

# Rare baby elephant twins born in Kenya

January 20 2022

---



Conservation group Save the Elephants said the twins were first spotted by lucky tourist guides on a safari drive Samburu Reserve in northern Kenya.

An elephant in Kenya has given birth to twins, an extremely rare event, conservationists said Thursday.

Conservation group Save the Elephants said the twins—one male and one female—were born to a mother named Bora.

They were first spotted by lucky tourist guides on a safari drive at the weekend in Samburu reserve in northern Kenya.

Videos show the days-old newborns getting accustomed to their savannah surroundings with their doting mother and an older sibling, Bora's first calf, born in 2017.

African elephants have the largest gestation period of any living mammal, carrying their young for nearly 22 months, and gives birth roughly every four years.

"Twins are rarely encountered in elephant populations and form about only one percent of births," Save the Elephants' founder Iain Douglas-Hamilton said in a statement.

However, elephant twins do not often fare so well. The last pair of twins born in Samburu, in 2006, failed to survive more than a few days.

"Quite often the mothers don't have enough milk to support two calves," Douglas-Hamilton said.

"The next few days will be touch-and-go for the new twins, but we all have our fingers crossed for their survival."



Just one-in-100 elephant births result in twins.

There are an estimated 36,280 elephants in Kenya, according to the country's first-ever national wildlife census conducted last year.

That figure represented a 12-percent increase in population numbers recorded in 2014, when killing for ivory was higher.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) warned last year that poaching and habitat destruction, particularly due to land conversion for agriculture, had had a devastating effect on elephant numbers in Africa as a whole.

The population of African savanna elephants plunged by at least 60

percent in the last half century, prompting their reclassification as "endangered" in the latest update to the IUCN's "Red List" of threatened species.

© 2022 AFP

Citation: Rare baby elephant twins born in Kenya (2022, January 20) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-01-rare-baby-elephant-twins-born.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.