

## Chicago Zoo researchers seek to learn how stress impacts the maternal behaviour of wild female chimpanzees.

A team of researchers based at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, and in conjunction with their collaborators at the Jane Goodall Institute and Tanzania National Parks, is seeking to identify the primary causes of stress among the well-documented female chimpanzees living in Gombe.

Stress experienced by chimpanzee mothers impacts the care given to their offspring. It is believed that continued stress may ultimately affect the health and development of infant chimpanzees.

“All sorts of things could be considered stressful for chimpanzee mothers. They nurse their young until they are about four years of age and their older offspring stay with them until they are about eight to 10 years old. They feed not only themselves but also their young. Just getting enough ripe fruit (their primary diet) is difficult without intruding on the resources that belong to other chimp groups nearby. How do they cope? They are basically single-mothers,” said Elizabeth Lonsdorf, Ph.D, director



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# WHAT STRESSES OUT MOTHER CHIMPS?

of the Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes at the Chicago zoo.

Field data on stress levels is now being collected in Gombe and will be combined with behavioural data collected since 1970 by researchers from the Jane Goodall Institute’s Gombe Stream Research Centre.

“For nearly 40 years, researchers have been following mother chimpanzees and their offspring and recorded their interactions. This is a truly amazing dataset of 15,000 hours on 39 different mothers.

No other study site has a comparable amount of data on great-ape mother-infant interactions,” said Lonsdorf.

In Chicago, 22,000 pages of these field-collected hand-written data-sets are undergoing the process of being translated from Swahili into English in order to be inputted into a zoo-designed database for analysis.

Stress is measured by the amount of cortisol (the primate stress-hormone) found in the faecal samples of individual chimpanzees.

## Endangered colobus faces extinction because of poaching – report

The Endangered *Colobus guereza ssp. percivali*, one of the eight subspecies of the colobus guereza, is facing imminent extinction due to poaching in Samburu, a new report says.

The subspecies, commonly referred to as Mt Uarges guereza (or Uarguess guereza) is named after Mt Uarges, one of the mountain ranges that make up the Mathews range where the subspecies was first reported. It is only found in three forests of Samburu within a small geographic range of less than 150 Km<sup>2</sup> that extends from Kirisia Hills to Mathews range and Ndoto forests.

The report titled: “The distribution of the Endangered Mt Uarges

guereza, the de Brazza’s, the Patas, and the Sykes’ monkey, the Somali and Senegal lesser galagos in Samburu, northern Kenya” recommends urgent action to save the endemic subspecies from further decline.

According to the findings of a survey that I led between April 2007 and December 2008 in Mt Nyiro forest, Ndoto forest, Kirisia Hills and Mathews range forest, the subspecies has for a long time been poached for its skin by the local community which uses it for ceremonies such as circumcision. The skin is worn by Morans who tie two pieces round the leg above the ankle to cover the feet.

– Iregi Mwenja

## Ivory Haul Seized in Amboseli

Ivory poachers transporting 703 kg (1,550 lbs) of whole and partially chopped tusks were apprehended on Saturday, April 24, at Mbirikani in the eastern part of the Amboseli ecosystem. The Kenya Police from Oloitokitok, led by Inspector Charles Mwangi, laid ambush on the Oloitokitok-Emali road and nabbed a late-model 4X4 loaded with tusks, most of which probably came from up to 50 Amboseli elephants.

Two men, one Tanzanian and one Kenyan, were apprehended. Six more escaped in unclear circumstances. The poachers’ vehicle had a security

car pass to the last session of Kenya’s parliament.

The plight of elephants in the Amboseli ecosystem has become critical over the past year and more particularly over the past four months. Elephants are being wounded and killed by spears, poison arrows and bullets at an alarming rate. For the first time in many years, tusks are being removed by unknown persons. The Elephant Trust has discovered that the ivory is being sold at Ksh 3,000 (US \$38) per kilo. Most of the ivory is reported to be going across the border into Tanzania. ●

– Elephant Trust