

ADVERTISEMENT

Parents! Give **kids** MAGAZINE



Free Gift with your order

SUBSCRIBE NOW

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC NEWS

REPORTING YOUR WORLD DAILY

TODAY'S BEST NEWS PHOTO



[Photo in the News: Dead Whale Found With Car-Size Tongue](#)

VIDEO IN THE NEWS



[Video: Beached Baby Whale's Race Against the Clock](#)

[News Front Page](#)

[15 Most Popular News Stories](#)

[Photos in the News](#)

[Videos in the News](#)

[Animals & Nature News](#)

[Archaeology & Paleontology News](#)

[Environment News](#)

[Health News](#)

[History & Culture News](#)

[Weird News](#)

[Science & Space News](#)

[Travel & Adventure News](#)

NEWS FEEDS

[XML](#) [RSS](#)

Get our news delivered directly to your desktop—free.

[How to Use XML or RSS](#)

PODCAST

[News Front Page](#) > [Animals & Nature](#)

Elephants "Learn" to Avoid Land Mines in War-Torn Angola

Leon Marshall in Johannesburg, South Africa for [National Geographic News](#)
July 16, 2007

[Elephants](#) moving into war-ravaged southern [Angola](#) from neighboring countries appear to have developed the ability to avoid the land mines that litter the region, scientists report.

Michael Chase, a biologist who has been studying the elephants for seven years, says he first detected the animals' apparent ability to avoid the mines from satellite-collar tracking images.



[Enlarge Photo](#)

The elephants are returning in growing numbers to southeast Angola, where thousands of the animals were massacred during the country's protracted civil war, said Chase, who heads the nonprofit conservation group Elephants Without Borders.

The region was headquarters for Jonas Savimbi's rebel UNITA movement, which is reported to have sold ivory to pay for

TODAY'S MOST POPULAR NEWS STORY



[Photo Gallery: New 7 Wonders vs. Ancient 7 Wonders](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Today's NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



ONLY \$15!

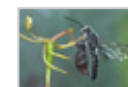
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

SUBSCRIBE

LATEST PHOTOS IN THE NEWS



[Dead Whale Found With Car-Size Tongue](#)



[New "Wasp" Orchids Tempt Male Bugs](#)

Listen to the free weekly National Geographic [News podcast](#), featuring top science and nature headlines, entertaining interviews, and more!

[New to podcasts?](#)

FREE NEWSLETTER

Sign up for our free [Inside National Geographic](#) newsletter.

Every two weeks we'll send you our top stories and photos ([see sample](#)).

CONTACT US

[Email the News Staff](#)

[Contact Other Staff](#)

SHOP



[Visual History of the World Book](#)

[Printer Friendly](#)

[Email to a Friend](#)

RELATED

- [Elephants Airlifted to Repopulate War-Torn Park in Angola \(September 4, 2001\)](#)
- [Elephants: Photos, Video, Fast Facts, More](#)
- [5-Country Conservation Area Would Aid Africa's Largest Elephant Herd \(April 4, 2007\)](#)

weapons.

(Read related story: "[Illegal Ivory Trade Boosted by Angola Craft Markets, Conservationists Say](#)" [October 27, 2006].)

Since the end of the war in 2002, elephants have begun to go back to the Luiana Partial Reserve in Angola's sparsely populated Cuando Cubango province that borders southwest [Zambia](#) and [Namibia](#) (see [Africa map](#)).

Chase said that when the initial migration began a number of elephants had their trunks and legs blown off by mines, condemning the animals to agonizing deaths. But the elephants that followed since have avoided those areas.

"I don't know if elephants have 'learned' to avoid land mines, but my limited observations suggest they might have," he said.

"Once I overlay the movements of our five satellite-collared elephants with the location of [the known] mine fields, it would appear that they were avoiding these areas."

Evidence that elephants are avoiding the danger zones is supported by his team's observations on the ground, he added.

"We have not seen any evidence of elephants being blown up or injured by land mine explosions in the three years we have been working in this area," he said.

"Incidents of elephants being injured or killed by land mines used to happen often when elephants were chased over these areas by people."

Continued on [Next Page >>](#)



[Photo Gallery: New Skintight Space Suit Design Unveiled](#)

[More Photos in the News](#)

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S PHOTO OF THE DAY



- [Today's Photo](#)
- [Download as Wallpaper](#)

Podcasts



National Geographic to Go

National Geographic News, Videos, and More
[Download Podcasts](#)

BEST PRICE AVAILABLE

\$15

ORDER NOW ►

12 ISSUES OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

SAVE 74%

LATEST VIDEOS IN THE NEWS



[Video: Beached Baby Whale's Race Against the Clock](#)



[Video: Humpback Whales' Feeding Frenzy](#)



[Video: Egypt's Most Famous Female King Found](#)

[More Videos in the News](#)

SOURCES AND RELATED WEB SITES

- [Kruger National Park](#)
- [Zambia Wildlife Authority: Elephants Without Borders](#)

 NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM

© 1996-2007 National Geographic Society. All rights reserved.

[Home](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Search](#) | [Free Newsletters](#) | [Subscriptions](#)

[Shopping](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
| [Press Room](#)