



2016 Year End Report



“Elephants cannot be manufactured. Once they’re gone, they cannot be replaced.”

—Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton, DPhil, CBE,
Founder and CEO, Save the Elephants



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
The Continental Picture For Elephants	5-6
Nine Key Elements	7
Financial Statement	8
Testimonials	9
Project Updates	10
Anti-Poaching Projects	11-12
Anti-Trafficking Projects	13-15
Demand Reduction Projects	16-17
Stories From The Field	19-23
Anti-Poaching Projects Map	24
Anti-Trafficking Projects Map	25
Demand Reduction Projects Map	26

Executive Summary

While committed conservationists across the continent have made great strides over the past year, Africa's elephants are still in deep trouble. There are signs that the situation is improving in places like Kenya, but elephants are still being killed for their ivory at an unsustainable rate in other parts of their continent. New continental reports by both the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and Vulcan Inc. released this year confirm the perilous state of elephants.

The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) works to support the best efforts from organizations working to save elephants. Indeed, the ECF funds ideas, not just well-known institutions, enabling organizations large and small, international and grassroots, to have access to emergency and innovation funding to end these wildlife crimes. The ECF is also nimble and highly efficient, with 100% of donated funds going directly to actions to save elephants, and zero overhead. Supporters can rest assured that the funds go to trusted projects and institutions, as each is assessed for their potential impact using Save the Elephants' profound knowledge of elephants and African conservation organizations, as well as its deep network of contacts. To date, the ECF has funded 114 projects and 45 organizations in 25 different countries across Africa and Asia.

Organizations supported by the ECF have made great strides in elephant protection in the last year. In more and more core elephant areas, even in some isolated ones, territory is being reclaimed from the poachers.

We have provided air support, radio communications, and specialized training for anti-poaching rangers in the field. We have supported radio-collaring of elephants so rangers can track their locations and provide "close protection" services. The ECF has also supplied specialized software and hardware that enable rapid reaction units to use intelligence gathered from informer networks to guide their missions. Thanks to some of the best people and organizations in the business, this integrated approach is now working in Africa's forest environments where movement, observation, and communications are much more challenging than in savannahs.

The ability of our partners to stop illegal traders has greatly expanded in the last year. In nine countries and across many borders our anti-trafficking work is leading to a clearer understanding of the illegal trade networks and how to stop them. Law enforcement agencies, and their special units within the police or wildlife authorities, have been supported by collaborating nonprofits which help to strengthen their capacity and hone their skills, resulting in an impressive increase in arrests. With training of prosecutors and the judiciary, these arrests are increasingly leading to far greater sentences—making these actions against elephants a serious crime.

Our understanding of trafficking networks is improving fast, but we realize that the next step of bringing down these kingpins will be more difficult. Detailed investigations and strong evidence are needed to thwart these powerful and dangerous criminals. The type of support we are providing to our partners is shifting in response to this new need, with more mentoring in areas like evidence chain of custody.

Momentum to close down ivory markets gathered pace this year following the landmark joint declaration between President Obama and President Xi Jinping—announcing that both China and the U.S. would shutter the ivory trade within their nations. In perhaps the greatest sign of progress in demand reduction, China joined the U.S. as a powerful voice in calling for united action to end domestic ivory markets on the international stage at key global policy meetings. ECF partners are working to help China create a domestic ban that is effective, timely, and enforceable while also ensuring public support. Meanwhile, ECF supported field investigations have shown an emerging threat; as we move closer to a ban on trade in mainland China, markets are mushrooming in neighboring countries such as Hong Kong, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. These countries will be an increasing focus of the ECF's investments to reduce demand for ivory and ensure that ivory stays on elephants that are able to roam across the wilds of Africa in safety.

The Continental Picture For Elephants

By Dr. Chris Thouless

Manager of the Elephant Crisis Fund & Strategic Advisor to Save the Elephants

We know much more about the status of Africa's elephants than we did a year ago. Two landmark studies have been produced; the first is a paper summarizing the results of the *Great Elephant Census*, carried out by Vulcan Inc. and collaborators, in which the largest savannah elephant populations were counted from the air. The second is the *African Elephant Status Report 2016*, which brought these results together with other information from the rest of Africa, including new results and analyses from the forests, to show how the overall status of elephants has changed in the last ten years.

As chair of the African Elephant Specialist Group's Data Review Working Group I took the lead in collecting and reviewing the information and writing the report. Bringing together data streams on elephant loss across the continent enabled the development of science-driven guidance for the Elephant Crisis Fund's investment priorities.

The picture for elephants is not good, though it is evident that the reported levels of poaching are lower in some important places than they were three or four years ago. Overall, elephant numbers have declined substantially across Africa, with countries in southern Africa that had previously seemed safe being hit hard. The continental population has fallen by at least 110,000 elephants over the past 10 years, and perhaps considerably more, given how little we know about what is happening in the forests of Central Africa. Since the start of the recent poaching upsurge in 2009, it is likely that 20-30% of Africa's elephants have been lost. More than half of the known continental decline comes from Tanzania, which in the mid-1970s held the largest elephant population in Africa.

However, there are signs of hope. In 2016 law enforcement agencies, many of them supported by the ECF, caused serious disruption to trafficking networks, making a number of high profile arrests. Poaching has been reduced to manageable levels in Kenya and in Uganda where recent aerial counts indicate that elephant populations are stable or increasing.

In some areas the killing has decreased only because elephants have become rare and difficult to find due to poaching and because they flee from human presence. Poachers then move on to new targets, such as the larger herds of southern Africa. Poaching has increased in Zambia and over the border in Zimbabwe, as well as in Kruger National Park in South Africa. Further, there are worrying signs of an upsurge of killing in Botswana and Namibia. Beyond southern Africa, beleaguered strongholds such as the Niassa Reserve in Mozambique and Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are under intense and increasing threat. We have projects in all these hotspots, and we must do much more.

Gabon, the last major refuge for forest elephants, is under unprecedented assault, but due to dense forest cover it is difficult to accurately assess the scale and extent of the poaching and to protect such a vast area. In response, the Elephant Crisis Fund is helping the government of Gabon shore up its anti-trafficking and intelligence work to root out criminal syndicates. We have also supplied a tracking app developed by Save the Elephants and powered by Vulcan Inc., to the management of Wonga Wongue National Park in central Gabon to test new approaches to follow and defend these elusive forest elephants—an approach that may be scaled across Gabon. Forest elephants elsewhere are also benefitting from ECF investments, in places like Odzala National Park and Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park in the Republic of Congo.

While it is improbable that African elephants will become extinct in the wild in the near future, small isolated populations such as those in West Africa, in countries like Mali, are in real danger of disappearing—although we have been surprised by how many have survived in the most difficult circumstances, a tribute to the adaptability of elephants. Even though the numbers in these areas may be trivial in a continental context, they are important for conservation at a national level. The ECF has played a critical role in helping preserve small, overlooked populations including those in Guinea, Nigeria, and Ethiopia.

Nine Key Elements of The Elephant Crisis Fund

One Goal The Elephant Crisis Fund's only goal is to end the ivory crisis. We welcome the day when that goal is achieved and the ECF can be wound down.

100% All funds raised go to the most effective partners and projects in the field. Even bank transfer fees are paid by the Wildlife Conservation Network, separately from your donation, ensuring every cent of every dollar donated for elephants goes to elephants.

Collaboration No single organization can solve this global problem. The ECF is focused on ending the ivory poaching crisis through uniting diverse actors into concerted action for wildlife. Only together can we save elephants.

Ideas, Not Institutions The ECF seeks out the best and most urgent initiatives to address the ivory crisis, regardless of who presents them. We seek to support the proposals with the most potential, no matter if they come from large-scale international organizations or local field operations.

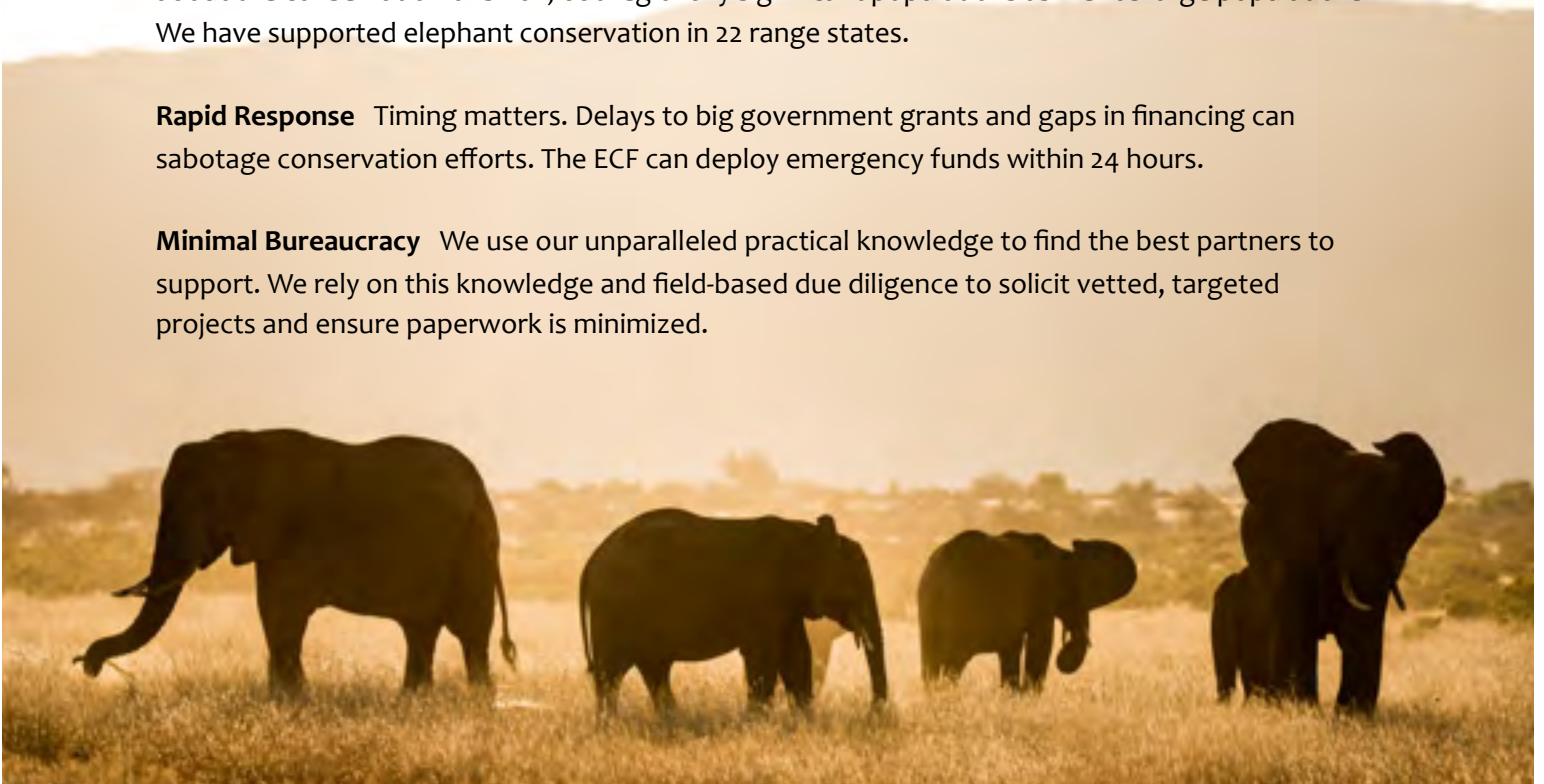
Data-Driven Save the Elephants is at the heart of scientific understanding of elephants and their status. With 50 years of field experience and a deep network across the continent and around the world, the ECF is able to target strategic priorities across Africa, with sharp focus and due diligence.

Pioneering The ECF supports conservation innovation, then shares successful concepts with other partners and projects. Examples of such innovation include GPS tracking technologies, ivory DNA analysis, and courtroom accountability efforts.

Range-Wide We believe that elephant conservation is not just about numbers; we are concerned about the conservation of small, but regionally significant populations as well as large populations. We have supported elephant conservation in 22 range states.

Rapid Response Timing matters. Delays to big government grants and gaps in financing can sabotage conservation efforts. The ECF can deploy emergency funds within 24 hours.

Minimal Bureaucracy We use our unparalleled practical knowledge to find the best partners to support. We rely on this knowledge and field-based due diligence to solicit vetted, targeted projects and ensure paperwork is minimized.



Financial Summary

We are pleased to report that the Elephant Crisis Fund has raised over \$10.3M since its launch in May 2013, and with your help, we've raised more than \$2.4M in 2016 alone (at the time of this writing). With poaching, trafficking, and demand for ivory still at crisis levels, we have developed a new goal to raise a total of \$15M by May 2018.

As of November 1, 2016, a total of \$7,921,709 had been allocated towards the most urgent and innovative elephant conservation projects. There remains a pipeline of critical projects under development and Save the Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network continue their mission to raise further support to ensure the funding of these crucial actions.

The Returns on Your Investment: Elephant Crisis Fund Support to Stop the Killing of Elephants and the Trafficking and Demand for Their Ivory

The world has united around a simple strategy to save elephants from the scourge of the ivory crisis: Stop the Killing, Stop the Trafficking, and Stop the Demand. The ECF has been a catalytic and deep investor in each.



Testimonials

“Over the past few years ECF has provided timely funding to protect critical populations of elephants, dismantle poaching networks, train elite ranger teams, and stop the demand for ivory. We applaud your work to promote collaboration and rapid responses to the most critical threats to elephants, and are proud to be a part of these efforts.”

Cristián Samper, President and CEO, Wildlife Conservation Society

“African Parks is responsible for between 25% and 100% of the national elephant populations of five different countries in Africa. The Elephant Crisis Fund has been an essential partner in providing support to some of our conservation efforts, usually at times when the need for intervention has been urgent. In particular ECF enabled us to overcome an escalating poaching problem in Liwonde National Park in Malawi through the rapid deployment of rangers by helicopter; and helped us establish an intelligence network around Garamba National Park in DRC... ECF lives up to its name by delivering resources to the field, where we need them most.”

Peter Fearnhead, Chief Executive Officer, African Parks

“The Elephant Crisis Fund sponsored by Save the Elephants and WCN has been recognized as an important leader in the efforts to slow the epidemic of slaughter of the African elephant herds... The voice of African conservation is loud and clear about elephants and ivory today; stop the killing, stop the trafficking, and stop the buying. The African Wildlife Foundation has supported the Elephant Crisis Fund along with WCN, WildAid, and other conservation entities and I urge you to also join this collaborative effort for urgent elephant conservation efforts now.”

David Thomson, Chair, African Wildlife Foundation

“We have seen China and Hong Kong announce bans on sales of ivory, a fifty percent increase in awareness of poaching as a problem and declines in the wholesale price of ivory from 50 – 80% in some cases. This was only possible with the support of our partners at Save the Elephants and African Wildlife Foundation and through the vital funding from the Elephant Crisis Fund.”

Peter Knights, Founder and CEO, WildAid

“The support that the Elephant Crisis Fund has provided to projects in FFI’s Africa Programme has been invaluable. ECF has delivered funding and technical support quickly that has both allowed us to address emerging or changing threats and be flexible to the situation on the ground.”

Alison Mollon, Africa Director, Flora & Fauna International

“The beauty of this initiative is that it often fills a vacuum of support for the myriad of small, but dedicated and extremely effective, groups and individuals involved in tackling the illegal ivory trade; groups without a high profile or celebrity status who battle the international criminal networks engaged in this insidious trade from Africa through to the end markets. It is extremely refreshing to see the emergence of a donor who is prepared to invest in what are often considered intangible goals and outputs, but which nonetheless are a powerful catalyst for positive change and enforcement action.”

Mary Rice, Environmental Investigation Agency

Project Updates



Anti-Poaching

STOP THE KILLING: ANTI-POACHING INVESTMENTS

Poaching networks are constantly looking for new elephants to target for their ivory, and conservation partners across Africa struggle to outpace these criminals. The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) support has expanded the anti-poaching efforts of a coalition of these partners. In 2016 the ECF continued its support for “boots on the ground” and “eyes in the sky” projects to keep elephants safe—and has accelerated investment in emergency responses, intelligence-led anti-poaching patrols, and new approaches to satellite tracking of elephant movements for greater security.

The ECF provides emergency support where either a poaching crisis has erupted or a funding shortfall has occurred. When a helicopter was damaged by machine gun fire from poachers in Garamba National Park in an incident in which four rangers were killed, the ECF stepped in and provided emergency funding. Within 32 hours a replacement helicopter was back in the air conducting surveillance operations, surviving rangers were reinforced, and African Parks Network was able to ensure support to the grieving families of the fallen. As poaching accelerated in the vast Niassa Reserve of northern Mozambique, one of the last major strongholds for elephants, the ECF invested in a radio system in one core area to allow more efficient real time deployment of rangers and for them to communicate when poaching attacks happened. When funding is at risk of running dry before additional committed donations can arrive, the ECF has stepped in to provide continuity of protection for elephants under pressure in places like Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Photo credit: Frank af Petersens



Helicopters are sometimes the only way of providing rangers with access to remote parts of protected areas and can be critical to successful enforcement. This helicopter in Liwonde, Malawi, was funded by the ECF to assist African Parks with patrols during the wet season.

Anti-Poaching

The conservation community lacks the resources to ensure ranger patrolling spans the African elephant range. Deployment of patrols must be strategic and targeted and intelligence-led. Intelligence gathering allows partners to work more efficiently, deploying troops at the right places and the right time to minimize the vulnerability of elephants and other wildlife. While intelligence-led patrolling has proven successful in savannah habitats, increased ECF investments in the forests of the Congo Basin show that this intelligence-driven approach may also be possible in forest habitats. For example, with ECF support, the Wildlife Conservation Society is using this integrated approach to law enforcement in the forests of Nouabalé Ndoki National Park in the Republic of the Congo. Information on criminal movements guides anti-poaching actions, and data gathering by rangers further supports prosecutions.

This approach proved effective in July 2016 when a group of newly trained rangers discovered a poachers' camp while patrolling the Ndoki River around the park's periphery. The poachers opened fire with AK-47s but the rangers, who had been equipped by the ECF and trained in small-unit tactics, fanned out, fired back and eventually seized the camp. They recovered six pairs of elephant tusks and an AK-47 with six empty magazine clips. The rangers then used their satellite phones to alert a rapid-reaction unit to set up roadblocks along nearby logging roads. They managed to capture Samuel Pembele, a main player in one of the most notorious ivory-trafficking groups in northern Congo. Pembele's capture proved particularly fruitful as he provided information to authorities about others in the trafficking group, including another ringleader. Pembele was tried on November 15th in the Sangha River town of Ouésso and despite a bribery attempt, was sentenced to five years imprisonment. Such stories are increasingly replicated across Africa, thanks to your support of the Elephant Crisis Fund.

TRACKING FOR SECURITY

The ECF is not only responding urgently to poaching, but is also developing and funding innovation. One of the most significant innovative investments involves radio-tracking elephants to give law enforcement managers real-time data for tactical and strategic purposes. Save the Elephants, along with Paul Allen's Vulcan Inc., have developed an app that allows collared elephants to be tracked from almost anywhere—in secured control rooms set up in national parks, on foot or in Land Rovers in the bush, or in aircraft patrolling the skies.

When a collar indicates an elephant has stopped moving and has been killed, a rapid response will improve the chances of intercepting the poachers before they can make their escape. Save the Elephants is working to try and reduce the time between an elephant fatality and the information being received in the field in order to maximize the chances of a successful arrest. Such rapid response to one elephant's death can potentially save many more.

Anti-Trafficking

STOP THE TRAFFICKING: INVESTMENTS TO STOP THE ILLEGAL PURCHASE AND MOVEMENT OF IVORY

Anti-trafficking efforts are often overlooked. Since much of this work is carried out in the shadows, as it involves deep investigations and undercover work with dangerous criminal networks, it is less visible than anti-poaching and demand reduction efforts. Yet to end the ivory crisis these traffickers must be found, arrested, and successfully prosecuted so that criminal networks reject ivory as being more trouble than it is worth. The Elephant Crisis Fund has made dealing with ivory trafficking a priority area in the last year—supporting trusted law enforcement units across Africa to find, arrest and prosecute traffickers, helping local partners to develop courtroom monitoring programs, and supporting cross-border intelligence sharing and operations. Today, the ECF is one of the most effective funders of anti-trafficking efforts for ivory and wildlife crime in the world.

Photo credit: Fauna & Flora International



Informer networks and a supportive community have been a key part of an ECF project to boost the activities of the forest guards working with Fauna & Flora International in Guinea's Ziama Reserve.

We have a clearer intelligence picture of the trafficking networks operating across the continent than ever before, as well as their links with illegal drug and arms traffickers throughout Africa. Collaborative investigations by our partners have revealed that a large proportion of ivory leaving Africa is facilitated by a relatively small number of kingpins whose networks are generally organic and flexible rather than tightly controlled from the top down.

The techniques used by our partners have been more successful at achieving mid to low level arrests and prosecutions, than in dealing with high value targets. Direct sting operations will not trap the kingpins who may never see the ivory they trade. In some cases, kingpins are close to the political leaders in the countries where they are operating, and prosecutions can easily be compromised or obstructed by people who threaten and bribe on a massive scale. To take on these challenges we will increasingly support longer-term investigations and engage with new partners from the realm of law enforcement and anti-corruption groups.

For our partners to close in on powerful traffickers, they must very carefully engage informants to gather information and admissible evidence for prosecutions. The ECF is providing expert advisors to guide how to recruit and assess informants, guard sensitive data on targets, establish intelligence sharing protocols, and improve personal security.

Anti-Trafficking

One syndicate in Kenya has been exposed (through a combination of DNA analysis and other evidence) as having shipped 40 tons of ivory out of the port of Mombasa over the last five years. A key breakthrough was made with the arrest of Feisal Ali Mohamed, a member of this syndicate, who was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in July 2016, largely thanks to the efforts of ECF grantee WildlifeDirect. Feisal was a mid-level player, however, and the leaders of the syndicate are still free and operating with relative impunity out of Mombasa's port. To change this, several layers of the trafficking network need to be taken out. The ECF has invested funding and time into building greater coordination between dedicated government and civil society parties and now various law enforcement efforts are underway to shut the syndicate down. The U.S. is pushing for the extradition of key members of the gang, but more will be done to thwart the corruption and threats that could lead to these criminals walking free.

“ The Elephant Crisis Fund has supported WildlifeDirect's critical work in combating wildlife crime in Kenya leading to the precedent setting conviction and sentencing of one of Africa's most notorious ivory criminals, Feisal Mohamed Ali. This alone has sent a strong deterrent message across Kenya and elephants are safer for it. The strategic application of ECF Funds is going a long way towards ending the slaughter and achieving justice for elephants. ”

Paula Kahumbu
Founder & CEO of WildlifeDirect

Using the experience gained from ECF investments with WildlifeDirect in Kenya we are now supporting efforts to bolster the prosecution process in other countries. By ensuring that courtroom procedures are transparent, corruption in the criminal justice system is minimized, and wildlife criminals are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, there has been an immediate increase in successful arrests and convictions. Prior to January 2016, courts in Malawi had not served a single prison sentence for any elephant ivory trade offense since 2009. This year out of 19 cases, 15 ended in prison sentences of an average four years.

The Elephant Crisis Fund has also made progress in promoting collaboration between active investigations across borders—which requires a different approach as governments are inherently resistant to share intelligence with other nations. Partners working across eastern and southern Africa through ECF support are moving in on higher-level traffickers operating in the region and helping to stem flows of ivory.

In 2016, several large Asian networks operating out of Mozambique have been identified. These networks are behind the ongoing killing of elephants and ivory trafficking in northern Mozambique. In the coming year, ECF aims to help build up further intelligence to allow law enforcement officers to arrest and convict these traffickers; a difficult undertaking because of weak law enforcement in Mozambique.

Anti-Trafficking

Gabon National Parks Agency (ANPN) has launched a new investigations unit to recruit, assess, and train anti-trafficking intelligence operatives to protect its forest elephants, which represent the species' largest remaining population in Africa. The ECF is providing both strategic advice and grants to provide top-level mentors to train and build capacity of the investigations unit. ANPN has identified at least three key trafficking networks in operation nationally and, with support from the Elephant Crisis Fund, can now advance their efforts to dismantle these networks.

The Elephant Crisis Fund is working to create a clear path for other funders to support organizations with future long-term operational costs. In 2017 we will further strengthen investigations and prosecutions to dismantle criminal networks by elevating the depth and quality of investigations. This work will enhance collaborative cross-border and international intelligence sharing, improve the rates of successful prosecutions, and examine trafficking links between Africa and Asia.

Photo credit: Alex Hofford



Ivory is an attractive proposition for crime syndicates involved in trafficking contraband as shown by this seizure by customs officials in Hong Kong.

Photo credit: Jay Crafter, Invictus K9.



Sniffer dogs can be a valuable asset for detecting ivory hidden by traffickers as well as tracking poachers. Pictured are dogs working with Fauna & Flora International in Gonarezhou National Park, Zimbabwe.

Demand Reduction

STOP THE DEMAND: ENDING THE DESIRE FOR AND TRADE IN IVORY

At the end of 2015 the presidents of the U.S. and China announced that they would shut down virtually all ivory trade within their borders, a decision of huge significance that should have profound implications for elephants. Momentum towards these national bans on trading ivory (the international ban remains in force) continued to build this year at two major global conservation meetings—the World Conservation Congress and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. China emerged as the strongest voice on these stages, calling for countries to close their domestic ivory markets.

The finish line is within sight, but still some way off. It is critical that the U.S. and Europe maintain their commitments and progress to ensure that China's ban is strong and implemented in a timely fashion. Elephant Crisis Fund activities to reduce demand for ivory in 2016 have concentrated on building support for effective domestic bans on ivory in nations where the trade is most active.

The ECF has supported the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in promoting a strong domestic ivory ban in China. The team helped convince China to strengthen its existing wildlife laws and have worked with the U.S. government to persuade China to establish a timeline for the ban. To help ensure that the resulting ban is enforceable, NRDC has been working with China to improve the standard of wildlife forensics, allowing for more effective prosecution of traffickers and sellers once the ban is in place.

Photo credit: Save the Elephants/Frank Pope



The destruction of ivory stockpiles, such as the record 105 tons burned in Kenya in 2016, is a declaration that tusks should not be treated as a commodity.

Demand Reduction

New investigations by ECF-funded consultants Lucy Vigne and Esmond Bradley Martin in 2016 revealed unexpected consequences of the changes taking place in China. Neighboring Vietnam is now one of the biggest markets in the world, with the number of ivory pieces on sale having increased by a factor of six in just seven years. No other country is known to be as active in the illegal import of raw tusks and illegal export of ivory goods, as mainland Chinese are now seeking to buy ivory more cheaply by crossing these porous borders. We have therefore focused on demand reduction efforts in Vietnam and are supporting WildAid in their work to provide further information on the ivory trade in Vietnam and build campaigns to diminish it.

Such investigations can electrify a nation's efforts to enforce the law on ivory and hold their governments accountable. While other recent studies on ivory in Vietnam had suggested the trade was almost non-existent, the ECF report has already stimulated verbal commitments from government officials to take action to close down the illegal traders. A similar process followed the release of the ECF-supported report *Hong Kong's Ivory: More Items for Sale Than in Any Other City in the World*, which helped catalyze the Hong Kong's Legislative Council to ban ivory trade in the territory.

Anecdotal reports and an initial scouting trip suggested that markets in Laos are also mushrooming, and in November 2016 Lucy Vigne travelled to Laos to gather more evidence on the extent of these markets. We look forward to reporting to you the results of this investigation.

Photo credit: Lucy Vigne and Esmond Bradley Martin

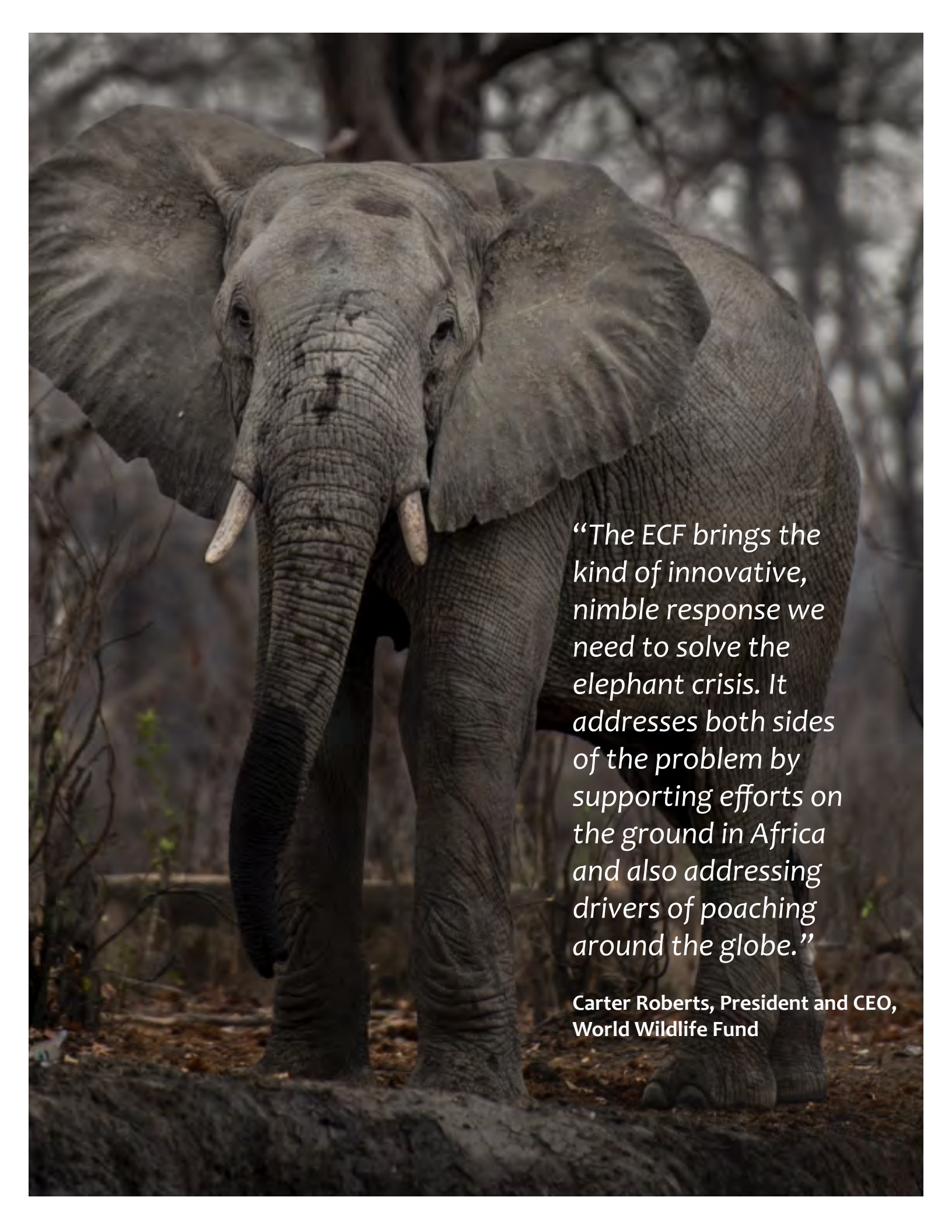


In Hanoi, Vietnam, ivory items such as these are usually displayed at the bottom shelf or at the back of the shop only to be spotted by keen buyers looking for ivory. Whereas ivory items in the north villages are usually displayed on the top shelves of cabinets for easy viewing.

Photo credit: Alex Hofford



Elephants made out of ivory in an antiques shop in Bangkok's Chinatown district, Thailand.



“The ECF brings the kind of innovative, nimble response we need to solve the elephant crisis. It addresses both sides of the problem by supporting efforts on the ground in Africa and also addressing drivers of poaching around the globe.”

**Carter Roberts, President and CEO,
World Wildlife Fund**

Stories From The Field



Stories From The Field

PROTECTING AN ELEPHANT OUTPOST

In a small, hilly forest on the western edge of the African continent, the last elephants in the Republic of Guinea cling to survival. With only 200 remaining, the Ziama forest that lies on the border with Liberia provides them with a final refuge in an increasingly human dominated landscape.

Across West Africa, tiny scattered groups of elephants hide in whatever pockets of cover they can find. The region is now home to less than 3% of the continent's remaining elephants, and they might seem doomed to eventual extinction. The large elephant populations that can still be found in other parts of the continent are a more attractive proposition to the bulk of donors because of their size and fame. Remnant elephant populations matter to the nations that host them and their people, to the genetics of the species, and to the ultimate recovery of elephants from the scourge of the ivory crisis. We believe that these forest elephants in Ziama can have a future and they can teach us lessons about coexistence between elephants and people that will be applicable elsewhere. We also believe that elephant conservation is not just about numbers; our goal is to achieve the survival of elephants in as many parts of their range as possible. Governments of many of these countries are realizing that they are in danger of losing an extremely important part of their national heritage and are now seeking the support the ECF and our partners can provide.

As the pressures on the elephants of the Ziama forest continued to increase, disaster struck with the 2014 Ebola epidemic. The forest was close to the center of the outbreak, and all conservation work came to a standstill.

In early 2015, as the epidemic came to an end, Fauna and Flora International (FFI) approached the ECF to ask for support of their work to protect the Ziama elephants. After careful vetting, we provided funding for equipment, training, and provisions for 30 rangers and to set up village liaison committees to engage the local communities in the conservation work of the reserve.

Photo credit: C. Thouless



One of Africa's few remaining forest elephants, pictured here in a clearing in Noubalé-Ndoki in the Republic of Congo. Forest elephants have been shown to reproduce slower than almost any other mammal, making them particularly vulnerable to poaching.

Stories From The Field

By early 2016 the situation had completely changed. The rangers in new uniforms and with new training had become a capable team, taking pride in their work. They are now carrying out five-day patrols in the forest and recording routes and observations using GPS devices, rather than word of mouth. They found and destroyed 627 steel cable snares that threaten elephants and other wildlife alike. And, in a mere few months, eleven poachers were arrested.

Photo credit: Fauna & Flora International



With support from the ECF forest guards in Guinea's Ziama Reserve have become an effective force against poachers.

The work with local communities bore fruit. In October 2015, upon discovering a fresh elephant carcass the ranger teams were able to enlist the help of the villages close to the incident to track down, and subsequently arrest, the individuals responsible and confiscate the ivory and meat.

Elephant poachers are still a risk to Ziama, but the forest rangers are now equipped and motivated to address the threat. Thanks to the success of this initial phase of support, other donors have stepped in to keep them operational, and the government of Guinea, after the end of the Ebola outbreak, has shown a renewed interest in the conservation of these last remaining elephants.

Stories From The Field

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE IVORY TRADE IN VIETNAM: THE POWER OF IMAGES

When anecdotal reports began suggesting that Vietnam was becoming a market for ivory, rather than just a trafficking route, Lucy Vigne and Esmond Bradley Martin took notice.

Two of the world's leading experts on the ivory and rhino horn trade, Vigne and Martin know that accurate and consistent information is critical if wildlife is to receive the protection it needs. In late 2015 they went to Vietnam to investigate.

Photo credit: Lucy Vigne and Esmond Bradley Martin



In Northern Vietnam, skilled hand carving of pieces of ivory as shown here is relatively uncommon since most of the production is of mass-produced, machine-carved items.

Vigne and Martin carried out a survey in their usual meticulous manner. Careful not to draw more attention than possible to themselves, they visited markets where ivory could be on sale, and used their hard-won knowledge of all the different forms of ivory and its imitations to record every single piece on display, without arousing the suspicions of the dealers. Whenever possible they engaged the dealers in conversation to get a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the market, and took photographs surreptitiously if they could.

Their findings were alarming. The Vietnamese ivory market has grown faster than anywhere in Asia. Vigne and Martin found 242 outlets with over 16,000 ivory items on display. In addition to the major markets in Ho Chi Minh City, there are a number of small

villages where artisans are carving ivory into small artifacts such as bangles and chopsticks. Compared to a previous study in 2008 the number of items seen for sale had risen six-fold, with the number of artisans increasing ten-fold over the same period. Most of the buyers are Chinese, taking advantage of the lower prices in Vietnam. Some are wholesalers, while others are Chinese tourists buying individual pieces. With no real law enforcement on ivory outside the major cities the trade has expanded rapidly.

Stories From The Field

This investigative work was compiled into a generously illustrated report that was released in July 2016 and received considerable attention at an international level. The report was also translated into Vietnamese for use inside the country. Tom Milliken—the Elephant and Rhino Program Leader and longest serving staff member of TRAFFIC, the UN-mandated wildlife trade investigation body—presented the report to senior Vietnamese officials prior to the world’s biggest wildlife trade meeting, the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), held in Johannesburg in October 2016. The officials began by denying that any problems existed, but changed their position after seeing the evidence. Beyond the facts and figures, it was the unequivocal nature of the photographs that had the biggest impact on them. They requested further copies to distribute to other Vietnamese officials.

At the CITES meeting the Vietnamese delegation not only acknowledged the existence of the problem, they also asked for help to combat it. In November 2016, Vietnam held the third Illegal Wildlife Trade meeting in Hanoi, an indication of their commitment to cap the illegal wildlife. The report continued to make waves amongst high level government officials at the meeting, helping generate the vital political will needed to halt the ivory trade in Vietnam, and demonstrating the power of rigorous research backed up by compelling images—all a result of strategically placed support by the Elephant Crisis Fund.

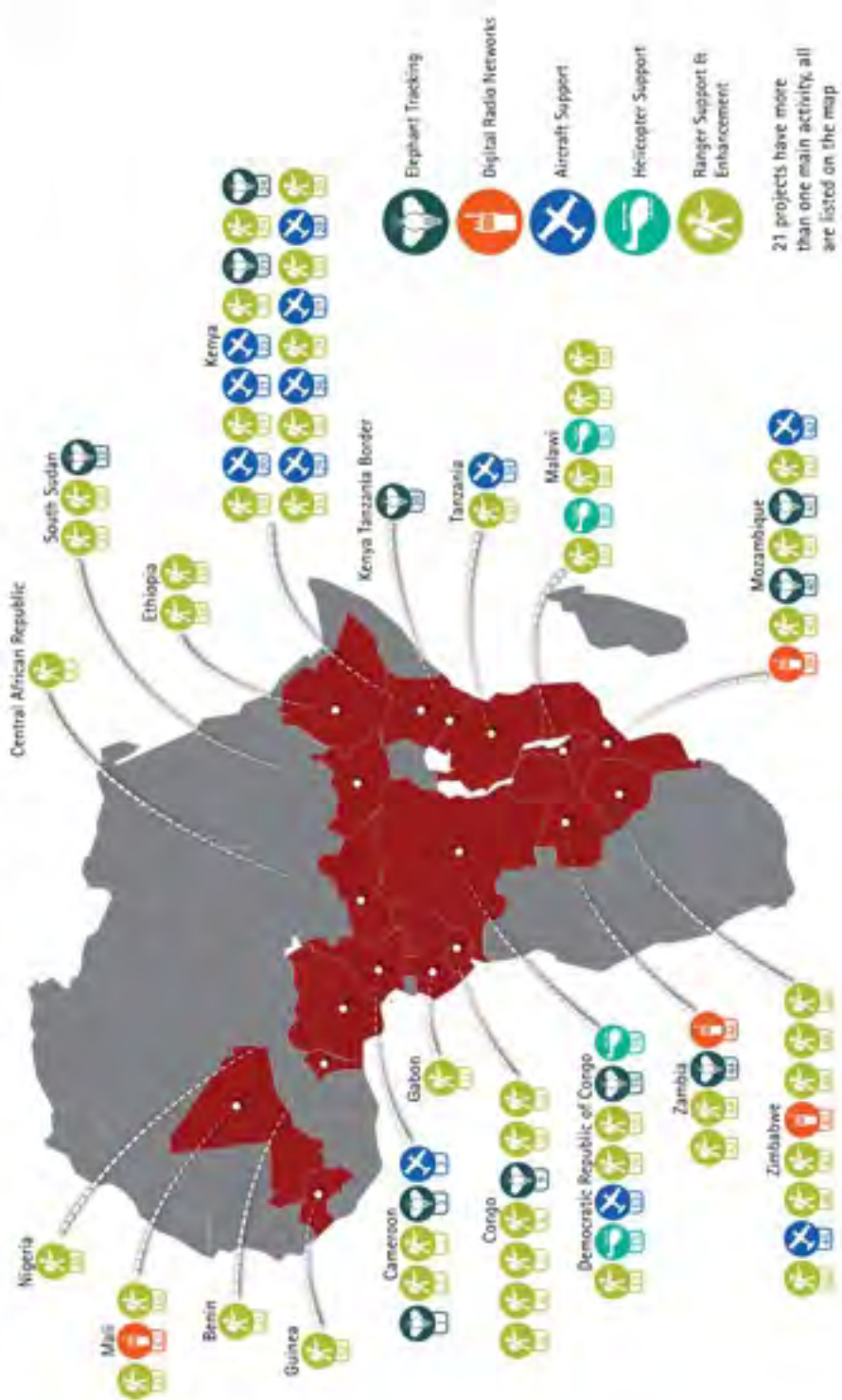
Photo credit, left and right: Lucy Vigne and Esmond Bradley Martin



Most buyers of ivory in northern Vietnamese villages like this one, Buon Ma Thuout, are Chinese seeking lower prices than they can find at home in China.



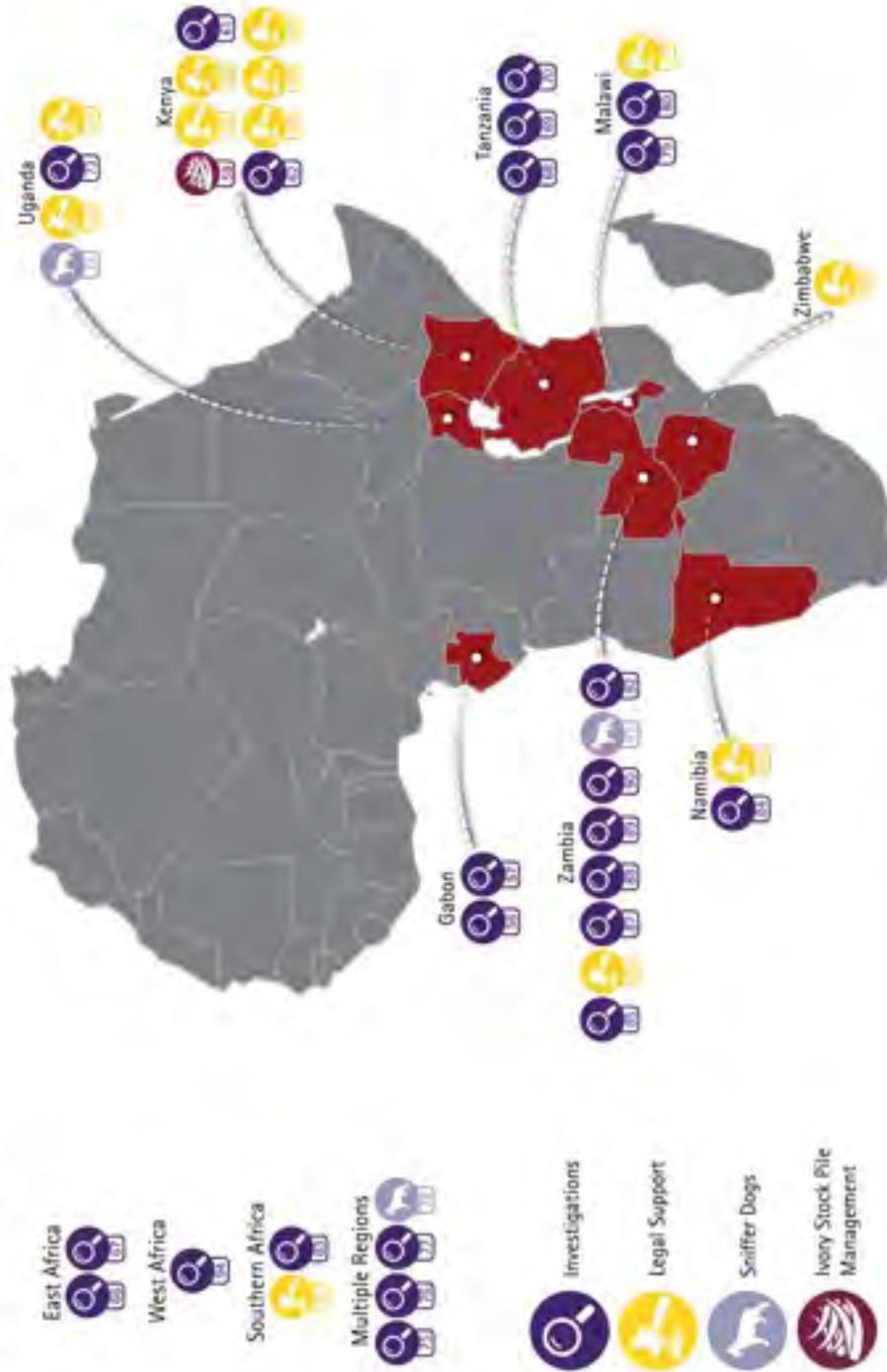
ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND ANTI-POACHING PROJECTS May 2013 - December 2016



For details of each of the projects featured on this map please refer to the separate Investments Appendix to the 2016 Year End Report.



**ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND
ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROJECTS**
May 2013 - December 2016



For details of each of the projects featured on this map please refer to the separate Investments Appendix to the 2016 Year End Report.



**ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND
DEMAND REDUCTION PROJECTS**
May 2013 - December 2016



For details of each of the projects featured on this map please refer to the separate Investments Appendix to the 2016 Year End Report.

AS OF YEAR END 2016

\$7.9M deployed for elephants in 3 years



ECF has invested in

25

Countries

114

Projects

45

Organizations



ElephantCrisisFund.org

