

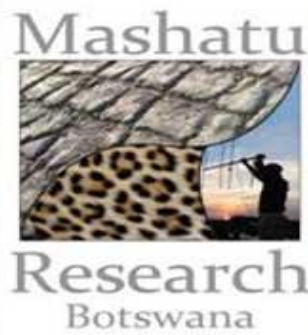
## December 2010 Update

December 2010 was a month that saw plenty of elephants in the reserve, but their movements were not what we have come to expect, as they avoided the areas that they frequented in past years and stayed mainly in the south-eastern areas. Even though the rain continued (however erratically), the Central Area of the reserve did not see much of it, while in other areas there were downpours on a much more regular basis. As such, the elephants did not frequent the Central Area as they have in past years. The reason for them staying in the south-eastern part of the reserve was clear for anyone driving through the area, particularly later in the month, when the devil-thorn started producing its characteristic yellow flowers. The elephants took advantage of these favourable conditions and moved into the area in large numbers.



Also with the coming of the rains, we have had numerous new additions to the elephant population. Although I was lucky enough to see a few new calves last month, this month has been really special in terms of new calf sightings, with new calves being seen every few days. These calves are amazing to watch during their first months of development, and always provide us with ample entertainment, whether it is trying to run after its mother, harassing its siblings, or just trying to get used to using its trunk.

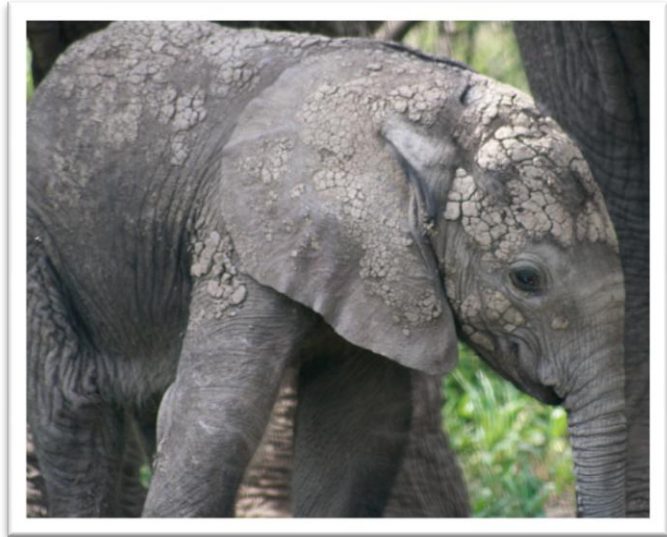




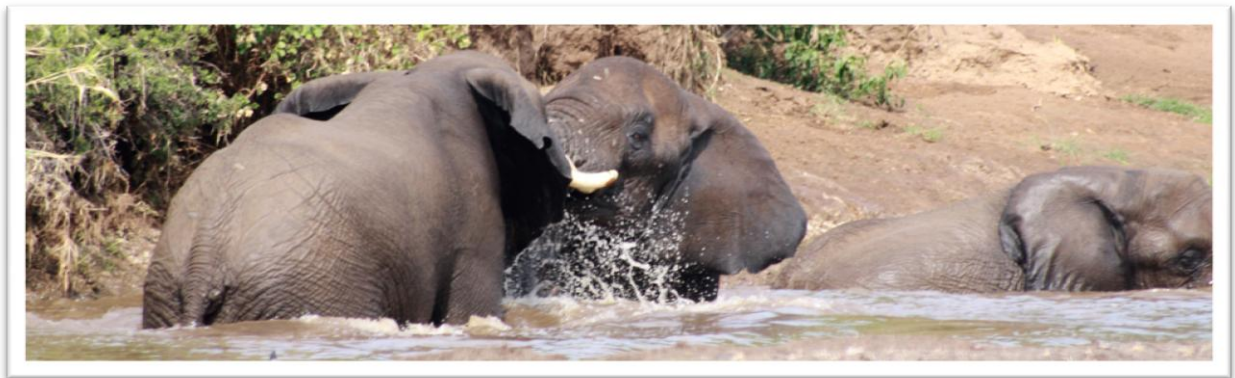
## Ivory Drives

To do an ivory drive in December is always something special. One of the reasons for this is that there are always numerous newborn calves with the herd, and this year we had a few truly special drives. On most of them we were able to get incredibly close to some of these youngsters, and had some really amazing experiences.

On one of the drives, Ilse's herd moved in all around us and started feeding. Everyone was being very protective of the new calf, and when there was a bit of pushing and shoving and waving of ears, it was not towards us, but towards a teenager that had gotten too close to the new calf.

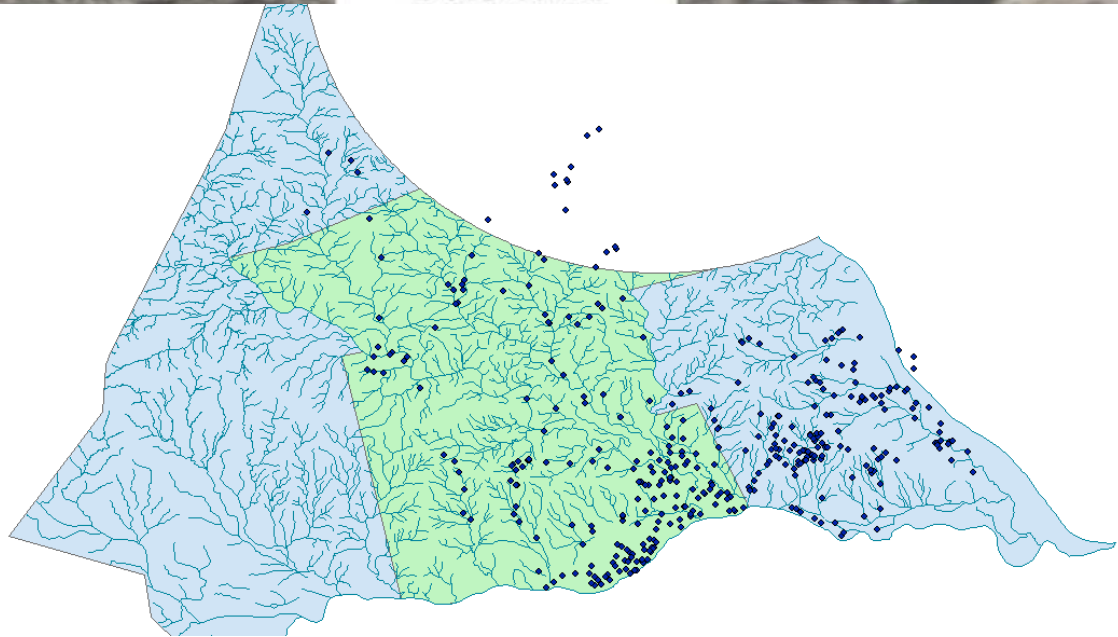


As always, with the heat, the elephants took advantage of the increased rainfall and water in the rivers to enjoy themselves as much as possible, and on one drive, we managed to catch up with three young bulls wallowing in a pool in the Majale River. Just enjoying the water did not keep them occupied for long, and as time passed they started wrestling and pushing each other around, all while enjoying the refreshing water.



## Collared Elephants

As we can see from the map below, Christina's herd spent much of their time in the south and eastern sides of the reserve. They did make one brief foray into Zimbabwe, but soon returned to Botswana.



The matriarch of the herd, Christina, also has a very special reason to celebrate the start of 2011. While on an Ivory Drive we tracked down Christina's herd and we were lucky enough to see that the old girl has something other than taking care of her herd to keep her occupied. By the looks of this youngster, he was born in the last few days of 2010, and appears to be quite healthy.





Research would not be a reality if we do not have the amazing support from so many organisations and individuals who obviously share our love for nature and the vision to conserve our magnificent heritage. Thank you to each and every person who has made a contribution, in whichever way, to the project.

