society to understand **how elephants respond to human pressures** that are negatively impacting their environment.

Each footprint tells a story. Together, these stories are revealing a continent where elephant landscapes are becoming more fragmented - but also where timely action can still safeguard the connections elephants need to thrive. With the support of our partners and donors, we are using these insights to help ensure that Africa's giants continue to roam free.



A herd of tracked elephants in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo © Chris Thouless

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Eyes in the Sky

How drones are transforming elephant research

At Save the Elephants, innovation continues to build on the legacy of our founder, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton. One of the newest tools helping us understand elephants is the drone - offering an entirely new perspective on their behaviour and ecology.

Before we began our explorations, our researchers first asked a critical question: if we fly carefully, do elephants behave normally?

In Samburu, northern Kenya, we studied how elephant families respond to drones flown under strict protocols designed to minimise disturbance. Flights were launched at least 1,640 feet (499.87 metres) from the elephants, approached from downwind, and flown at 390 feet above ground. From the ground, researchers carefully recorded elephant reactions, looking for behaviours such as bunching together, raising trunks, or spreading ears.

Initial reactions were recorded in only about half of the exposures. These responses then dwindled during the course of a single flight, and then again over repeated encounters, suggesting that elephants can quickly habituate and learn to ignore the drones.

This has opened the door to exciting new research. Equipped with thermal cameras, drones are allowing us to observe elephants at night. Early footage confirms that elephants often sleep lying down late at night - raising new questions about where they choose to sleep and whether family members take turns keeping watch.

Drones are also helping us measure elephants from above. By combining aerial imagery with a laser rangefinder, we can calculate body dimensions such as back length - an important indicator of age. Verified using elephants of known age in Samburu, these techniques may soon help scientists assess the age, sex, and health of remote elephant populations across Africa.



STE is using drones to study elephants © Jane Wynyard



Tracking data from elephants like Goshi (pictured) reveals how they adapt to the changing landscape © Tsavo Trust

Goshi of Tsavo

Tracking a crop raider across a changing habitat

Elephants in Tsavo, southern Kenya, range across more than 26,000 square miles, moving between largely unfenced protected areas, ranches and community land. Among them is Goshi, a large bull and emerging super tusk, recognisable by his long, straight tusks. Known to farmers in Sagalla for his appetite for crops, **he has become a frequent, and unwelcome, visitor.**

In 2024, we fitted Goshi with a GPS tracking collar, enabling us, and the Kenya Wildlife Service, to monitor his movements in real time. Data shows that while he occasionally ventures into Tsavo East National Park, he spends most of his time in the neighbouring ranches and community area. He typically remains near water sources by day and ventures into farms at night. Insight into his movements enables ranger teams to quickly intervene, guiding him away before significant crop damage occurs and tensions escalate, **helping reduce risk for both people and elephants.**

Goshi's tracked data reveals more than patterns of conflict in Tsavo. It is also shedding light on how these elephants are adapting to change in this vast landscape. As he moves between the park and ranches, Goshi regularly crosses the busy Nairobi-Mombasa Highway and uses wildlife underpasses beneath the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) - Kenya's new railway link that cuts between Tsavo East and Tsavo West national parks. Throughout the year, we tracked him crossing under the SGR and over the highway 51 times, moving from one side of the Tsavo ecosystem to the other, **painting a clearer picture of how these elephants navigate their fragmented habitat.**

By tracking bulls like Goshi, local communities and conservation teams are gaining a clearer understanding of elephant behaviour and movement patterns. This knowledge plays the dual role of helping anticipate human-elephant conflict and giving elephants a voice in the planning of a six-lane highway that will follow the path of the railway. .

We are now helping advise the community on the establishment of a wildlife-friendly conservancy to protect the movement corridor that Goshi uses between Tsavo East and the Taita Ranches. His movements are guiding our conservation efforts which will hopefully lead to a more peaceful future for both Goshi and the farmers.



Protecting Habitats and Connectivity

Technology allows STE to record detailed routes of elephants like these in Samburu © Robbie Labanowski

Mapping the Paths of Giants

How tracking shapes conservation

Elephant tracking was one of Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton's great passions — and one of his most enduring gifts to conservation.

The technology he helped pioneer, from the earliest GPS collars of the 1990s to today's advanced app-based systems, spread far beyond Save the Elephants, inspiring a proliferation of tracking studies across Africa. Working closely with teams of young researchers, Iain helped establish approaches that have since been adopted for many species beyond elephants.

The earliest collars recorded just one GPS location per day - a wonder at the time but far too little to understand the full complexity of elephant movement and behaviour. Today, technology allows us to record elephants' locations at almost any desired interval, revealing the detailed routes they use when moving through landscapes. From government boardroom to field, this tracking data has become an **essential tool for shaping conservation planning** across entire ecosystems.

Driven by a deep curiosity to understand elephant ranging behaviour, Iain's early studies focused on quantifying home ranges of iconic bulls and matriarchs, including their migratory routes. **He was fascinated when he saw elephants move fast across landscapes** - especially in near-perfect straight lines often through human-dominated habitats, a behaviour he termed "streaking." By compiling weekly range maps of collared elephants, Iain assessed how quickly elephants explored new territories and what triggered them, often taking to the skies in his Cessna bushplane to confirm these movements.

His early plots led to the first hand-drawn corridor maps, based directly on observed routes and updated frequently - sometimes just weeks apart - as new data emerged. By 2006, with tracking data from nearly 50 elephants, Save the Elephants joined the first joint landscape planning initiative alongside scientists studying other species. This collaboration confirmed that elephants often define the key corridors used by many other animals. In 2008, Iain led a knowledge transfer project that expanded this work, equipping scientists studying lions, zebras, and wild dogs with tracking technology and analytical tools.



Festus Ihwagi, STE's Senior Scientist and Research Policy Lead at the Land and Environmental Court in Nairobi
© Anthony Owino/East African Wildlife Society

By 2013, Save the Elephants had built the largest elephant tracking dataset in existence, complemented by data from other species across Kenya. Together, these datasets formed a critical foundation for Kenya's National Wildlife Corridors Report - launched in 2018 - a landmark in defining landscape connectivity.

Today, this tracking data continues to guide conservation planning and is widely used by government and stakeholders managing land use and protecting corridors. Building on this expertise, we have been invited by the Kenyan government to advise on wildlife crossings for the proposed 500km, six-lane expressway from Nairobi to Mombasa. This new infrastructure will add to existing transport lines cutting through the Tsavo ecosystem, home to Kenya's largest elephant population.

In 2025, as part of this collaboration, we joined government teams and consultants in Tsavo to show the major wildlife crossing points, many passing through existing railway culverts. Over the past decade, we have monitored the effectiveness of crossings along the Standard Gauge Railway, generating invaluable insights to guide future infrastructure design.

We also worked with the Kenya National Highways Authority along the Isiolo–Moyale highway, demonstrating how **infrastructure can be planned with wildlife in mind**.

Beyond major infrastructure, tracking data has been vital in mapping corridors networks across pastoral landscapes, linking elephant ranges with community lands. These insights have helped our scientists to advise on the impacts of infrastructure on landscape in areas without existing tracking data, such as the Aberdare Range in west central Kenya.

Iain's example seeded tracking programmes across the continent - but data sitting in isolation can only do so much. Through Save the Elephants' Continental Tracking Initiative, we are now consolidating this work, bringing individual studies into a shared network and putting under-utilised data to work at continental scale.

The vision Iain pursued in northern Kenya - that understanding how elephants move is fundamental to securing their future - is now being realised across Africa.

Read more about the Continental Tracking Initiative on P27 of this report.

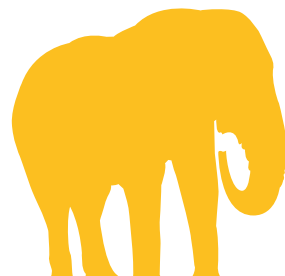


Elephant herd about to enter the Mito SGR underpass in Tsavo © Richard Moller

“There are many people who inspired me but most of all it was the elephants that inspired me.”

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton

Future for Nature interview, 2014



A Corridor Secured

An elephant lifeline protected

Northern Kenya's Laikipia and Samburu counties are home to Kenya's second largest elephant population — a wide-ranging community that depends on a network of ancient pathways to move between vast landscapes.

The Oldonyiro corridor, weaving through community land in Isiolo County, is **one of the most critical of these arteries**. Yet over the past two decades, tracking data has revealed what local elders already knew from lived experience: these routes were quietly narrowing, squeezed by land degradation and unplanned settlement.

Data alone, however, cannot protect a corridor. A line drawn on a map is just a paper corridor — one that can be ignored when it suits, sold when land prices rise, or abandoned when community leadership changes. Real protection demands something harder to achieve: the understanding and active buy-in of the people who live alongside these paths.

That is why Save the Elephants worked closely with community elders to ground-truth historical elephant routes, and why local women - the Mama Tembos, or elephant mothers - now play a central role in monitoring and safeguarding the corridor day to day. Built on that community foundation, the **Oldonyiro corridor has been formally incorporated into Isiolo County's spatial plan** - the first of ten identified corridors in northern Kenya to achieve legal recognition, and the first genuinely protected against future development.

The significance reaches beyond a single pathway. Keeping elephant rangelands connected across an increasingly human-dominated landscape reduces conflict, maintains genetic diversity, and provides critical safety valves as climate shifts push animals to seek new resources. Corridors are not just elephant infrastructure — **they are the architecture of a resilient ecosystem**.

Work to secure the remaining nine corridors continues. This milestone, in partnership with Wyss Academy of Nature and generously supported by Stichting Wildlife Beekse Bergen, is a powerful reflection of Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton's legacy, and one he would have been hugely proud of.



Benjamin Loloju, STE's Corridors Manager, on a corridor mapping exercise with partners from northern Kenya © Benjamin Loloju



A livestock and wildlife corridor marker © Jane Wynyard

The Elephant Crisis Fund



A Year of Challenge, Resilience, and Impact

Navigating uncertainty while strengthening conservation across Africa

2025 was both a challenging and productive year for the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) - one that tested our budgets and resilience but also revealed the strength of our network and the depth of support for elephant conservation from our supporters.

The unexpected and near-total loss of US government funding for conservation in Africa caused significant disruption for many of our partners working to protect elephants across the continent. However, **thanks to the generosity of our supporters**, we responded quickly with emergency funding for the worst-affected organisations, and as a result we are pleased to report that many of our partners coped much better than initially feared.

THIS ABILITY TO RESPOND RAPIDLY TO SUDDEN AND UNFORESEEN CRISES UNDERSCORES THE VITAL ROLE THAT THE ECF PLAYS FOR ELEPHANT CONSERVATION ACROSS AFRICA.

We are also pleased that our network reported that there was **no noticeable increase in poaching or ivory trafficking in 2025**. Not only is this reassuring that our investments into anti-trafficking work had been sustainable, but this enabled us to focus on our core priorities - safeguarding vulnerable elephant populations and supporting human-elephant coexistence.

We concentrated our efforts on supporting local and community-based organisations, providing them with technical assistance from ECF staff members, the wider Save the Elephants team, and other partners. The Continental Elephant Tracking Initiative and STE's human-elephant coexistence training courses in Tsavo, Kenya, have been particularly instrumental in **strengthening continental collaboration**.

We were delighted that the work of the ECF was **recognised with the 20th BBVA Foundation Worldwide Conservation Award** for 2025. Beyond the valuable endorsement of our conservation model, the award came with a cash prize that we are excited to invest back into vital elephant programmes across Africa.

As always, we are deeply grateful to our donors for their steadfast support of conservation organisations protecting elephants and their habitats across Africa.



STE's CEO, Frank Pope, receiving the BBVA Worldwide Award for Biodiversity Conservation, on behalf of the Elephant Crisis Fund © Fundación BBVA



A herd of elephants drinking water in Pendjari, Benin © Marcus Westberg

A Continental Network for Elephants

Sharing knowledge and data to protect elephants and people

Across Africa, strategic collaborations between Save the Elephants (STE) and the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) are helping people and elephants share space more safely. By combining cutting-edge science with practical training for conservationists and communities, these partnerships are turning knowledge into action - strengthening a continental-wide network working to protect elephants and reduce human–elephant conflict.

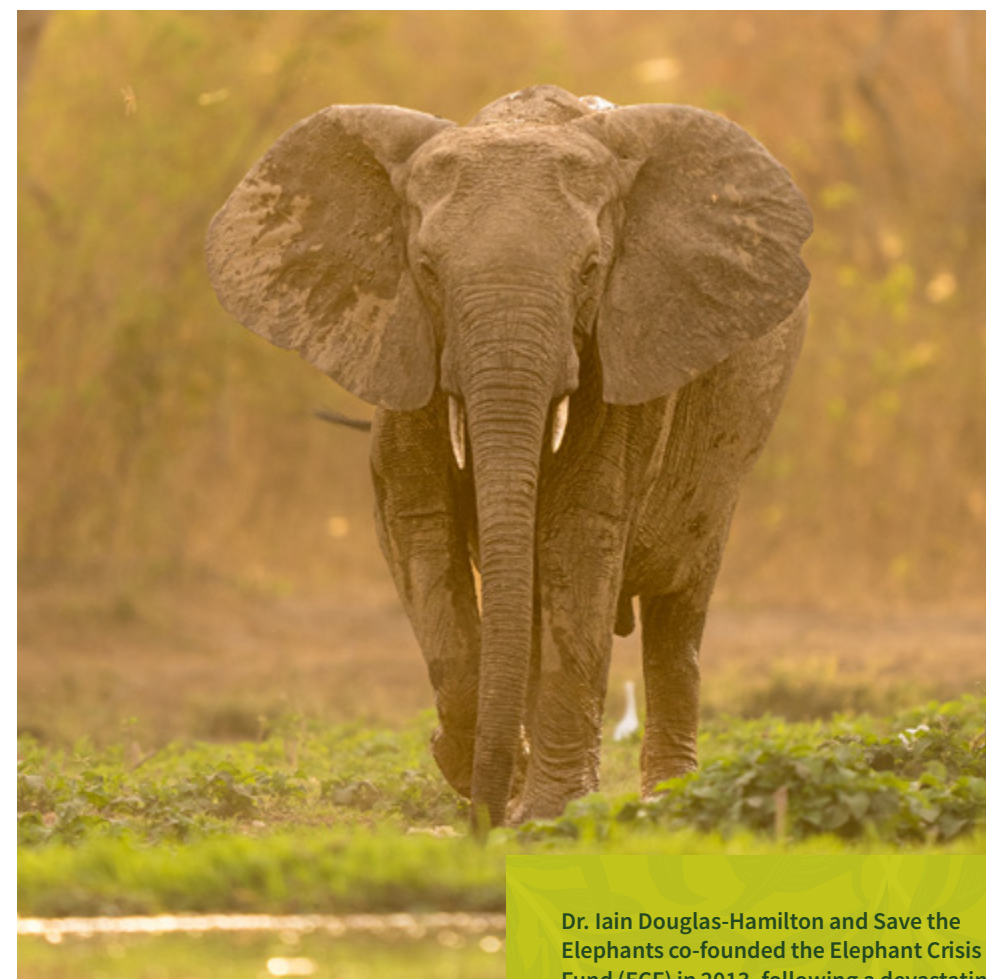
Many ECF partners already use satellite tracking as a conservation tool, but through STE's Continental Elephant Tracking Initiative (CTI) these individual studies become part of a much bigger picture. By building a network of elephant researchers and conservationists across Africa this important project enables insights that extend beyond individual projects, improving understanding of how elephants move across landscapes, the pressures they face, and where conservation action is needed most at both local and continental scales. This is supported by the CTI's focus on best practice in deploying tracking collars on elephants and managing and analysing data, with STE providing technical support where needed.

This collaborative approach is already producing actionable insights across the network. In Dzanga Sangha, Central African Republic, tracking revealed how far forest elephants travel to reach mineral-rich forest clearings known as baïs, journeys that expose them to poaching risk.

In northern Angola, data pinpointed road-crossing hotspots where elephants were being struck by vehicles, guiding plans for protective fencing. In South Sudan, unusual movement patterns

identified a moment of intense human–elephant conflict, helping partners plan alternative water sources for elephants. In Zimbabwe, tracking data exposed a previously unknown illegal goldmine blocking a wildlife corridor - prompting authorities to shut it down.

Alongside this scientific collaboration, STE's Trainer of Trainers programme in Tsavo, Kenya equips Elephant Crisis Fund partners with practical tools to reduce conflict on the ground. Over the last three years, almost 70 ECF grantees from across Africa have taken part in the programme. During the three-day workshop, practitioners, farmers and community leaders exchange experiences, test mitigation methods and learn proven coexistence strategies. Participants return home ready to train others, creating a multiplier effect that strengthens conservation capacity across Africa and helps communities live more safely alongside elephants.



Elephant in Benin © Marcus Westberg

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton and Save the Elephants co-founded the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) in 2013, following a devastating surge in poaching. The ECF was created in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Network to deliver rapid support to frontline organisations across Africa.

The Coexistence Challenge

On the Path to Coexistence

How Iain's work shapes our future with elephants

Long before human-wildlife coexistence became a global priority, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton recognised that if people and elephants were to share landscapes safely, sustainable solutions had to be grounded in how elephants think, move, and behave. He believed that **understanding elephants was the key to both living with them, and saving them.**

Iain's founding principle remains at the heart of Save the Elephants' coexistence work. From Iain's early studies in Lake Manyara to his pioneering use of GPS tracking collars, STE has built a deep understanding of elephant behaviour - knowledge that we continue to draw on to shape our dynamic 200 page Human-Elephant Coexistence (HEC) Toolbox manual. The translates science into real-life practical solutions that are helping to reduce conflict and support communities across Africa's elephant range states.

One of the most powerful applications of this approach has been the use of **tracking data to anticipate conflict before it happens.** GPS collars, like the one we attached to a well-known crop-raider in Sagalla, south Kenya, named Goshi, enable geo-fence alert systems to notify communities when elephants like Goshi approach farms. These early warnings give farmers time to respond safely and proactively, reducing the risk of crop loss and potentially fatal encounters. It is a direct evolution of Iain's belief that understanding the drivers of elephant behaviour is the foundation of effective elephant conservation.

In high conflict agricultural landscapes adjacent to Tsavo National Park, the HEC Toolbox methods are applied to protect dozens more farms through a combination of methods, including beehive fences, chilli deterrents, watch towers, and metal strip fences.

In 2025 in Sagalla, this approach delivered both protection and prosperity: participating farmers produced more than 1900 jars of elephant-friendly honey. Building on this success, they have now finalised the formation of a community-based organisation to manage the beehive fence networks and the growing honey production, strengthening local ownership and long-term sustainability.

Importantly, **these benefits extended beyond crop protection.** Women in the Sagalla community play a central role in honey production and enterprise development, gaining new income streams and financial independence. The Women's Enterprise Center, established in 2018 through STE support, reached a significant milestone at the end of 2024 as a fully independent, community-run initiative. In 2025 it independently supported 40 women to develop alternative livelihoods that do not rely solely on farming, strengthening their households' resilience and reducing vulnerability to elephant-related losses for hundreds of community members.



Women of Kizi, Tanzania receive beehives made by women from Sagalla, Kenya © Jane Wynyard

At the same time, STE invests in people and partnerships. The monthly Training of Trainers programme at the Tsavo Research Centre **equips conservation practitioners, community leaders, and government partners** with the skills to apply and adapt the HEC Toolbox in their own landscapes - ensuring coexistence solutions were locally relevant and scalable.

In the more pastoralist dominant communities of Samburu, where conflict has centred increasingly around water and limited grazing resources, our HEC Toolbox has helped our Rapid Response Units to promote a combination of elephant corridor integrity, elephant-aware behaviour, and how to improve protection of key water points.



STE's Rapid Response Unit in Ngaremara, northern Kenya © Jane Wynyard

Crucially, the lessons learned through these coexistence efforts in Kenya are shared far beyond STE's core sites in Kenya. Through our Elephant Crisis Fund, we support partners across the continent to adapt and implement coexistence strategies in their own contexts - extending Iain's vision across Africa's elephant range states.

Across all these efforts, one idea unites the work: coexistence solutions are most effective when they are informed by elephant behaviour and shaped by local realities. Iain's legacy lives on in this integration of science and practice. By understanding elephants, we are finding new ways to live alongside them.

“Anyone who studies elephants - and certainly it happened to me - becomes intensely aware that you're dealing with a sentient species. A species where the individuals are thinking their own thoughts.”

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton

A Life Among Elephants

In Southern Kenya, Coexistence Begins at Home

Health builds resilience

In Sagalla, where farms border the vast elephant habitat of Tsavo, Kenya's biggest protected area, the challenges of daily life can intensify human-elephant conflict. We have found that strengthening family health is a critical - yet often overlooked - component of elephant coexistence.

Since 2021, STE has implemented a community health programme grounded in a One Health approach, recognising the interconnected wellbeing of people, wildlife, and ecosystems. In 2025, the programme worked with three local dispensaries - Kirumbi, Kajire, and Bamako - and trained over 40 community health promoters, improving access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services across the landscape.

Building on our toolbox of coexistence solutions, this approach complements practical conflict-reduction measures - such as beehive fences and early warning systems - by addressing the underlying social and economic pressures communities face.

Improved access to health services in Sagalla enabled hundreds of women and families to make more informed decisions about their futures. At the same time, conservation messaging was integrated into every community dialogue, reinforcing the link between healthy families and healthy ecosystems.



Community Baraza in Kirumbi village, Tsavo

Women have always been at the centre of this work. As primary caregivers and key decision-makers in households, their increased access to health services and alternative livelihood opportunities strengthens household resilience, reducing vulnerability to both climatic and elephant-related losses.

By pairing our HEC Toolbox with a One Health model, we are demonstrating that coexistence is not only about deterring elephants. In Sagalla, healthier families are helping to create the conditions for a more stable, sustainable future where people and elephants can thrive together.



STE's CEO, Frank Pope, speaking to the audience at the San Diego Natural History Museum © Sarah Kunkel

Iain's Story, Still Travelling

A life in Africa, a legacy felt around the world

In packed theatres across the United States, *A Life Among Elephants* has been leaving a powerful impression. As the credits roll, audiences rise to their feet - not only applauding the film, but the extraordinary life it celebrates: that of our late founder, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton and his mission to protect wild African elephants.

The documentary made its U.S. theatrical debut at the DC Environmental Film Festival in March 2025, where it received the *Flo Stone & Roger D. Stone Award for Outstanding Artistry in Filmmaking* - an early sign of the impact it would have with audiences across the country.

From New York to Malibu, Chicago to Indianapolis, the film has travelled from city to city, drawing packed theatres and sparking powerful conversations about elephants, conservation, and the fight against the ivory trade.

Through rare archival footage and personal interviews with the late Jane Goodall, Iain's family, and Save the Elephants' Director of Field Operations, David Daballen, the documentary offers an intimate look at the pioneering work that transformed the world's understanding of elephant society.

At its heart, the film tells a deeply personal story - a lifetime spent studying, protecting, and advocating for elephants, and the vision that helped change global attitudes toward their conservation.

The film's reception in the United States has shown that its message resonates far beyond borders. In 2026, the journey continues with plans to expand international screenings, bringing Iain's story to new audiences and inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders.

Audiences around the world can watch *A Life Among Elephants* on Curiosity Stream, Channel 4's streaming platform in the UK and SBS in Australia.



"The future of elephants will be forged in the hearts and minds of Africa's people."

Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton

Vogue interview, 2018



News

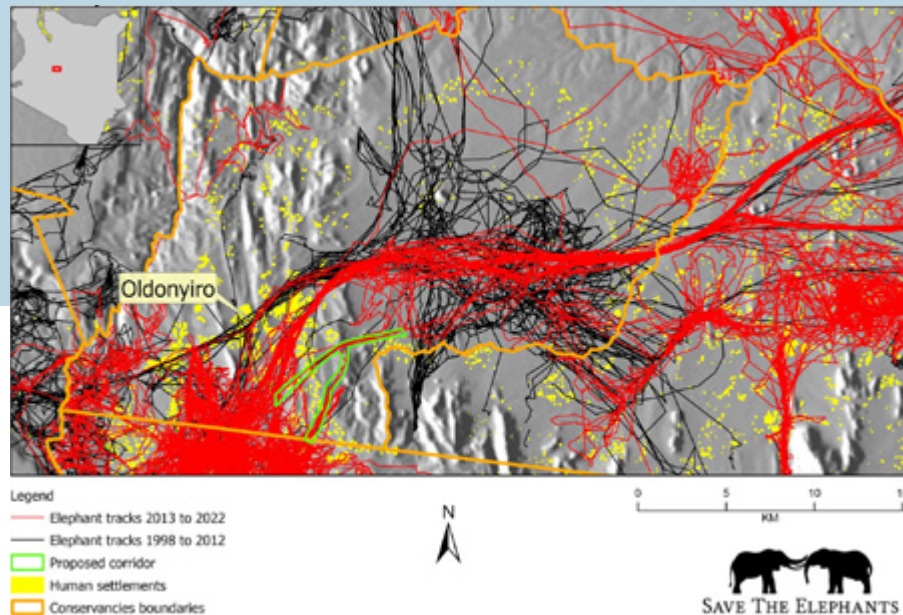
A Decade in the Making

Securing legal protection for the Oldonyiro corridor in 2025 was a landmark moment for Save the Elephants (STE) - hard won after a decade of dedicated work with communities and local government. This vital wildlife pathway, now formally recognised in Isiolo County's spatial plan, safeguards a lifeline for northern Kenya's elephants and the people who share their landscape. As one of ten key corridors identified by STE, it brings real hope that others will follow. This achievement was made possible in partnership with Wyss Academy for Nature and support from Stichting Wildlife Beekse Bergen.

Read the full story on p24.



Benjamin Loloju, STE's Corridors Manager, at a community engagement session in Naapu conservancy, Oldonyiro © Ben Okita



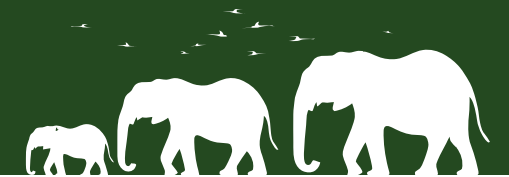
Tracking map showing the movements of elephants through the Oldonyiro corridor in northern Kenya

Following Elephants Beyond Borders

In 2022, Iain returned to Uganda for the first time in over 50 years, determined to understand what was happening to the little-known elephants of the remote Kidepo landscape. Working with partners, Save the Elephants began tracking this overlooked population - and what we've discovered is remarkable. Elephants here are moving freely across national borders and far beyond protected areas. With a second collaring mission in 2025, that picture is coming into sharper focus. These movements are reshaping how we think about protecting cross-border elephants. It's a discovery that would have deeply resonated with Iain.



Iain flying a plane during the Uganda collaring in 2022
© Angus Carey- Douglas



Honouring a Life That Changed the Fate of Elephants

In April 2025, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton was awarded the Esmond B. Martin Royal Geographical Society Prize - one of conservation's highest honours. Shared with Dr. Jake Wall, the award recognised a lifetime of work that transformed how the world understands and protects elephants. From pioneering behavioural research to leading the fight against the ivory trade, Iain's impact shaped conservation across Africa. The prize was accepted in London by STE's Chairman, Professor Fritz Vollrath, marking a poignant moment of recognition for a legacy that continues to guide and inspire.



Prof. Fritz Vollrath, STE Board Chairman, accepts the 2025 EBM Royal Geographical Society Prize on behalf of Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton in London © James Tye

From Africa to Uzbekistan

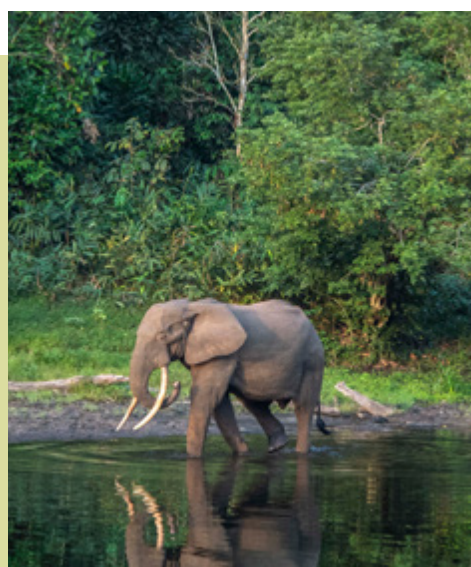
At CITES COP20 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, Save the Elephants joined global leaders shaping the future of wildlife conservation. Thank you, Pat Price, for sending us. But beyond the formal sessions, we brought our own elephant work to life - sharing practical solutions through our Human-Elephant Coexistence Toolbox and spotlighting the impact of the Elephant Crisis Fund. A screening of *A Life Among Elephants* offered a powerful moment of reflection, connecting Iain's legacy to the urgent work continuing today across Africa.



Film poster for *A Life Among Elephants*

Hope for Critically Endangered Forest Elephants

The IUCN African Forest Elephant Status Report, part-funded and co-authored by Save the Elephants, brings cautious, but welcome news. It shows an estimated 16% rise in forest elephants since 2016 to 135,690, offering a spark of hope for the species. Reduced poaching is a result of continued efforts by the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) - a Save the Elephants and Wildlife Conservation Network initiative - and its partners, though the species remains critically endangered.



An endangered forest elephant in Wali Bai in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, Congo © Jane Wynyard

Matt Finds a New Home

Matt - our life-size sculptured Kenyan bull - has found a permanent home in Houston after being sold to a private collector. A standout of the Great Elephant Migration, a 5,000-mile travelling exhibition across the U.S., he and the rest of the life-sized herd sparked conversation, raised vital funds for elephant conservation, and spotlighted human-elephant coexistence. Named after one of our study elephants, who died in 2019 aged 52, Matt's real-life movements - tracked by GPS since 2002 - transformed our understanding of elephant behaviour. It feels fitting that his namesake's journey continues to inspire, even in a new home.



Matt, the bull elephant's life-size sculpture as part of The Great Elephant Migration © Tasha Gorel

Recognition That Fuels Action

In November, Save the Elephants received the prestigious BBVA Worldwide Biodiversity Conservation Award, recognising the impact of STE's work through the Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) - a joint initiative with the Wildlife Conservation Network. More than an honour, this is a powerful endorsement of a model that gets vital funding quickly to those protecting elephants on the ground. The award will directly strengthen the ECF's ability to respond to urgent threats and support partners across Africa working to secure a future for elephants.



STE's CEO, Frank Pope (third right), with other winners of the BBVA Worldwide Award for Biodiversity Conservation in Spain © Fundación BBVA

Powerful Ways to Support

Our aunt, Mary Snite Boardman, first met Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton in 2002 at the Wildlife Conservation Network's EXPO in San Francisco. She long-admired their research, books, and campaigns to save elephants, and the EXPO meeting offered a chance to deepen her connection with her conservation heroes. What followed was regular financial support for STE, along with a warm exchange of letters and a lasting, treasured friendship.

Mary took us to Elephant Watch Camp in Samburu in 2007, where we learned first-hand about their work and met the larger team. During this visit, Iain shared his concern about the reemergence of poaching for the illegal ivory trade. We returned to New York, leveraged our media contacts to secure coverage of the renewed crisis, marched at the United Nations with Iain, and years later were among the initial donors of the Elephant Crisis Fund.

During that first visit, Oria introduced us to her vital work with local communities. Lance, working with his mother, Katherine Snite Williams, rallied support for the STE Education Program through the Fred B. Snite Foundation. The foundation has donated \$200,000 over twenty years to fund new buildings, school equipment and supplies, feminine hygiene, and nutrition supplements at the Westgate School and other local primary schools near Samburu.



STE's founder, Iain Douglas-Hamilton and Mary Boardman

Shortly after Mary passed away in 2013, we held a memorial with the Douglas-Hamiltons on the banks of the Ewaso Nyiro River in Samburu National Reserve, and it was announced that her estate had established an endowed fund to support Save the Elephants and the Elephant Crisis Fund for fifteen years after her death. In total, that consistent annual support will amount to more than US\$2.5 million for elephant conservation.



Lance Williams, Grant Kretchik with Oria Douglas-Hamilton at Westgate School in Samburu, Kenya

We are honored to carry forward Mary's legacy by offering annual unrestricted support for STE and, in recent years, underwriting tuition for STE staff to earn their Master's degrees, helping to equip and empower the next generation of STE leaders.

In 2017, we were delighted to bestow the inaugural Mary S. Boardman Award for Community Conservation on Oria for her inspiring and tireless work. The ceremony was held at the WCN EXPO, fifteen years after that first spark of friendship between our families.

We visit Kenya often and count the STE team among our trusted friends. While we still mourn Iain's passing, we are grateful to share an enduring connection to the larger "elephant family," for which we owe Iain our deepest gratitude.

Through our collective efforts, Save the Elephants and the Elephant Crisis Fund have become our family's most significant charitable partnership, owing to the innovation, integrity, persistence, and devotion of the entire team.

Asante sana!

Lance Williams and Grant Kretchik
Los Angeles



Lance Williams, Oria Douglas-Hamilton and Iain Douglas-Hamilton

All photos courtesy of Lance Williams and Grant Kretchik



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Iain in Manyara National Park, Tanzania, greeting Virgo an elephant he befriended

Finance

Statement of revenue & expenses

	AUDITED	UNAUDITED
	2024	2025
REVENUE (US\$)		
Donations	5,445,797	6,998,406
Interest Earned	931	20,079
TOTAL REVENUE	5,446,728	7,018,485
Administration & Logistics	197,731	191,897
Governance	51,686	48,303
Fundraising	354,087	413,114
Elephant Protection & Pathways	1,718,584	1,735,234
Human-Elephant Coexistence	1,770,563	1,544,871
Understanding Elephants	1,085,003	1,593,264
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,177,654	5,526,683
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	269,074	1,491,802

2025 accounts (unaudited) converted at a rate of £1 - \$1.28

Unaudited figures for 2025 are presented here. Variations may result from the auditor’s recommendations.

At the end of 2025, Save the Elephants (STE) held **\$3,306,315** in reserves, equivalent to 6 months of operating expenditure, as set by STE’s board.



Analysis of 2025 expenditure

Elephant Protection & Pathways	31%	\$1,735,234
Understanding Elephants	29%	\$1,593,264
Human-Elephant Coexistence	28%	\$1,544,871
Fundraising	7%	\$413,114
Admin & Logistics	3%	\$191,897
Governance	1%	\$48,303



Securing Their Future Elephants Need You

Playful elephant calves in Samburu © Frank af Petersens

Those born today could live more than 60 years but they face increasing challenges from human impacts. Help us continue the legacy of our founder Dr Iain Douglas-Hamilton to protect elephants and foster peaceful coexistence between our species. You can still give in memory of Iain, and if you’d like more information about how we’re honouring him in 2026, please get in touch with us by email at donate@savetheelephants.org

Cheque

Cheques should be made out to the payees and sent to the corresponding addresses below. Please include your address for the mailing of tax information.

 \$ (USD) Payable to:	 £ (GBP) Payable to:
Save the Elephants USA Inc 1350 Avenue of the Americas Floor 2, Suite 266 New York, NY 10019 EIN: 88-2429208 Tel: +1 646-820-3989	Save the Elephants c/o Gerald Edelman LLP 73 Cornhill, London, EC3V 3QQ Registered Charity #1118804 Tel: +44 (0) 7490 406 825

Bank transfer

For account details please email us and include your country. This will enable us to give you the correct bank information.

Online

Quick and secure way to give:
[savetheelephants.org/donate](https://www.savetheelephants.org/donate)

Other ways to give to elephants

- Donate through your DAF or IRA.
- Ask your employer about workplace giving.
- Donate stocks or securities

Planned giving

Leaving a gift in your will is a powerful way to change the world for the better for elephants. Download our legacy information pack from our website or email us.

Contact for donation enquiries

Email:
donate@savetheelephants.org

Website:
www.savetheelephants.org

If you prefer, you can still donate through our fiscal sponsor partner in the US, Wildlife Conservation Network (EIN: 30-0108469)

In the wild landscapes of Samburu, the lives of elephants and ancient nomadic cultures are intertwined. At Elephant Watch Camp, our official tourism partner, you don't just witness this world - you become part of it.

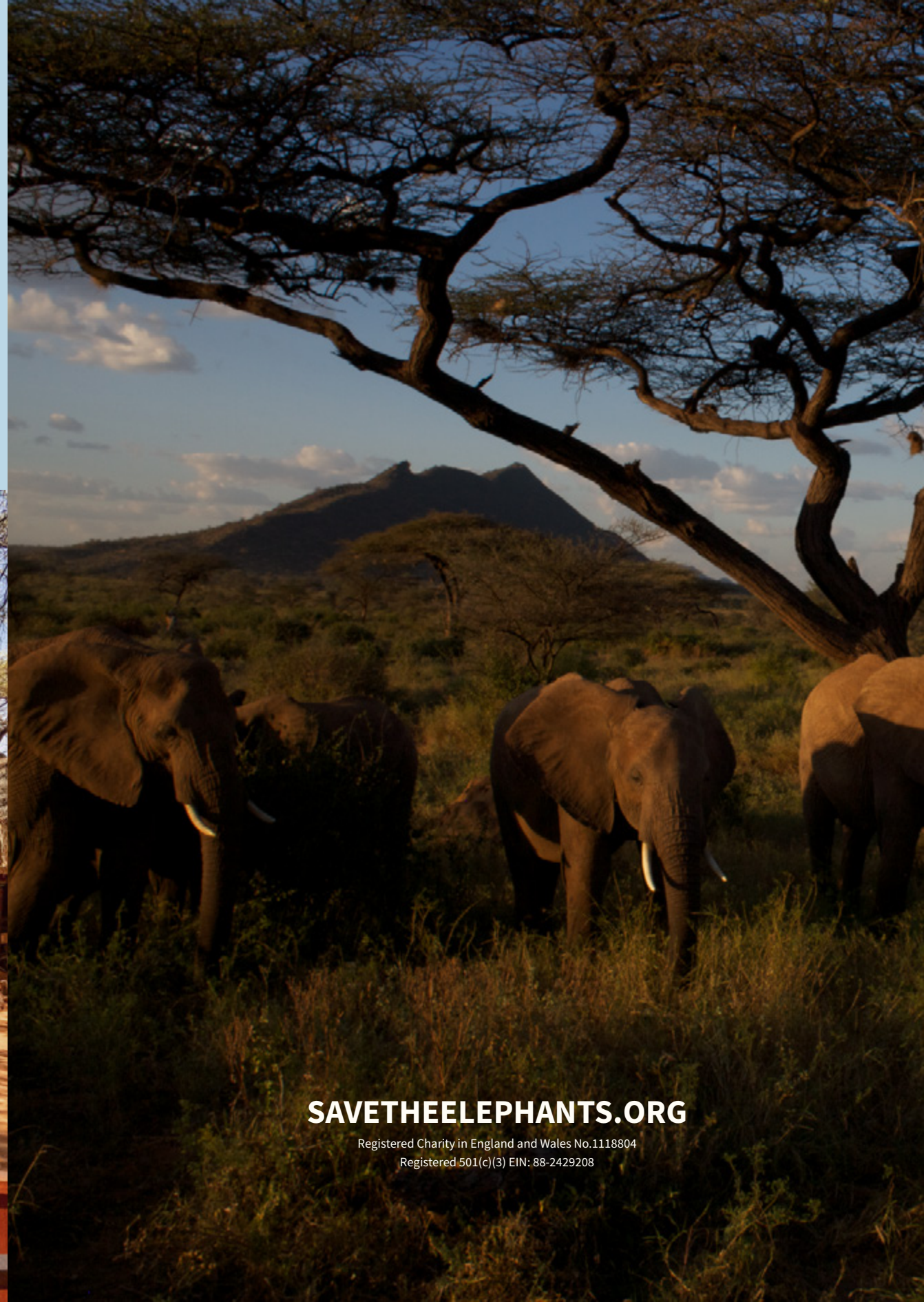
Book Now!

Phone: +254 (0)713 037 886

Email: info@elephantwatchesafari.com



Elephant Watch Camp's Lengumei lays out the table © Susan Molloy



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