

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee  
Lyon (France), 7 - 11 March 2022

Species specific matters

ELEPHANTS (ELEPHANTIDAE SPP.):  
IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION CONF. 10.10 (REV. COP18):  
REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been submitted by the Secretariat.

Background

2. Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, in the section **Regarding trade in elephant specimens**, directs the Standing Committee in paragraph 17 to:
  - a) *review actions taken by the Parties to implement the provisions of this Resolution, particularly – but not limited to – the provisions concerning trade in elephant specimens,*
  - b) *make targeted recommendations as appropriate, in accordance with the Guidelines contained in Annex 3, which may include requesting identified Parties to develop and implement National Ivory Action Plans; and*
  - c) *report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties;*
3. Paragraph 19 of the same Resolution further **DIRECTS the Secretariat to report at each regular meeting of the Standing Committee on any apparent problems in the implementation of this Resolution or in the control of trade in elephant specimens, and to assist the Standing Committee in its reporting to the Conference of the Parties.**
4. In order to meet its reporting requirements indicated above, the Secretariat prepared this document for consideration by the Standing Committee at the present meeting. The report provides an update on the implementation of various provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*. The report also includes information on the implementation of Decisions on *Trade in Asian elephants* (*Elephas maximus*) and *trade in mammoth ivory* adopted at the 18th meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP18, Geneva, 2019).
5. The document is divided into five sections to facilitate its consideration by the Standing Committee:
  - Part 1 on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) as it relates to reports to be submitted by the Secretariat for consideration by the Standing Committee.
  - Part 2 on the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) MIKE and ETIS Subgroup of the Standing Committee.
  - Part 3 on the implementation of Decisions 18.226 and 18.227 on *Trade in Asian elephants* (*Elephas maximus*).
  - Part 4 on the implementation of Decision 18.120 on *Trade in mammoth ivory*.

- Part 5 on reporting by the Standing Committee to the 19th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES (CoP19).
6. A number of provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) and associated Decisions adopted at CoP18 are subject to separate documents prepared for consideration by the Standing Committee at the present meeting:
- *National ivory action plans: Report of the Secretariat* in terms of paragraphs 10 and 17 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) (see document SC74 Doc. 28.4)
  - *Closure of domestic ivory markets: Report of the Secretariat* on the implementation of Decisions 18.117 to 18.119 (see document SC74 Doc. 39)
  - *Review of the ETIS programme: Report of the Secretariat* on the implementation of Decisions 18.18 to 18.20 (see document SC74 Doc. 12)
  - *MIKE and ETIS programmes: Report of the Secretariat* on the implementation of Decisions 18.21 and 18.22 (see document SC74 Doc. 13)
  - *Guidance on ivory stockpiles: Report of the working group* on the implementation of Decisions 18.182 and 18.183 (see document SC74 Doc. 61.1)
  - *Annual inventories of stockpiles: Report of the Secretariat* on the implementation of Decisions 18.184 and 18.185 (see document SC74 Doc. 61.2)

Part 1: Reporting by the Secretariat as per paragraph 12 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18)

7. Paragraphs 12 of the Resolution, directed to the Secretariat, provides the following:

12. *DIRECTS the Secretariat, pending the necessary external funding, to:*

- a) *report on information and analyses provided by MIKE and ETIS at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, subject to the availability of adequate new MIKE or ETIS data, at relevant meetings of the Standing Committee; and, in collaboration with TRAFFIC as appropriate, provide other reports, updates or information on MIKE and ETIS as required by the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or Parties;*
  - b) *prior to relevant meetings of the Standing Committee, invite the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to provide an overview of trade in elephant specimens as recorded in the CITES database; the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) African and Asian Elephant Specialist Groups to submit any new and relevant information on the conservation status of elephants, pertinent conservation actions and management strategies; and African elephant range States to provide information on progress made in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; and*
  - c) *on the basis of the information specified in paragraphs a) and b) above, recommend actions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee;*
8. Adequate new MIKE and ETIS data is available to enable the Secretariat to report at the present meeting as required in paragraph 12 a). In accordance with paragraph 12 b), the Secretariat invited UNEP-WCMC, IUCN and the Chair of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (Chad) to provide new and relevant information concerning the trade in and conservation of elephants. The Secretariat is grateful for their submissions.
9. The various contributions were compiled into an integrated report that is presented in Annex 1 to the present document. It gives an overview of the levels of illegal killing of elephants, illegal and legal trade in elephant specimens, the status of African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) and Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) populations, and updates from the African Elephant Fund on the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan. Key features of the report in Annex 1 are presented below.

### ***Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme***

10. At the time of writing (December 2021), there are 69 designated MIKE sites in Africa, which together hold an estimated 50% of the African elephant population, and 30 sites in Asia. It is less clear what proportion of the total Asian elephant population is represented in these sites, but it is estimated to be approximately 25%.
11. In 2020, Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe was added to the MIKE site network in Africa, while Yok Don National Park in Viet Nam was added to the MIKE site network in Asia. Bangladesh expanded its MIKE site to include the broader landscape of Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary.
12. MIKE data is collected in the field by law enforcement and ranger patrols and through other means in designated MIKE sites. When an elephant carcass is found, site personnel try to establish the cause of death and other details, such as sex and age of the animal, status of ivory and stage of decomposition of the carcass. This information is recorded in standardized carcass forms, details of which are then submitted to the CITES MIKE Programme. The MIKE Online Database developed by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with the Science Division of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with funding from the European Union, facilitates online submission of data and contains more than 23,000 records submitted by participating range States.
13. The programme evaluates relative poaching levels based on the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE), which is calculated on an annual basis as the number of illegally killed elephants found divided by the total number of elephant carcasses found, which includes elephants illegally killed, elephants that died of natural causes, management-related deaths and deaths recorded as unknown (i.e., carcasses for which the cause of death could not be determined). PIKE is an index of poaching pressure and provides trends relating to the levels of poaching. It may be affected by several potential biases related to data quality, reporting rate, carcass detection probabilities, variation in natural mortality rates and other factors, and hence results need to be interpreted with caution.

#### ***Human-elephant conflict data***

14. Based on reporting by range States, elephant deaths associated with human elephant conflict are sometimes categorized as “illegal”, while in other cases these are reported as “management-related deaths” or deaths where the cause is not known and therefore classified as “unknown”. The CITES Secretariat assessed the 773 records (3% of all carcass records) where Parties reported that elephant deaths were associated with human elephant conflict. In Africa, the majority of these cases were recorded as “management-related deaths” (58% or 387 records), while in Asia, they were most commonly recorded as “illegal” (67% or 70 records). Because PIKE is used as an index of poaching, it is important to understand to what extent deaths associated with human elephant conflict, which may be recorded as “illegal” but not considered poaching, is included. The CITES Secretariat will continue to collaborate with participating range States and the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to get further clarification on this matter and refine the MIKE analysis accordingly.

#### ***PIKE analysis in 2021***

15. The previous [MIKE report for Africa and Asia](#) included the analysis of data collected from 2003 till the end of 2019 in Africa and till the end of 2017 in Asia. The report was published on the CITES website on 16 November 2020 and detailed the new PIKE trend analysis methodology. As indicated in that report, the MIKE-ETIS TAG recommended the use of the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) to interpret PIKE trends over time. A weighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.w**) model that includes elephant population estimates from each MIKE site was trialled on an experimental basis but requires further work by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with the MIKE-ETIS TAG.
16. The 2021 PIKE trends analysis is presented in Annex 1 to the present document and is summarized below. It was conducted following the methodology mentioned in the paragraph above and considered by the MIKE-ETIS TAG at its online meeting that took place on 28 and 29 June 2021.

#### ***PIKE trends: Africa***

17. The dataset used for this latest PIKE trend analysis for Africa consists of 22,015 records of elephant carcasses found and recorded between 2003 and the end of 2020 at 66 MIKE sites in 30 range States in Africa, representing a total of 760 site-years.

18. Compared to the [previous PIKE trend analysis](#) of November 2020, the PIKE trend analysis presented in this document considers an additional 1,285 records of elephant carcasses encountered in the course of 2020, that were reported by 62 MIKE sites in Africa. The number of reporting MIKE sites increased from 58 in 2019 to 62 in 2020. Compared to 2019, 21 more elephant carcass records were submitted in 2020. 228 of the 1,285 carcasses reported in 2020 were recorded as illegally killed; while 335 of the 1,306 carcasses reported in 2019 were recorded as illegally killed.
19. The annual mean **continental PIKE** generally increased from 2003 to 2010, peaked in 2011, and decreased from 2011 to 2020. Prior to the maximum value of PIKE in 2011, the trendline for the unweighted Bayesian GLMM PIKE estimates shows that there is sufficient evidence to confirm an upward trend (increase in PIKE) from 2003 to 2011, and a downward trend (decrease in PIKE) from 2011 to 2020. Over the last five years (2016 to 2020), the unweighted continental PIKE estimate shows a downward trend with a level of certainty over 95%. The 2020 PIKE estimate is the lowest since 2003.
20. There is strong evidence that the PIKE trend in **Central Africa** increased from 2003 to 2011, then remained at high PIKE levels up to 2019 and decreased in 2020.
21. Between 2003 and 2019, the highest PIKE estimate for **Eastern Africa** was in 2011. Based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM analysis, there is strong evidence of a downward trend in PIKE between 2011 and 2020.
22. Based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM analysis, PIKE in **Southern Africa** increased between 2003 and 2011 and subsequently decreased from 2011 to 2020. Between 2015 and 2017, the PIKE estimate remained relatively unchanged, and a downward trend started in 2018 which continued in 2020.
23. Inferring a subregional trend for the **West Africa** subregion with the smallest African elephant population is difficult, given the total number of carcasses reported and the number of sites that reported zero carcasses found. Compared to the three other subregions, West Africa reported the lowest total number of carcasses (914 over 18 years). This results in a high level of uncertainty of the PIKE estimates and the trend needs to be interpreted with caution. From 2019 to 2020, the PIKE estimate remained relatively unchanged. For 2020, the unweighted PIKE estimate in West Africa is 0.52 (range: 0.25 - 0.77) and above the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.34 (range: 0.28 – 0.39) for the same year.

#### *PIKE trends: Asia*

24. The CITES Secretariat reported in November 2020 on the levels and trends in illegal killing of Asian elephants [for the years 2003 – 2017 \(see MIKE report\)](#). The dataset used for this latest PIKE trend analysis for Asia contained in Annex 1 to the present document consists of 3,887 records of elephant carcasses found between 2003 and the end of 2019 at 29 MIKE sites in 13 range States in Asia, representing a total of 254 site-years.
25. The data received for 2020 was incomplete and therefore not included in the analysis. All the MIKE sites in southeast Asia submitted reports for 2020, but only ten of the fifteen MIKE sites in south Asia submitted data due to complications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
26. Approximately 94% (3,657 out of 3,887) of the carcasses are from MIKE sites in south Asia and the remaining 6% (=230/3,887) from MIKE sites in southeast Asia. It should be noted that more than 70% of Asian elephants occur in south Asia.
27. The number of reporting countries and sites remained the same in 2018 and 2019. A total of 287 carcasses were reported on in 2018, and 318 in 2019; the number of Asian elephants recorded as illegally killed decreased slightly from 44 in 2018 to 40 in 2019.
28. The continental PIKE trend based on the unweighted Bayesian GLM in the last five years (2015-2019) has remained relatively flat. From 2018 to 2019, the PIKE estimate slightly decreased and the unweighted PIKE estimate is 0.33 (range: 0.24 - 0.43).
29. No trend analysis disaggregated by the two Asian sub regions is presented because a significant proportion of carcasses are reported by south Asia and India in particular, which holds the largest population of Asian elephants, while the average number of carcasses in southeast Asia is small. The estimates at each subregion have wider confidence intervals compared to the continental results and therefore only the continental results were included in the report in Annex 1.

### ***Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) Programme***

30. ETIS is a comprehensive and global information system whose central feature is a database holding the details of seizures or confiscations of elephant ivory and other elephant specimens reported to occur since 1989.
31. As of 20 October 2021, there were 32,353 records in ETIS from 1989-2020, of which 29,447 represent ivory seizures and confiscations (hereafter referred to as seizures or records for brevity), while the remainder comprises seizures of non-ivory elephant products (including manufactured hide products, hair products and meat).
32. Overall, reporting to ETIS slightly improved from previous years with 49 Parties reporting data for 2020 (compared to 47 Parties reporting data for 2019 and 42 for 2018). Additional seizure data for 24 Parties covering the period from 2016 to 2019 was received from the World Customs Organization (WCO). Nine of these 24 Parties did not report to ETIS for at least one of these years, and therefore the WCO seizure records represented the only records available for these Parties for these years.
33. The input data for the analysis comprised of 16,818 ETIS records from 68 countries spanning 2008 – 2020.
34. In 2019, the third highest weight of ivory seizures for the period 2008 to 2020 was reported to ETIS, with three record-setting seizures recorded in 2019, each totalling 7.5 tonnes or more. In 2020, lower numbers of seizures and seized weight of elephant specimens were reported than in the preceding year.
35. The illegal ivory trade trend analysis based on the transaction index shows that there was a peak in ivory seizures in 2014 – 2015, after which there has been an overall decreasing trend in illegal ivory trade to 2020, with 2020 estimates comparable to the baseline levels of 2008. Similar to results from the MIKE trend analyses, ETIS trends have been declining in recent years, but for 2020 it is not possible to determine the extent to which this is due to a real decrease in illegal ivory trade, e.g., stemming from enhanced controls by Parties or declining demand, or due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on overall trade, including in illegal wildlife. It is assumed therefore that 2020 data may represent an unusual outlier year for global trade and illegal ivory trade activities. An analysis of seizure information for 2021 and following years may clarify whether these decreasing trends will be sustained.
36. From 2008 to 2020, ETIS recorded 165 seizures greater than 500 kg in total weight, the majority of which (155 seizures) involved raw ivory. Forensic data for 24 of these 165 seizures (all made before 2018) is available and has been included in ETIS. More recent records of large seizures made from 2018 to 2020 (n=19) have yet to have forensic examination data shared with ETIS as recommended in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18). In each of the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, nine seizures greater than 500 kg were reported.
37. Apparent underreporting of ivory seizures to ETIS continues to be an issue, including by countries that are part of the NIAP process. In some cases, additional data from WCO, or open-source data from CITES reports, NGO information, or media reports may indicate that seizures are made by Parties that they themselves do not report. While some lack of reporting can be corrected for by the current models, and alternative improved options for estimating the ETIS reporting covariate are currently being explored, it is essential that Parties comply with data reporting guidelines to ETIS so that trends in illegal trade can be analyzed and monitored effectively and in a timely manner over extended periods of time. Currently, there is an average time lag of about 300 days between seizure occurrence and reporting to ETIS, which is more than triple the 90 days specified in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18).
38. ETIS Online (<https://etisonline.org/>) was launched on 15 October 2020. Available in the three languages of the Convention, the online portal allows Parties to upload, view, download, and verify ETIS records relating to their country; view and download their country's report for a given or multiple years; and view and download ETIS reports to the Standing Committee and to the Conference of the Parties. Strict registration protocols developed with the CITES Secretariat are in place to verify users with their respective country's Management Authorities. TRAFFIC has been offering training to Management Authority staff concerning the use and functionalities of ETIS Online. To date, ETIS Online has 72 users from 46 countries and 18 Parties have submitted 336 records online, some doing so continuously throughout 2021. Having more Parties register on ETIS Online and use it as the main portal for continuous ETIS data submission will result in a more consistent, timely, and complete reporting and would help to optimize outputs and delivery of ETIS analyses results to the Parties and the CITES Secretariat.

## **Legal trade in elephant specimens**

39. An overview of reported trade in *Loxodonta africana* using CITES annual report data over the period 2016 – 2019 provides the following insights:
- a) Reported direct trade by African elephant range States principally comprised wild-sourced tusks, skin pieces and skins for hunting trophy (H) and commercial (T) purposes, in addition to wild-sourced specimens for scientific (S) purposes.
  - b) Direct trade in wild-sourced ivory carvings reported by African elephant range States totalled 222 kg and 195 items. The majority (72%) of ivory carvings traded by weight were reported in 2017 (160 kg), and approximately half of the ivory carvings reported by number were reported in 2019 (102 items).
  - c) Trade in tusks reported by number decreased by 67% between 2016 and 2019 according to data reported by African elephant range States, while the number of tusks reported by importers decreased by 71%.
  - d) When the number of individual elephants involved in the trade is estimated (by assuming that for the tusks data provided, two tusks equal one individual and that each trophy equals one individual), exports reported by most African elephant range States decreased between 2016 and 2019 (Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Exports reported by two range States increased over this period (Cameroon and the United Republic of Tanzania).
  - e) When the declared export quotas for tusks as sport-hunted trophies are compared with exporter-reported and importer-reported data for both tusks and hunting trophies (assuming that one trophy includes two tusks), no exporting range State appears to have exceeded their annual export quotas set in 2018 or 2019.
40. Many Parties do not follow the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports* consistently and this could lead to double counting of trophies. Standardisation in reporting of hunting trophies through application of the *Guidelines*, in particular for species such as *Loxodonta africana* where export quotas have been established, is crucial to assessing compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

## **Status of African and Asian elephant populations**

### *African elephant population status*

41. The IUCN African elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) maintains the African Elephant Database (AED), the formal repository for geospatial information on the numbers and distribution of the species. The principal findings of the 2016 African Elephant Status Report (2016 AESR) were summarized in the Annex to document [SC69 Doc. 51.1](#). The report identified 37 African elephant range States with a known and possible elephant range of over 3.1 million km<sup>2</sup>; surveys indicated a total population of 415,428 (± 20,111) elephants, with an additional 117,127 to 135,384 elephants in areas not systematically surveyed.
42. The AfESG resolved that an update of the African Elephant Status Report (AESR) will be initiated in 2021/2022, covering five years from 2016 to 2020 inclusive. There are expectations that African elephants could be on a recovery trajectory given fewer poaching incidents compared to the period before 2016. However, as elephant populations recover, they may come into conflict with humans and this may result in conflict-related elephant deaths.
43. Results for elephant surveys conducted in three of the four subregions (Central, Eastern and Southern Africa) since 21 December 2015 are captured in the African Elephant Database maintained by the AfESG, which will form the basis of the next status report.
44. The AfESG and IUCN decided in 2021 to treat African forest (*Loxodonta (africana) cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta (africana) africana*) as two separate species. This was the result of a consensus that had emerged among experts following new research into the genetics of elephant populations ([Loxodonta africana subspecies distribution across African Elephant Database Input Zones](#)). If a similar decision is adopted by CITES, this may have implications for implementing CITES processes. In this regard, the Animals Committee agreed at its 31st meeting (AC31, online, June 20121) to submit to the Conference of the Parties



at its 19th meeting a number of draft decisions to initiate a process for assessing the effects of splitting the African elephant in two species (see [AC31 Sum. 3](#)).

45. The reassessment of the Red List status of the African Elephant was conducted separately for the two species of the African elephant recognized by the IUCN, with the forest *Loxodonta cyclotis* listed as Critically Endangered and the savannah *Loxodonta africana* listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2021). Before this update, African elephants were treated as a single species, listed as Vulnerable.
46. The AfESG indicated in its report that African elephants continue to be threatened by poaching, human–elephant conflict-related deaths and deterioration of their habitats through increased anthropogenic activities.

#### *Asian elephant population status*

47. The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) is distributed in 13 countries across south Asia and southeast Asia over an area of 486,800 km<sup>2</sup> with an estimated population of between 48,323–51,680 in the wild. The region also has about 14,930 – 15,130 Asian elephants in captivity.
48. Although the overall Asian elephant population remains stable, declining elephant populations in Cambodia, Indonesia (Sumatra), the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam are of concern. Only 100 – 130 elephants are thought to be left in the wild in Viet Nam (from an estimated 1,500 – 2,000 in the 1980s).
49. The challenges to elephant conservation across its distribution range in Asia are habitat loss and fragmentation, human–elephant conflict, poaching and illegal trade in elephants. Human–elephant conflict remains the number one cause of human-induced mortality for Asian elephants in the wild.
50. Illegal trade in ivory and other elephant parts and products remains a major concern in some countries in the region and apart from ivory, the illegal trade in other body parts of elephants, particularly skin, has increased in the last few years, especially in Myanmar.
51. The IUCN Asian elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) informed that illegal trade in live Asian elephants is reported from Cambodia, India (north-eastern part of India), the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

#### ***African Elephant Fund (AEF) and implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan***

52. Progress is reported by the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (AEFSC) through its Chair (Chad).
53. In April 2021, a new AEFSC was elected following the expiry of the term served by the previous AEFSC. The election was conducted by a written no-objection procedure. The current AEFSC will serve for a period of three years (2021 – 2023) as stipulated in the Rules of Procedure of the AEFSC.
54. Since the start of the AEF in 2010, 40 projects have been completed in African elephant range States in support of the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP).
55. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AEF issued an emergency call for proposals to provide funding to range States to address elephant conservation challenges related to the pandemic. A package of 19 project proposals was approved by the AEFSC.
56. The review of the AEAP was initiated in 2018. Several consultative meetings and discussions have been held to gather views and expert opinions on the recommended revisions to the Plan. The IUCN AfESG has provided detailed technical inputs for consideration in order to reflect the current realities in the conservation of the African elephant. These reports have informed part of the discussions by the African elephant range States that have also shared their views on the current plan and proposed changes during a meeting convened by UNEP in November 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The review process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the process has been reinstituted with the goal of finalization and endorsement by the range States in 2022.

57. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the AEF have been revised based on the inputs and comments received from the range States, donors, AEFSC and the AEF Secretariat. The ToRs will be circulated to the African range States for final review and endorsement.

#### Observations by the Secretariat on the report in Annex 1

58. The report in Annex 1 provides an update since SC70 (Sochi, 2018) (see document [SC70 Doc. 49.1, Annex 1](#)) on the levels of illegal killing of elephants, illegal and legal trade in elephant specimens, the status of elephant populations, and the implementation of the AEAP supported through the AEF.
59. The Secretariat notes that reporting by range States on MIKE and by Parties on ETIS improved over the last few years and that the online systems (MIKE Online Database and ETIS Online) will play an important role in further facilitating timely data submission. Parties should be encouraged to make use of these online platforms to meet these reporting obligations.
60. The Secretariat is of the view that the trends and information provided in the report, especially the downward PIKE trend in Africa based on MIKE data, the overall decreasing trend in illegal ivory trade based on the ETIS data, and the expectation expressed by the IUCN AfESG that the African elephant populations may be on a recovery trajectory, are encouraging. The Secretariat commends the efforts of elephant range States and other Parties as well as partners in supporting actions to bring about this positive change. Continued action and commitment by all role players are required to ensure the downward trends in illegal killing and trade are maintained. The role and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be established at present but could affect resources available in range States for conservation and wildlife management.
61. The lack of recent survey data for West Africa and Asia is concerning because the African elephant populations in West Africa and the Asian elephant populations in southeast Asia are small, fragmented and isolated and therefore vulnerable to the various threats, including poaching, habitat loss and fragmentation due to increasing pressure on natural areas. The 2016 African Elephant Status Report reported that West Africa lost twelve populations of elephants since the African Elephant Status Report published in 2007. At the MIKE Subregional Steering Committee meeting for West Africa in October 2021, the range States indicated that support is needed to conduct and fund surveys. With regards to Asian elephant populations, the [Red List assessment](#) reflected on the fact that lack of reliable population estimates across most of the Asian elephant range presents a considerable challenge to detect declines, emphasizing the need to conduct surveys.
62. In terms of reporting on legal trade, the guidance to standardise reporting of hunting trophies included in the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports* seems still not applied consistently by Parties. This is a matter that has been raised by UNEP-WCMC in previous reports as well. At its 70th meeting, the Standing Committee reminded Parties to use the *Guidelines* when reporting on trade in hunting trophies of *Loxodonta africana* (see document [SC70 SR](#)).

#### Part 2: MIKE and ETIS Subgroup of the Standing Committee

63. The MIKE Subgroup was first established by the CITES Standing Committee at its 41st meeting (SC41, Geneva, February 1999) to oversee further development, refinement and implementation of the systems known as Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE). At its 49th meeting (SC49, Geneva, April 2003), the mandate of the subgroup was expanded to include ETIS. At the 72nd meeting of the Standing Committee (SC72, Geneva, August 2019), the Committee reconstituted the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup with the following composition:
- *Four African elephant range States (2 anglophone and 2 francophone): Congo, Ethiopia, Senegal and Namibia;*
  - *Two Asian elephant range States: China and Indonesia; and*
  - *Two representatives from Europe and North America: Belgium and Canada.*
64. The MIKE and ETIS Subgroup intends to meet in the margins of the present meeting to discuss the nominations for global and co-opted members membership of the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group and will report back to the Standing Committee later at the meeting.



65. The Standing Committee may also wish to refer other MIKE and ETIS matters to the Subgroup for consideration at their meeting, such as the Review of the ETIS programme [Decisions 18.18 to 18.20 (see document SC74 Doc. 12)], and the MIKE and ETIS programmes [Decisions 18.21 and 18.22 (see document SC74 Doc. 13)].

Part 3: Implementation of Decisions 18.226 and 18.227 on *Trade in Asian elephants* (*Elephas maximus*)

66. At CoP18, the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.226 and 18.227 on *Trade in Asian elephants* (*Elephas maximus*) as follows:

**18.226 Directed to Parties**

*All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to:*

- a) undertake, as necessary, investigations into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives, and endeavor to enforce, and where necessary improve, national laws concerning international trade in specimens of Asian elephants with the explicit intention of preventing illegal trade;*
- b) develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations;*
- c) ensure that trade in, and cross-border movements of live Asian elephants are conducted in compliance with CITES, including the provisions in Article III, paragraph 3, for Asian elephants of wild origin;*
- d) collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, requesting as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the Secretariat; and*
- e) at the request of the Secretariat, provide information on the implementation of this Decision for reporting by the Secretariat to the Standing Committee.*

**18.227 Directed to the Secretariat**

*The Secretariat shall:*

- a) request a report from all Parties involved in trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives on the implementation of paragraphs a) through d) of Decision 18.226;*
- b) upon request and pending the availability of external funding, assist range States of Asian elephants in their implementation of Decision 18.226; and*
- c) incorporate information provided by range States in accordance with Decision 18.226, paragraph e), together with other findings and recommendations concerning trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives as appropriate, into its regular reporting to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on Trade in elephant specimens.*

67. As anticipated by Decision 18.226, paragraph e), and to facilitate the implementation of Decision 18.227, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2020/017 of 2 March 2020](#), inviting Parties involved in trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives to report to the Secretariat on their implementation of Decision 18.226, paragraphs a) to d). In the same Notification, the Secretariat also invited range States of Asian elephants requiring assistance in their implementation of Decision 18.226 to communicate this to the Secretariat, indicating the nature of the support required.
68. The Secretariat received replies from Cambodia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and would like to thank these Parties for their reports, which are presented in Annex 2 to the present document (in the language and format as received).
69. The five Parties reported on a diverse range of activities they are implementing to address paragraphs a) to d) of Decision 18.226.

- a) **Cambodia** reported *inter alia* that it established a specialized wildlife crime unit, known as the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT), which had a national remit to suppress wildlife crime, arrest offenders, seize wildlife contraband and file cases to court. WRRT operations were reported to focus in particular on combating illegal domestic trade in ivory. Cambodia further reported that, in March 2020, it officially approved a 10-year National Asian Elephant Conservation Action Plan. This plan aims to raise awareness, support research, conserve Asian elephants in Cambodia and combat illegal killing and illegal trade. Cambodia did not have any records of international trade in live Asian elephants from the country and highlighted its commitment to ensure that any trade or cross-border movement of Asian elephants would be conducted in compliance with national laws and CITES provisions.
- b) **Indonesia** reported that Asian elephants are protected by its national legislation, and that trade in any Asian elephant specimen was illegal in Indonesia and subject to strict penalties including fines and imprisonment. Indonesia had established an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the Sumatran Elephant 2019-2022 with the objective to secure the remaining Sumatran elephant populations and to mitigate direct threats to their survival. Key strategies in this context were, amongst others, involving local communities and other key stakeholders in the conservation efforts, rescuing small non-viable elephant populations of fewer than five individuals, mitigating human-elephant conflicts, eliminating direct threats to priority elephant conservation sites, and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement officers in combating wildlife crime.
- c) **New Zealand** reported that illegal trade in elephant specimens is limited and that the few cases involving elephant specimens it detected related to personal effects associated with household moves, rather than smuggled items. CITES implementing legislation enabled bringing criminal charges against offenders for the illegal importation of CITES-listed species. Since 2020, infringement notices as a lesser punitive action were available to authorities as an enforcement tool. New Zealand *inter alia* highlighted that any imports of live Asian elephants require both a New Zealand issued CITES import permit and a CITES export permit or re-export certificate from the country of export/re-export. There is one known small-scale Asian elephant captive breeding programme in operation in the country. Strategies for captive breeding operations in New Zealand (and Australia) were coordinated through the Australasian Species Management Programme of the Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia, which also maintained a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants.
- d) **Thailand** reported that trade in specimens of wild Asian elephants was illegal in the country and that limited international trade in live Asian elephants was allowed only for domesticated Asian elephants. In recent years, no cases of illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives had been detected in Thailand. Thailand outlined the different laws in the country applicable to elephants and ivory and highlighted that a process to enact a new Elephant Act was underway to further strengthen measures to protect and conserve Asian elephants and prevent laundering of wild-caught elephants into the domesticated elephant population. Thailand also highlighted several other measures it had taken to protect Asian elephants, both wild and domesticated, and to prevent Asian elephant specimens from entering illegal trade. Thailand reported good collaboration between different authorities in the country to strengthen enforcement interventions, including through the establishment of task force units that conduct monthly inspections at ivory shops and perform duties at places considered to present a high illegal trade risk, such as tourism hotspots and border points. Thailand noted that it has a comprehensive registration system in place covering all owners of domesticated elephants and including information on individual elephants. Regarding collaboration in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, Thailand would welcome collaboration, especially with its neighbouring countries, in establishing such a regional system. In addition to the response from Thailand to the Notification, the Permanent Mission of Thailand in Geneva in June 2020 formally corresponded with the Secretariat, indicating the unprecedented challenges that were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular in relation to food availability for captive elephants. Thailand provided details on the assistance provided to elephant camps to mitigate these impacts and ensure the welfare of the elephants.
- e) The **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** referred to its legislation on the regulation of trade in endangered species, an Ivory Act of 2018 banning the sale of ivory in the UK other than for a limited number of exemptions, and regulations and standards for the management and movement of Asian elephants in captivity in the UK. The Party had conducted actions to detect and seize ivory destined for illegal export mostly to China, and elephant hair jewelry, including with hair from Asian elephants. Any imports into or (re-)exports from the United Kingdom of live Asian elephants would require the appropriate CITES import and (re-)export permits. Between 2000 and 2018, one live captive-bred Asian elephant had been re-exported from the UK and 26 certificates

were issued for elephants to be moved within the United Kingdom or to member States of the European Union.

70. The replies show that some Parties undertake a variety of activities to implement Decision 18.226. Parties involved in trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to draw upon this information to identify measures they could take at national level to address illegal trade affecting Asian elephants.
71. The Secretariat notes that only three of the 13 Asian elephant range States reported on their implementation of Decision 18.226. The Decision fully aligns with, and complements the [Jakarta Declaration for Asian Elephant Conservation](#) agreed by Asian elephant range States in 2017. Effective implementation of Decision 18.226 can significantly contribute to achieving the ambitions set in the Jakarta Declaration, and Asian elephant range States are encouraged to continue to pursue the implementation of the provisions of this Decision actively and vigilantly. The Standing Committee may therefore wish to recommend that Decision 18.226 be renewed and revised, noting the low response rate from range States to Notification Parties [No. 2020/017 of 2 March 2020](#).
72. In the context of Decision 18.227, paragraph b), through its Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme, the Secretariat reached out to range States in southeast Asia to offer support, *inter alia* relating to the implementation of Decision 18.226 in the context of a project funded by the United States' Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Under this project, the development of a regional system for registration of live elephants and investigation into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives can be supported. The Secretariat is working with Asian elephant range States to verify available information regarding their registration systems for live Asian elephants. The MIKE programme initiated a consultation process with Asian elephant range States to establish whether available data is still accurate and current. Once this process is completed, the information will be evaluated and overlapping measures and outliers identified, and a proposal drafted on minimum requirements for a registering, marking and tracing system for live Asian elephants. The Secretariat plans to present this proposal to range States to initiate discussions on either establishing a regional system, or alternatively deploying standardized national systems.
73. Should the Standing Committee agree to recommend to CoP19 that Decision 18.226 be revised and renewed, and considering the work the Secretariat initiated concerning possible minimum requirements for a registering, marking and tracing system for live Asian elephants to be consulted with range States, the Committee may recommend that Decision 18.227 be replaced with the following decision:

**19.AA Directed to the Secretariat**

*The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *request a report from Asian elephant range States on the implementation of paragraphs a) through d) of Decision 18.226;*
  - b) *subject to the availability of external funding, develop minimum requirements for a registering, marking and tracing system for live Asian elephants, to be presented to Asian elephant range States with the aim of establishing a regional system, or alternatively standardized national systems, for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants; and*
  - c) *report any information provided in response to Decision 19.AA paragraph a) and on the implementation of Decision 19.AA paragraph b), as well as findings and recommendations concerning trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives as appropriate, to the Standing Committee.*
74. The Secretariat notes that, since CoP18, it has received reports from unofficial sources suggesting that live Asian elephants may cross borders illegally, in particular from the Lao People's Democratic Republic into China. The Secretariat has formally written to China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic about this matter as reported in document SC74 Doc. 28.1.

**Part 4: Implementation of Decision 18.120 on *Trade in mammoth ivory***

75. The study to be commissioned in accordance with [Decision 18.120 on Trade in mammoth ivory](#) is subject to external funding, which could not be secured by the Secretariat.

76. The Secretariat has been in correspondence with the Kent University in the United Kingdom regarding a MSc student conducting research in the context of Decision 18.120. This is, however, an independent research project that was ongoing at the time of writing. The Secretariat further took note of a Wildlife Justice Commission report concerning wildlife trade on e-commerce sites in China with a focus on mammoth ivory. In addition, a non-governmental organization reached out to the Secretariat in November 2021, indicating that it might have information that could be relevant to the study.
77. The undertakings and sources of information mentioned in paragraph 76 above could be useful to inform the study outlined in the provisions of Decision 18.120. Since external funds could not be secured to commission the study, the Secretariat proposes the adoption of a decision that directs the Secretariat to consolidate information emanating from the afore mentioned work that could inform considerations relating to the potential contribution of trade in mammoth ivory to illegal trade in elephant ivory and elephant poaching. The Secretariat therefore proposes that the Standing Committee consider recommending the deletion of Decisions 18.120 and 18.121 and the adoption of the following decisions:

**19.xx Directed to the Secretariat**

*The Secretariat shall, taking into consideration available information and research studies, compile information relating to the potential contribution of mammoth ivory trade to illegal trade in elephant ivory and elephant poaching and report its findings to the Standing Committee.*

**19.xx Directed to the Standing Committee**

*The Standing Committee shall consider the report and findings provided by the Secretariat in accordance with Decision 19.xx and make recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties*

Part 4: Reporting by the Standing Committee to CoP19

78. Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18), in paragraph 17, directs the Standing Committee to:
- a) *review actions taken by the Parties to implement the provisions of this Resolution, particularly – but not limited to – the provisions concerning trade in elephant specimens;*
- [...]
- c) *report the results at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*
79. The present document and its Annexes, and documents SC74 Doc. 28.4, SC74 Doc. 39, SC74 Doc. 12, SC74 Doc. 13, SC74 Doc. 61.1 and SC74 Doc. 61.2 provide information relating to the implementation of relevant provisions of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) and could be considered by the Standing Committee in reporting to CoP19 on the actions decided and determinations made regarding the elements of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) addressed by SC74.

Recommendations

80. The Standing Committee is invited to:
- a) take note of the information contained in this document, as well as the annexes to the present document;
  - b) encourage elephant range States to use the MIKE Online Database for MIKE data submission and Parties to use ETIS Online to submit seizure information;
  - c) encourage donors and partners to support African elephant range States to conduct and fund surveys of elephant populations;
  - d) note that the MIKE and ETIS Subgroup intends to meet in the margins of the present meeting to discuss matters as indicated in paragraph 64 and items referred to it by the Standing Committee and report back to the Standing Committee;

- e) request Parties to step up efforts concerning use of the guidance to standardise reporting of hunting trophies included in the *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports* when reporting on trade in hunting trophies of *Loxodonta africana*;
- f) note the low response rate from Asian elephant range States on their implementation of Decision 18.226, paragraphs a) to d), and the reports received from Cambodia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, thanking these Parties for the reports submitted;
- g) consider recommending to CoP19 that Decision 18.226 be renewed and revised to be addressed to Asian elephant range States;
- h) consider recommending to CoP19 that Decision 18.227 be deleted and replaced with the draft decision presented in paragraph 73 of the present document; and
- i) consider recommending to CoP19 that Decisions 18.120 and 18.121 be deleted and the Decisions as presented in paragraph 77 of the present be considered for adoption.

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.): Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18)

## LEVELS OF ILLEGAL KILLING OF ELEPHANTS, ILLEGAL AND LEGAL TRADE IN ELEPHANT SPECIMENS, THE STATUS OF ELEPHANT POPULATIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN: A REPORT TO THE CITES STANDING COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*, in paragraph 12, directs the Secretariat, pending the necessary external funding, to:
  - a) *report on information and analyses provided by MIKE and ETIS at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties and, subject to the availability of adequate new MIKE or ETIS data, at relevant meetings of the Standing Committee; and, in collaboration with TRAFFIC as appropriate, provide other reports, updates or information on MIKE and ETIS as required by the Conference of the Parties, the Standing Committee, the MIKE and ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or Parties;*
  - b) *prior to relevant meetings of the Standing Committee, invite the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to provide an overview of trade in elephant specimens as recorded in the CITES database; the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN/SSC) African and Asian Elephant Specialist Groups to submit any new and relevant information on the conservation status of elephants, pertinent conservation actions and management strategies; and African elephant range States to provide information on progress made in the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan; and*
  - c) *on the basis of the information specified in paragraphs a) and b) above, recommend actions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties or the Standing Committee;*
2. This is the seventh report prepared by the organisations for the CITES Standing Committee, with previous reports having been provided for SC61 (Geneva, August 2011), SC62 (Geneva, July 2012), SC65 (Geneva, July 2014), SC66 (Geneva, January 2016), SC69 (Geneva, November 2017) and SC70 (Sochi, October 2018).

**Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants**

3. This section has been prepared by the CITES Secretariat and was released on the CITES website in November 2021 ([PIKE trend analysis 2003 – 2020](#)). An update may be published as an information document at the 74th meeting of the Standing Committee if MIKE reports are received from the range States prior to the meeting.

Background

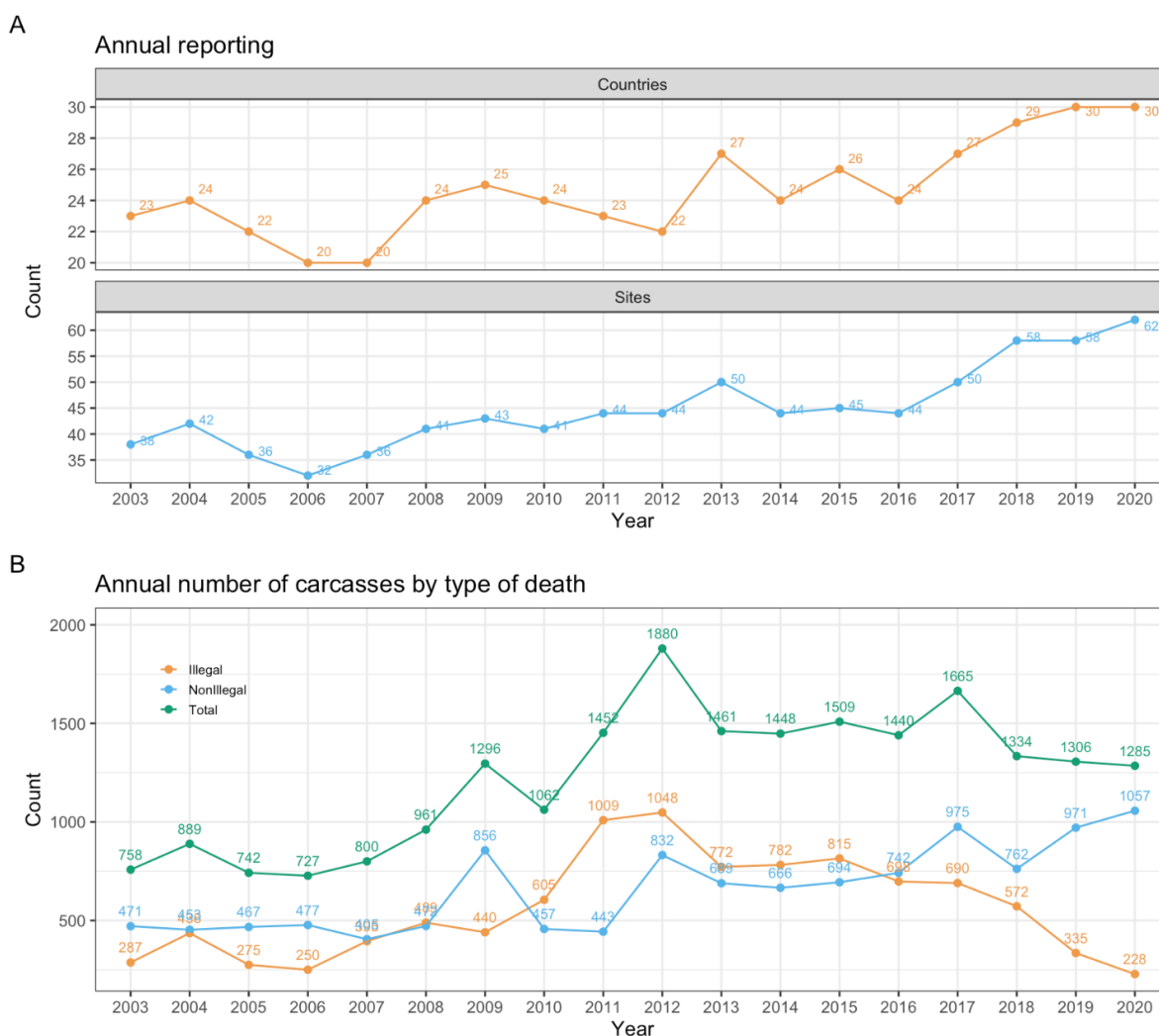
4. The CITES programme for Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants, commonly known as MIKE, was established by the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES at its 10th Meeting (Harare, 1997) and is conducted in accordance with the provisions in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*. The CITES MIKE Programme is managed by the CITES Secretariat under the supervision of the CITES Standing Committee. Since implementation began in 2001, the operation of the programme in Africa has benefited from substantial and consistent financial support from the European Union.
5. The CITES MIKE programme aims to inform and improve decision-making on elephants by measuring trends in levels of illegal killing of elephants, identifying factors associated with those trends, and building capacity for elephant management in range States. It operates in a large sample of sites spread across elephant range in 32 countries in Africa and 13 countries in Asia. There are 69 designated MIKE sites in Africa, which together hold an estimated 50% of the African elephant population, and 30 sites in Asia. Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe and Yok Don National Park in Viet Nam was added to the MIKE site network in 2020.



6. MIKE data is collected by law enforcement and ranger patrols in the field and through other means in designated MIKE sites. When an elephant carcass is found, site personnel try to establish the cause of death and other details, such as sex and age of the animal, status of ivory and stage of decomposition of the carcass. This information is recorded in standardized carcass forms, details of which are then submitted to the CITES MIKE Programme. The MIKE Online Database developed by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with the UNEP's Science Division and with funding provided by the European Union, facilitates online submission of data and contains more than 23,000 records submitted by participating range States.
7. The programme evaluates relative poaching levels based on the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE), which is calculated on an annual basis as the number of illegally killed elephants found divided by the total number of elephant carcasses found, which includes elephants illegally killed, elephants that died of natural causes, management-related deaths as well as deaths recorded as unknown (cause of death could not be determined).
8. Based on reporting by range States, it is clear that deaths associated with human elephant conflict are sometimes categorized as "illegal", while in other cases these are reported as "management related deaths" or other types of death. The CITES Secretariat assessed the 773 records (3% of all carcass records) where Parties reported that elephant deaths were associated with human elephant conflict. In Africa the majority of records indicated that the deaths associated with human elephant conflict were management related deaths (58% or 387 records), while in Asia deaths associated with human elephant conflict are most commonly recorded as "illegal" (67% or 70 records). In Africa, 39% (259 records) were recorded as "illegal" and the remainder (3% or 23 records) as other types of death. In Asia, 4% (4 records) were categorized as "management related" and the remainder (29% - 30) as other types of death. Because PIKE is used as an index of poaching, it is important to understand to what extent illegal deaths associated with human elephant conflict, which may not be considered poaching, is included. The CITES Secretariat will continue to collaborate with participating range States and the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to get further clarification on this matter and refine the MIKE analysis accordingly.
9. PIKE is an index of poaching pressure and provides trends relating to the levels of poaching. It may be affected by several potential biases related to data quality, reporting rate, carcass detection probabilities, variation in natural mortality rates and other factors, and hence results need to be interpreted with caution.
10. In the previous [MIKE report for Africa and Asia](#), published on the CITES website on 16 November 2020, the new PIKE trend analysis methodology was shared with CITES Parties. As indicated in that report, the TAG recommended the use of the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) to interpret PIKE trends over time. A weighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.w**) model that includes elephant population estimates from each MIKE site was trialled on an experimental basis but requires further work by the CITES Secretariat in collaboration with the TAG.

#### PIKE trend analysis for 2020: Africa

11. The dataset used for this PIKE trend analysis for Africa consists of 22,015 records of elephant carcasses found and recorded between 2003 and the end of 2020 at 66 MIKE sites in 30 range States in Africa, representing a total of 760 site-years.
12. Compared to the [previous PIKE trend analysis](#) published in November 2020, the PIKE trend analysis presented in this document considers an additional 1,285 records of elephant carcasses encountered in the course of 2020, that were reported by 62 MIKE sites in Africa. The number of reporting MIKE sites increased from 58 in 2019 to 62 in 2020 (see Figure 1A).



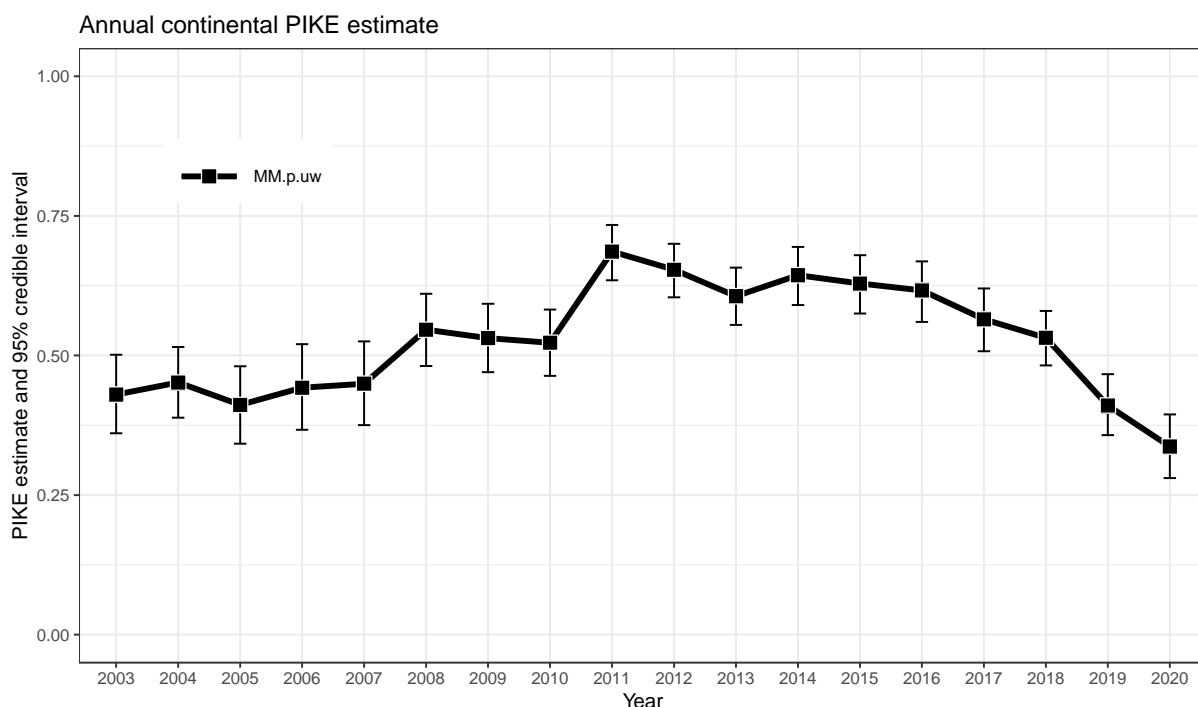
**Figure 1:** A. Number of countries and MIKE sites that submitted reports (2003 – 2020). In 2020, the number of sites that reported from Central, Eastern, Southern and West Africa were 12, 14, 18 and 18 respectively. B. The total number of carcasses reported irrespective of cause of death (green), the number of carcasses of elephants illegally killed (orange) and the number not illegally killed (blue) (natural deaths, management related deaths and unknown type of death) reported by year.

13. In 2020, the number of sites that submitted reports in central Africa were 12 of 16 sites (75%); in eastern Africa 14 of 16 sites (87%); in southern Africa 18 of 19 sites (94%); and in west Africa 18 of 18 sites (100%). Of the sites that reported, four in central Africa, two in eastern Africa and ten in west Africa reported zero carcasses found in 2020. Compared to 2019, 21 more elephant carcass records were submitted in 2020 (see Figure 1B). Two hundred and twenty-eight (228) of the 1,285 carcasses reported in 2020 were recorded as illegally killed; while 335 of the 1,306 carcasses reported in 2019 were recorded as illegally killed.
14. As indicated in paragraph 7, the results of the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw** – unweighted by elephant population estimate) are used to interpret PIKE trends over time.

#### Continental PIKE trend (Africa)

15. Figure 2 shows the continental PIKE estimate across years based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) analysis. The error bar or confidence/credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates. In Bayesian analysis, a 95 percent credible interval (CI) is an interval within which a PIKE estimate falls with a 95% probability.
16. The annual mean PIKE generally increased from 2003 to 2010, peaked in 2011, and decreased from 2011 to 2020. Prior to the maximum value of PIKE in 2011, the trendline for the unweighted Bayesian GLMM PIKE estimates (**MM.p.uw**) shows that there is sufficient evidence to confirm an upward trend (increase in PIKE) from 2003 to 2011, and a downward trend (decrease in PIKE) from 2011 to 2020 (see Annex 1b

for the table with details relating to the statistical support for the downward trend). Over the last five years (2016 to 2020), the unweighted continental PIKE estimate shows a downward trend with a level of certainty over 95%. The 2020 PIKE estimate is the lowest since 2003.



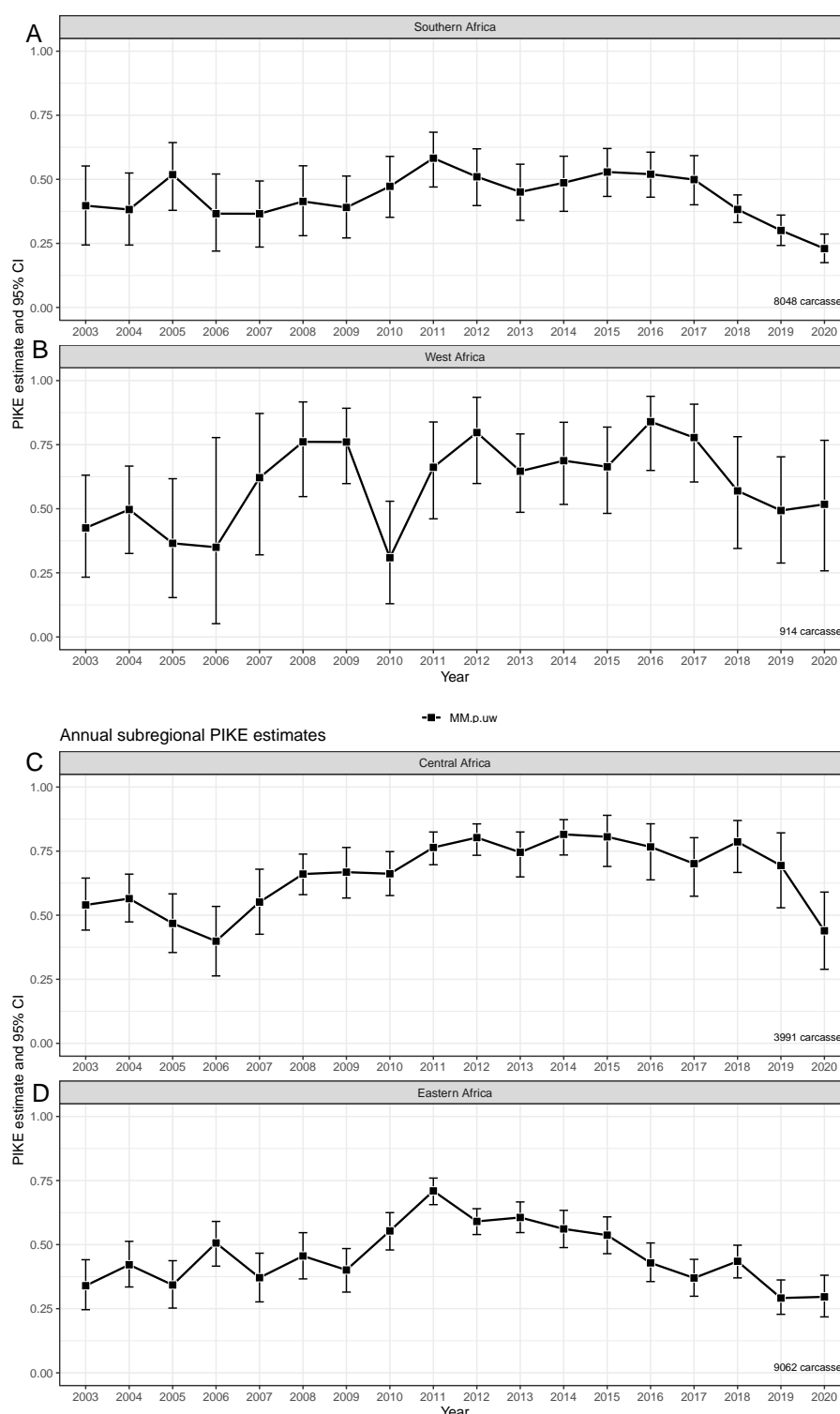
**Figure 2:** Continental PIKE estimates based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach (**MM.p.uw**). The error bar or the confidence / credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates.

#### Subregional PIKE trends (Africa)

- Figure 3 (A-D) shows the subregional PIKE estimate across years based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) approach for central, eastern, southern and west Africa. The error bar or confidence/credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates. Results below show that the PIKE trend differs across years and subregion.

#### Central Africa

- The PIKE estimates for central Africa are shown in Figure 3. A. Based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach, there is strong evidence that the PIKE trend increased from 2003 to 2011 and remained at high PIKE levels up to 2019 and decreased in 2020.
- In the previous report, the unweighted Bayesian GLMM analysis over the most recent 5 years (2015-2019) showed neither an upward or downward trend. However, the 5 most recent years of this new analysis (2016-2020) show a likely decline in PIKE (Table in Annex 1b). Overall the trend in the last five years is downward due to a decrease in PIKE estimate in 2020. In sites that reported in 2019 and 2020 ( $n=6$ ), PIKE remained the same or decreased at 5 sites and increased in one site during this period. For 2020, the unweighted PIKE estimate for central Africa remains high, with an average PIKE estimate of 0.44 (range: 0.28 - 0.59) and above the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.34 (range: 0.28 – 0.39) for the same year.



**Figure 3:** Subregional PIKE estimates across years based on unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach. The error bar shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates and represent 95% credible intervals. The total number of carcasses (from 2003-2020) for each subregion are shown at the bottom right corner of each graph. A – Central Africa; B – Eastern Africa; C – Southern Africa and D – West Africa.

### Eastern Africa

20. The PIKE estimates for eastern Africa are shown in Figure 3. B. Between 2003 and 2019, the highest PIKE estimate for the subregion was in 2011. Based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM analysis, there is strong evidence of a downward trend in PIKE between 2011 and 2020. Overall, the trend in the last five years is downward. Between 2019 and 2020, the PIKE estimate has remained relatively unchanged, being at its lowest value in 2019. For 2020, the unweighted PIKE estimate in eastern Africa remains relatively constant, with an average PIKE estimate of 0.30 (range: 0.21 - 0.38) and below the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.34 (range: 0.28 – 0.39) for the same year.

## **Southern Africa**

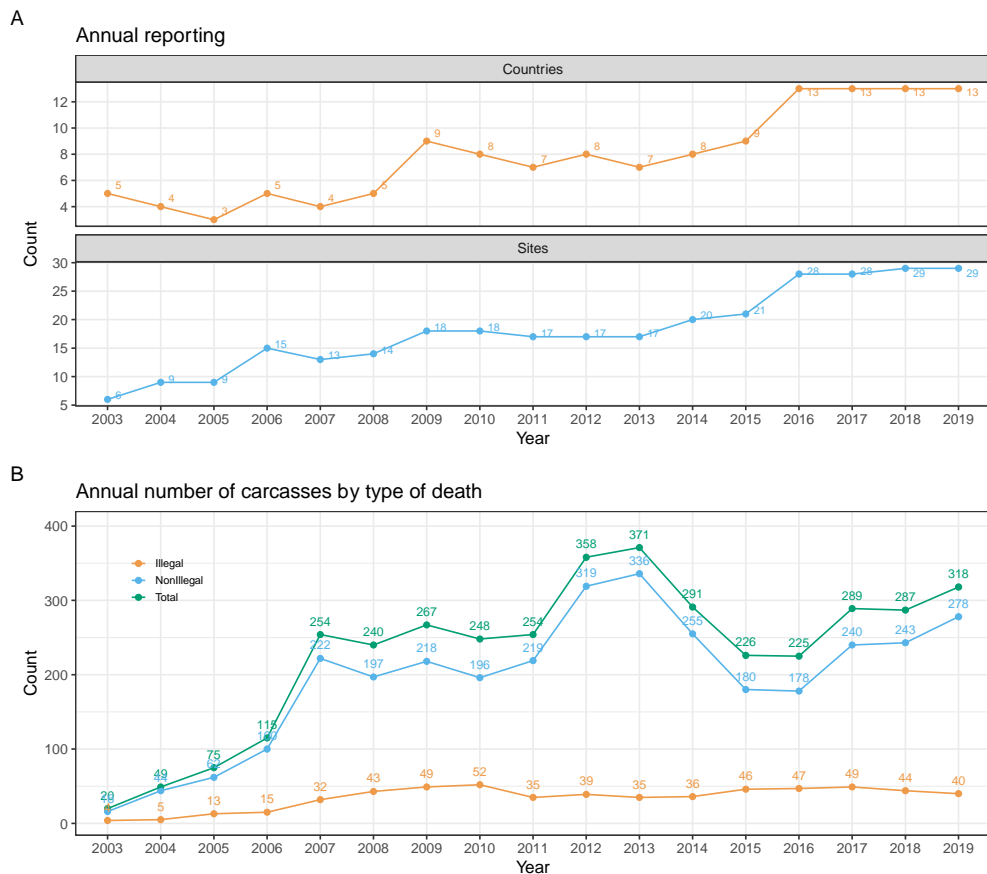
21. The PIKE estimates for southern Africa are shown in Figure 3.C. Based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM analysis, PIKE likely increased between 2003 and 2011 and subsequently decreased from 2011 to 2020. Between 2015 and 2017, the PIKE estimate remained relatively unchanged, and a downward trend started in 2018 which continued in 2020. Overall, the trend in the last five years is downward due to a decrease in PIKE estimates in the last three years from 2018 to 2020. The unweighted PIKE estimate for 2020 in southern Africa is 0.22 (range: 0.18 - 0.29) and below the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.34 (range: 0.28 – 0.39) for the same year.

## **West Africa**

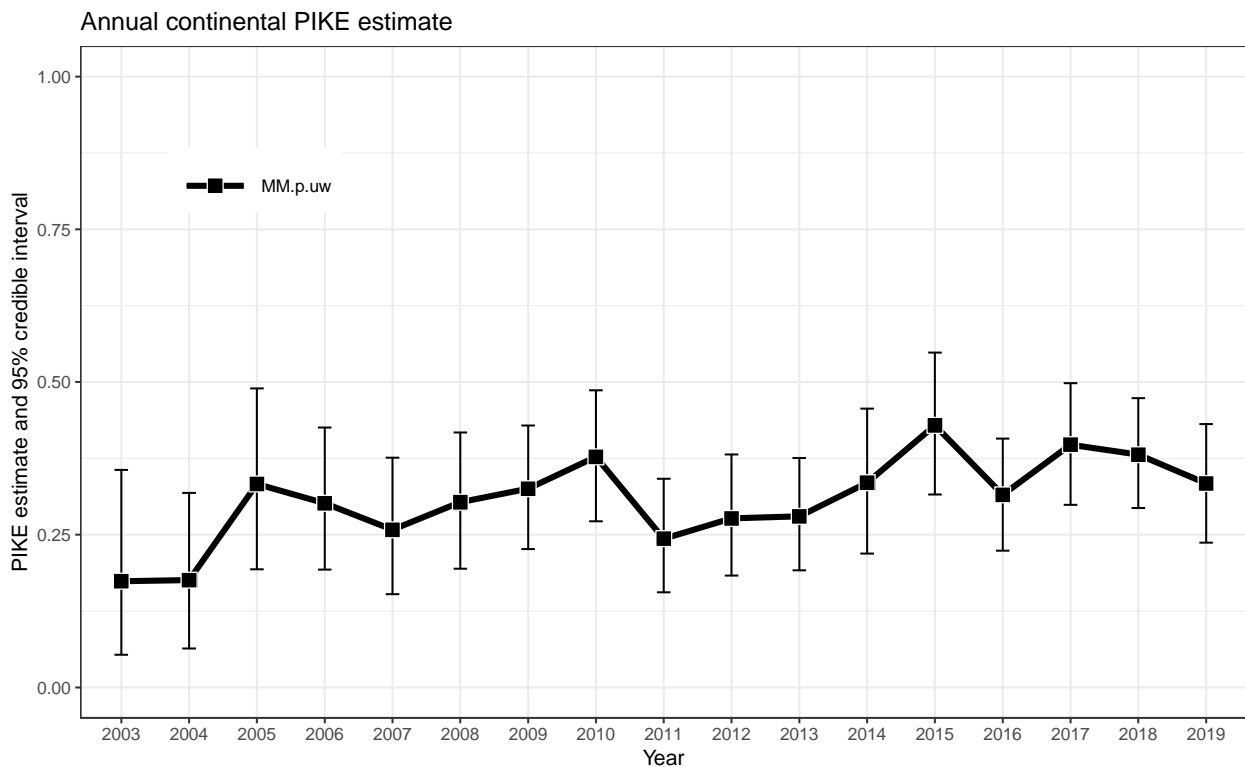
22. The PIKE estimates for west Africa are shown in Figure 3.D. Inferring a subregional trend for the subregion with the smallest African elephant population is difficult, given the total number of carcasses reported and the number of sites that reported zero carcasses found. Compared to the three other subregions, west Africa reported the lowest total number of carcasses: 914 carcasses reported over 18 years (Figure 3. D). In 2020, a total of 12 carcasses were reported from 8 sites while 10 sites reported not finding any elephant carcasses. This results in a high level of uncertainty of the PIKE estimates (i.e. the width of the credible intervals) and the trend needs to be interpreted with caution. Based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach there is marginal evidence of a downward trend over the last five years. From 2019 to 2020, the PIKE estimate remained relatively unchanged. For 2020, the unweighted PIKE estimate in west Africa is 0.52 (range: 0.25 - 0.77) and above the average continental PIKE estimate of 0.34 (range: 0.28 – 0.39) for the same year.

## PIKE trend analysis: Asia

23. The CITES Secretariat reported on the levels and trends in illegal killing in Asia [for the years 2003 – 2017](#) in the [MIKE report](#) released on 16 November 2020. Through an EU-funded project in South and Southeast Asia, engagements with Asian elephant range States were strengthened and support was provided to range States to facilitate MIKE data submission. In 2018 and 2019, a total of 29 Asian sites reported. In 2020, all fifteen MIKE sites in southeast Asia submitted reports and ten of the fifteen MIKE sites in south Asia submitted data. Unfortunately, a full complement of MIKE sites in south Asia could not report due to complications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the data set used for this analysis consists of 3,887 records of elephant carcasses found between 2003 and the end of 2019 at 29 MIKE sites in 13 range States in Asia, representing a total of 254 site-years (Figure 4 A).
24. Approximately 94% (=3657/3887), of the carcasses are from MIKE sites in south Asia and the remaining 6% (=230/3887) from MIKE sites in southeast Asia. It should be noted that more than 70% of Asian elephants occur in south Asia. The number of countries and sites reporting remained the same in 2018 and 2019. The total number of carcasses between 2018 to 2019 increased from 287 to 318, and the number of carcasses reported as illegally killed decreased slightly from 44 to 40.
25. Figure 5 shows the continental PIKE estimate across years based the unweighted Bayesian GLMM (**MM.p.uw**) analysis. The error bar or confidence/credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates. In Bayesian analysis, a 95 percent credible interval (CI) is an interval within which a PIKE estimate falls with a 95% probability. The PIKE trend based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM in the last five years (2015-2019) has remained relatively flat. From 2018 to 2019, the PIKE estimate slightly decreased. For 2019, the unweighted PIKE estimate is 0.33 (range: 0.24 - 0.43).
26. Trend analysis disaggregated by subregion is not reported because a large proportion of carcasses are reported from south Asia as stated above. Approximately 91% of the records (3,568 carcass records) are from MIKE sites in India, which holds the largest population of Asian elephants, while the average number of carcasses in southeast Asia is small. The confidence intervals for estimates at each subregion have wider confidence intervals compared to the continental results and therefore only the continental results are reflected in this present document.



**Figure 4:** (A) Total number of countries and sites that submitted reports by year. (B) The total number of carcasses reported irrespective of cause of death (green), the number of carcasses of elephants illegally killed (orange) and the number not illegally killed (blue) (natural deaths, management related deaths, unknown type of death) reported by year.



**Figure 5:** Continental PIKE estimates for Asia, based on the unweighted Bayesian GLMM approach (MM.p.uw). The error bar or the confidence / credible interval shows the level of uncertainty in the annual PIKE estimates.



27. This section has been prepared by TRAFFIC.
28. The Elephant Trade Information System, commonly known as ETIS, was established by the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at its 10th Meeting (Harare, 1997), and is conducted in accordance with the provisions in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on *Trade in elephant specimens*.
29. ETIS is a comprehensive and global information system whose central feature is a database holding the details of seizures or confiscations of elephant ivory and other elephant specimens reported to occur since 1989. In 2020 ETIS Online ([etisonline.org](http://etisonline.org)) was launched as an online database providing Parties with the ability to submit and review ETIS data online and to access and download data and reports relating to their country. ETIS is managed and coordinated by TRAFFIC in consultation with the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat.

#### Data collection

30. In terms of paragraph 4 in Annex 1 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) “*All Parties, through their CITES Management Authorities, following liaison with appropriate law enforcement agencies, should provide information on seizures and confiscations of ivory or other elephant specimens in the prescribed formats either to the Secretariat or directly to TRAFFIC within 90 days of their occurrence.*”
31. While late or no data submissions that were documented in previous reports continued in 2020 and 2021 and were, at least temporarily, exacerbated by the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, overall reporting to ETIS slightly improved from previous years with 49 Parties reporting data for 2020 (compared to 47 Parties reporting data for 2019 and 42 for 2018). Additional seizure data for 24 Parties covering the period from 2016 to 2019 was received from the World Customs Organization (WCO), of which nine Parties<sup>1</sup> did not report to ETIS for at least one of the years from 2016 – 2019, hence WCO data represented the only records available for these Parties for at least one year in that time frame.
32. The availability of ETIS Online to submit seizure and confiscation data allows Parties to do so continuously throughout the year and within 90 days of the occurrence of law enforcement actions. Yet despite an extensive data collection effort initiated after the launch of [ETIS Online](#) and [CITES Notification No.2021/011](#) that resulted in the submission of 1,890 records by 37 Parties for the period 2008-2020, several reporting challenges persist:
- a) Firstly, the timely reporting of ETIS data remains an issue where for 2019 and 2020, the mean reporting interval between seizure or confiscation date and reporting date was 322 days (median=303 days; SD=219 days; max= 978 days)<sup>2</sup>, or more than triple the recommended period of 90 days.
  - b) Secondly, as Parties resumed their reporting of ETIS data after a reporting gap (e.g., two additional Parties reported in 2020 compared to 2019), previous years’ data were not submitted and data gaps remained, thus limiting inference on trends.
  - c) Thirdly, reporting ETIS data for 2020 is incomplete for Parties participating in the National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) process ([CITES-NIAP](#)); for example, only two (Togo and Viet Nam) out of the five Category A Parties, and only four (Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Qatar) out of the nine Category C Parties submitted 2020 ETIS data (all Category B Parties, i.e., Hong Kong SAR, reported 2020 ETIS data). In general, reporting from NIAP Parties has been inconsistent, the exceptions being Ethiopia and Hong Kong SAR, which have been reporting continuously for the time period included in this report’s trend analyses (i.e., 2008 – 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> The nine Parties for which WCO represented the only available ETIS data for at least one year from 2016-2019 are: Burkina Faso, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Estonia, India, Oman, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, and Sri Lanka.

<sup>2</sup> Because the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 understandably caused reporting delays, reporting statistics were also summarized for the five years prior to the pandemic, i.e., from 2015-2019; average reporting patterns were similar: mean=374 days; median=324 days, SD=314 days; max=2070 days.

- d) Lastly, and as outlined in detail in sections below, incomplete data submissions (e.g., missing quantities or missing information on countries in the trade route) also limits inclusion of records in the analysis and therefore possible insights as to trade patterns and trends.

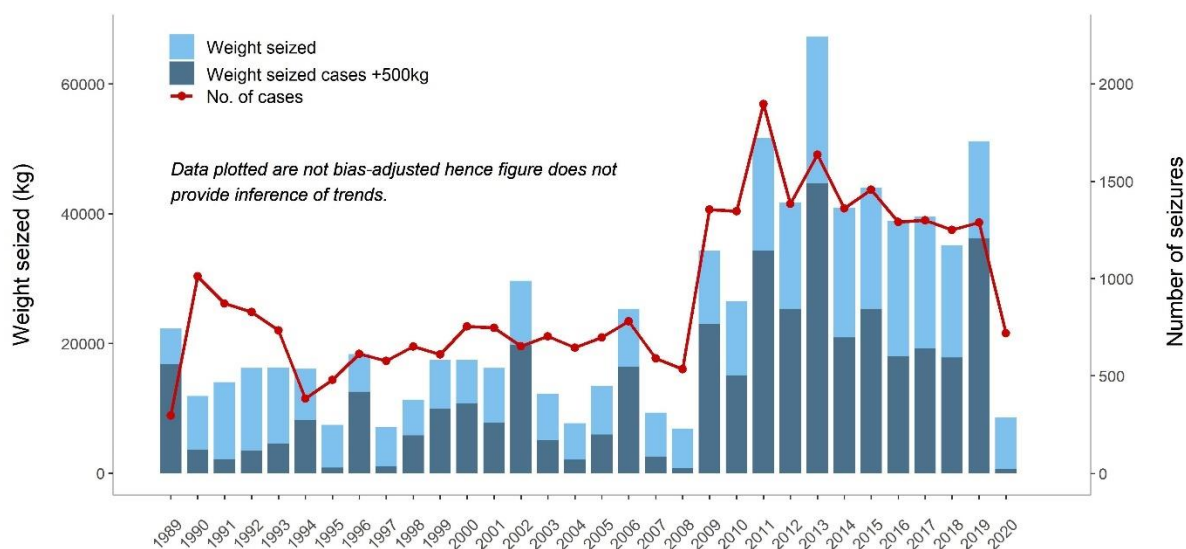
33. It is worth noting that because of data collection limitations in advance of SC73 and upon consultation with the MIKE-ETIS TAG at its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting on 2 July 2020, it was decided not to include the trend analyses results in the ETIS report planned for SC73<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it is also worth stressing that Parties adhering to the reporting guidelines in Resolution Conf. 10.10. (Rev. CoP18) will allow more regular and timely production of trend analyses and the monitoring of countries where illicit ivory trade is of concern. The availability of ETIS Online, which was requested in SC69 ([SC69 Com. 11 paragraph 5.b](#)), should facilitate future timely submission of ETIS data by the Parties in addition to the augmentation of missing data for past years.

#### Overview of seizures data

34. As of 20 October 2021, there were 32,353 records in ETIS from 1989-2020, of which 29,447 represented ivory seizures and confiscations (hereafter referred to as seizures or records for brevity; Figure 6), while the remainder comprised seizures of non-ivory elephant products. Of the ivory seizures (n=29,447), only about half of the records (48%) had both the number of pieces and weight of raw or worked ivory reported to ETIS. As detailed in the methodology presented in Annex 1c, in cases where only the number of ivory pieces but not its weight was reported, missing weights were estimated from the reported number of pieces, and for reported or estimated worked ivory, Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weights were calculated to account for wastage. Hence collectively and hereafter in this report for brevity, *weight seized* refers to the total ivory weight from the reported data, the estimated weights for records with number of pieces but no weight, and the RIE weights for both reported or estimated worked ivory seizures weights.
35. Reported data for number of seizures and weight seized are summarized in Figure 6, but should not be interpreted as a trend, nor are they suggestive of absolute quantities of ivory seized over time, because of inherent bias in the seizure data stemming from variable seizure and reporting rates that are likely not similar for a given country between years, or for a given year between countries. Nevertheless, tallies for recent data are provided as reference for reported ETIS data between this and the last ETIS report ([CITES 2021a](#)) and as a reference for input data that informed the trend analysis.
36. Comparing 2018 and 2019 data to tallies presented in the last ETIS report, a total of 243 records were added to ETIS for the year 2018, and 392 records for 2019; these additions respectively represented a 24% and 44% increase in the number of seizures reported since the last report for a total of 1,250 and 1,288 records in 2018 and 2019, respectively. An additional 719 records were added to ETIS in 2020 which, compared to the 1,288 records reported for 2019, represented a decline of 44% in reported ETIS records (Figure 6).
37. The total weight of seizures in 2019 represents the third-largest quantity of raw and worked ivory seized reported to date (51,161 kg), following the record year of 2013 (67,341 kg) and only 472 kg less than the second-largest year of 2011 (51,633 kg). Compared to 2018, 2019 represented a 29% increase in reported weight seized, and contained three exceptionally large seizures that were the largest ever recorded in ETIS: a seizure by officials in China of 7,482 kg of raw ivory exported by sea from Nigeria and destined for China; a seizure by officials in Singapore of 8,795 kg of raw ivory exported by sea from the Democratic Republic of the Congo transitioning via Singapore (where it was intercepted) en route to Viet Nam before its final destination stated to be China; and a seizure by officials in Viet Nam of 9,104 kg of raw ivory, also exported from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that transitioned undetected via the Republic of the Congo and Singapore before reaching its destination and being seized in Viet Nam. Compared to 2019, 2020 represented an 83% decrease in reported weight seized, which totalled 7,244 kg of seized ivory.

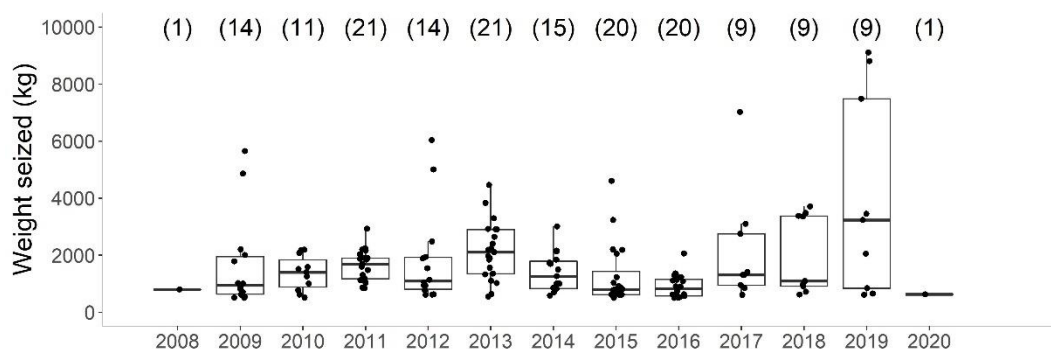
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<sup>3</sup> The agenda for SC73 did not include an ETIS report in terms of paragraph 12 of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18); however, an ETIS report that provided an [Overview of seizure data and progress on requests from SC69 and SC70](#) was released on the [CITES-ETIS](#) website in March 2021.



**Figure 6: Number of ivory seizure cases and weight by year from 1989 - 2020.** Summaries are based on data downloaded from the ETIS database on 20 October 2021. Number of seizures includes seizures and confiscation reported to ETIS<sup>4</sup>. Weight seized refers to the total ivory weight from the reported data, the estimated weights for records with number of pieces but no weight, and the Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weights for both reported or estimated worked ivory seizures weights (based on methods described in Annex 1c).

38. From 2008 to 2020, ETIS recorded 165 seizures greater than 500 kg in total weight, the majority of which (155 seizures) were attributed to raw ivory (Figure 7). Paragraph 23 of Resolution Conf. 10.10. (Rev. CoP18) urges Parties to forensically sample seizures weighing 500 kg or more, and paragraph 24 recommends that Parties share with the Secretariat and source countries information on the origin or age of seized ivory specimens arising from forensic analysis of samples to facilitate investigations and prosecutions, and for analysis by MIKE and ETIS in their reporting to the Standing Committee and the Conference of the Parties. Forensic data for 24 of these 165 seizures is available and has been included in ETIS, all from seizures made before 2018. More recent records of large seizures made from 2018 to 2020 (n=19; Figure 7) have yet to have forensic examination data shared with ETIS as recommended in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18).
39. Overall, the number of reported seizures greater than 500 kg remained the same from 2017 – 2019 totaling nine cases each year. These large seizures presented less than half of the highest number (21 cases) of large seizures reported in 2011 and 2013 (Figure 7); however as noted above, 2019 had the third-largest total weight seized, with three record-setting raw ivory seizures. Only one seizure totaling more than 500 kg was reported in 2020<sup>5</sup>.



**Figure 7. Distributions of ivory seizure weights for large seizures 500+ kg.** Boxplots represent 50% of the data centered around the median (horizontal line), and dots represent ETIS data. Numbers in parentheses are the number of seizures or confiscations reported to ETIS with seized weight of 500+ kg that were used to construct each boxplot for each

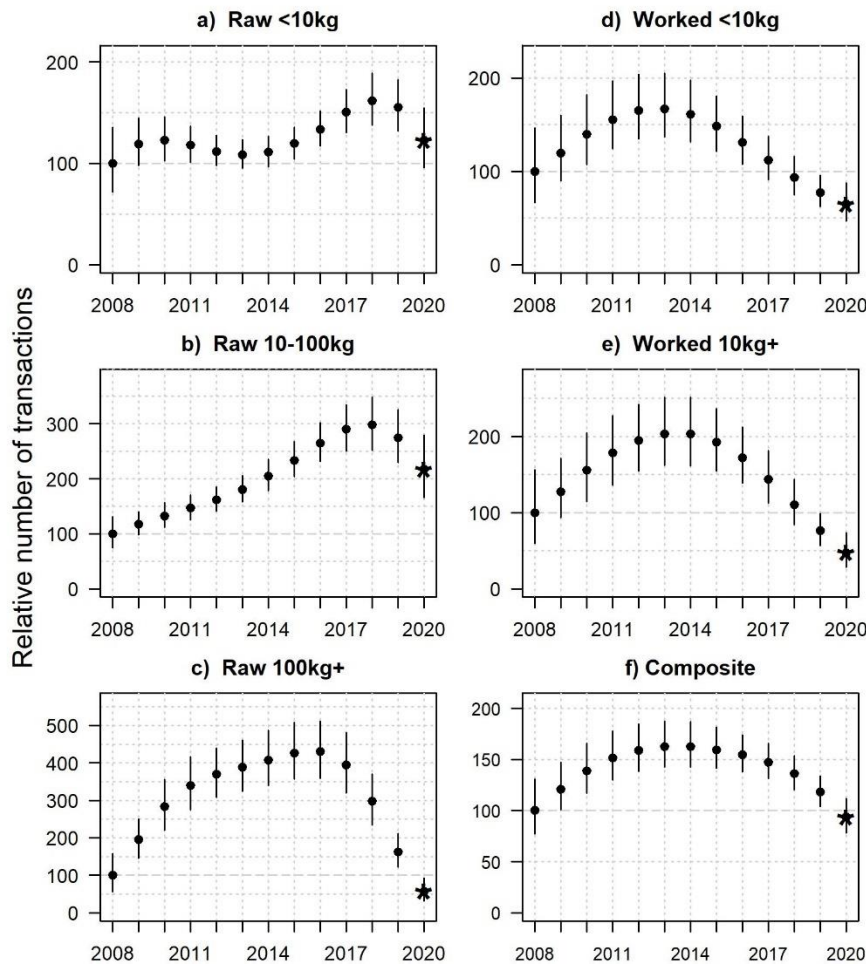
<sup>4</sup> As also detailed in Annex 1, summaries refer to ETIS data that passed certain checks including the removal of duplicated records, follow up if missing or abnormal information was noted, verification of open sources data by the Parties, etc.

<sup>5</sup> This seizure was made by officials in Cameroon, in which 626 kg of ivory was seized in land mode of transport <https://www.traffic.org/news/record-elephant-ivory-seizure-of-626-kg-in-cameroon/>

*respective year. Weight seized refers to the total ivory weight from the reported data, the estimated weights for records with number of pieces but no weight, and the Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weights for both reported or estimated worked ivory seizures weights (based on methods described in Annex 1c). Summaries are based on data downloaded from the ETIS database on 20 October 2021.*

#### Trends and levels of illegal ivory trade

40. The analytical framework used in the trend analysis for this report is described in other ETIS publications as detailed in Annex 1c. This basic framework has been used for each ETIS trend analysis since CITES CoP16 (CITES 2013). Seizure data were classified into three categories for raw ivory: small (less than 10 kg), medium (10 kg to less than 100 kg), and large (100 kg or more), and two categories for worked ivory: small (less than 10 kg), and large (10 kg or more), and results are shown for each category as well as for the composite index across all categories. The same bias-correcting variables used for the trend analyses presented in the CoP18 ETIS report (CITES 2019) were used in this report when estimating seizure and reporting rates; law enforcement ratio and trade change index were used to model seizure rates, and covariates quantifying reporting rates to ETIS and to CITES annual reports were used to model reporting rates (see also Annex 1c).
41. Trend analyses were run for data spanning 2008 – 2020, where 2008 was used as a baseline year because it marked the second CITES-approved one-off sale of ivory between six Parties, and the beginning of a nine-year moratorium on further sales by range States where elephants are listed in Appendix II (CITES 2013, 2016, and 2019). Resulting transaction and weight indices are presented relative to the first year in the time series, or 2008, which is set to a value of 100, and thus should not be interpreted as absolute values. Bias-adjusted estimates are presented with 95% credible intervals to indicate trends in illegal ivory trade activity. Finally, all analyses were conducted in Programme R (R Core Team 2020).
42. The resulting input data for the analysis comprised of 16,818 ETIS records from 68 countries spanning 2008 – 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic economic, travel, and trade activities were severely reduced which could have subsequently impacted illegal trade activity, seizure rates, and reporting rates as detailed in the *Discussion* section in paragraphs 45 to 49 below; therefore, **2020 likely represent an abnormal year, acting as an outlier that could impact results**. In exploring the potential impacts of 2020 ETIS data on trend results, analyses were repeated to only include data from 2008 – 2019. While modeling results for this additional analysis are not presented in the main report to avoid confusion, they are available graphically in Annex 1d. It is noted that some changes in trend between the two modeling approaches was observed; for example, excluding 2020 data resulted in an increasing rather than decreasing trends for transaction index for three ivory type and weight classes for 2019, which for two classes (small and medium raw ivory) 2019 then represented a peak year in the timeseries analyzed (Figure A2, Annex 1d).



**Figure 8. Transaction index.** Transaction index estimates for (a) small (<10 kg), (b) medium (10-100 kg), and (c) large ( $\geq 100$  kg) raw ivory classes; (d) small (<10 kg), and (e) large ( $\geq 10$  kg) worked ivory classes; and (f) the composite across all ivory types and weight classes. Mean estimates (bold dot) are shown with 95% credible intervals. Asterisk is denoting the fact that 2020 data (and estimates) likely represent an abnormal year, acting as an outlier that could impact results (see also Annex 1d, Figure A2). Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 20 October 2021.

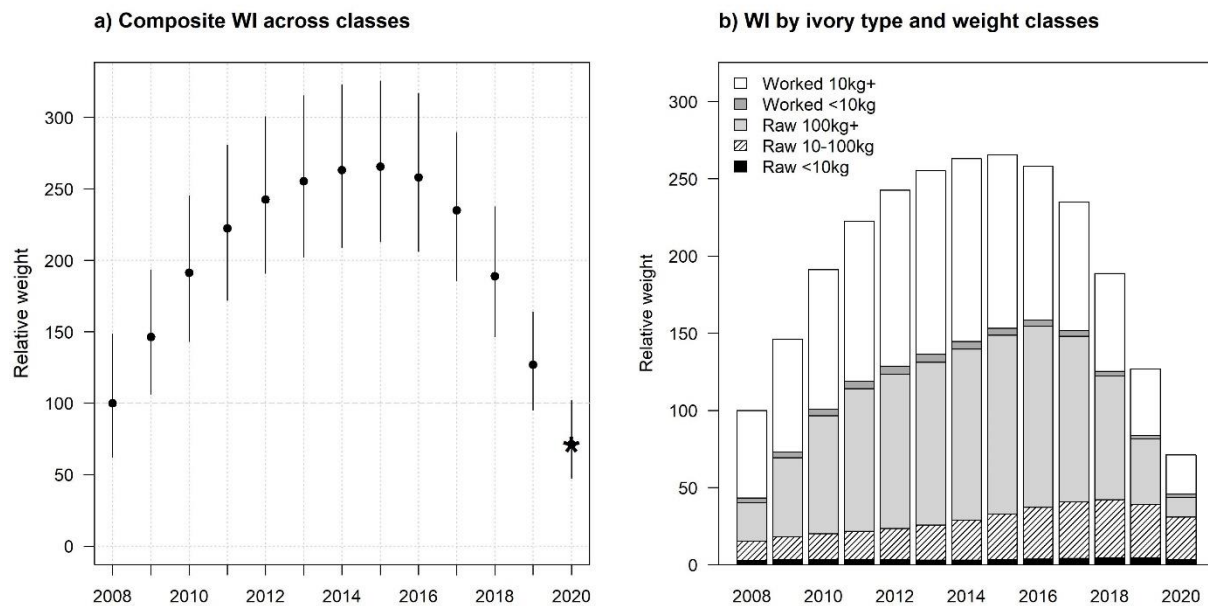
### Transaction Index

43. The overall Transaction Index (TI) presented in Figure 8 provides a relative measure of global illegal ivory trade transactions from 2008 – 2020. The composite TI trend (Figure 8.f.) showed that illegal ivory trade activity continues to decline from its peak in 2013-2014, and that TI estimated for 2020 was below the baseline level of 2008, although credible intervals overlap. When examining trends by class, estimated small raw ivory in 2019 was relatively similar to TI estimate in 2018, but then declined for 2020 to levels similar to those estimated for 2015 (Figure 8.a.), and medium raw ivory demonstrated similar trends albeit TI for 2019 was lower still compared to 2018 (Figure 8.b.). Large raw ivory showed a marked decline for raw ivory with TI estimates in 2020 being lower than the baseline TI estimates of 2008, although some overlap of credible intervals is still noted (Figure 8.c.). Declining trends are also noted for both classes of worked ivory, where for small worked ivory class, 2018 – 2020 estimate are below the baseline estimate for 2008 (Figure 8.d.), and for medium-large class, 2019-2020 estimates are below the baseline year of 2008 (Figure 8.e).

### Weight Index

44. Patterns observed for the composite weight index (WI) indicated a decreasing trend following peak levels in 2015, where 2020 estimates were lower than the 2008 baseline levels, although credible intervals overlapped (Figure 9.a.). When examining WI results by class, and similar to TI results, for small and large worked ivory classes, 2019 estimates are lower but relatively similar to 2018, and estimates then decreased further for 2020 (Figure 9.b).





**Figure 9. Weight index.** (a) Composite of weight index estimates across all ivory types and weight classes, where mean estimates (bold dot) are shown with 95% credible intervals, and where an asterisk is denoting the fact that 2020 data (and estimates) likely represent an abnormal year, acting as an outlier that could impact results (see also Annex 1d, Figure A3 and A4); and (b) weight index estimates depicted by ivory type and weight classes. Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 20 October 2021.

## Discussion

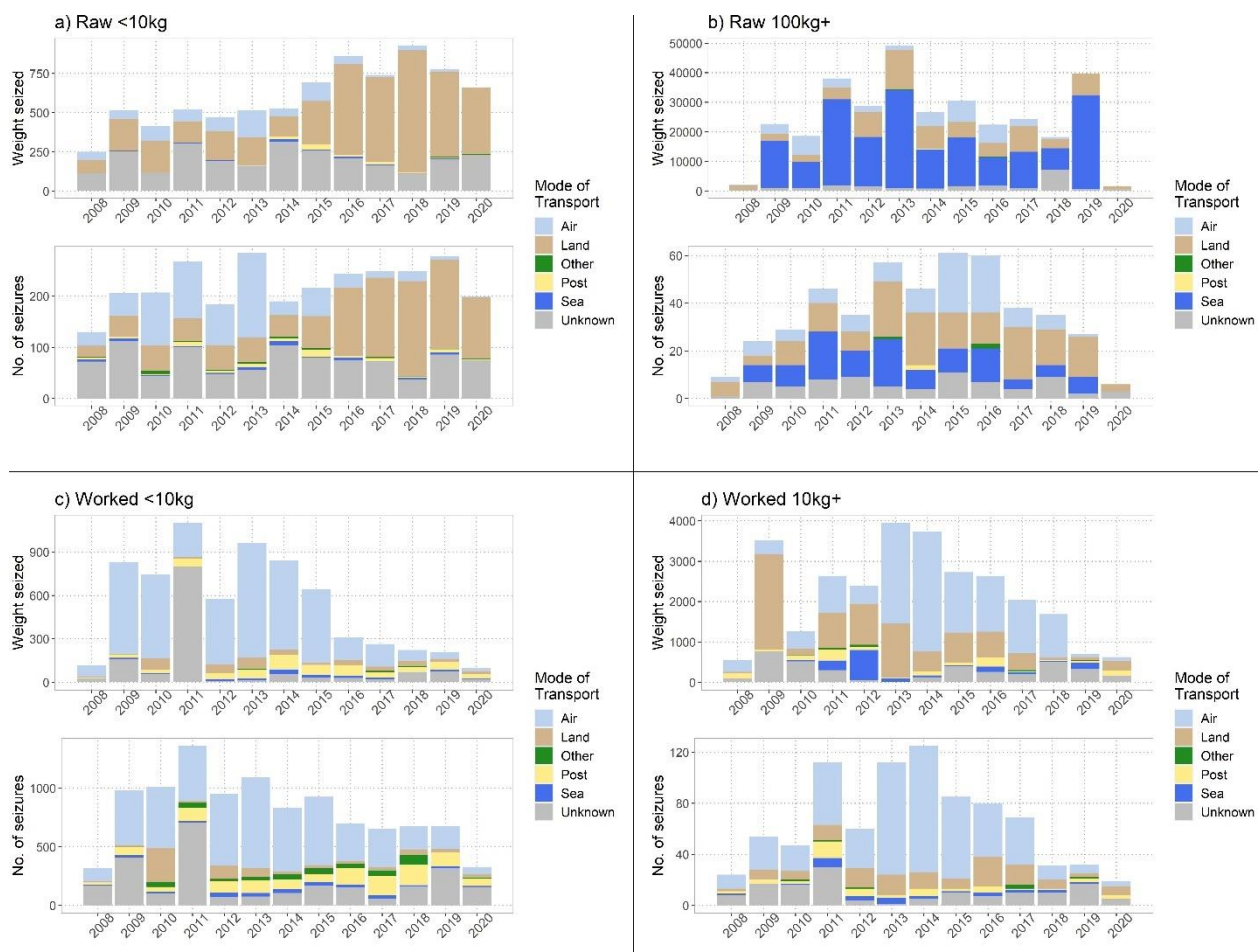
45. In 2019 the third highest weight of ivory seizures was reported to ETIS in the period 2008 to 2020, whereas in 2020, lower numbers of seizures of elephant specimens were reported. The trend analysis shows that since the peak ivory trade in 2014 – 2015 there has been an overall decreasing trend in illegal ivory trade activity to 2020, with 2020 estimates comparable to the baseline levels of 2008. While it is encouraging and a sign of optimism that similar to results from the trend analyses of Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants data ([CITES 2021b](#)) ETIS trends have been declining in recent years, for 2020 it is impossible to determine the extent to which this is due to a real decrease in illegal ivory trade stemming from control actions taken by the Parties, or due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on overall illegal wildlife trade (elaborated on in detail below). However, it is likely that 2020 represents an unusual outlier year for global trade and illegal ivory trade activity, and it is too early to tell whether decreasing trends will be sustained. Early 2021 data already suggest global economies, travel, and trade are recovering (IATA 2021, UNCTAD 2020, UNWTO 2021), and notable incidents of illegal ivory trade are being reported for 2021<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, when trend analyses were conducted excluding 2020 data (Annex 1d), for two ivory type and weight classes transaction index trends for illegal ivory trade activity increased to a peak in 2019. Coupled with the three record-setting seizures of weights of 7.5 tonnes or more of ivory that were reported to ETIS in 2019 illegal ivory trade activity remains high; future analysis of ETIS data will provide an indication of the direction and sustainability of trends.
46. One way to try and assess the connections between the pandemic effects and the lower trends observed in illegal ivory trade is to consider how illegal raw and worked ivory shipments are transported in relations to overall levels of tourism and cargo shipments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism travel declined by 73% relative to 2019 (UNWTO 2021), air freight capacity declined by 21.1% (IATA 2021), and sea trade volume declined by a modest 4.1% accompanied with long backlogs at ports (UNCTAD 2020). Exploring the reported mode of transport for ETIS records - mainly air, land, post, or sea - may therefore provide insights into how COVID-19 might have affected illegal ivory transactions; data are explored by ivory type and class below (Figure 10)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> For example, a 4,752 kg of raw ivory seized in Nigeria that was reported by UNODC 2021, but has yet to be submitted to ETIS by the Party.

<sup>7</sup> Mode of transport data were available for 74% of records reported from 2008-2020, most attributed to worked (n=11,137) rather than raw (n=5,926) ivory seizures records.



47. For small raw ivory seizures (<10 kg), overall reported data indicates land was the predominant mode of transport by number of seizures and weight from 2008 – 2020 (Figure 10.a), with similar proportions between 2019 and 2020 suggesting reported illegal activity transported over land persisted during the pandemic. Overall, for large raw ivory (100+ kg), fewer seizures by number were reported to be transported by sea, but they comprised a larger proportion of the weight, especially in 2019 (Figure 10.b<sup>8</sup>). No large shipments by sea were reported as seized for 2020, however, it is too early to tell whether that is a result of lower levels of shipments passing through the ports (although sea freight decreased only modestly by 4.1% in 2020 as reported above), or a result of lack of enforcement efforts to intercept them. Information for 2021 already indicates large shipments of illegal ivory are being transported by sea<sup>6</sup>. Finally for worked ivory, which for small pieces is primarily associated with purchases by tourists or individuals (CITES 2019), air was generally the predominant mode of transport reported for seizures between 2008 - 2020 (Figure 10.c-d.), and compared to 2019, fewer reported seizures of small worked ivory in 2020 were transported by air. Given that tourist air travel is recovering after almost ceasing all operations in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic (IATA 2021), it is important to ensure that law enforcement efforts continue to intercept worked ivory transactions transported by air travel and cargo, including the sharing of intelligence that has shown success in intercepting large seizures<sup>9</sup>.



**Figure 10. Mode of Transport Reported Data.** Number of seizures and total weight reported to ETIS for each mode of transport from 2008 – 2020 for (a) small (<10 kg) and (b) large ( $\geq 100$  kg) raw ivory classes and (c) small (<10 kg), and (d) large ( $\geq 10$  kg) worked ivory classes. Medium (10-100 kg) raw ivory class showed similar patterns to small raw ivory (a) and is therefore omitted for brevity. No. of seizures represent the non-bias adjusted summary of seizures and confiscations reported to ETIS. Weight seized include actual reported raw ivory weights, adjusted reported worked seizure weights by the raw ivory equivalent (RIE) conversion factor, or estimated weights for raw or worked seizures that reported the number of pieces but had missing weights (based on procedures described in Annex 1c). Summaries are based on data downloaded from the ETIS database on 20 October 2021.

<sup>8</sup> A declining pattern in mode of transport data doesn't necessarily indicate the overall number and weight of transactions are also declining for a given year. Rather it is a reflection of the mode of transport data reported to ETIS.

<sup>9</sup> As reported by officials in Singapore, the 8.8 tonnes of ivory was intercepted following intelligence sharing by China; <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/news/2019/7/national-parks-board-works-with-singapore-customs-and-immigration--a--checkpoints-authority-to-seize-11--d--9-tonnes-of-pangolin-scales-and--8--d--8-tonnes-of-elephant-ivory>

48. It must be stressed that various factors related to the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 may have affected issues such as levels of trade and modes of transport use in differing ways. For example, the OECD has reported that the online environment has become more intensely misused for various illicit trades, with significant increases in the trade of illicit products taking place on the Internet, primarily through the movement of small parcels (OECD, 2020). Another factor to be considered is the possible decreased law enforcement effort that may have resulted from staff illness, isolation, absence due to furlough or focus of effort and resources on COVID-related areas of work. There is currently not enough data to conclusively determine how these different factors have affected illicit movements of ivory, and Parties are urged to invest in collecting, monitoring and exchanging information on illegal trade so they can respond to these rapidly changing trends and patterns in a timely and effective manner.
49. Lastly, and similar to previous reports, under-reporting to ETIS continues to be an issue, including for countries that are part of the NIAP process. In some cases, additional data from WCO, or open-source data from CITES reports, NGO information, or media reports may indicate seizures are made by a Party that they themselves do not report e.g. the large seizure made in 2020 reported on above. While some lack of reporting can be corrected for by the current models, and alternative improved options for estimating the ETIS reporting covariate are currently being explored (Annex 1c), it is essential that Parties comply with data reporting guidelines to ETIS so that trends in illegal trade can be analyzed and monitored effectively and in a timely manner over extended periods of time. Currently there is an average time lag of about 300 days between seizure occurrence and reporting to ETIS, which is more than triple the 90 days specified in Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18). At the same time, it is encouraging to see the increased use of ETIS Online by the Parties, now reaching 72 users from 46 countries (detailed update below), with 18 countries using the portal to report seizures online during the first year the website operational. Having more Parties register on ETIS Online and use it as the main portal for continuous ETIS data submission will result in a more consistent, timely, and complete reporting and would help to optimize outputs and delivery of ETIS analyses results to the Parties and the CITES Secretariat.

#### Updates on progress on requests made to TRAFFIC at SC69 and SC70

##### *SC69 Com 11 paragraph 5b): Developing an ETIS Online facility for the CITES Parties*

50. ETIS Online (<https://etisonline.org/>) was launched on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 with a joint press release by the CITES Secretariat and TRAFFIC and a Notification to the Parties ([No. 2020/065](#)). Available in the three languages of the Convention, the online portal allows Parties to view, download, and verify ETIS records relating to their country, view and download their country's report, and view and download ETIS SC and CoP reports. Additionally, Parties can upload seizure data using an online form or in bulk using an available Excel template. Strict registration protocols developed with the CITES Secretariat are in place to verify users with their respective country's Management Authorities. Online user guides are available in English, French, and Spanish, and TRAFFIC has been offering training to Management Authority staff<sup>10</sup>. Response to ETIS Online by the Parties has been very positive, where, as noted above, to date ETIS Online has 72 users from 46 countries<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, 18 Parties have submitted 336 records online, some doing so continuously throughout 2021. TRAFFIC has been engaging with the Parties to provide one-on-one training when requested and has been presenting ETIS Online at multi-lateral meetings, e.g., the MIKE Subregional Steering Committee meetings or Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX) regional meeting, reaching to date a total of 30 Parties.

##### *SC70 Com 18 paragraph 11): Make aggregated data on the number and weight of ivory seizures available on the CITES website.*

51. The revised [CITES-ETIS website](#) was published online in March 2021. Annual data aggregates for number of seizures and total weight seized for seizures made within a country are now available to download as country reports. Updates of data aggregates and the planned addition of summaries for seizures implicating Parties, also known as "seizure-out", should be completed by SC74.

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<sup>10</sup> TRAFFIC provided 13 training sessions with countries between 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2021 and 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, where some training sessions were conducted one-on-one with staff responsible for submission of ETIS data and other training session involving MAs from several countries (e.g., MIKE-ETIS West Africa Subregional Steering Committee, SADC-TWIX).

<sup>11</sup> Algeria, Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, France, Germany, Hong Kong SAR, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

## Acknowledgements

52. The ETIS programme is entirely dependent on donor and grant support. TRAFFIC is grateful for generous contributions by: The Darwin Initiative, a U.K. government grants scheme; The European Union; The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; The Belgian Federal Public Service for Food, Health, and the Environment; The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality of the Netherlands; The Netherlands Federal Public Service, Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment; University of Reading; The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; The U.S. Agency for International Development; WWF.

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## **Legal trade in ivory**

53. This section has been prepared by UNEP-WCMC.
54. An overview of reported trade in *Loxodonta africana* using CITES annual report data over the period 2016-2019 is provided herein. Complete trade data for 2020 are not yet available, as the deadline for submission of annual reports to CITES for 2020 was 31 October 2021 and annual reports are still being received. Similarly, trade data for 2021 are not yet available (submission deadline: 31 October 2022). An annual report for the 2016-2019 period has not yet been received at the time of writing (November 2021) for Mozambique (2019). All trade statistics are based on data held within the CITES Trade Database (accessed on 10/11/2021).
55. Reported legal direct trade in *L. africana* by African elephant range States over the period 2016-2019 principally comprised wild-sourced tusks, skin pieces and skins for hunting and commercial purposes, in addition to wild-sourced specimens for scientific purposes. Direct trade in wild-sourced ivory carvings<sup>12</sup> reported by African elephant range States in 2016-2019 totalled 222 kg and 195 items. The majority (72%)

<sup>12</sup> Including trade reported in the CITES Trade Database as ivory carvings, jewellery, ivory jewellery, and piano keys.

of ivory carvings traded by weight were reported in 2017 (160 kg), and approximately half of the ivory carvings reported by number were reported in 2019 (102 items).

56. In total, for 2016-2019, African elephant range States reported the direct export of 200 tusks and 16,672 kg of wild-sourced tusks (Table 1 and Table 2); countries of import recorded the import of 443 tusks and 873 kg of tusks. All trade in tusks by weight was exported from Zimbabwe and predominantly reported as hunting trophies (purpose code 'H'). Zimbabwe reported the export of 2,144 kg of tusks in 2019, which represented a decrease of 55% compared to 2018 levels (4,777 kg) and remained below the peak in trade over this period in 2016 (4,944 kg; Table 2). Trade in tusks reported by number decreased by 67% between 2016 and 2019 according to data reported by African elephant range States, while the number of tusks reported by importers decreased by 71% (Table 1).
57. The discrepancy in the number of tusks reported in trade by African elephant range States compared with the number reported by importing countries (200 compared with 443 tusks, respectively) can in part be explained by differences in reporting: Zimbabwe reported exports primarily by weight, whereas countries of import largely reported trade from Zimbabwe in number of tusks. Additionally, a permit analysis identified some cases where such discrepancies occurred due to year-end trade<sup>13</sup>, or discrepancies in the term code reported, for example one trading partner reporting trade as 'trophies' while the other reported 'tusks'.
58. In addition, a total of 1,144 wild-sourced trophies were reported by exporters and 1,228 reported by importers 2016-2019 (Table 3).

**Table 1.** Direct trade in wild-sourced\* tusks of *Loxodonta africana* from African elephant range States, 2016-2019 (all purposes).

Exporter	Reported by	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Botswana	Exporter	8	0	0	10	18
	Importer	6	2	0	0	8
Cameroon	Exporter	2	0	0	4	6
	Importer	4	0	0	0	4
Mozambique	Exporter	10	6	2	NR	18
	Importer	6	16	0	0	22
Namibia	Exporter	32	0	15	16	63
	Importer	32	14	21	14	81
South Africa	Exporter	55	18	1	5	79
	Importer	48	26	9	0	83
United Republic of Tanzania	Exporter	0	0	4	1	5
	Importer	0	0	2	2	4
Zambia	Exporter	7	2	0	2	11
	Importer	0	12	0	0	12
Zimbabwe	Exporter	0	0	0	0	0
	Importer	88	57	47	37	229
<b>Total</b>	<b>Exporter</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>200</b>
	<b>Importer</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>443</b>

Source: CITES Trade Database, UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

NR= No report received at the time of writing (November 2021).

\* 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W' or without a source specified. No trade in tusks reported by number was reported as source 'U'.

**Table 2.** Direct trade in wild-sourced\* *Loxodonta africana* tusks as reported by weight (kg) from African elephant range States, 2016-2019 (all purposes), rounded to the nearest kilogram.

Exporter	Reported by	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
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<sup>13</sup> Where the exporter reports the permit issued at the end of one year, and the importer reports the transaction having occurred in the next year. This could lead, for instance, to some trade reported in 2017 by exporters that is reported by importing countries in 2018, resulting in discrepancies in both years.

Zimbabwe	Exporter	4944	4807	4777	2144	16672
	Importer	247	139	461	26	873

Source: CITES Trade Database, UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

\* 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W'. No trade in tusks reported by weight (kg) was reported as source 'U' or without a source specified.

**Table 3.** Direct trade in wild-sourced\* sport-hunted\*\* trophies of *Loxodonta africana* from African elephant range States, 2016-2019.

Exporter	Reported by	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Botswana	Exporter	25	2	0	1	28
	Importer	18	1	0	2	21
Cameroon	Exporter	2	2	2	5	11
	Importer	1	1	2	7	11
Mozambique	Exporter	13	11	10	NR	34
	Importer	19	7	9	8	43
Namibia	Exporter	94	90	69	33	286
	Importer	99	80	64	26	269
South Africa	Exporter	104	115	43	62	324
	Importer	73	82	41	11	207
United Republic of Tanzania	Exporter	1	0	4	9	14
	Importer	0	3	16	9	28
Zambia	Exporter	5	9	8	4	26
	Importer	2	5	9	18	34
Zimbabwe	Exporter	86	109	156	70	421
	Importer	158	121	231	105	615
Total	Exporter	330	338	292	184	1144
	Importer	370	300	372	186	1228

Source: CITES Trade Database, UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

NR= No report received at the time of writing (November 2021).

\* 'Wild-sourced' only includes trade recorded as source 'W' or without a source specified. No trade in trophies was reported as source 'U'.

\*\* 'Sport-hunted trophies' consist of trade in 'trophies' reported as purposes 'H', 'P' and 'T' as well as those without a purpose specified. This does not include trade in other 'trophy' items such as skins, skulls, ears, tails, etc.

#### Estimates of numbers of individuals and tusks in trade

59. When the number of individual elephants involved in the trade is estimated (by assuming that for the tusks presented in Table 1 two tusks equal one individual and that each trophy presented in Table 3 equals one individual), exports reported by most African elephant range States decreased between 2016-2019 (Table 4): Botswana (from 29 to six individuals), Namibia (from 110 to 41 individuals), South Africa (from ~132 to ~65 individuals), Zambia (from approximately nine to five individuals) and Zimbabwe (from 129 to 70 individuals). Exports reported by two range States increased over this period: Cameroon (from three to seven individuals) and the United Republic of Tanzania (from one to ~10 individuals). Mozambique's annual report for 2019 had not been received at the time of writing, but according to importers, there was a decrease in exports (from 22 to eight individuals). Note that these estimates do not consider trade reported by weight (only applicable to Zimbabwe).
60. When the declared export quotas for tusks as sport-hunted trophies are compared with exporter-reported and importer-reported data for both tusks and hunting trophies (assuming that one trophy includes two tusks), no exporting range State appears to have exceeded their annual export quotas set in 2018 or 2019 (Table 4). However, quotas appear to have been exceeded by two range States: Botswana (in 2016 and 2017) and Namibia (in 2016).

61. Botswana's zero quotas issued for 2016 and 2017<sup>14</sup> appear to have been exceeded as reported by both Botswana and the countries of import. In particular, in 2016 the zero quota was apparently exceeded by 58 tusks (29 individuals) as reported by Botswana and by 42 tusks (21 individuals) as reported by importers. In 2017, the apparent excess was four tusks (two individuals) as reported by both Botswana and importers (Table 4).
62. It is important to note that potential quota excesses for elephant tusks can be difficult to establish due to reporting practices. For example, trade reported as a 'trophy' may contain one, two or no tusks. Additional details provided in annual reports were scrutinised, where possible, to provide further details relating to potential quota excesses. Based on such information, the apparent excess of Botswana's 2016 quota can be reduced to 14 tusks (~7 individuals) as reported by Botswana, and to 16 tusks (~8 individuals) as reported by importers. The apparent excess of Botswana's 2017 quota can be reduced to two tusks (~1 individual) as reported by Botswana only.
63. Namibia appears to have exceeded its quota published for 2016 (of 180 tusks) by 40 tusks (~20 individuals) according to data reported by Namibia, and 50 tusks (~25 individuals) according to importers (Table 4). Based on additional details included in importer annual reports, the apparent excess according to importers can be reduced to 46 tusks (~23 individuals). In the case of trade reported by Namibia, it should be noted that Namibia's annual report is based on permits issued rather than actual trade, meaning that some of the reported exports may not have occurred.

#### Reporting issue

64. The analysis of hunting trophy data is complicated by the variety of ways in which hunting trophies can be reported. The *Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual reports*<sup>15</sup> states that all the trophy parts of one animal, e.g. an elephant's two tusks, four feet, two ears and one tail, constitute one 'trophy' if they are exported together on the same permit. However, in practice, many Parties do not follow the *Guidelines* consistently and this can lead to double-counting of trophies. Standardisation in reporting of hunting trophies through application of the *Guidelines*, in particular for species such as *L. africana* where export quotas have been established, is crucial to assessing compliance with the provisions of the Convention.
65. Serial numbers provided within annual reports can provide valuable insight for verification of quota compliance and this information could be collected more systematically through the CITES Trade Database to support CITES implementation if Parties request this. Adoption of electronic permitting and automated transfer of trade data to the CITES Trade Database in near real-time would facilitate this and should be considered as a means for enhancing transparency and traceability for all species with quotas and tagging/marking systems. These compliance considerations may be relevant for continued discussions by the Standing Committee and its Electronic Systems and Information Technology Working Group.

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<sup>14</sup> CITES Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on Trade in elephant specimens stipulates that if a range State does not submit its export quota to the CITES Secretariat in writing by 1 December for the following calendar year, a zero export quota is issued.

<sup>15</sup> CITES Notification to the Parties 2017/006 issued on 16/01/2017 (reissued on 17/04/2018) and CITES Notification No. 2019/072 (issued on 04/12/2019) covered the period under analysis. The guidelines have subsequently been replaced by those published under CITES Notification No. 2021/044 on 06/07/2021.



**Table 4.** Estimated trade in wild-sourced\*\* *Loxodonta africana* tusks calculated based on the total number of reported tusks combined with an estimate of the number of tusks reported in trade as “trophies”\*\* directly exported by African elephant range States 2016-2019, and export quotas for *Loxodonta africana* tusks as sport-hunted trophies 2016-2021 established in compliance with Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on trade in elephant specimens. Potential quota excesses based on the estimated tusks are indicated in **bold**. Where there was no published quota for tusks as trophies, this is indicated by a hyphen. Trade data for 2020 and 2021 were not yet available at the time of writing. All quantities are reported by number; tusks reported by weight have been excluded from estimates. Only sport hunted trophies (reported as purpose ‘H’, ‘P’ or ‘T’ or without a purpose specified) have been included in the estimates; trade in trophy items (i.e. reported as skull, skin etc.) has been excluded.

Exporter	Reported by	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	2021
		Estimated No. of tusks*	Quota (# tusks)	Estimated No. of tusks*	Quota (# tusks)	Estimated No. of tusks*	Quota (# tusks)	Estimated No. of tusks*	Quota (# tusks)	Quota (# tusks)	Quota (# tusks)
Botswana	Exporter	<b>58</b>	0	<b>4</b>	0	0	-	12	200	800	800
	Importer	<b>42</b>	0	<b>4</b>	0	0	-	4	200		
Cameroon	Exporter	6	160	4	160	4	-	14	-	0	0
	Importer	6	160	2	160	4	-	14	-		
Mozambique	Exporter	36	56	28	38	22	66	NR	-	24	0
	Importer	44	56	30	38	18	66	16	-		
Namibia	Exporter	<b>220</b>	180	180	180	153	180	82	180	180	180
	Importer	<b>230</b>	180	174	180	149	180	66	180		
South Africa	Exporter	263	300	248	300	87	300	129	300	300	300
	Importer	194	300	190	300	91	300	22	300		
United Republic of Tanzania	Exporter	2	200	0	100	12	100	19	100	100	100
	Importer	0	200	6	100	34	100	20	100		
Zambia	Exporter	17	160	20	160	16	160	10	160	160	160
	Importer	4	160	22	160	18	160	36	160		
Zimbabwe	Exporter	172	1000	218	1000	312	1000	140	1000	1000	1000
	Importer	404	1000	299	1000	509	1000	247	1000		

Source: CITES Trade Database, UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

\* Total number of tusks estimated based on the number of tusks reported plus two times the number of trophies reported (with the assumption that one trophy corresponds to one individual and therefore contains two tusks).

\*\* ‘Wild-sourced’ only includes trade recorded as source ‘W’ or without a source specified. No trade in tusks or trophies was reported as source ‘U’.

NR= No report received at the time of writing (November 2021).

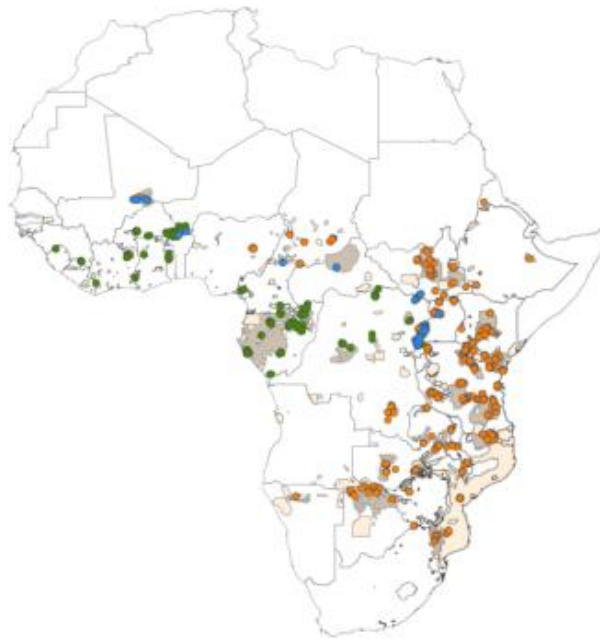
66. This section has been prepared by the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG).

#### Status Reports

67. The AfESG provides technical expertise and advice to governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and individuals in support of conservation and management of the African elephant. As a critical component of this mandate, the AfESG maintains the African Elephant Database (AED), the formal repository for geo-spatial information on the numbers and distribution of the species. It also publishes the African Elephant Status Report (AESR). Full status reports were published in 1995, 1998, 2002, 2007 and 2016 and provisional updates were released online for 2012 (in 2013) and 2013 (in 2015). The next status reports for both forest and savanna elephants are planned for production in 2022 and 2023 respectively.
68. The death of 350 elephants in northern Botswana between March and June 2020 concerned conservationists and scientists. There were varied speculations as to the causes of death ranging from deliberate poisoning of waterholes, or diseases or toxins, possibly exacerbated by climate change, and the impact of cattle veterinary fences. However, the Botswana government indicated that the cause was cyanobacteria poisoning. Across the border in Zimbabwe, more than 20 dead elephants were found between Hwange National Park and Victoria Falls in August 2020, with concerns that the two incidents could have been linked. There have since been similar events involving 39 elephants in 2021 under investigations in Botswana.

#### African elephant taxonomy

69. The decision by the IUCN to treat African forest (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*) and savanna elephants (*Loxodonta africana africana*) as separate species was the result of the consensus that had emerged among experts following new research into the genetics of elephant populations ([Loxodonta africana subspecies distribution across African Elephant Database Input Zones](#)). Accumulating genetic, ecological and demographic evidence indicates a separation between these two subspecies. However, the hybridisation that occurs in some of the zones separating the rainforest and woodland-savanna habitats poses uncertainty and conservation challenges. The AfESG commissioned a study to conduct further genetic analyses on the occurrence of hybrids after collecting additional sampling in the areas surrounding these convergence zones. The results of this study, completed in March 2019, showed that, despite numerous opportunities to hybridise, hybridisation was extremely rare across Africa (Figure 11). There were, however, exceptions in areas of high human conflict, such as the Albertine Rift and West Africa. Here, high levels of asymmetric poaching appeared to have increased hybridisation as elephants of one subspecies sought safe haven in the lesser poached habitat of the other. Individuals in a few populations that have a combined population size totalling <2000 elephants had evidence of hybridisation. As part of the Red List process, all populations known to have hybrids were identified, and each had pure populations of only one or the other species present, and not both. For practical purposes, these populations were assigned to the pure species which occurs there. Given the low level of hybridisation, this should not be of such a concern as to distract from the need to focus on the conservation of each of the species separately, with an emphasis needed on the conservation of remaining populations of forest elephants.



**Figure 11.** Reference samples identified to subspecies status are shown (forest = green; savanna = orange, hybrids = blue) with AED input zones (light brown = input zones that contain no samples, brown = input zones that contain samples)  
– Source: Kim, J., & Wasser, S. K. (2019)

#### Red List assessment of the African elephant

70. A team of six assessors from the AfESG was established in July 2017 to re-assess the Red List status of the African Elephant. The team included experts with experience of forest and savanna elephant populations across all regions of the continent, as well as an expert modeller. They conducted the re-assessment separately for the two species of the African elephant, with the forest *Loxodonta cyclotis* listed as Critically Endangered and the savannah *Loxodonta africana* listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2021). Before this update, African elephants were treated as a single species, listed as Vulnerable.
71. This was the first time the two species were assessed separately for the IUCN Red List, following the emergence of new genetic evidence (Okita-Ouma & Slotow 2021). The process was an extremely rigorous one, taking the best part of four years (2017 to 2021) to complete, with a comprehensive modelling approach and navigation through the complex datasets and species differences. There were high levels of scrutiny at different stages, including by the IUCN Red List Standards and Petitions Committee (SPC). Despite the challenges of compiling and incorporating historical datasets, the outcomes of the model were robust and provided a sound assessment. More details on the assessment of the forest and savanna elephants can be found on the IUCN Red List website: [African forest elephant](#), [African savanna elephant](#) and Hart et al. (2021). Analysis of estimates of African forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) from 161 localities across the species range indicated a reduction of more than 80% of the continental population in the past three generations (Gobush et al. 2021), while the population of African savanna elephants decreased by at least 60% over the last 50 years, according to the assessments (IUCN 2021).
72. The decision by the IUCN in 2021 to treat the African elephants as two separate species (see further details in paragraph 69 above) may have implications if adopted by CITES and in this regard the Animals Committee agreed at its 31<sup>st</sup> meeting to submit to the Conference of the Parties at its 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, a number of decisions to initiate the process to assess the potential effects ([AC31 Sum.3](#)).
73. Despite the overall declining trend of both African elephant species, the assessments also highlighted the impact of successful conservation efforts. Anti-poaching measures on the ground, together with more supportive legislation and land use planning which seek to foster human-wildlife coexistence, were identified critical to successful elephant conservation. As a result, some forest elephants have stabilised in well-managed conservation areas in Gabon and the Republic of the Congo. Savanna elephant numbers have also been stable or growing for decades especially in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area, which harbours the largest number of this species on the continent.

## Continental overview of elephant populations

74. The principal findings of the African Elephant Status Report (Thouless et al. 2016), were summarized in the Annex to document [SC69 Doc. 51.1](#). The report identified 37 African elephant range States with a known and possible elephant range of over 3.1 million km<sup>2</sup>; surveys indicated a total population of 415,428 ( $\pm 20,111$ ) elephants, with an additional 117,127 to 135,384 elephants in areas not systematically surveyed. The report also revealed that Africa's elephant population has seen the worst declines in 25 years, with a loss of approximately 111,000 elephants over the ten years (2006 – 2015). The AfESG resolved that an update of the African Elephant Status Report (AESR) will be initiated in 2021/2022, covering five years from 2016 to 2020 inclusive. There are expectations that African elephants could be on a recovery trajectory given fewer poaching incidents compared to the period before 2016. However, as they recover, they come into conflict with human encroachment into what was previously elephant habitat and some are killed in the process. Conflict-related deaths may not be currently impacting large populations but may be of significant consequences for small elephant populations in places like west Africa. As human settlement and linear infrastructural developments increase so will conflict between people and elephants as well as habitat loss unless proactive and appropriate measures are undertaken to prevent or curb the impact.

### *Priority for future elephant surveys*

75. Areas prioritized as critical in the AESR 2016 were the Kavango-Zambezi Trans-frontier Conservation Area, (KAZA TFCA) and Gabon. The surveys for the KAZA TFCA will be carried out in 2022 while results from the Gabon surveys of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 are under review, and results are expected in early 2022.

### *New and expected elephant survey results*

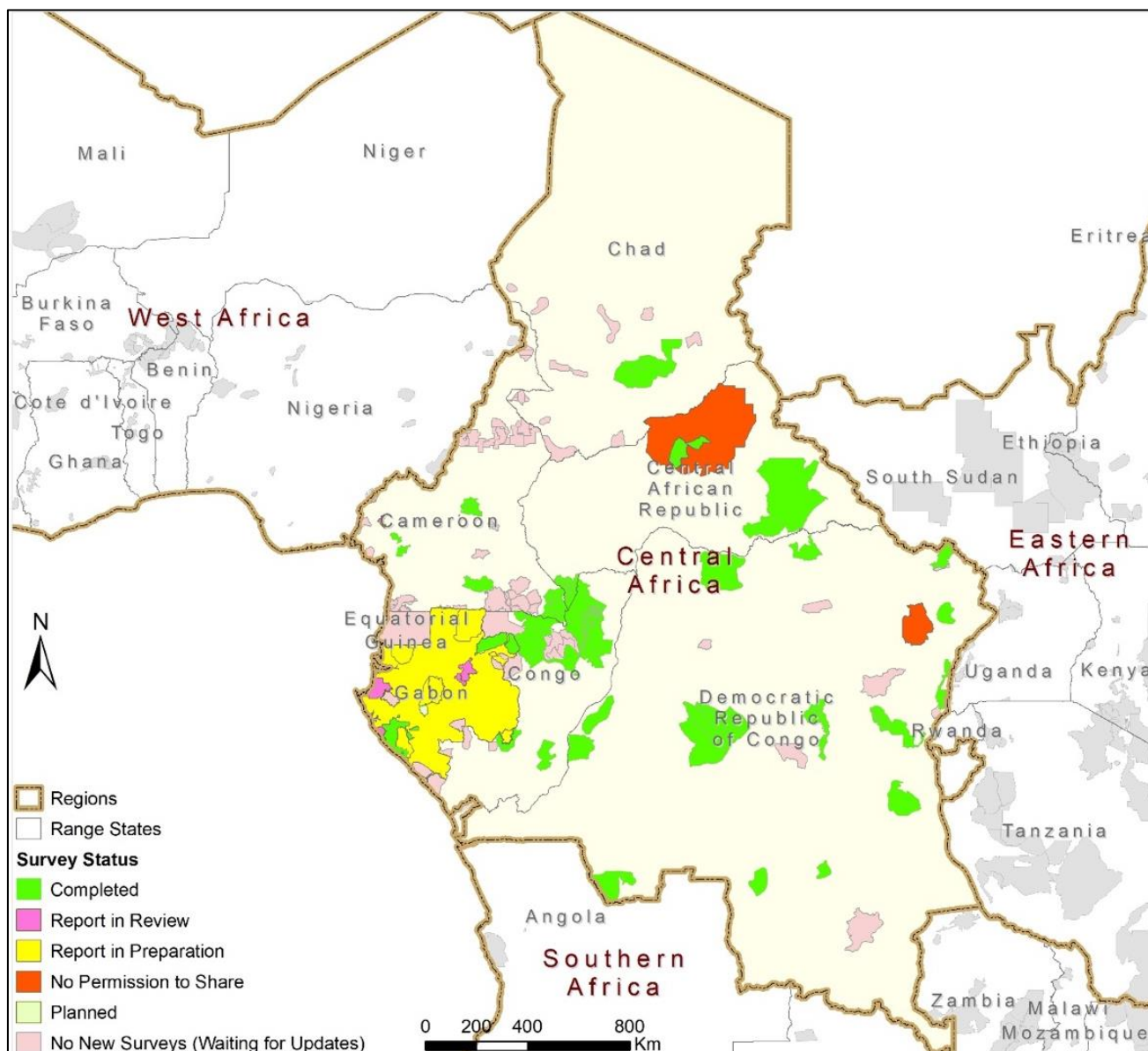
76. In central Africa, expected results for surveys carried out in sites in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo were received while results for sites in Gabon are under review in early 2022. In eastern Africa, results were received from the United Republic of Tanzania for surveys carried out in 2017 and 2019. Results for surveys carried out in 2020 and 2021 in Serengeti Ecosystem, Moyowosi-Kigosi and Loliondo are expected by the end of 2021. In southern Africa, the final results for the Mozambique National census completed in November 2018 are still awaited although preliminary results were received. Results for surveys carried out in South Africa between 2016 and 2020 were received.

### *Countries and sites surveyed from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 to June 2021*

77. A preliminary summary of elephant surveys conducted since the cut-off date for inclusion in the AESR 2016 (31<sup>st</sup> December 2015) is included in Tables 5 to 9 and in the maps (Figures 12 to 15).

**Table 5: Status of Surveys for central Africa Region**

Country	Surveys Status – Number of surveys (landscapes) and number of input zones (strata)											Total Surveys	Total Input Zones
	Report Received & Entered in AED		Report Completed (No Permission to Share)		Report Awaited (In Preparation)		Report Awaited (Under Review)		Planned Survey				
	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones			
Cameroon	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	5	
Central African Republic	3	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	
Chad	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	
Congo	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	
Democratic Republic of Congo	16	18	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	20	
Equatorial Guinea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Gabon	1	4	0	0	6	8	3	3	0	0	10	15	
	30	45	3	3	6	8	4	4	0	0	43	60	

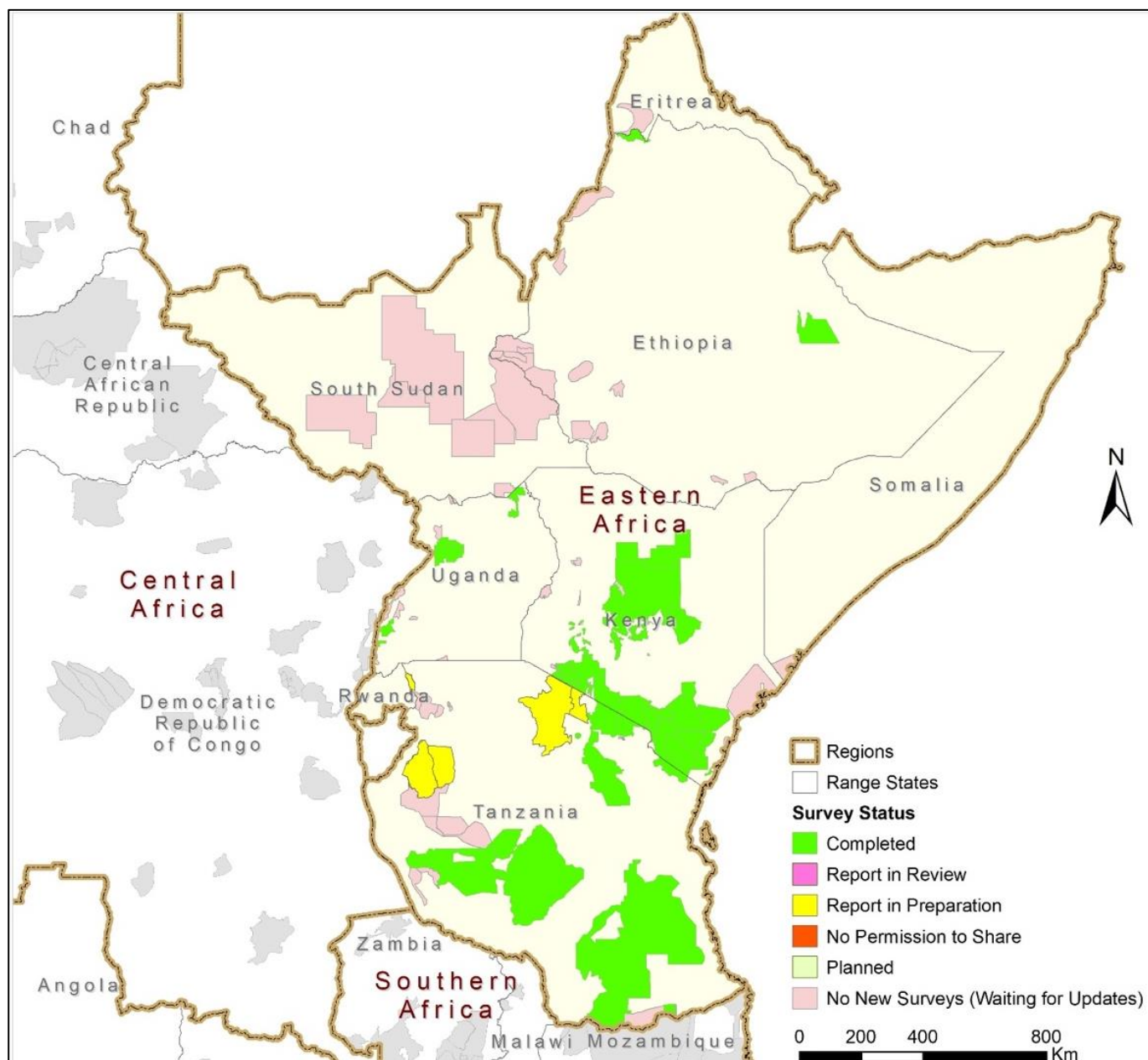


**Figure 12: Map of Overall Status of Sites Surveyed in central Africa Region**



**Table 6: Status of Surveys for Eastern Africa Region**

Country	Surveys Status – Number of surveys (landscapes) and number of input zones (strata)											Total Surveys	Total Input Zones
	Report Received & Entered in AED		Report Completed (No Permission to Share)		Report Awaited (In Preparation)		Report Awaited (Under Review)		Planned Survey				
	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones			
Eritrea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ethiopia	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
Kenya	5	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	10
Rwanda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somalia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Sudan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Republic of Tanzania	4	13	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	6	16	16
Uganda	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
	14	28	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	16	31	31

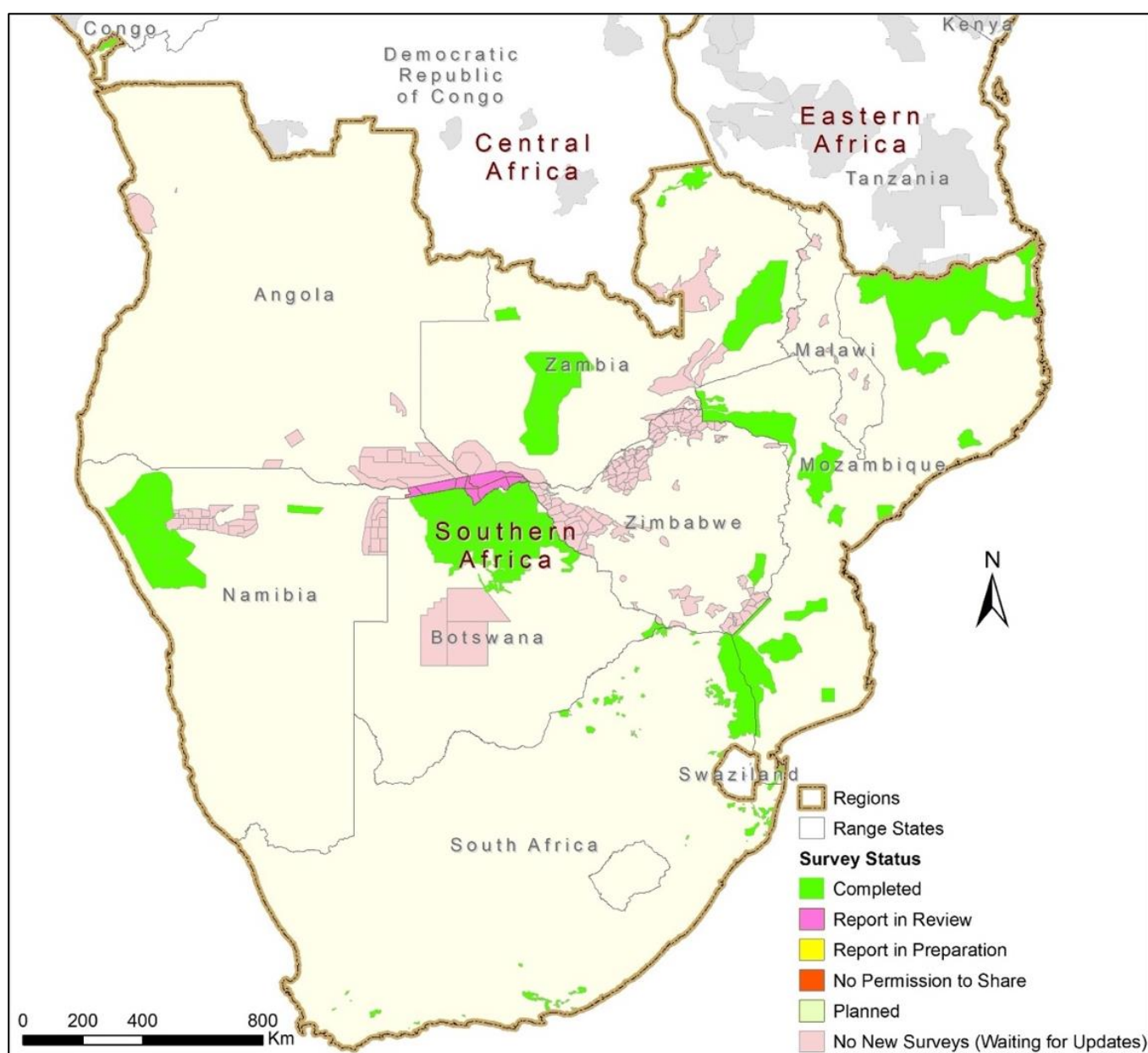


**Figure 13: Map of Overall Status of Sites Surveyed in eastern Africa Region**



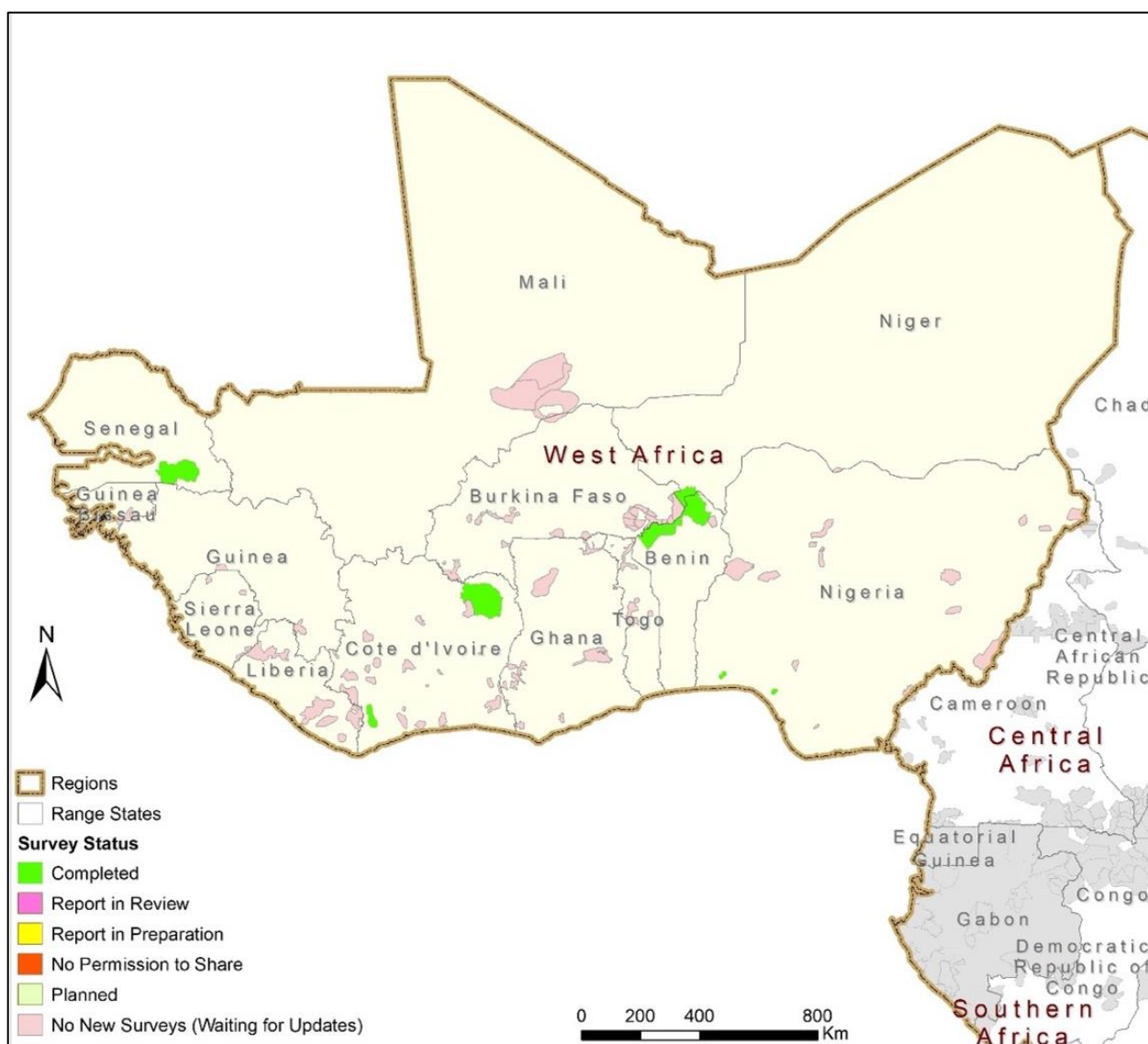
**Table 7: Status of Surveys for southern Africa Region**

Country	Surveys Status – Number of surveys (landscapes) and number of input zones (strata)											Total Surveys	Total Input Zones
	Report Received & Entered in AED		Report Completed (No Permission to Share)		Report Awaited (In Preparation)		Report Awaited (Under Review)		Planned Survey				
	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones			
Angola	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Botswana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Malawi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mozambique	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Namibia	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	4	4	
South Africa	73	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73	100	
Swaziland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Zambia	5	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11	
Zimbabwe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	<b>80</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>116</b>	



**Table 8: Status of Surveys for west Africa Region**

Country	Surveys Status – Number of surveys (landscapes) and number of input zones (strata)											
	Report Received & Entered in AED		Report Completed (No Permission to Share)		Report Awaited (In Preparation)		Report Awaited (Under Review)		Planned Survey		Total Surveys	Total Input Zones
	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones		
Benin	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Côte d'Ivoire	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Ghana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guinea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guinea Bissau	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mali	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Niger	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Nigeria	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Senegal	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Togo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	6	6	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12



**Figure 15: Map of Overall Status of Sites Surveyed in west Africa Region**

**Table 9: Overall Summary of No of Sites Surveyed Status by Region**

Table 3: Overall Summary of No of Sites Surveyed Status by Region												
Country	Surveys Status – Number of surveys (landscapes) and number of input zones (strata)										Total Surveys	Total Input Zones
	Report Received & Entered in AED		Report Completed (No Permission to Share)		Report Awaited (In Preparation)		Report Awaited (Under Review)		Planned Survey			
	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones	Land-scapes	Input Zones		
Central Africa	30	45	3	3	6	8	4	4	0	0	43	60
Eastern Africa	14	28	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	16	31
Southern Africa	80	113	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	83	116
West Africa	6	6	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	12
Totals	130	192	5	9	8	11	7	7	0	0	150	219

### Threats to the African elephant

78. Elephants continues to be threatened by poaching, human-elephant conflict-related deaths and deterioration of their habitats through increased anthropogenic activities. The AfESG members met in Pretoria, South Africa from 14 to 19 July 2019 to discuss the latest developments in elephant monitoring, conservation, management, and policy. The meeting discussed four thematic areas under the umbrella theme of “the Future of Africa’s Elephants in a Rapidly Changing World—working Towards the Coexistence of Elephants and Humans in Africa.”

- Theme 1: *Status and Distribution of Elephants, Red List, and Taxonomy;*
- Theme 2: *Elephant Conservation: Sustainable Use, Trade and Threats;*
- Theme 3: *African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP); and*
- Theme 4: *Landscape planning for Africa’s elephants and people.*

79. The meeting gathered over 50 of the 62 members of AfESG, but co-chairs of the AfESG also made a point of identifying and inviting representatives from across the range States who work closely with elephants, whether as managers of reserves with elephants or as the practitioners in government responsible for their conservation. Representatives from 27 of the 37 elephant range States attended the meeting. Details of the meeting can be found in the meeting’s proceedings document (Balfour et al., 2019), which AfESG produced in [English](#) and [French](#) languages as a resource for the group, and a broader audience.

80. The major threats to the survival of both species in the wild remain habitat destruction and poaching. Following the meeting in 2019, the AfESG established a number of different task forces to focus on issues of concern, including relating to threats to elephants. A human-elephant co-existence task force will focus on moving from a human-elephant conflict approach to one where we consider elephants within the broader landscape, including people and their livelihoods and wellbeing. This seeks to find win-win solutions that will promote tolerance by people of elephants in the landscape, and ensure that benefits flow to local communities, such that elephant habitat is retained, and communities want to protect their elephants because of tangible benefit flows. Secondly, the African Elephant Action Plan task force will look at promoting national-level planning for the two species that will seek to identify habitat requiring protection as well as interventions to reduce poaching. Finally, the sustainable use task force will look at improving the benefits that can flow from the different uses of elephants, again, to promote buy-in for local protection of elephants.

### *COVID-19 effect on conservation of elephants*

81. While some experts have heard anecdotes of elephant poaching incidents since the lockdowns due to COVID-19 began in March 2020, there has been no confirmation of an overall increase in elephant poaching. Fewer elephant surveys were carried out than in previous years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, of the ones that were done, none showed a dramatic decrease in the numbers of elephants or a high increase in numbers of carcasses. In many countries, anti-poaching activities by both the state and private sectors continued despite the high costs and losses in revenue, especially tourism,

as in many cases they were considered a national essential service. However, the loss of conservation revenue caused by the COVID-19 pandemic does pose a huge threat to conservation and anti-poaching activities in the long term. Governments, businesses, NGOs, and other stakeholders need to continue their support while countries and communities increase their conservation efforts.

## Conservation Action Plans and Strategies for elephant conservation

### *African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)*

82. Developed and owned by all 37 African elephant range States and formalised in 2010; the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) aims to secure, and restore where possible, sustainable elephant populations throughout their present and potential range in Africa recognising their potential to provide ecological, social, cultural and economic benefits. AfESG acknowledges the AEAP as the Plan for the conservation of elephants as developed, and agreed, by the range States. The AEAP was 10 years old in 2020 and AfESG provided technical input in July 2019 relating to possible areas of review to the range states for consideration. The expert members focused their attention on technical inputs and insights into the Plan's Vision, Goal, Objectives, (including prioritisation). Each of the Plan's strategies and activities was considered for gaps, emerging issues, or rewording/reframing to make it more effective. AfESG submitted its technical input document to the range states through the AEF Secretariat. The technical inputs were discussed by the range states at a meeting organised by UNEP that took place back-to-back with the MIKE Regional meeting for Africa in November 2019. Twenty-six range states attended the meeting and provided technical inputs and suggested reframing for the revision of the African Elephant Action Plan. The AEF Steering Committee was tasked by the range states to consider the best approach to finalise the review process. However, due to Covid-19, the AEF steering committee postponed a March 2020 meeting on this issue to 2021. The AfESG has subsequently recognised the forest and savanna elephants as separate species, and proposes a consideration for producing separate Action Plans bespoke to the specific circumstances of each species.

### *Regional and national elephant action planning*

#### **Regional level**

83. AfESG participated at the Kasane Elephant Summit held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019, convened by the President of Botswana, Hon. Mokgweetsi Masisi and attended by Heads of States and or representatives of the five countries that comprise the Kavango - Zambezi Trans frontier Conservation Area (KAZA-TFCA): Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Summit's theme was "Towards a Common Vision for the management of our elephants", i.e. a common vision for the management of the shared KAZA elephant population. KAZA is home to approximately half of Africa's savannah elephants and spans an area of approximately 520,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and includes no fewer than 36 formally proclaimed national parks, game reserves, forest reserves and game/wildlife management areas. The communiqué from the summit was made available and can be accessed here: [Kasane Elephant Summit communiqué](#).

#### **National level**

84. AfESG continues to be involved, either directly as a group or through its expert members in their personal capacities or collaboratively, in providing support to range States with the development of elephant strategies and management plans. This includes among others support to the Elephant Protection Initiative (EPI) that has, since 2018, been involved in National Elephant Action Planning (NEAP) processes. Table 10 provides an update of the progress made by range States in terms of the development or review of their national elephant management plans and/or strategies.

**Table 10: Progress made by range States in the development or review of their national elephant action plans**

<b>Elephant management plans</b>			
<b>Central Africa</b>	<b>Eastern Africa</b>	<b>Southern Africa</b>	<b>West Africa</b>
<b>Chad:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elephant management plan was completed in 2018 and refined in 2019 and will be implemented when funds become available</li> </ul>	<b>Ethiopia:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elephant management plan has been endorsed by the Prime Minister.</li> <li>Implementation to be initiated by the relevant conservation authority and partners.</li> </ul>	<b>Angola:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elephant management plan updated in April 2020.</li> </ul>	<b>Ivory Coast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2003 plan is being updated with the most recent information.</li> </ul>
<b>Congo Brazzaville:</b>	<b>Kenya:</b>	<b>Botswana:</b>	<b>Liberia:</b>

Elephant management plans			
Central Africa	Eastern Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elephant management plan was developed and approved by the relevant Minister in 2017 following a workshop by the government representatives, experts on elephant conservation, and national and international stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of Kenya's national elephant conservation strategy and management plan was initiated in late 2019 by the government aimed to be finalized in 2021.</li> <li>A team of stakeholders, including representatives from the AfESG and the EPI was established to coordinate the process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning workshops took place throughout Botswana in 2018.</li> <li>Elephant management plan has been submitted for finalization through the relevant government structures.</li> <li>The planning workshops were funded through a National Geographic grant, coordinated by Kalahari conservation society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan developed at a workshop in 2016 has been expanded and refined by EPI so that it aligns with the AEAP.</li> <li>Final version submitted to the President for signature.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Gabon:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEAP was finished in early 2019 and is being implemented.</li> </ul>	<p><i>United Republic of Tanzania:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working on its NEAP, but have been waiting for the wildlife surveys in 2020 before the Plan can be validated by the government</li> </ul>	<p><i>Malawi:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015 plan not properly aligned to AEAP, but has been extensively used and implemented</li> </ul>	<p><i>Nigeria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning workshop in Abuja was cancelled because of Covid-19, but will probably be done in 2021</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Uganda:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop in 2018 for NEAP, but the plan has not yet been released.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Mozambique:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft plan produced in 2017 following a workshop in Maputo, but is yet to be finalized</li> </ul>	
		<p><i>South Africa:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started developing a National Elephant Conservation Strategy in 2019 through a broad consultation process, being led by a team which includes the AfESG Co-Chair and two other members of the Specialist Group. Unfortunately, there have been delays with progress due to Covid-19</li> </ul>	
		<p><i>Zimbabwe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2015-2020 plan with its four regional components were all completed in 2015 and is being implemented</li> </ul>	

85. AfESG will continue to provide inputs and technical support to the NEAP processes. NEAPs are important frameworks for conserving elephants and for facilitating reporting of elephant status across Africa and increasing the robustness of data used for a wide range of decisions. Range States are encouraged to develop and implement their NEAPs.

#### Implications of outcome of CITES CoP 18 to AfESG reporting

86. The amendments to Resolution Conf. 11.20 (Rev. CoP18) place an obligation on the AfESG to assist the Animals Committee and the CITES Secretariat to implement the following provision agreed by CITES parties relating to appropriate and acceptable destinations for African elephants:

*“AGREES that where the term ‘appropriate and acceptable destinations’ appears in an annotation to the listing of *Loxodonta africana* in Appendix II of the Convention with reference to the trade-in live elephants\* taken from the wild, this term shall be defined to mean in situ conservation programmes or secure areas in the wild, within the species’ natural and historical range in Africa, except in exceptional circumstances where, in consultation with the Animals Committee, through its Chair with the support of the Secretariat, and in consultation with the IUCN elephant specialist group, it is considered that a transfer to ex-situ*



locations will provide demonstrable in-situ conservation benefits for African elephants, or in the case of temporary transfers in emergency situations;”

*\*Excluding elephants that were in ex-situ locations at the time of the adoption of this Resolution at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

87. This effectively meant that the AfESG would be consulted for expert input and the AfESG has established a new task force on the movement of elephants from *in-situ* to *ex-situ*, to respond to the request from the CITES secretariat relating to the above.

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## **Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*): Status, threat and conservation actions**

88. This section has been prepared by the IUCN/SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group) and provides an update since the report submitted to the 70th Standing Committee report.
89. The Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) is a global network of specialists studying, managing, monitoring, and conserving Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) across their 13 Range States in Asia. The overall aim of the AsESG is to promote the long-term conservation of Asia's elephants and, where possible, recover populations to viable levels; provide sound scientific and technical advice to aid decision-making and conservation actions; and build the capacity of Asian Elephant Range States to manage the species and the challenges it faces.

## Status

90. The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) is distributed in 13 countries across South Asia and South East Asia over an area of 486,800 km<sup>2</sup> (Sukumar, 2003) with a population of 48,323–51,680 in the wild (Menon and Tiwari, 2019). The species occurs in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka in South Asia and Cambodia, China, Indonesia (Kalimantan and Sumatra), Lao PDR, Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam in South-east Asia. Feral populations occur on some of the Andaman Islands (India). All populations of Asian elephants are included in CITES Appendix I, and the global status of the species in the IUCN Red List is Endangered (A2c; ver 3.1; Choudhury et al., 2008). Sumatran Elephants (*E. m. sumatranus*) are listed as Critically Endangered (A2c; ver 3.1; Gopala et al., 2011). The region also has about 14,930–15,130 elephants in captivity (AERSM, 2017; Menon and Tiwari, 2019).



91. Although the overall Asian elephant populations remains stable in Asia but declining elephant population in Viet Nam, Indonesia (Sumatra), Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR are of concern (AERSM, 2017; Menon and Tiwari, 2019, MECAP, 2018, GDANCP, 2020). Only 100–130 elephants thought to be left in the wild in Viet Nam (from an estimated 1500–2000 in the 1980s).

#### Challenges and threats

92. The challenges to elephant conservation across its range of distribution in Asia are habitat loss and fragmentation, human–elephant conflict, and poaching and illegal trade of elephants (Leimgruber *et al.*, 2003; Sukumar, 2003; Sukumar 2006; Sukumar *et al.*, 2016; Hedges, 2006; Fernando *et al.*, 2008; Menon *et al.*, 2017; AERSM, 2017; Menon and Tiwari, 2019). With fragmentation and habitat shrinkage, the interaction between humans and elephants have increased, leading to intense conflicts between people and elephants, causing fatalities on both sides besides damage to human property (Sukumar, 1990; Nath and Sukumar, 1998; Williams *et al.*, 2001; Madhusudan, 2003; Kumar *et al.*, 2004; Menon and Tiwari, 2019). Human–elephant conflict remains the number one cause of mortality for Asian elephants in the wild.
93. Trade of ivory and other elephant parts/products remains a major concern in China and other Southeast Asian countries. China, Viet Nam, Malaysia and Cambodia are among the major countries of transit or destination of shipment of ivory from African elephants. Other transit countries include Lao PDR, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand (UNODC, 2020; Krishnasamy & Zavagli, 2020). In 2018–2019 alone, more than 17,000kg of ivory was seized in Viet Nam, representing over 70% of the ivory seized in Southeast Asia during this period (Krishnasamy & Zavagli, 2020). In Malaysia, between 2011 and 2018, about 5826.6 kg of ivory seized most of which were destined for China, Viet Nam and other southeast Asian countries (DWNP, Peninsular Malaysia pers. comm; Krishnasamy & Zavagli, 2020). Malaysia is the only southeast Asian countries with almost no domestic ivory market; illegal ivory markets existing in China, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and to some extent in Thailand and Indonesia (UNODC, 2020; Krishnasamy & Zavagli, 2020, WJC 2020, GDANCP, 2020, Elephant Family, 2019, Vigne & Martin, 2018; MECAP, 2018). Cases of ivory seizures also reported from India and Nepal in south Asia.
94. Due to CoVID19 pandemic with borders being closed and improved enforcement, wildlife traffickers are believed to be stockpiling in Viet Nam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia (WJC 2020). The study further indicates that due to improved law enforcement efforts in Viet Nam and Lao PDR, Chinese-led open ivory market has developed in Cambodia. Market ivory surveys in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap also suggests that there is a demand for ivory from Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian buyers (GDANCP, 2020).
95. Apart from ivory, the trade of other body parts of elephants, especially skin trade has increased in the last few years further threatening the elephant populations, especially in Myanmar (Elephant Family, 2018; Elephant Family, 2019; CITES/IUCN, 2016; Samson *et al.*, 2018; MECAP, 2018). Markets in towns on the Myanmar/China border especially Mong La are hot spots for the illegal ivory and elephant skin trade (Elephant Family, 2019; Samson *et al.*, 2018; Krishnasamy & Zavagli, 2020). Most of the elephant skin products are for sale in China. The trade has expanded geographically with elephant skin traders selling skin products in China, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam. Another disturbing trends seen is that some traditional medicine manufacturers are now combining ground pangolin scales with powdered elephant skin in medicinal pills. (Elephant Family, 2019). The trade (elephant skin for jewellery and medical products, and elephant trunks and legs for furniture) could result in indiscriminate killing of elephants of both sexes, thereby further endangering the fragile elephant population in the region. Due to improved enforcement in range states, there seems to be a decline in physical sale but the online sale of ivory and elephant products have increased over the years (Elephant Family, 2019; Krishnasamy & Zavagli, 2020)
96. Illegal killing of Asian Elephants has been reported from Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Malaysia (peninsular and Sabah), Indonesia and India. In Myanmar, about 127 poaching cases reported from 2012–2019 primarily in the Ayeyarwady, Bago Yoma and Yangong (Samson *et al.*, 2018, Elephant Family, 2019; WWF Myanmar, pers. comm). Between 2008–2019, about 23 cases of elephant poaching reported in Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP, Peninsular Malaysia) and in Borneo Sabah, about 145 elephant death reported between 2010 and 2019, mostly due to suspected poisoning and shooting in retaliation to human elephant conflict but in some with missing tusks also reported. Available data indicates that elephant poaching for ivory is rampant in Sabah. In July 2019, the Indonesian authorities arrested a person who was smuggling 10 tusks originating from Sabah (Sabah WL Department, 2020). At least 139 illegal killing of elephants reported between 2010 and 2019 in India (Project Elephant, MoEFCC).

97. Illegal trade of live elephants also reported from Myanmar, Cambodia, North east India and Lao PDR, although at a much lower scale (Rangarajan *et al.*, 2010; Elephant Family, 2018; MECAP, 2018; GDANCP, 2020).

#### Conservation Strategies and Action Plan

98. The Chinese Government decision to end the commercial processing and sale of ivory by the end of 2017 seems to be showing positive results. Surveys indicate that there has been decline of ivory trade and the illegal ivory objects offered for sale are small items, primarily jewellery suggesting possible declining interest in large artwork (UNODC, 2020). The decision of the Chinese government during current pandemic to suspend the sale and consumption of wildlife could further help in minimising trade.
99. The Government of Malaysia in recent years has taken various proactive measures to achieve its targets of ivory action plan by 2030 and to fulfil its commitment to CITES for preventing trade of ivory and transit through Malaysia. It has strengthened collaboration between its five Enforcement agencies and has developed specific national level risk profiles and indicators to combat wildlife trafficking, particularly ivory trafficking. The Department of Wildlife has established intelligence and technical centre for wildlife crime in 2018. It has also established cybercrime Cell to deal with wildlife cases. Between 2008-2019, about 23 cases of elephant poaching reported, 37 poachers arrested and convicted. The Department is also collaborating with other agencies for intelligence sharing and skill development training. The Malaysian Government destroyed 3,377 seized ivory pieces weighing 9.5 tonnes in April 2016 and 3.92 tonnes of seized ivory in April 2019 (DWNP, Peninsular Malaysia presentation at AsESG meeting in Sabah, 2019).
100. The Lao PDR through a Prime Minister Order prohibited the trade of ivory and asked to shut down outlets operating illegally in 2018 but this needs to be effectively enforced. Myanmar has also taken various proactive measures to stop the trade through improved enforcement, campaigns and training of enforcement agencies.
101. At CMS CoP13, the proposal of the Government of India to include *Elephas maximus indicus* in Appendix I of the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) was unanimously supported by all participating countries. AsESG assisted the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India in preparation of the proposal. The inclusion of the species in Appendix I of CMS will hopefully facilitate better coordinate between range countries and could also help minimize illegal trade.
102. Thailand has adopted the DNA based profiling and registration of all captive elephants in the country and is maintaining a database to prevent illegal trade and laundering of illicitly-sourced elephants into captivity. This along with the Elephant Ivory Act, (2015) indicates minimised trade of illegal ivory products in Bangkok markets (Krishnasamy *et al.*, 2016). DNA based registration of captive elephants should be adopted by other countries as well to prevent trade of live elephants and better monitoring (AERSM, 2017, AsESG meeting in Bangkok, 2018).
103. As reported in SC70, with escalation of ethnic violence in Rakhine state of Myanmar since 2017, about one million Rohingya people have moved to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh and have taken refuge in about 27 camps in Kutupalong-Balukhali Rehab sites for which about 8200 acres of forest land were cleared. This has created a crisis for both human and wildlife. One prime elephant corridor has been disrupted as the camps have come in the middle of this corridors. About 40-45 elephants are trapped on west of the Rehab camp (IUCN Bangladesh) in Teknaf WS, Inani Reserve Forest and Himchari NP increasing human-elephant conflict with 14 human deaths and 46 human injuries reported between 2017 and 2019 (IUCN Bangladesh *per comms.*). Bangladesh Forest Department and IUCN Bangladesh has taken various initiatives for preventing HEC and retaliatory killing of elephants. It has formed 50 elephant response team (monitoring elephant movement from 95 watch-towers in 18 camps), public awareness and monitoring. AsESG has constituted a Working Group that visited the rehab site in Oct-Nov 2018 and the major observation/suggestions include- strengthening elephant response team, power fencing of the border of the camps on the western side, habitat restoration and need to provide LPG gas as an alternative to firewood. The WG also felt the need to strengthen wildlife enforcement to prevent wildlife trade as well as to initiate trans-boundary dialogue between Forest Department of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

#### AsESG members meeting and major outcome

104. The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) was held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia from 04<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019 that was attended by 17 Government officials from all the 13 Asian elephant range countries apart from AsESG members are other experts. Wide range of issues

including standards and guidelines for the management and welfare of elephants in wild and in captivity, wildlife emergencies, national action plans, red-listing of Asian elephants and challenges for the conservation of elephants in Sabah, Malaysia were discussed.

105. AsESG during last few years has been working to develop protocols in the form of guidelines or manuals to guide the management of specific matters confronting elephant conservation in an effective and scientific manner. The AsESG Working Groups have finalised the following documents:

- Guidelines for rehabilitation of captive elephants in the wild as possible re-stocking option;
- Manual for the effective management and care of captive elephant in musth;
- Guidelines for welfare and use of elephants in tourism;
- Guidelines for creating artificial water holes in elephant habitats;

106. It is also working to map the distribution of Asian elephants in range States, guideline for best practices in addressing and mitigation human elephant conflict as well as guidelines to treat, minimize and manage spread of emerging new disease. The progress of these Working Group was presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of AsESG in Sabah. Post meeting, AsESG has formed two more working groups- one on Borneo Elephants to decide if this should be considered as sub-species and its Red-listing and the second one to assist drafting of the National Action Plan for conservation of elephants in Peninsular Malaysia.

107. A special session was organised at AsESG meeting to discuss the increasing human elephant conflict in Sabah, Malaysia with about 145 elephant death reported between 2010 and 2019, mostly due to suspected poisoning and shooting. AsESG plans to work with the Sabah Wildlife Department to evaluate and address the issue.

108. AsESG has submitted the updated Red List assessment of mainland Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) except the Sumatran sub species. The last assessment was undertaken in 2008.

109. To address the issues of elephant trade and poaching and better coordination, AsESG organized a side event on the *Impact of poaching and illegal trade on Asian Elephants* at the CITES CoP18 meeting held at Geneva with senior Ministry officials of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia and other experts speaking at the event.

110. At CMS CoP13, AsESG also discussed ways to strengthen transboundary co-operation through a side event organized in partnership with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India and CMS on "*Elephant conservation beyond borders*" with officials from India, Bhutan, Bangladesh and CMS Secretariat speaking at the event.

#### Elephant conservation action plans

111. Reiterating the need to have National Elephant Conservation Action Plans (NECAP) for all the 13 range States, the AsESG offered to assist countries to develop these action plans. As an outcome and since the last reporting, Bhutan (NCD 2019), Sabah (Malaysia) (SWL 2020) and Cambodia (GDANCP, 2020) have published their National Action Plan and Indonesia will soon be finalising their plan. AsESG is also working with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), India and with the Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Wildlife and Aquatic Management Division, Lao PDR to assist them in preparation of the NECAP for India and Lao PDR respectively. Nepal is also updating their plan. Peninsular Malaysia (2013-22), Myanmar, Viet Nam and Bangladesh already have their plans. Draft plan exists for China and Thailand. Sri Lanka has Elephant Conservation Policy document. Viet Nam plans to update their plan with AsESG assistance. All the finalised Elephant conservation action plans could be accessed at <https://www.asesg.org/resources.php>

#### *Collaboration between AsESG and the MIKE Programme*

112. As reported in SC70 report, AsESG is working with MIKE Asia programme both in Southeast Asia and South Asia to help coordinate with range countries for the MIKE elephant carcass data collection process using the spread of AsESG members in range countries. With human elephant conflict being a major problem, the range countries have also suggested including a greater component related to human-elephant conflict in the data collection process as well as capacity building on monitoring and HEC

mitigation. AsESG select members participated in MIKE South-east Asia Sub-Regional Meeting held on 29-30 October 2019 in Bangkok and MIKE Sub-Regional meeting for South Asian countries in Bhutan on 3 October 2019. The CITES MIKE Programme presented the MIKE site network review report compiled by a consultant appointed by the CITES Secretariat. This review process was aimed at addressing the concerns raised by range States about the current MIKE site composition and comprehensive data collection process.

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#### **African Elephant Fund (AEF) and implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP)**

113. This section has been prepared and submitted by the Chair of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (AEFSC) in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the host of the Fund, and the AEF Secretariat.

114. This report is an update by the AEFSC on the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) and it covers a period between August 2018 and October 2021. Previous reports submitted to the Standing Committee are contained in documents [SC65 Doc 42.1](#) (pp.32-34), [SC66 Doc 47.1](#) (pp.11-14), [SC69 Doc. 51.1 Annex](#) (pp.19-21) and [SC70 Doc. 49.1 Annex 1](#) (pp 13-15).

115. The African Elephant Action Plan was adopted by African elephant range States in March 2010 in the margins of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (see document [CoP15 Inf. 68](#)).

116. The 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP12) held in Manila, the Philippines, from 23 to 28 October 2017 endorsed the African Elephant Action Plan as the principal strategy for elephant conservation under CMS, as contained in CMS Resolution 12.19. The rationale for doing this was that African elephants have been listed on CMS Appendix II since 1979 but no strategy document has existed under CMS to conserve the African elephant since 2014. Given that the African Elephant Action Plan addresses all the objectives of CMS and had been agreed by all 37 African elephant range States already, the CMS COP also endorsed it in principle, with the strategy document to follow. The resolution can be accessed on the link <https://www.cms.int/en/document/endorsement-african-elephant-action-plan>.

117. The African Elephant Fund (AEF) and the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee (AEFSC) were established in accordance with Decision 14.79 (Rev. CoP15) to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

#### Membership of the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee

118. In April 2021, a new AEFSC was elected following the expiry of the term served by the previous AEFSC. The election was conducted by a written no-objection procedure. The current AEFSC will serve for a period of three years (2021 - 2023) as stipulated in the Rules of Procedure:

a) African elephant range States:

- i) Chair: Chad
- ii) Vice-Chair: Cameroon
- iii) West Africa sub-region: Niger (note: the process of selection of the second representative for the west Africa sub-region is underway)
- iv) Central Africa sub-region: Cameroon and Chad
- v) Eastern Africa sub-region: Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania
- vi) Southern Africa sub-region: Namibia and Zimbabwe

b) Donors

- i) The European Commission
- ii) France
- iii) The Netherlands
- iv) Belgium (Observer)
- v) Germany (Observer)

c) Ex-officio members

- i) The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- ii) The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat.
- iii) The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Secretariat.

#### Meetings of the AEFSC

119. Within the reporting period, the 11<sup>th</sup> AEFSC Meeting was held in Accra, Ghana on 18 – 21 February 2019. During this meeting, the AEFSC approved seven (7) projects from the 2018 Call for Proposals, with a total budget of USD 573,958.56. In addition, the AEFSC discussed the progress of the review of the AEAP, the UNEP Procurement Guidelines that had been introduced, and the revision of the Terms of Reference (ToRs), Rules of Procedure (RoPs), proposal template and proposal evaluation and selection criteria.

120. The 12<sup>th</sup> AEFSC Meeting was to be held in Kampala, Uganda on 10 – 13 March 2020. However, this was disrupted by the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

121. The AEFSC therefore shifted to virtual meetings. Between 2020 and October 2021, the AEFSC has held four formal (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>) and four informal Virtual AEFSC meetings. The projects selected for funding under the emergency call for proposals were approved during the 6<sup>th</sup> Virtual AEFSC meeting. In addition, the processes of reviewing the AEAP, ToRs, RoPs and AEF proposal documents was resumed in the 7<sup>th</sup> Virtual AEFSC meeting held on 29 September 2021.



## Projects funded from the African Elephant Fund

122. Since the start of the AEF in 2010, forty (40) projects have been completed in the African elephant range States in support of the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP). Reports for some of the AEF projects can be accessed using the link <https://www.africanelephantfund.org/en/regreports>.

123. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AEF issued an emergency call for proposals to provide funding to range States to address elephant conservation challenges related to the pandemic. A package of nineteen (19) project proposals was approved by the AEFSC during its 6<sup>th</sup> Virtual Meeting (Table 11), the largest number of projects selected in one call since the inception of the AEF. The increased risks to elephants due to the pandemic was evident from the narratives in the proposals submitted. Range States were anticipating, and had already begun witnessing, a rise in poaching-related activities mainly to access bushmeat and human-elephant conflict incidences. The main objective of the projects was to mitigate poaching (objective 1 of the AEAP) during a time when access to other sources of funding to support these activities were limited (e.g., income from tourism). The projects also focus on addressing human-elephant conflicts in close collaboration with the communities, and strengthening the enforcement of anti-poaching regulations (objectives 3, 4, 5 and 7 of the AEAP). The implementation of a majority of the projects was initiated in 2021, with two having been completed by September 2021.

**Table 11:** List of Covid-19 projects approved per region at the 6<sup>th</sup> Virtual AEFSC meeting held on 24 August 2020

Sub-region	Beneficiary Country	Amount in USD
Central Africa	Cameroon, Chad (2)	150,000
East Africa	Ethiopia, Kenya (4), South Sudan, Uganda	341,557
Southern Africa	Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe	146,879
West Africa	Ghana (2), Liberia, Niger, Nigeria and Togo	295,153
<b>Total Funding</b>		<b>933,589</b>

124. In total, there are currently twenty-three (23) ongoing projects being funded by the AEF, of which ten (10) are COVID-19 projects.

125. It should also be noted that the AEF issued the ninth call for proposals with a deadline of 14 February 2020. A total of eighteen (18) project proposals were received. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these proposals were not evaluated as the package for COVID-19 emergency projects was prioritized for evaluation and implementation.

## Funding

126. In terms of overall funding and expenditure, the total funds received by the African Elephant to date is **USD 4,714,206**, while the total funds that have been allocated is **USD 3,625,396**.

127. The donor funding received to the Fund in 2021 is as follows (Table 12):

**Table 12:** Donor Funding

Donor	Amount (Euros)
France	20,000
The Netherlands	120,000 (pledged)

128. The Chair, on behalf of the AEFSC and all the African elephant range States, would like to appreciate and thank the Governments of Netherlands, Germany, France and the European Commission for contributing the needed financial resources towards the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan and securing the future of the African elephant by protecting and conserving them across its range.

129. In particular, the AEFSC is grateful that through this funding support, the AEF was able to quickly respond to the need for emergency financial assistance to the African elephant range States due to COVID-19. It contributed towards ensuring that governments, conservation organizations and communities have the resources to not only continue, but to also reinforce, conservation efforts and the implementation of the AEAP at a time of increased threats to the African elephant.

130. Due to the growing financial needs as more projects are being approved and implemented, the development of a long-term resource mobilization strategy has been identified as a priority and will be

undertaken by the AEFSC. The AEFSC appeals to Parties, donors, IGOs, NGOs, private sector and philanthropists to support the implementation of these projects by contributing to the Fund.

#### The African Elephant Action Plan

131. The review of the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) was initiated in 2018. Several consultative meetings and discussions have been held to gather views and expert opinions on the recommended revisions to the Plan. The IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) has provided detailed technical inputs for consideration in order to reflect the current realities in the conservation of the African elephant. These reports have informed part of the discussions by the African elephant range States who have also shared their views on the current plan and proposed changes during a meeting convened by UNEP in November 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The review process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the process has been reinitiated with the goal of finalization and endorsement by the range States in 2022.

#### Terms of Reference of the AEF and Rules of Procedures of the AEFSC

132. The process of reviewing the Terms of Reference (ToRs) and Rules of Procedure (RoPs) was initiated in 2018 during the 10<sup>th</sup> AEFSC Meeting. The objective of the review was to reflect the developments of the AEF and incorporate lessons learnt.

133. The revised RoPs were finalized and adopted by the AEFSC during its 7<sup>th</sup> Virtual AEFSC Meeting held on 29 September 2021. The RoPs have been updated on the AEF website (<https://www.africanelephantfund.org/en/rules-of-procedure>).

134. Further, the ToRs have been revised based on the inputs and comments received from the range States, donors, AEFSC and the AEF Secretariat. The ToRs will be circulated to the African range States for final review and endorsement.

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.): Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18)ESTIMATED TRENDS IN PIKE FROM UNWEIGHTED BAYESIAN GLMM BY REGION AND TIME PERIOD  
AND STATISTICAL SUPPORT FOR A DOWNWARD TREND

Region	Time period, Years	Estimated slope (annual estimate of PIKE change) (year <sup>-1</sup> )	95% Credible interval	Probability that trend is negative	Level of certainty associated with the reported trend (i.e. slope)
Africa	2003-2011	0.026	[0.019, 0.034]	0	highly certain upward
	2011-2020	-0.033	[-0.039, -0.027]	1	highly certain downward
	2016-2020	-0.071	[-0.089, -0.055]	1	highly certain downward
Central Africa	2003-2011	0.031	[0.019, 0.043]	0	highly certain upward
	2011-2020	-0.023	[-0.036, -0.011]	1	highly certain downward
	2016-2020	-0.066	[-0.105, -0.024]	0.998	likely downwards
Eastern Africa	2003-2011	0.032	[0.022, 0.042]	0	highly certain upward
	2011-2020	-0.045	[-0.051, -0.038]	1	highly certain downward
	2016-2020	-0.034	[-0.058, -0.011]	0.998	likely downwards
Southern Africa	2003-2011	0.013	[-0.002, 0.03]	0.051	uncertain of a trend
	2011-2020	-0.030	[-0.04, -0.019]	1	highly certain downward
	2016-2020	-0.078	[-0.102, -0.053]	1	highly certain downward
Western Africa	2003-2011	0.026	[0.001, 0.052]	0.023	uncertain of a trend
	2011-2020	-0.020	[-0.043, 0.002]	0.96	likely downwards
	2016-2020	-0.093	[-0.154, -0.024]	0.997	likely downwards

The slope estimate indicates how much PIKE changes on average over a single year over a given time period. A negative value of the slope means that the trend is downward and positive value that the trend is upward. The credible interval gives the range of values the slope can possibly take with 95% certainty. The probability that the trend is downwards is based on a linear regression model of the posterior PIKE estimate over a specified time period. Probability of downward trend is highly certain when the probability value is 1 (or 0 if the slope is positive), a value less than 1 is likely, and value of less than 0.95 is uncertain.

Elephants (Elephantidae spp.): Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18)

## OVERVIEW OF ETIS TREND ANALYSES' METHODOLOGY

The analytical methods used to estimate illegal ivory trade activity trend are well documented in peer-reviewed literature (Underwood *et al.* 2013), CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) reports since CoP16 (CITES 2013, 2016, and 2019), and in general resources available online that include the more [technical paper by Burn and Underwood](#) (2013) available from the University of Reading, U.K. and the less technical guide to [Understanding ETIS Online](#) available on the TRAFFIC website.

The following provides details on the methodology that is published in the above-mentioned resources and that was implemented in the analyses included in this report. Where relevant, specific citations are noted or quoted, however readers interested in more technical aspects of the ETIS methodology are referred to the citations provided at the end of this Annex, as this overview is not meant to be an all-inclusive depiction of the evolution of the ETIS methodology over time, nor is it meant to outline all of the standard operating procedures of the data collection and cleaning processes. Instead, details presented here are aimed at providing a general understanding of the modeling methodology, as well as the decisions processes that generated input data for the trend analyses - e.g., time frame of data inclusion, estimation of missing weights and class determination, and covariates used to bias-adjust ETIS data – in order to derive the transaction and weight indices as indicators of illegal ivory trade activities.

**Data inclusion**

*Time period of the analysis:* The analyses presented in this report include ETIS data covering the period from 2008 through 2020. The first year in the time series marks the second CITES-approved one-off sale of ivory between six Parties, and the beginning of a nine-year moratorium on further sales by range States where elephants are listed as Appendix II (CITES 2013, 2016, and 2019). As noted in the main report and in Annex 1d, the last year of the time series marks the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and likely represents an outlier that could impact results. Therefore, while the analyses presented in the main report cover the full time period of 2008 – 2020, analyses were also repeated for the period 2008-2019 and those results are presented in Annex 1d.

*Selection of countries:* All data submitted to ETIS passes a verification process by the ETIS administrator with engagement from the Parties - e.g., removal of duplicated record, follow up if missing or abnormal information was noted, verification of open sources data by the Parties, etc. All checked and verified data are presented in pre-modeling summaries of Figures 6, 7, and 10 of the main report text. However, some countries almost never make, or are implicated in, seizures, thus they contribute very little data to the analysis. A scoring system based on weight classes has been in use since CoP16 such that only countries with sufficient data to meet the following criterion are included in the trend analyses (CITES 2016):

*...one point was given for every seizure (including those for which a country was implicated in the trade chain but the seizure was made elsewhere) in the small weight class, 10 points for each seizure in the medium weight class and 100 points for each seizure in the large weight class. Countries needed to score at least 100 points over eight years of data to be considered.*

In the analyses presented in this report 68 countries were included, accounting for 99% of the seizures by number and 99.8% by weight in the period 2008-2020.

**Weight estimation and classes**

*Weight estimation:* There are two main components of weight estimation in the ETIS analyses – 1) estimating weights for seizures that report the number of pieces (e.g., whole tusks or tusk pieces) but not the seizure's weight, and 2) estimating the Raw Ivory Equivalent (RIE) weight for reported and estimated worked ivory weights. For the former, it is consistently documented that roughly 50% of the data reported to ETIS has missing weight information (CITES 2013, 2016, 2019; this report). The methodology to estimate missing weights has been in use at least since ETIS analyses were prepared for CoP15 (CITES 2009), and methodology has evolved to best capture the non-linear relationship between the number of pieces of ivory seized and its weight (for details on the current statistical model in use see Burn and Underwood 2013). In general, the model is developed using ETIS records that reported both the number of pieces and their weight,

and then applying the resulting model parameters to estimate weights for seizures with reported number of pieces but no reported weight (see below on how the analyses account for any estimation uncertainty by using class assignment). Previously, weight estimation models were developed only before a CoP report; however, weight estimation models were developed for the ETIS report planned for SC73 ([CITES 2021a](#)) and those parameters were used here. Lastly, to estimate the RIE for both reported and estimated worked ivory seizure weights, a 30% wastage is assumed due to carving of raw ivory and based on earlier reporting by Milliken (1989).

**Weight classes:** Seizure weights have an inherent uncertainty that can result from measurement error when data are collected at the seizure or confiscation incident location, or from the need to estimate weights for records with reported number of pieces but missing weights as described above. To address this uncertainty, use of weight categories (rather than the actual reported or assigned weights of seizures) when analyzing the ETIS data has been implemented since CoP16, where data are aggregated as number of seizures per year and country for each class; aggregates then serve as the input data to model trends. Since CoP17, ivory type and weight classes are: small (less than 10 kg), medium (10 kg to less than 100 kg) and large (100 kg or more) raw ivory, and small (less than 10 kg) and large (10 kg or more) worked ivory, where medium and large worked ivory classes have been combined owing to the fact that there are very few seizures of worked ivory in the large weight class. It is noteworthy that given recent patterns in raw ivory seizures where fewer larger seizures of 100 kg and more are noted, and where the few seizures that are recorded are of record-setting weights, a future exploratory analysis is planned (pending funding) to consider alternative weight classes and/or modeling methods to better capture reported data in modeling illegal ivory trade trends.

### ***Bias-adjustment of ETIS data***

As detailed in Underwood *et al.* (2013), there are two sources of bias for using ETIS (or any seizure) data as an indicator for illegal trade activity. First, despite best efforts put forward, not all illegal transactions are seized by law enforcement authorities, and second, not all seizures are reported. Moreover, seizure and reporting efforts could change for a given Party overtime, as well as between Parties for a given timeframe, necessitating bias-correction if one wishes to make relatively meaningful comparisons between countries over time. To address such biases, Burn and Underwood developed a hierarchical Bayesian model that incorporates seizure and reporting rate parameters in the estimation of transaction and weight indices and their trends (Figure A1; see [Supporting Text S1](#) in Underwood *et al.* 2013, and Burn and Underwood 2013 for statistical formulae). Independent proxy variables that account for some of the differences in seizure and reporting rates between and within individual countries over time are explored periodically, as described in Underwood *et al.* (2013) and the CoP18 ETIS report (CITES 2019).



**Figure A1 – Schematic of model of illegal ivory trade.** Graphis shows the process by which to be added as an ETIS record, an illegal ivory activity must be sized at a given rate and reported at a given rate, which are modeled by relevant proxy variables or covariates. (Figure adopted from *Understanding ETIS: an introduction and overview of the elephant trade information system analysis* available in [English](#) and [French](#) on the [TRAFFIC-ETIS website](#)).



The analysis prepared for this report relied on the covariates used for the above-mentioned ETIS report to CoP18 and included Law Enforcement ratio and Trade Chain Index as predictors for seizure rates, and CITES reporting and ETIS data collection scores as predictors for reporting rates (Figure A1). Law enforcement ratio (also known as LE ratio) is defined as the proportion of all seizures that a country was involved in that were made by the country themselves. Countries implicated in seizures and that did not make and report any seizures themselves have a LE ratio of zero, whereas countries that capture and report all shipment known to have passed through their borders will have an LE ratio of one. A lagged law enforcement ratio is used because the level of law enforcement in the previous year may represent the enforcement environment for the current year.

Trade Chain Index (TCI) was introduced in the ETIS analyses for CoP18 and is aimed at correcting for a situation where destination countries in the trade chain may have higher LE ratio simply due to the fact that a shipment is less likely to leave their borders. The TCI is calculated as a ratio of destination and non-destination trade chain scores, thus it measures the relative role that a country plays in the trade route. The ratio is then logged (after adding one) and is used along with LE ratio to model seizure rates.

For modeling of reporting rate, a CITES reporting score is derived as a ratio of the number of years that a country submitted their annual trade reports as [documented by the CITES Secretariat](#), over the number of years for which the Convention has been in force for that Party. Additionally, an ETIS data collection score is derived based on modes of reporting of ETIS data, i.e., passive, prompted or targeted defined as follows (Underwood *et al.* 2013):

*... **targeted** data collection in which an ETIS representative visits the country, reviews law enforcement records and collects information on elephant product seizure cases. Although little targeting has occurred in recent years, countries are often **prompted** by mail, e-mail or CITES notifications to submit seizure records. Other records arrive **passively**, i.e. unprompted, some originating from sources other than the CMAs [CITES Management Authorities] themselves, such as NGOs or other unofficial sources. Some CMAs report to ETIS by sending records that have been collected in the context of national automated systems holding wildlife trade seizure information. In these cases, we might expect that most, if not all, seizures made in that country are reported. In the case of passive, unsolicited reporting it is less clear that all seizures are reported to ETIS. To capture this variability each record in ETIS is scored according to whether it was obtained from targeting or prompting, or from an automated mechanism, or whether it was received passively. We define the data collection score (DC) for a country as the proportion of records in a year that came from a targeted/automated/prompted mechanism.*

While the same ETIS data collection variable was used for this report's analyses, the launch of ETIS Online and the lack of travel for face-to-face "targeting" of ETIS data from the Parties due to the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that alternative ways to quantify a reporting variable for the analyses are warranted. TRAFFIC has already been exploring alternative covariate structure for the ETIS data collection and reporting covariate, and once reviewed by the MIKE-ETIS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) it will be incorporated in further ETIS trend analyses.

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CITES (2019). *Report on The Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS)*. CoP18 Doc. 69.3 (Rev. 1), CITES Secretariat, Geneva, Switzerland. 60 Pp.

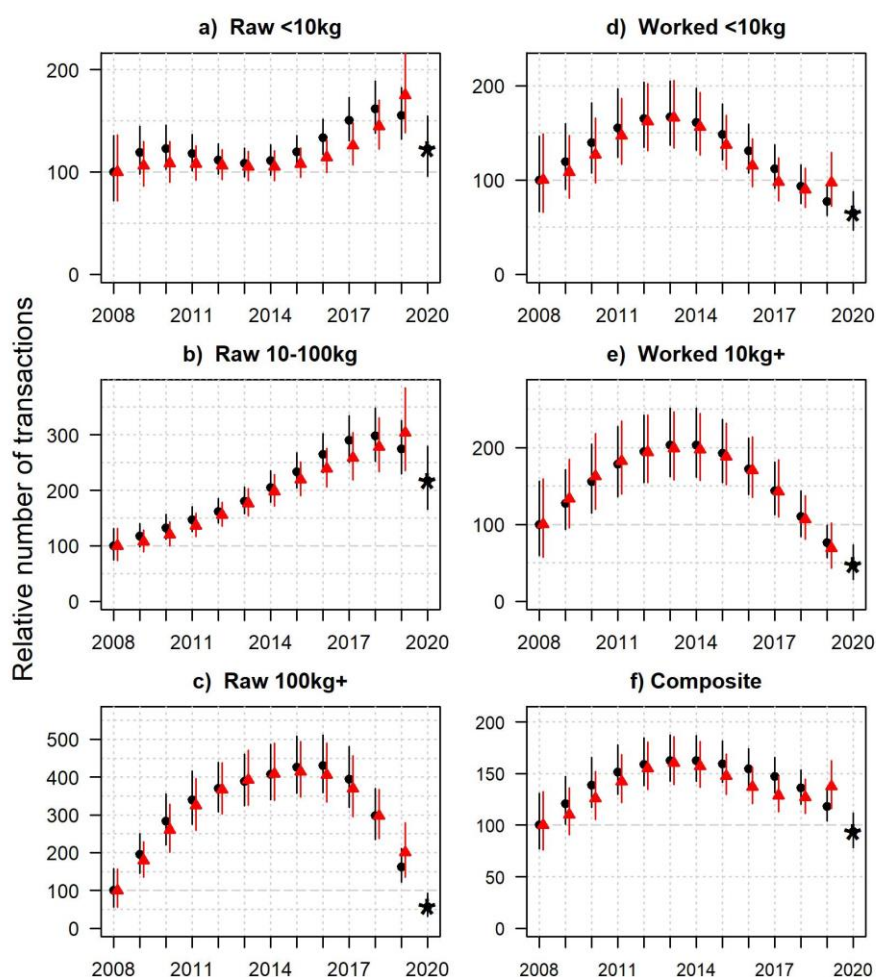
Milliken T (1989) *The Japanese trade in ivory: tradition, CITES and the elusive search for sustainable utilisation*, in *The Ivory Trade and Future of the African Elephant*, S.Cobb, Ed. Oxford: Ivory Trade Review Group.

Underwood, F.M., Burn, R.W., Milliken, T. (2013). *Dissecting the Illegal Ivory Trade: An Analysis of Ivory Seizures Data*. PLoS One 8 (10): e76539.

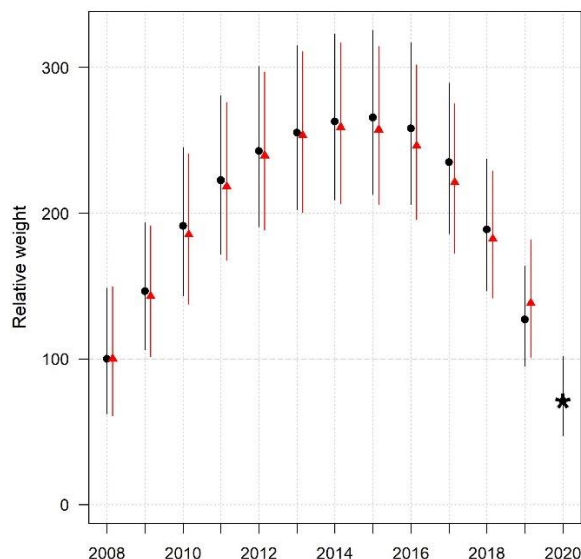
Elephants (Elephantidae spp.): Implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18)

## ETIS TREND ANALYSES RESULTS FOR MODELS EXCLUDING 2020 DATA

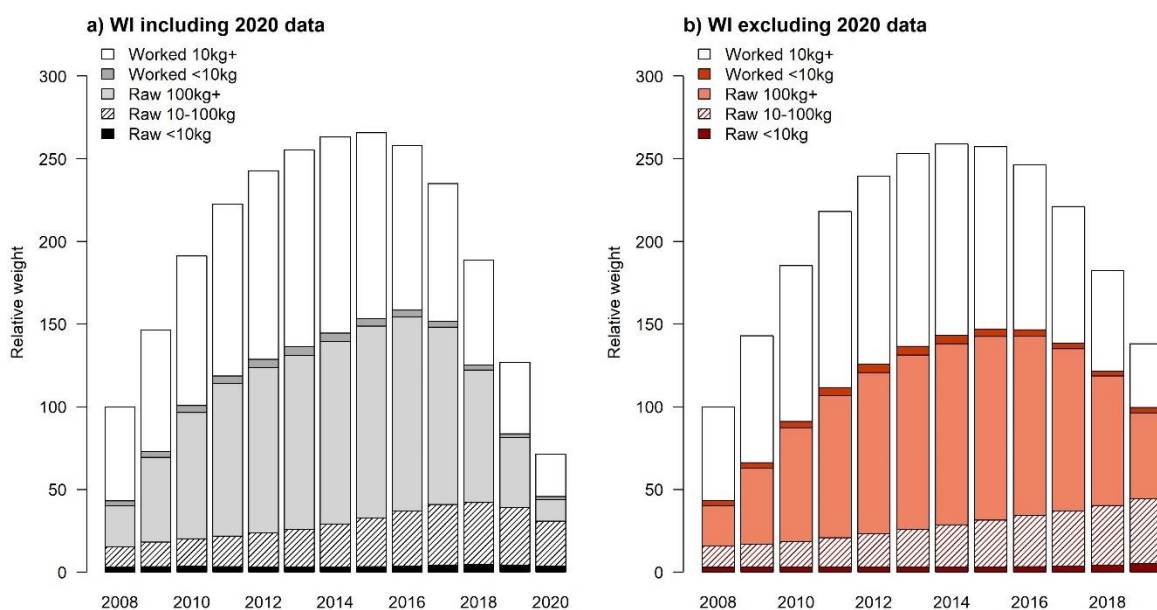
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic economic, travel, and trade activities were severely reduced which could have subsequently impacted illegal ivory trade activity, seizure rates, and reporting rates as detailed in the main text of this report; therefore, **2020 likely represent an abnormal year, acting as an outlier that could impact results**. In exploring the potential impacts of 2020 ETIS data on trend results, analyses were repeated to only include data from 2008 – 2019. While modeling results for this additional analysis are only presented as this Annex 1b and not included in the main report to avoid confusion, it is worth noting that changes in trend between the two modeling approaches – i.e., including and excluding data from 2020 - were observed. For example, excluding 2020 data resulted in an increasing rather than decreasing trends for transaction index (TI) for three ivory type and weight classes for 2019 (Figure A2.a, b, and d), which for two classes (small and medium raw ivory; Figure A2.a-b) 2019 then represented a peak year in the timeseries analyzed. Similar trends were observed for weight index (WI) as depicted in the differences between the bars in Figures A4. panels a and b, although unlike the composite TI which increased in 2019 compared to 2018 for models excluding 2020 data, WI estimates indicated decreasing trends with or without data from 2020.



**Figure A2. Transaction index** estimates for (a) small (<10 kg), (b) medium (10-100 kg), and (c) large ( $\geq 100$  kg) raw ivory classes; (d) small (<10 kg), and (e) large ( $\geq 10$  kg) worked ivory classes; and (f) the composite across all ivory types and weight classes. Models were ran including (black circles) or excluding (red triangles) data from the abnormal year of 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic (estimates for 2020 denoted with an asterisk). Mean estimates are shown with 95% credible intervals. Y-axis scales vary between panels to allow for clear depiction of the degree of change in trend relative to the baseline year of 2008. Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 20 October 2021.



**Figure A3. Weight index composite trends.** Composite of weight index across all ivory types and weight classes. Models were ran including (black circles) or excluding (red triangles) data from the abnormal year of 2020 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic (estimates for 2020 denoted with an asterisk). Mean estimates are shown with 95% credible intervals. Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 20 October 2021.



**Figure A4. Weight index (WI) trends by ivory type and weight classes.** Weight index trends are presented for models that (a) included and (b) excluded 2020 data that likely represented an abnormal year, acting as an outlier that could impact results. Models are based on ETIS data downloaded from the database on 20 October 2021.



ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា  
Kingdom of Cambodia  
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ  
Nation Religion King

ក្រសួងកសិកម្ម រុក្ខាប្រមាញ់ និងនេសាទ  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
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CITES Management Authority of Cambodia

No: 033/20 CMAC

Phnom Penh 17-April-2020

Ms. Ivonne Higuero  
Secretary-General  
CITES Secretariat, International Environment House,  
Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine,  
Geneva, Switzerland

**Subject: Implementation of the Decisions for Trade in Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)**

Dear Ms. Ivonne Higuero,

In reference to the CITES Secretariat's Notification to the Parties No. 2020/017, dated on 02 March 2020, CITES Management Authority of Cambodia herewith submits its response to the concerning associated with Trade in Asian Elephants (*Elephas maximus*) that required under the Decisions 18.226 and 18.227 agreed by the Conference of Parties.

For the implementation of paragraph a) of the Decision 18.226, Cambodia has established a specialized wildlife crime unit under the support from Wildlife Alliance. This unit is known as Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) that consisted of four officers from the Forestry Administration, seven officers from Military-Police General Department and one officer from the Fisheries Administration. The WRRT has a national remit to suppress wildlife crime, arrest wildlife offenders, seize wildlife contraband and file cases to the court. Its operations cover all provinces in Cambodia and regularly cooperate with other enforcement agencies as required including Customs and Police as needed. Currently, the WRRT are continuing intensively on investigating and combating illegal wildlife trade including Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives. Their operations also conducted against domestic trade in ivory especially focus on the local shops selling ivory products.

On 17 March 2020, Cambodia officially approved a 10-year National Asian Elephant Conservation Action Plan in Cambodia (2020-2029) which has been developed through the national workshop and consultation meeting with experts, authorities, national and international NGOs, private sectors, developing partners and also local communities. This 10 years action plan raise the awareness, support the research, conserving and protecting of Asian elephants in Cambodia and especially, preventing it from the illegal hunting and trading.

For the implementation of paragraph c) of the Decision 18.226, Cambodia has never had any record on trading live Asian elephants cross-bordering. However, Cambodia commits itself to ensure that trade in and cross-border movements of the Asian elephants will be conducted in compliance with the country national law and CITES provisions.

Please accept our warmest thanks for your consideration support, cooperation and assurance of our highest regards.

Sincerely yours,

H.E. NAO THUOK, PhD  
Secretary of State

Chairman CITES Management Authority of Cambodia  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

- CC:
- Cabinet of the Minister
  - Forestry Administration
  - Cambodia CITES Secretariat
  - File





MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTRY REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION  
**DIRECTORATE OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION**  
Mangala Wanabhakti Building, Block VII, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Gatot Subroto St., Jakarta 10270 – Telephone/ fax : 62-21- 5720227

30 April 2020

Our Ref: S. 270/KKH/PKINT/KSA.2/4/2020

To:

**MS. Ivonne Higuero**

CITES Secretariat

International Environment House

Chemin des Anémones

CH-1219 Chateline Geneva

Switzerland

Email: info@cites.org

**Subject: Trade in Asian Elephants (*Elephas maximus*)**

Dear Madam,

Referring to the notification to the parties No. 2020/017 dated 2 March 2020 regarding Trade in Asian Elephants, CITES Management Authority of Indonesia would like to inform the progress of implementation on the Decision 18.226 Directed to the Parties as follows:

1. Based on Act No. 5 year 1990, Government regulation No. 7 year 1999, and Minister of Environment and Forestry regulation P.16/MENLHK/SETJEN/Kum.1/12/2018, the Asian Elephants (*Elephas maximus*) are protected. Furthermore, the trade of any form and derivative product of this species is considered illegal and is subject to a maximum imprisonment of 5 (five) years and a maximum fine of Rp. 100,000,000.00 (one hundred million rupiah) equal to USD 7,300.
2. Indonesia has established The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for Sumatran Elephant 2019-2022. This is part of the Elephant Conservation Strategy and Action Plan which was arranged based on programmatic interventions in answering landscape (elephant population pocket) based needs. The objective of EAP for Sumatran Elephant is to secure the remaining Sumatran elephant and resolve the direct threats, including doomed populations, poaching, human wildlife conflict.
3. The key strategies such are:
  - a. Protection over wild elephant population, involving local communities, protected area managers, as well as forest concession managers,
  - b. Rescuing doomed or critical elephant populations (less than 5 individuals which is not viable to survive) based on through study and detail planning as well as intense post – translocation monitoring.
  - c. Effectively and adapting human-elephant conflicts by promoting human – elephant co-existence practices, build and manage the barrier, enhance stakeholder engagement (including community, local government and private sectors)
  - d. Eliminating potential direct threats at priority sites and finding alternative and solutions
  - e. Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement officers in combating wildlife crime, including cyber patrol.

Thank you for your kind attention and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

**Indra Exploitasia, DVM**

Director of Biodiversity Conservation

Email: macites@menlhk.go.id, subditkonvensi.kkh@gmail.com, nining.ngudi2019@gmail.com, sr.ratna@gmail.com

cc.:

1. Director General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation, Indonesia;
2. Director General of law Enforcement of Environment and Forestry;
3. Permanent Mission of The Republic of Indonesia to the UN, WTO, and Other International

### **Trade in Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*)**

1. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.226 and 18.227 on Trade in Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*), as follows:

#### **18.226 Directed to Parties**

All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to:

- a) undertake, as necessary, investigations into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives, and endeavour to enforce, and where necessary improve, national laws concerning international trade in specimens of Asian elephants with the explicit intention of preventing illegal trade;
- b) develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations;
- c) ensure that trade in, and cross-border movements of live Asian elephants are conducted in compliance with CITES, including the provisions in Article III, paragraph 3, for Asian elephants of wild origin;
- d) collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, requesting as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the Secretariat; and
- e) at the request of the Secretariat, provide information on the implementation of this Decision for reporting by the Secretariat to the Standing Committee.

#### **18.227 Directed to the Secretariat**

The Secretariat shall:

- a) request a report from all Parties involved in trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives on the implementation of paragraphs a) through d) of Decision 18.226; b) upon request and pending the availability of external funding, assist range States of Asian elephants in their implementation of Decision 18.226; and c) incorporate information provided by range States in accordance with Decision 18.226, paragraph e), together with other findings and recommendations concerning trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives as appropriate, into its regular reporting to the Standing Committee on the implementation of Resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP18) on Trade in elephant specimens.

2. Parties involved in trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are hereby requested to report to the Secretariat on their implementation of Decision 18.226, paragraphs a) to d).
3. The Secretariat will make the information received available to the 73rd meeting of the Standing Committee, Geneva, October 2020 (to be confirmed), together with any other findings or recommendations it may have.
4. The Secretariat also invites range States of Asian elephants requiring assistance in their implementation of Decision 18.226, to communicate this to the Secretariat, indicating



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the nature of the support required. This will enable the Secretariat to consider the support it may be able to provide pending the availability of external funding.

5. Responses should be submitted by email to the Secretariat at [info@cites.org](mailto:info@cites.org) and [johannes.stahl@cites.org](mailto:johannes.stahl@cites.org), no later than 30 April 2020.

**New Zealand response (submitted by New Zealand CITES Management Authority)**

As directed to Parties:

*a) undertake, as necessary, investigations into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives, and endeavour to enforce, and where necessary improve, national laws concerning international trade in specimens of Asian elephants with the explicit intention of preventing illegal trade;*

The illegal trade of *Elephas maximus* specimens is low in comparison to other CITES specimens detected without required permits at New Zealand's border. For example, in 2018, of 6435 instances of illegal trade events, 9 of these included Elephantidae spp specimens, some of which may have included *Elephas maximus*. Species level identification was not obtained through DNA testing as the circumstances of the seizures, although investigated by the Department of Conservation's National Compliance Team (as are all illegal elephant ivory importations), did not warrant DNA testing. All seizures were found in personal effects in household moves, rather than being concealed or likely imported for commercial purpose.

The Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989, which implements the Convention in New Zealand, enables the Department of Conservation to lay criminal charges for the illegal importation of CITES Appendix I, II and III species. In 2020, the ability to issue infringement notices as a lesser punitive action to prosecution, will be an additional enforcement action tool available to enforcement authorities.

*b) develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations;*

There is one known small scale (one animal) captive breeding programme in operation in New Zealand. Strategies for captive breeding operations within Australia and New Zealand are coordinated through the Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA)'s Australasian Species Management Program. Further information on this program which includes the management of *Elephas maximus*, can be found at <https://www.zooaquarium.org.au/public/Conservation/Species-Programs/Public/Conservation/Species-Programs.aspx?hkey=c750d8b3-8493-4d92-994c-1bdcc976d23a>

*c) ensure that trade in, and cross-border movements of live Asian elephants are conducted in compliance with CITES, including the provisions in Article III, paragraph 3, for Asian elephants of wild origin;*

The importation of live *Elephas maximus* into New Zealand, requires both a New Zealand issued CITES Import permit (provided the conditions of Article II, paragraph 3) have been met), and a CITES Export Permit or Re-export Certificate from the country of export/re-export. This is a

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requirement under the Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989, which implements the Convention in New Zealand.

*d) collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, requesting as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the Secretariat*

The Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA)'s Australasian Species Management Program performs this function regionally. All animals within New Zealand zoos are registered under the Species360 ISIS ZIMS (Zoological Information Management System) whereby a Specimen Record is held for each animal, information which includes parental lineage, transponder number, birth place, ownership etc

Contact details: New Zealand CITES Management Authority

Department of Conservation, 18-32 Manners Street, Wellington 6011, New Zealand

Email: [cites@doc.govt.nz](mailto:cites@doc.govt.nz)

## Thailand's report on the implementation of Decision 18.226

At its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting (CoP 18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 18.226 and 18.227 on Trade in Asian elephants (*Elephantus maximus*). The Decision 18.226 directed all Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and derivatives to:

- a) undertake, as necessary, investigations into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives, and endeavor to enforce, and where necessary improve, national laws concerning international trade in specimens of Asian elephants with the explicit intention of preventing illegal trade
- b) develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations
- c) ensure that trade in, and cross-border movements of live Asian elephants are conducted in compliance with CITES, including the provisions in Article III, paragraph 3, for Asian elephants of wild origin
- d) collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, requesting as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the Secretariat
- e) at the request of the Secretariat, provide information on the implementation of this Decision for reporting by the Secretariat to the Standing Committee

Thailand hereby provides information on the implementation of the Decision 18.226 as follows:

- a) undertake, as necessary, investigations into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives, and endeavor to enforce, and where necessary improve, national laws concerning international trade in specimens of Asian elephants with the explicit intention of preventing illegal trade**

There has been no case of illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivative found in Thailand recently. However, we have enacted the laws and carry out various measures to protect the elephants and preventing them from illegal trade. Asian elephants in Thailand are divided into two legal status, wild elephant and domesticated elephant. The Asian elephant

taken from the wild is considered “wild elephant”, and is protected by law and not allow to be traded. The trade in domesticated elephant of Thailand must be conducted in accordance with the national Thai laws and regulations. More details are as follows:

### *1. Wild elephant*

Asian elephants taken from the wild were protected by the Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act, B.E.2562 (2019). This act replaces the previously Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act B.E. 2535 (1992). The new law maintains protection of wild elephants and prevention of the possession of illegal wildlife specimens, carcasses and products thereof with substantially increased penalty (prison terms, fines, or both) to violation.

### *2. Domesticated elephant*

2.1 Domesticated Asian elephant are defined as a beast of burden and must be registered under the Beast of Burden Act B.E.2482 (1939) which is enforced by the Ministry of Interior. Exportation or the importation of all species of beast of burden including domesticated Asian elephants must be notified to appointed officials to endorse the identification card of the animal to acknowledge its import or export.

The Ministry of Interior has improved the registration of domesticated elephant in accordance with the Regulations under Beasts of Burden Act for better identity proofing of individual domesticated elephants. The new form of Elephant Identification Certificate prescribed by the Regulation contains individual elephant’s identification information including microchip number and some key biological data. The improved registration system stores all data of all domesticated elephants, such as physical characteristic and biological data, which including DNA data, in digital format (microchip). All domesticated elephants must be registered with completed all required data for the purpose of identity proofing and preventing the false registration of smuggled wild elephants to declare as domesticated ones.

2.2 Controlling the trade, import, export and possession of ivory and ivory products originating from domesticated elephant ivory under the Ivory Trade Act B.E. 2558 (2015). There are three registration systems which are: (1) registration system of ivory traders and ivory products list; (2) registration system for legal ivory possession from domesticated and African elephants; and, (3) registration system for confiscated ivory. These registration systems will be the central database for information on ivory. The concerned authorities will be able to access information about traders, ivory possessors, ivory products movement, changes in ownership and to monitor

confiscated ivory effectively. The registration system for domesticated elephant ownerships, the license for legal owners to legally trade, and the strict control to prevent the trafficking of ivory will hopefully prevent any illegal ivory from entering the market.

2.3 Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) including parts and derivatives thereof as goods of which the export from the Thailand needs permission under the Export and Import Act B.E.2522 (1979). Also, the import or the export of domesticated Asian elephants must get a health certificate granted by Department of Livestock Development and endorsement on relevant documents and permits for import or export of the animal must be done by CITES and Customs officials at the port of import or export.

2.4 There are the Tourism business and tour guide committee's regulation to cover any violations involving elephant ivory and protected wild fauna and flora.

2.5 Enactment of a new Elephant Act to protect and conserve Asian elephants and prevent laundering of wild-caught elephants into the domesticated population. The draft act covers the legislation of elephants' birth and death, prevention of cruelty to elephants, the operations of elephants' businesses, elephants' well-fair, the control of international trade in elephants. At present, it is in the process of preparation of information for regulation Impact assessment from this act.

### *3. Supervision and Law Enforcement*

Cooperation between the Royal Thai Police Department, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, and Thai Customs Department in relation to increase enforcement of ivory smuggling in high risk areas and at borders, seaports, airports post offices and online ivory trade.

Establishing Task force units, comprised of Royal Thai Police departments and Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation cooperating in rotation, have been established to implement and better monitor and regulate ivory shops in Thailand. Monthly inspections conducted have found that ivory shops have complied with ivory regulations. These Task force units have also been dispatched in several risk spots for illegal ivory trade, such as tourism hotspots and country borders, to enable better inspections and monitoring to suppress ivory crime.

The Thai Customs has cooperated with source, transit, and destination countries in order to strengthen efforts at intercepting wildlife trafficking being committed by trafficking

syndicates. It has utilized technical experience and technologies to better assess risks in activities. It has coordinated with Customs from other countries, such as Singapore, Lao PDR, and Cambodia, in relaying its risk analyses of suspected wildlife trafficking activities and behaviour. This effort has resulted in seizures of illegal trade in wildlife and their parts and derivatives by Customs of these countries. Strict inspections of travelers and cargo at checkpoints in international airports, seaports, and country borders have utilized the latest available technologies such as the Case Management Investigation System (CMIS), the Risk Management System, the Facial Recognition System Detection, the Railway Cargo Inspection System, and the usage of stationary and mobile X-rays in the inspection of cargos and passenger baggage.

Thailand continues our awareness raising campaigns (e.g. “No Ivory, No Tiger Amulets – ไม่พึ่งเขี้ยวงา”, “no consuming, no buying, no hunting, no selling, no contracting disease, and no animal extinction”) among the main target groups which are foreign tourists, ivory traders, ivory owners and the general public.

Furthermore, Thailand is committed to combat the illegal wildlife trade and possession within its borders, especially African-originated ivory and wild elephant ivory. Thailand is committed to close all markets of African ivory within the country completely without exceptions, including African-ivory-made antiques items. Due to the stricter laws and penalties, Thailand is confident that it will progress in the fight against wildlife trafficking.

Thailand has national laws, regulations and enforcement will be strict enough to prevent potential abuse by wildlife traffickers.

## **b) develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations**

Thailand has a registration system managed by the Ministry of Interior (Department of Provincial Administration). All captive ‘domestic’ elephant owners must be registered under the Beast of Burden Act B.E.2482 (1939). Each elephant is identified scientific information (DNA) and is stored in digital form (microchip). No cost for implanting microchips. Then they receive a valid Registration certificate (dtuaruuphaphanchang) for every elephant they own.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (Department of Livestock Development) is responsible for elephant movements and health care through livestock veterinary networks, and coordinates a microchipping program.



There also are elephant camp standards, one issued by the Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and the other by the DLD that include regulations on elephant shelters, health care, food and water, mahout management, environmental and waste management, tourist service and safety, and recording systems.

Additionally, Department of Livestock Development in cooperation with National Elephant Institute held the education and awareness programme of staffs, mahouts, veterinarians, and other people who are involving in taking care of and controlling of Asian elephants about how to take a proper care of Asian elephants to elephant camps.

- c) ensure that trade in, and cross-border movements of live Asian elephants are conducted in compliance with CITES, including the provisions in Article III, paragraph 3, for Asian elephants of wild origin

Thailand has never allowed any trade in Asian elephants taken from the wild. International trade in live Asian elephants of Thailand is allowed only for domesticated Asian elephants with limited purposes (for international relations, researches, conservation, and as ancient items and artworks). The regulation for these exports will have to be strictly implemented and meticulously considered by all related agencies to prevent animal cruelty and compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and national laws.

Since 2009, Thailand has prohibited the export of elephants until the completion of nationwide house elephants' registration to prevent the claim of wild elephants as house elephants for export.

On 22 July 2019, Minister Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Mr. Varawut Silpa-archa) gave a policy to disagree with sending Thai elephants abroad under animal exchange and research programmes, following concerns about their health.

- d) collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, requesting as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the Secretariat

None. However, Thailand is welcoming collaboration amongst Asian elephant range states, especially with neighboring countries, on the mentioned regional system.

**Other matters**

Thailand has revised a drafted 20 year-management plan of wild Asian elephants which aims to: manage wild Asian elephant population at a desired population size; solve human-elephant conflict; prevent illegal activities involving Asian elephants; conserve and manage wild Asian elephants with participatory and sustainability approaches; and be a role model regarding Asian elephant management in Asia.

## **UK response to CITES notification 2020/017 concerning Trade in Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*)**

As requested by the CITES Secretariat in CITES notification 2020/017 concerning trade in Asian elephants, we are pleased to provide the information below on the UK's implementation of Decision 18.226 paragraphs a) to d).

### **Decision 18.226 - All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to:**

**a) undertake, as necessary, investigations into the illegal trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives, and endeavour to enforce, and where necessary improve, national laws concerning international trade in specimens of Asian elephants with the explicit intention of preventing illegal trade;**

#### *Regulations implementing CITES in the UK*

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is implemented in the UK through the [EU Wildlife Trade Regulations](#) (the Regulations). The provisions of the Regulations go beyond CITES in a number of respects, most notably by regulating domestic trade as well as international trade in endangered species. There are also measures stricter than required by the Regulations in place for the trade of raw elephant ivory. For example, commercial use of raw elephant ivory will not be authorised in the UK regardless of origin.

#### *Ivory Act 2018*

The UK adopted primary (framework) legislation in December 2018 with regard to domestic ivory sales (the [Ivory Act 2018](#)). The Ivory Act 2018 bans the sale of ivory in the UK other than for a limited number of exemptions.

#### *Enforcement*

UK Border Force (UKBF) and UK police forces with coordination from the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), act as the enforcement authorities for CITES in the UK.

UKBF enforces CITES requirements at UK borders ensuring that elephant specimens entering or leaving the UK have the correct CITES permits or certificates.

UKBF has carried out successful targeted action to detect and seize a number of packages of illegally exported ivory, often destined for China. UKBF has seized small quantities of statues portraying Ganesh which appear to be of Indian origin and statues of possibly Thai origin depicting buddhas. Of the smaller items sold over eBay and illegally exported to China it would appear very few are new ivory with some of the specimens being quite dated including some antique items.

NWCU supports the enforcement of CITES requirements by police forces within UK borders. Most of what they see is worked ivory. They also come across cases involving elephant hair jewellery, including Asian jewellery that uses Asian elephant hair worked in with gold into bangles and rings. There are two cases involving Asian elephant hair going through the court system at the moment.

### **Decision 18.226 - All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to:**

**b) develop strategies to manage captive Asian elephant populations**

The UK is not a range state for Asian elephant, however there are Asian elephants in captivity in the UK. Much of the work on elephants in captivity in the UK is led by the [BIAZA Elephant Welfare](#)

Group. As of the end of 2019, there were 28 Asian elephants (5 male and 23 female) held in captivity.

There are standards for managing captive Asian elephant populations in the UK. These can be found in [Appendix 8](#) of the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice (SSSMZP) published by the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The SSSMZP, including the elephant chapter, are currently being updated.

In addition to the standards within the SSSMZP, the SSSMZP document refers elephant inspectors to the *Management Guidelines for the Welfare of Zoo Animals: Elephants* (BIAZA) and current recommendations of Defra/ZEC (Zoos Expert Committee)-endorsed elephant management groups such as the UK Elephant Welfare Group.

In 2013 Defra funded a research project to develop behavioural indicators, as part of a wider set of indicators, to assess the welfare of elephants in zoos. Information related to the project can be found [here](#). The final report is due next year. The executive summary of the Elephant Welfare Group's 5 year report can be found on <https://biaza.org.uk/elephant-welfare-group>.

**Decision 18.226 - All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to:**

**c) ensure that trade in, and cross-border movements of live Asian elephants are conducted in compliance with CITES, including the provisions in Article III, paragraph 3, for Asian elephants of wild origin.**

Any imports into or (re)exports from the UK of live Asian elephants would require the appropriate CITES import and (re)export permits which would only be issued if the relevant provisions in Article III, para 3 of the Convention (and Article 4 and 5 of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations had been complied with). UK permits would be processed and issued or rejected by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), the licensing arm of the UK CITES Management Authority, following consultation with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), the UK CITES Scientific Authority.

Based on UK trade data, between 2000 and 2018 one live captive-bred Asian elephant was re-exported from the UK to Israel in 2001 and 26 certificates were issued for elephants to be moved within the UK or to EU Member States.

**Decision 18.226 - All Parties involved in the trade in Asian elephants and their parts and derivatives are encouraged to:**

**d) collaborate in the development and application of a regional system for registering, marking and tracing live Asian elephants, requesting as necessary assistance from experts, specialized agencies or the Secretariat.**

Under the regulations in force in the UK, live Asian elephants moved between zoos within the UK are required to be issued with a certificate (unless they are moved between scientific institutions) and to be uniquely marked, e.g. with a tag or microchip. Details of the tag or microchip number have to be included in the certificate. Under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981, any receiving zoo needs to have the appropriate accommodation and skills needed to look after elephants, and records have to be kept of the transfer by both the receiving and releasing zoos.