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**REVERED ELEPHANT MATRIARCH SAVES HER FAMILY
FROM DROUGHT AND FAMINE IN NEW DOCUMENTARY
*ECHO: QUEEN OF THE ELEPHANTS***

*--Researcher Cynthia Moss and Team Follow These Gentle Giants in Pursuit of Preserving the
Dwindling African Elephant Population--*

(Silver Spring, MD—November 16, 2009) Twelve hundred elephants live nestled at the foot of Africa’s tallest mountain, Kilimanjaro. These magnificent animals – the most studied group of free, wild elephants on earth – and the determined researchers who study and hope to protect them are the subjects of Animal Planet’s powerful, two-hour documentary **ECHO: QUEEN OF THE ELEPHANTS** premiering **Thursday, December 3, from 8-10PM (ET/PT)**. The vast Kenyan savannah is experiencing one of its worst droughts in living memory. As a result, these majestic creatures, which cherish familial ties and experience emotions similar to those of humans, must watch as their family members fall victim to thirst, starvation and poaching. Tragically, it is estimated that hundreds of elephants have died as a result.

With the filmmakers who brought viewers the breathtaking images in PLANET EARTH, this beautiful documentary tells the story of one remarkable heroine – Echo, the elephant matriarch – as she battles the elements on the last journey of her celebrated life. Each day is a new fight for survival and an opportunity for triumph for Echo and her family. As she nears the end of her life, she must find the strength to win her final battle—to save her family as she prepares to pass on the reigns of her African kingdom.

“**ECHO: QUEEN OF THE ELEPHANTS** combines spectacular cinematography and the plight of these animals to capture a very intimate story of survival,” says Marjorie Kaplan, president and general manager of Animal Planet. “Mother Nature who gives us the awe-inspiring images we expect from natural history films is also wreaking havoc on these majestic creatures. The nearly

indescribable beauty and courage of Echo, her family and the researchers is important and deeply moving.”

With the help of Cynthia Moss, her team of researchers and the cinematographer, who have studied and filmed Echo and her family for almost 40 years, this telling documentary provides viewers a sustained, insider’s look at the daily dramas and intimate moments of Echo, her family and the other colossal creatures who call the Amboseli National Park in Kenya their home.

“Echo has been invaluable in teaching us about the social interactions, communication and leadership of elephants,” says Moss. “But to those who have studied Echo for all these years—she is much more than a research subject. Echo is a powerful presence in our lives and the lives of her family. She’s been a companion; she’s given us joy and filled us with wonder on a daily basis, and for that, I will always be grateful.”

In 1972, Moss founded the now famous Amboseli Elephant Research Project to study and conserve these African animals. Since then, she and her research associates have identified and recorded more than 2500 elephants. Without formal scientific training but armed with a passion for learning, Moss has become the world’s leading expert on the African elephant family structure, life cycle and behavior. Her research efforts contribute significantly to the conservation of Africa’s elephant populations.

While Echo was able to survive hungry predators, angry poachers and other deadly pitfalls, tragically, the drought chronicled in **ECHO: QUEEN OF THE ELEPHANTS** ultimately took her life. At 63, her body could no longer deal with the severe effects of the conditions and without rain, the end is nowhere in sight.

To learn more about the Amboseli Elephant Research Project or to donate to the cause, please visit <http://www.elephanttrust.org/>. To learn more about African elephants, please visit <http://animal.discovery.com/guides/mammals/habitat/tropgrassland/africeleph.html>.

ECHO: QUEEN OF THE ELEPHANTS was produced for Animal Planet by Discovery Studios in association with Mike Birkhead Associates, Off The Fence and Animal Planet

International. Christine Weber is the executive producer and Dana Kemp is the producer for Discovery Studios. Melinda Toporoff is the executive producer for Animal Planet.

Animal Planet Media (APM), a multi-media business unit of Discovery Communications, is the world's only entertainment brand that immerses viewers in the full range of life in the animal kingdom with rich, deep content via multiple platforms and offers animal lovers and pet owners access to a centralized online, television and mobile community for immersive, engaging, high-quality entertainment, information and enrichment. APM consists of the Animal Planet television network, available in more than 96 million homes in the US; online assets www.animalplanet.com, the ultimate online destination for all things animal; the 24/7 broadband channel, Animal Planet Beyond; Petfinder.com, the #1 pet-related Web property globally that facilitates pet adoption; [PetsIncredible](http://PetsIncredible.com), a major producer and distributor of pet-training videos and includes web service PetVideo.com; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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