



IFAW *in* ACTION

International Fund for Animal Welfare

Saving the World's Elephants

Elephants are highly intelligent and social. Although they are the largest living land mammal, they are surprisingly fragile species. Without human help, they may disappear from the wild in this century.



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Elephants are “keystone” species—they influence the survival of all the species around them as well as the ecosystem as a whole. By protecting elephants, IFAW protects many animals, including humans, and our shared environment.

IFAW addresses three major threats to elephants—ivory poaching, habitat loss, and human-elephant conflicts—by supporting cautious conservation and trade policies, anti-poaching patrols, improved park management, effective wildlife law enforcement, habitat conservation, elephant research, and public education.

Stopping the Ivory Trade

Elephant populations plummeted from more than 1.2 million worldwide to about 600,000 in the decade before the United Nations *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) banned the international ivory trade in 1989. The exact extent of elephant poaching today is unknown, but killing continues. In a two-year period, 9.7 tons (8.8 metric tons) of illegal ivory were seized in Asia, seven elephants were gunned down in Uganda, and Kenya seized 33 fresh tusks and lost two rangers in battles with poachers.

As a non-governmental participant in CITES, we opposed one-off sales of ivory in 1997 and 2002, fearing—quite rightly—that even limited legal trade would encourage poaching. Collaborating with several nations and NGOs, we are developing plans for the non-commercial disposal of ivory stockpiles, examining the economic costs/benefits of the ivory trade, and investigating markets in Japan, China and India.

Strengthening Anti-Poaching Efforts

Wildlife agencies in elephant range states generally lack the funds to enforce anti-poaching and wildlife trade laws, so IFAW helps them enhance security, improve communications, address human-wildlife conflicts, and educate local communities about conservation.

These partnerships have been hugely successful. IFAW is enabling the *Kenya Wildlife Service* (KWS) to strengthen park management, improve ranger training and more effectively combat poaching. Kenya's *Meru National Park* is now a showcase of professional wildlife management.

In 1987, when IFAW began supporting the *Uganda Wildlife Authority's* anti-poaching patrols, only 150 elephants remained in *Queen Elizabeth* and *Kidepo National Parks*. Today there are 1,200.

In 1999, IFAW assisted the *Liwonde Game Scout Training Project* in Malawi, one of the most successful anti-poaching training efforts in Africa. IFAW continues to support initiatives to ensure the future integrity of Malawi's national parks and wildlife. *Liwonde National Park* is home to more than 600 elephants.

Through our partner organisation, the *Wildlife Trust of India*, IFAW has provided ranger training in *Corbett National Park*, home to threatened Asian elephants and endangered tigers.

Conserving and Expanding Habitat

Habitat loss is a long-term threat to elephant survival. IFAW addressed this crisis in South Africa with a five-year grant to help *Addo Elephant National Park* purchase land. We continue to work with South African and Zambian authorities to protect elephants and their habitat.

IFAW is trying to link fragmented habitat and migratory corridors by working with community groups near protected areas in Kenya and China. Similar initiatives to secure corridors and expand ranges without harming local people are ongoing in cross-border areas in southern Africa. In India, IFAW helped purchase a critical corridor for elephants.

Reducing Human-Elephant Conflicts

As habitat shrinks, developing practical plans that enable landowners and local villagers to live alongside elephants becomes more critical.

In 2001, IFAW initiated the *Asian Elephant Project* in China's Yunnan province as a model of human-animal conflict resolution. Micro-loans help villagers seek alternative farming options, reduce agriculture in forests, and restore elephant habitat. We also collaborate with communities in India, Kenya and South Africa to develop strategies for peaceful human-wildlife coexistence.

The IFAW-supported *Liwonde National Park Fence Attendant Scheme* in Malawi — which employs local people to maintain the Park's bound-

ary fence — has reduced poaching and elephant damage to crops. IFAW also works with the KWS to relocate elephants to Meru and other parks.

Using Science to Save Elephants

To be effective, elephant conservation strategies must be based on solid science. IFAW supports the *Amboseli Elephant Research Project* in Kenya; ecological and behavioural studies in South Africa's Addo Park; and acoustic research on forest elephants in Central Africa.

IFAW has helped the KWS conduct aerial counts of elephants and other wildlife in Kenya's *Laikipia/Samburu* ecosystem and, in collaboration with *Conservation International*, sponsored an elephant population/habitat use study in Zambia's *Kafue National Park*.

KEY FACTS

- Centuries ago, millions of elephants roamed Africa. In 1998, the *World Conservation Union* estimated there were as few as 300,000.
- An estimated 35,000–50,000 Asian elephants are left in the wild.
- Elephants play a critical ecological role by recycling nutrients back to the soil, dispersing seeds, and altering vegetation.
- There are three known species of elephants: the Asian (*Elephas maximus*) and two African species; savanna (*Loxodonta africana*) and forest (*Loxodonta cyclotis*).

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Urge CITES to implement strict trade conditions and independent verification systems before allowing any ivory stockpile sales by contacting:

CITES Secretariat:

Tel: (+4122) 917-8139/40 Fax: (+4122) 797-3417

Email: cites@unep.ch

Your national CITES Management Authority (contact details can be found at: www.cites.org)

To learn more about IFAW's campaigns and projects to save elephants and other animals, visit our Web site at: www.ifaw.org.



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IFAW helps expand and protect habitat so elephant families like this one in South Africa's Addo Elephant National Park can live in safety.



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Experience has shown that allowing even limited, one-off legal sales of ivory stockpiles leads to increased poaching and elephant deaths.

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PROTECTING ANIMALS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTS WORLDWIDE