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Source: Karl A.K. Stromayer, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of International Conservation

TWIN ELEPHANTS BORN IN ADDO

Addo Elephant National Park (AENP), situated approximately 60km NNE of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, is home to Africa's southern most elephant population (excluding the three remaining elephants in the Knysna State Forest). Founded in 1931 with just eleven elephants, Addo's elephant population has now increased (with no immigration) to over 285 individuals, and expansion of the Park is underway to enable continued growth of the population.

A record number of births occurred in 1998, with a total of 29 calves born during the year. Amongst these births were Addo's first ever recorded twins, two females named Duet and Duo, born on 7 October. Although both twins were regularly observed together with their mother, suckling simultaneously (one on each side), following her, or just standing close to her, it was not uncommon to find the twins separated. Duet was usually with her mother, while Duo was often some distance away with other family members. Their mother, a young

cow (18 years old) with just one previous calf, was possibly unable to cope with the demands of two calves at once. Duo was never seen successfully suckling whilst away from her mother — lactating adult cows were observed to push her away, and although sub-adult cows were tolerant of her suckling attempts, they were unable to provide milk. Always the weaker of the twins, Duo unfortunately died shortly before Christmas, when she was just over two months old. Duet, however, appears to be thriving.

Every elephant within Addo (n = 286, February 1999) is currently known as a result of an ongoing research project on the population, initiated in 1996. Additionally, the history of the population has been reconstructed by tracing individual elephants' life histories through photographic and other records. Maternal family trees throughout the Park's life-span have been compiled. These data indicate that Duet, the surviving twin, is the great-great granddaughter of the Park's oldest elephant, 60 year old Buttercup!

Source: Anna Woodd, Addo Elephant National Park P0 Box 52, Addo 6105, South Africa
