



8th July 2011

PRESS RELEASE
SAVE THE ELEPHANTS and OXFORD UNIVERSITY

**Beehive fences as effective deterrents for crop-raiding Elephants:
field trials in northern Kenya**

By Lucy E. King, Iain Douglas-Hamilton and Fritz Vollrath

Increasing elephant populations in Kenya since 1989 have been widely praised as a conservation success story. However, where elephants and agricultural land overlap, incidents of human–elephant conflict are on the increase. Wildlife managers and farmers are now trying different farm-based deterrents to keep elephants out of crops with varying success. Such efforts include the use of dogs, watch towers, fire crackers, fences and chilli pepper barriers.

A new publication published online in the *African Journal of Ecology* by scientists from Save the Elephants and Oxford University, describes the success of beehive fences in preventing crop raiding by elephants within a rural farming community in northern Kenya.



This discovery that elephants avoid honey bees has been the focus of Dr Lucy King's research program in Kenya since 2006. King and colleagues show that elephants not only run away from bee sounds but that they also emit a unique low frequency rumble in response to the threat of bees.

“Finding a way to use live beehives was the next logical step in finding a socially and ecologically sensitive way of taking advantage of elephants’ natural avoidance behaviour to bees to protect farmers’ crops” says King. “The interlinked beehive fences not only stopped elephants from raiding our study farms but the farmers profited from selling honey to supplement their low incomes.”

P.O. Box 54667 · NAIROBI · 00200 · KENYA · TEL: +254 (0) 20 891673 / 890597 / 891335 · FAX: +254 (0) 20 890441 / 890596
E-MAIL: info@savetheelephants.org · www.savetheelephants.org

PATRON: HRH PRINCE BERNHARD OF THE NETHERLANDS, PRESIDENT AND CEO: IAIN DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, D.PHIL, OBE
TRUSTEES: PROFESSOR FRITZ VOLLRATH (CHAIRMAN), FELIX APPELBE BSc Est M, SABA DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, MARLENE MCCAY, PETER HENDERSON, EUAN MACDONALD
UK REG CHARITY No. 1118804



SAVE THE ELEPHANTS



King and colleagues' study was carried out for a period of over two years in Northern Kenya where farm-based field trials were deployed in a Turkana farming community of 62 farms. Only 1 bull elephant broke through the beehive fences to enter a farm during the whole study period. The research results provide the first large scale data to show that beehive fences are indeed effective in preventing the destruction of farm crops and hence have a significant role to play in alleviating human-elephant conflict. Generous donations from Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund and the British Government have helped support this innovative research.



P.O. Box 54667 · NAIROBI · 00200 · KENYA · TEL: +254 (0) 20 891673 / 890597 / 891335 · FAX: +254 (0) 20 890441 / 890596
E-MAIL: info@savetheelephants.org · www.savetheelephants.org

PATRON: HRH PRINCE BERNHARD OF THE NETHERLANDS, PRESIDENT AND CEO: IAIN DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, D.PHIL, OBE
TRUSTEES: PROFESSOR FRITZ VOLLRATH (CHAIRMAN), FELIX APPELBE BSc Est M, SABA DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, MARLENE MCCAY, PETER HENDERSON, EUAN MACDONALD
UK REG CHARITY No. 1118804



This publication can be accessed and downloaded from STE's website at the following link;
<http://www.savetheelephants.org/publications.html>

Published online on 5th July 2011, in *The African Journal of Ecology*.
(doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2028.2011.01275.x)

For more information, please contact:

Iain Douglas-Hamilton
Founder, Save the Elephants
iain@savetheelephants.org

Dr. Lucy E. King
Chief Operations Officer, Save the Elephants
lucy@savetheelephants.org

Or visit the STE website: www.savetheelephants.org

P.O. Box 54667 · NAIROBI · 00200 · KENYA · TEL: +254 (0) 20 891673 / 890597 / 891335 · FAX: +254 (0) 20 890441 / 890596
E-MAIL: info@savetheelephants.org · www.savetheelephants.org

PATRON: HRH PRINCE BERNHARD OF THE NETHERLANDS, PRESIDENT AND CEO: IAIN DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, D.PHIL, OBE
TRUSTEES: PROFESSOR FRITZ VOLLRATH (CHAIRMAN), FELIX APPELBE BSc Est M, SABA DOUGLAS-HAMILTON, MARLENE MCCAY, PETER HENDERSON, EUAN MACDONALD
UK REG CHARITY No. 1118804