

Dr. Joyce Poole

Elephant Ethologist and Conservationist

Director ElephantVoices



Joyce Poole, one of the world's foremost authorities on elephants, has studied the social behavior and communication of African elephants for over thirty years and has dedicated her life to their conservation and welfare. At the age of 19 she began her life's work in Amboseli National Park studying under mentor, Cynthia Moss. Dr. Poole is a member of Amboseli Elephant Research Project, the world's longest study of elephants, which forms an unparalleled body of knowledge. In 2011 she and her husband, Petter Granli, founded an elephant conservation project in the Maasai Mara.

Dr. Poole received her BA with high honors from Smith College in 1979, her Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 1982 and completed her post-doctoral research at Princeton University.

Poole's observations and discoveries about the intimate social and sexual lives of African elephants include the discovery of the heightened sexual and aggressive phenomenon of musth in male elephants, the use of powerful calls to communicate over long distances, the production of calls below the level of human hearing and the ability of elephants to imitate sounds of other species and machines. Recent collaborative research has shown elephants' capacity for empathy and probed the possibility that mothers demonstrate appropriate courtship behavior to their daughters.

Joyce Poole's critical finding that ivory poaching destroys the social fabric of elephant society was instrumental to the enactment of the international ban on the ivory trade in 1989. Her understanding of male elephant behavior, and the importance of social learning and role models in calf development, have been key to the adoption of more humane elephant management practices, including the banning of elephant capture for captivity in several countries.

As head of the Elephant Program of Kenya Wildlife Service from 1990-1994, Dr. Poole was responsible for elephant conservation and management throughout Kenya. Her knowledge and enthusiasm inspired many young Kenyans who today hold key elephant conservation and welfare positions in the country. In 1996 she was awarded a Smith College Medal for her research and training in Africa.

Dr. Poole's work and discoveries continue to make headlines, giving insight into the minds and behavior of this fascinating and threatened species. She has written numerous popular articles, scores of scientific publications, four of which have appeared in *Nature*, and she has authored two books, *Coming of Age with Elephants* and *Elephants*. Having participated in over 75 TV documentaries, Joyce continues to set the spotlight on elephants and their interests.

Using her in depth knowledge of elephant society, Dr. Poole works consistently for the better treatment and protection of individuals, influencing management policies for wild and captive elephants. She is a leading author of *The Elephant Charter* and has appeared as expert witness on behalf of elephants in legal cases around the world. As a Director of ElephantVoices, and working with Co-Director and husband, Petter Granli, Joyce Poole's mission is to continue to inspire wonder in the intelligence, complexity and voices of elephants and to secure a kinder future for them through research and the sharing of knowledge.