



ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND



Photo Credit: Daryl Balfour/wildphotossafaris.com

2016 Interim Donors Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While there are some early signs of hope for the future of Africa's elephants, they are still facing a crisis. The high price of ivory continues to attract the attention of organized crime syndicates, inciting corruption and poaching that are driving declines in elephant populations across large swathes of Africa.

The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) is dedicated to ending this crisis. The ECF supports projects across Africa and in ivory consuming countries which aim to stop the killing of elephants, prevent the trafficking, and put an end to the buying of ivory. Funding is given with minimal bureaucracy and no administrative deductions to allow donors to have maximum impact, and for partners to act quickly and effectively. The Elephant Crisis Fund team—experts from Save the Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network—provide strategic guidance, technical backing, and coordination with a growing alliance of organizations working together to end the crisis.

This report covers critical projects supported by the ECF between January and June 2016. It summarizes the situation, strategies, successes, and failures in anti-poaching, anti-trafficking, and demand reduction, followed by two stories highlighting specific places where ECF funding is at work. A full list of projects supported by the ECF to date is presented in maps and as an appendix.

The recent history of Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) exemplifies the challenge currently facing frontline elephant protection. African Parks Network, the ECF partner which manages Garamba, is fighting a war with a fraction of the resources an actual army would use. Currently they are losing both elephants and rangers at a shocking rate, but buoyed by new intelligence, technologies, and donor support, they are determined to keep this iconic wildlife area secure.

Organized crime syndicates and ivory traffickers have become more powerful and sophisticated, and the ECF and its partners have responded in kind. This year the ECF has focused on creating collaborative partnerships to capture and convict those who profit most from killing elephants. This report details the importance of the undercover investigations, vetted anti-corruption units, and courtroom monitoring to put criminals behind bars.

Positive steps have been made towards ending the demand for ivory that is driving poaching and trafficking. The U.S. government has enacted its pledge to close down trade at a federal level, and five states have also passed legislation. In support of China's pledge to stop the trade, ECF partners have been working with the public and government to pave the way for a ban in China, while also building projects to stamp out the border trade emerging in neighboring countries.

To date the ECF has supported over 100 project grants and 39 grantees, each vetted for their efficiency and impact. With your continued generosity and commitment, the best ideas and most urgent actions to end the ivory crisis will receive the support they need so that Africa remains wild with elephants.

SEVEN KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

One Goal. The Elephant Crisis Fund's only goal is to end the ivory crisis. Once the crisis is over and all funds allocated, the fund will be wound up.

100%. 100% of funds raised go to the partners in the field, in line with Wildlife Conservation Network's philosophy. Even bank transfer fees are paid separately from your donation, ensuring every cent of every dollar for elephants goes to elephants.

Ideas, Not Institutions. The ECF seeks out the best and most urgent ideas to address the ivory crisis, regardless of who presents them. No single organization can solve this colossal problem, so we seek to support the highest potential proposals no matter whether they come from large-scale international institutions or small, deeply embedded field operations.

Data-Driven. Save the Elephants is at the heart of scientific understanding of the elephants and their situation. With 50 years of field experience and STE's currently active contacts, the fund 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 projects operating in the same realm to accelerate change. Examples include GPS collar technology, ivory DNA analysis, and courtroom accountability efforts.

Collaborative. The ECF is focused on ending the ivory poaching crisis through uniting diverse actors into concerted action for wildlife.

Rapid Response. Timing matters. Bureaucratic delays to big government grants and small finance gaps can quickly sabotage conservation efforts. The ECF deploys emergency funds within 24 hours and other funds typically within two to four weeks.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

We are pleased to report that the Elephant Crisis Fund has surpassed its original goal of raising \$5M by the end of 2015 and has raised over \$8M since its launch in May 2013. With poaching, trafficking, and demand for ivory still at crisis levels, we have stepped up with a new goal to raise a total of \$15M by May 2018.

As of June 1st, 2016, a total of \$6.8M has been allocated towards the most urgent and innovative elephant conservation projects and \$1.4M has either been tentatively allocated or remains unrestricted in order to be available for urgent funding needs. 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.

PROJECTS

Below is a brief summary of our activities and results to date in 2016 in anti-poaching, anti-trafficking, and demand reduction—the three pillars of the ECF’s investment portfolio to end the ivory crisis. A full list of projects is provided in the Appendix.

Anti-Poaching

In the first half of 2016 the ECF’s anti-poaching support has continued to focus on essential “boots on the ground” and “eyes in the sky” patrols for threatened elephant populations and has further invested in technology that has made these patrols smarter and more effective.

Traditional anti-poaching staples such as ranger training and equipment have been supported by the ECF where an urgent need or funding gap has been identified. For example, from January to June 2016, ECF partners have invested in ground forces that have removed 7,256 snares in Conkouati-Douli (Congo) and patrolled 2,175 miles in Nouabale Ndoki (Congo). Eco-guards in Nouabale Ndoki (Congo) made 21 arrests and established informer networks, intelligence gathering teams and tactics, and developed a rapid response unit there. Further, 74 rangers and eco-guards were trained in Congo and South Sudan, as well as 50 governmental paramilitary agents in Mali.

Elephants roam over vast areas that can be difficult for ground patrols to monitor and protect. Aerial support therefore remains a critical element in safeguarding Africa’s protected areas, and has been an investment strategy for the Elephant Crisis Fund in four countries. The 294 hours/22,010 miles of aerial patrols over Tsavo National Parks in Kenya has been particularly critical to defending some of the most iconic elephants in Africa—the “Great Tuskers.” Aerial surveillance over Tsavo provided operational backup to the Kenya Wildlife Service who made 31 subsequent arrests. Helicopters are especially essential for moving rangers to key outposts and areas of conflict when conditions prevent use of airstrips. The ECF has funded helicopter deployment in Garamba (DRC) as well as operations in Liwonde (Malawi), where use of a helicopter enabled aerial cover and ranger deployment into swamps inaccessible by ground vehicles.

Photo Credit: Richard Moller



Aerial surveillance of some of the world’s last “Great Tuskers” in Tsavo National Park, Kenya.

Ground forces must communicate and coordinate patrols to intercept poachers and traffickers despite the distances. The ECF has enabled the installation of new digital radio networks in places like Niassa and Mali to create good communications channels while also enabling ranger positions to be tracked.

These tried and true investments of ground and aerial patrols have been strengthened by the use of new tracking technology. In northern Kenya, crisis-level poaching has been turned around thanks in part to the use of real-time tracking of elephants by Save the Elephants. Tracking data is fed into a regional operations center that oversees security where it can then guide the deployment of ranger patrols, greatly improving the efficiency of protection. Simply put, the data allows fewer rangers to protect more elephants.

“ Because of the Elephant Crisis Fund, we’ve had a plane, fuel, and manpower to conduct more than 110,000 miles of aerial reconnaissance routes across the vast Tsavo National Parks, allowing a bird’s eye view to direct anti-poaching teams more swiftly. With the ECF’s help, we’ve seen elephant poaching plummet by more than half.
-Richard Moller
CEO of the Tsavo Trust

The ECF is supporting elephant tracking projects to assist security in a total of five countries. Tracking technology is being developed by Vulcan, supported by Paul

Photo Credit: Matthew Rice



Digital radio network being installed in Niassa National Reserve, Mozambique.

Allen, into a state-of-the-art system that allows managers of protected areas to not only track and locate animals, vehicles, ground patrols, and aircraft, but to do so in relation to security incidents, informer tip-offs, and intelligence reports. By integrating this information into a single database and visualization system, managers will be able to respond to security incidents faster and more effectively, making more of Africa safer for more elephants and other wildlife.

Anti-Trafficking

After an elephant loses its life to a poacher, the criminal acts continue as the ivory is moved and shipped from the field to point of sale. The ECF supports local partner organizations that are dismantling these trafficking networks across the continent. Thanks to the ability to deliver fast and flexible funding, sometimes for covert operations, the Elephant Crisis Fund is able to facilitate our partners’ rapid response to new evidence or movements along trafficking routes and get funds to where they are needed in time to make a difference.

ECF grantees have identified major trafficking highways along which ivory moves through Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Despite Kenya being a continental leader in anti-poaching efforts and conservation policy (burning 105 tons of ivory in April 2016) it faces enormous challenges from an anti-trafficking perspective. The port in Mombasa continues to be the single largest exit point for

ivory on the continent with only limited law enforcement action taken against key suspects so far. In western Africa, the ivory from large numbers of elephants being killed in Gabon and Congo is funneling into Cameroon along two distinct ivory highways.

We use up-to-date intelligence from our partners to identify “trafficking black holes”, where substantial amounts of ivory are known to be passing, but where law enforcement is absent or ineffective. Once identified, we support organizations working together—sometimes across borders—to prosecute traffickers and corrupt officials. The ECF is actively building a strategy for the threats coming from Cameroon, Mozambique, and Kenya.

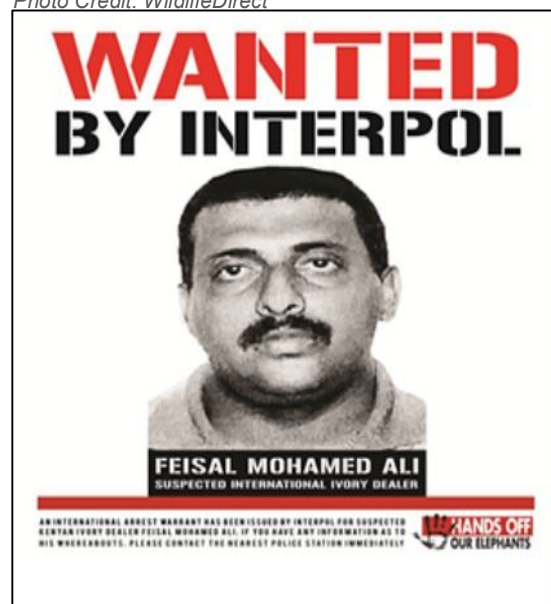
To stem the flow of ivory along trafficking routes, the ECF offers financial support and strategic and technical guidance in three main areas: conducting intelligence gathering and law enforcement, monitoring court cases involving traffickers to increase the number of successful prosecutions, and conducting cross-border work to close in on regional trafficking networks.

The ability to investigate the criminal syndicates trafficking ivory has been improved by the strengthening of intelligence networks. ECF-supported partners have used DNA analysis to identify the origin of ivory from seizures in order to track down trafficking syndicates operating in Africa. We’ve also supported the creation of a trans-national database of over 600 traffickers in southern Africa, which resulted in identifying half a dozen high-level suspects that are responsible for the majority of trafficking in the region. In the past six months, one unit has arrested 54 criminals involved in ivory trafficking and recovered more than 880 lbs. of illicit ivory. Through ECF funding, our partners have launched a major trafficking investigation in Uganda, arresting corrupt army personnel and have kept an alleged senior trafficker in Kenya in prison.

Anti-trafficking work conducted by dedicated and innovative Elephant Crisis Fund grantees has also been bolstered by important collaborations. The ECF is funding several organizations that have started working with U.S. law enforcement officers focused on East Africa. Other partner organizations have begun collaborating with each other directly in the exchange of relevant intelligence across borders—such as the cooperation between regional East and southern African partners. ECF grantees are learning from each other’s best practices in data gathering and analysis, investigative techniques, and courtroom monitoring—all to close in and clamp down on these insidious trafficking networks.

ECF support to the expansion of courtroom monitoring has been particularly compelling, as it both ensures the most vicious criminals are prosecuted to the fullest

Photo Credit: WildlifeDirect



Feisal Ali Mohammed is the biggest alleged ivory trafficker yet to be prosecuted in Kenya, and the case against him is a key test of the nation’s reformed wildlife laws. ECF is supporting WildlifeDirect to help achieve justice.

extent of the law, and heads off corruption in the prosecution and judicial processes. ECF has supported the ground-breaking tactics of WildlifeDirect to monitor critical

wildlife crime trials in Kenya and we are supporting similar approaches in Malawi and Zambia, helping to strengthen the prosecution of traffickers and ensuring that wildlife crime is taken seriously.

Perhaps indicative of the value of the Elephant Crisis Fund is the request by the government of Gabon for a strategic partnership with the ECF to support intelligence work. An agreement was signed jointly by Save the Elephants and the Wildlife Conservation Network. Gabon is home to not only the largest remaining populations of African forest elephants, but to a

government whose leadership is committed to tackling environmental crimes. The ECF is now embarking on support for major investigations into ivory poaching and trafficking in Gabon and across its borders into neighboring countries.

Demand Reduction

The ECF continues to make investments to reduce public demand for ivory and curtail its availability by working with national governments to make ivory trade illegal. In September 2015 China and the U.S. made a joint pledge to end their domestic ivory trades. While the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enacted President Obama's executive order banning ivory on June 6th, 2016, and five states have now passed state legislation, China has yet to announce an implementation plan. Resistance to banning the ivory trade in China from the State Forestry Administration (SFA) remains, partly due to pressure from the ivory carving and trading industries. In China, the ECF continues to support the Natural Resources Defense Council to develop an effective policy-driven path towards ending the trade in the country.

In the meanwhile there has been a dramatic escalation of ivory markets in countries bordering China—raising early concerns of displacement of the market to neighbors. Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Hong Kong are all seeing increases. In the case of Hong Kong an estimated 90% of buyers are from mainland China. ECF consultants, Vigne and Martin, have conducted research in Vietnam that establishes it as one of the biggest ivory markets in the world, a trade that has increased faster than anywhere else in Asia. They report all of the ivory on sale in Vietnam was fresh and from Africa. There is almost a complete absence of law enforcement there. These informative investigations are unveiling a new frontline for demand reduction efforts.

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The grants from the ECF have essentially established a specialist police unit as an effective wildlife law enforcement entity in Malawi and they, in turn, have gone on and profiled the most serious wildlife criminals in our country. This now means that specific operations and cases can be built against these few, but very significant criminals; men who have indirectly killed hundreds and probably thousands of elephants in our region.

- Jonathan Vaughan
Executive Director, Lilongwe Wildlife Trust

Hong Kong's legislature voted to ban the ivory trade in December 2015, and in June 2016 the Hong Kong government announced a 5-year implementation plan.

The ECF has continued its investment in mass media campaigns that inform the public about the impacts of buying ivory and inform opinion towards eliminating the ivory trade. WildAid's ground-breaking approach, funded in previous years, continues to leverage large media value from their celebrity-led campaigns. Powerful Public Service Announcements (PSAs) by WildAid and the International Fund for Animal Welfare—both ECF grantees—are currently running in subways, trains, buses, and airports in over 40 cities encompassing 28 provinces, representing 80% of China's urban population.

Photo Credit: STE: Storm Stanley



105 tons of ivory go up in smoke in Nairobi, Kenya, on April 30th, 2016. By far the largest ivory destruction in history, the burn marked Kenya's determination that ivory should no longer be treated as a commodity.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Garamba: Battle for the Heart of Africa

A war for wildlife is being fought in the heart of Africa. Garamba National Park and its three adjacent reserves form a rich ecosystem at the northeastern edge of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its savannahs, grasslands, woodlands, and swamps hold the largest concentration of elephants remaining in the region. But this paradise is in the center of a powerful storm of violence. The Lords Resistance Army, heavily armed bandits from South Sudan, and local poachers are all preying on the park for ivory and bushmeat.

The fight for elephants in Garamba is now in full swing. African Parks Network (APN), which took over management of the park in 2005, in partnership with the Congolese government, is now engaged in a front-line military situation, with rangers facing substantial casualties.

Photo Credit: African Parks/Jean Labuschagne



Garamba's B3 helicopter allows patrol deployment during the nine-month wet season. ECF funding has allowed increased action to meet the poaching threat.

Garamba has a nine-month wet season, during which much of the protected area is inaccessible by vehicles, making effective patrol deployment, medical evacuations, and tactical intervention almost impossible without helicopter support. In January 2015 the Howard G Buffet Foundation donated a B3 helicopter to counter the rebel militias flooding into the park, but when poaching surged in March 2015

African Parks did not have the funds to respond with increased helicopter assistance. The ECF injected \$200,000 to buy fuel for the helicopter to increase anti-poaching efforts in logistically challenging areas for a six-month period. The results were encouraging; poachers were confronted twelve times during the first three months of operations. Two poachers were arrested and converted into informants, gathering crucial intelligence on the routes poachers use to get into the park. Unfortunately, later in 2015 a ranger team came under heavy fire from poachers on the western boundary of the park; despite a helicopter rescue mission that managed to sling six rangers to safety, four were killed in the fight.

This crisis in Garamba was met within 32 hours with additional funding by the Elephant Crisis Fund. We rapidly delivered emergency funding to bring in additional ranger forces and replacement aerial support, while APN ensured the well-being of injured rangers together with heartfelt condolences and financial support to the families of the fallen.

Rangers and elephants are still being lost at an unacceptable rate in Garamba, with 114 elephants and four rangers killed in 2015 alone. Despite heavy investment from

Photo Credit: African Parks/Jean Labuschagne



Logistical and infrastructural support, medivacs, and the recovery of arrested persons and confiscated goods took up 36% of the helicopter hours in Garamba between April, May, and June 2015.

the ECF, in April 2016 another three rangers lost their lives and the park manager was severely wounded in a firefight. The ECF awaited a decision from APN on whether to abandon Garamba or hold the line.

African Parks decided to stay, but need more support if they are to succeed. A military-style response to the poaching in Garamba is needed, but conservation organizations do not have the resources or training to wage war as if they were conventional armed forces. The ECF is therefore committed to helping APN professionalize its ranger forces,

develop intelligence networks to enable them to focus enforcement where it is needed most, and conduct increased aerial surveillance to detect poachers and save Garamba's natural treasures.

North Luangwa: Taking on the Traffickers

In the early 1970s Zambia was home to one of Africa's largest elephant herds, estimated in excess of 100,000 in the Luangwa Valley alone. Two decades later the national elephant herd was reduced to 20,000, half of which remained in the Luangwa Valley.

Between 2008 to 2016, elephant poaching in North Luangwa increased ten-fold. East of the Luangwa Valley, traffickers on the Malawi border began feeding ivory through to Lilongwe, Malawi's capital. One particular town, Lundazi, was identified as the base for ivory traffickers operating along several ivory highways, including the Lilongwe route.

The Elephant Crisis Fund supported the creation of the Investigation and Intelligence Unit (IIU) based in Lundazi with the goal of disrupting the smuggling route to Malawi. We began by providing support for one year of operational funding and the purchase of a vehicle for undercover operations. A senior investigation officer was transferred in to head the operation.

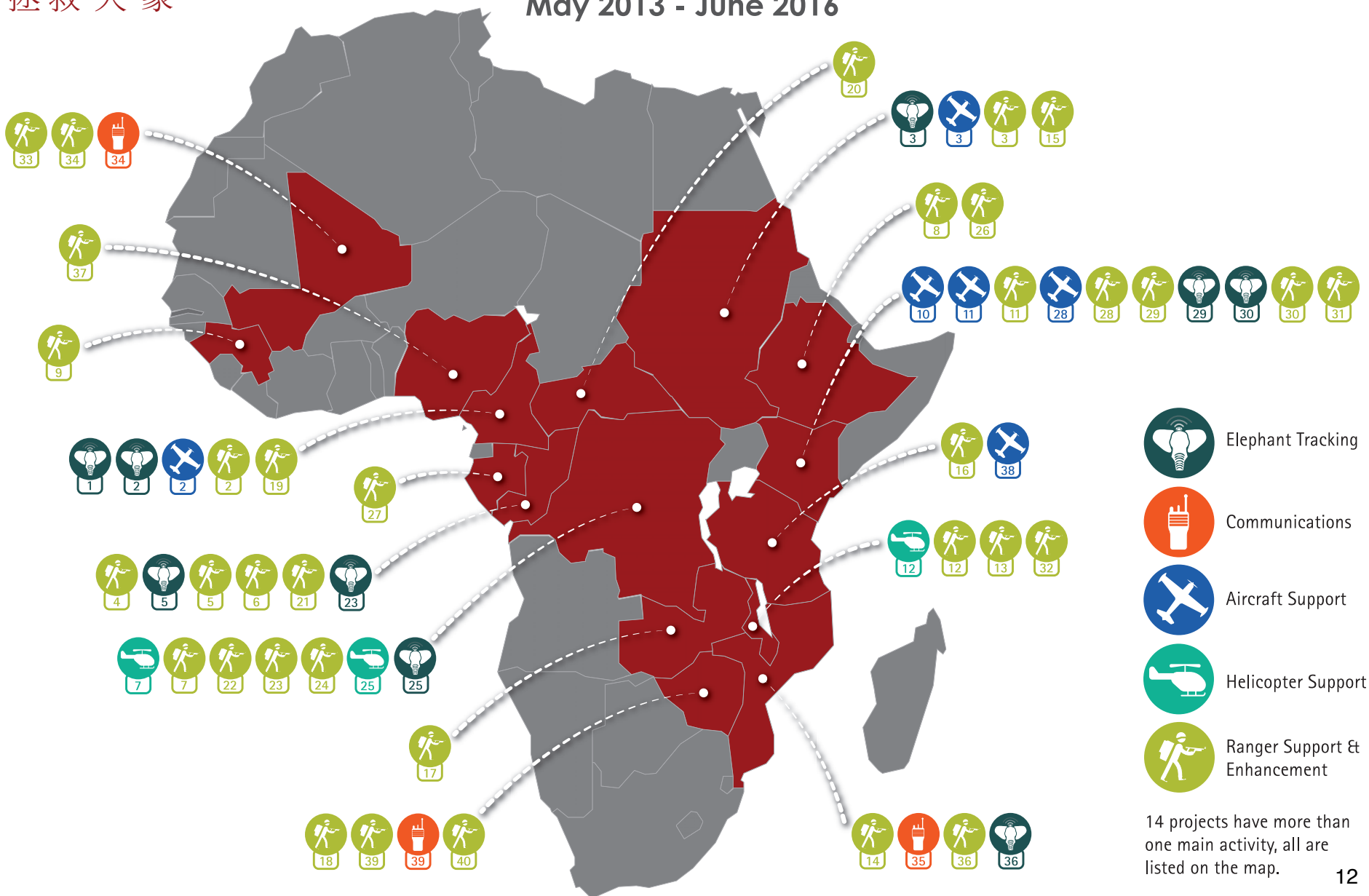
The investigations and undercover work funded by the ECF immediately led to the identification of high value suspects. Cases were built, and to date seven poachers and traffickers have been arrested, including notorious ivory traders and long-time targets Peter Banda and Uwine Uteka. All seven have been successfully prosecuted and sentenced to five years hard labor. Additionally, two village game scouts who were tasked with protecting the park, were found transporting ivory to Lundazi and were arrested. They were also given a sentence of five years hard labor, sending strong signals to those involved in the corruption that plagues anti-trafficking work.

The efforts of the Investigation and Intelligence Unit appear to be paying off. In 2015, 26 elephants were lost to poaching in the Musalangu Game Management Area that borders North Luangwa reserve. In the first six months of 2016 only two elephants have been lost.

Illustrating the catalytic nature and mission of the Elephant Crisis Fund, these investments, and the proven success of the IIU model in North Luangwa, have directly resulted in new and larger funds flowing for these efforts in the borderlands of northern and eastern Zambia through the WildCat Foundation.

ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND ANTI-POACHING PROJECTS

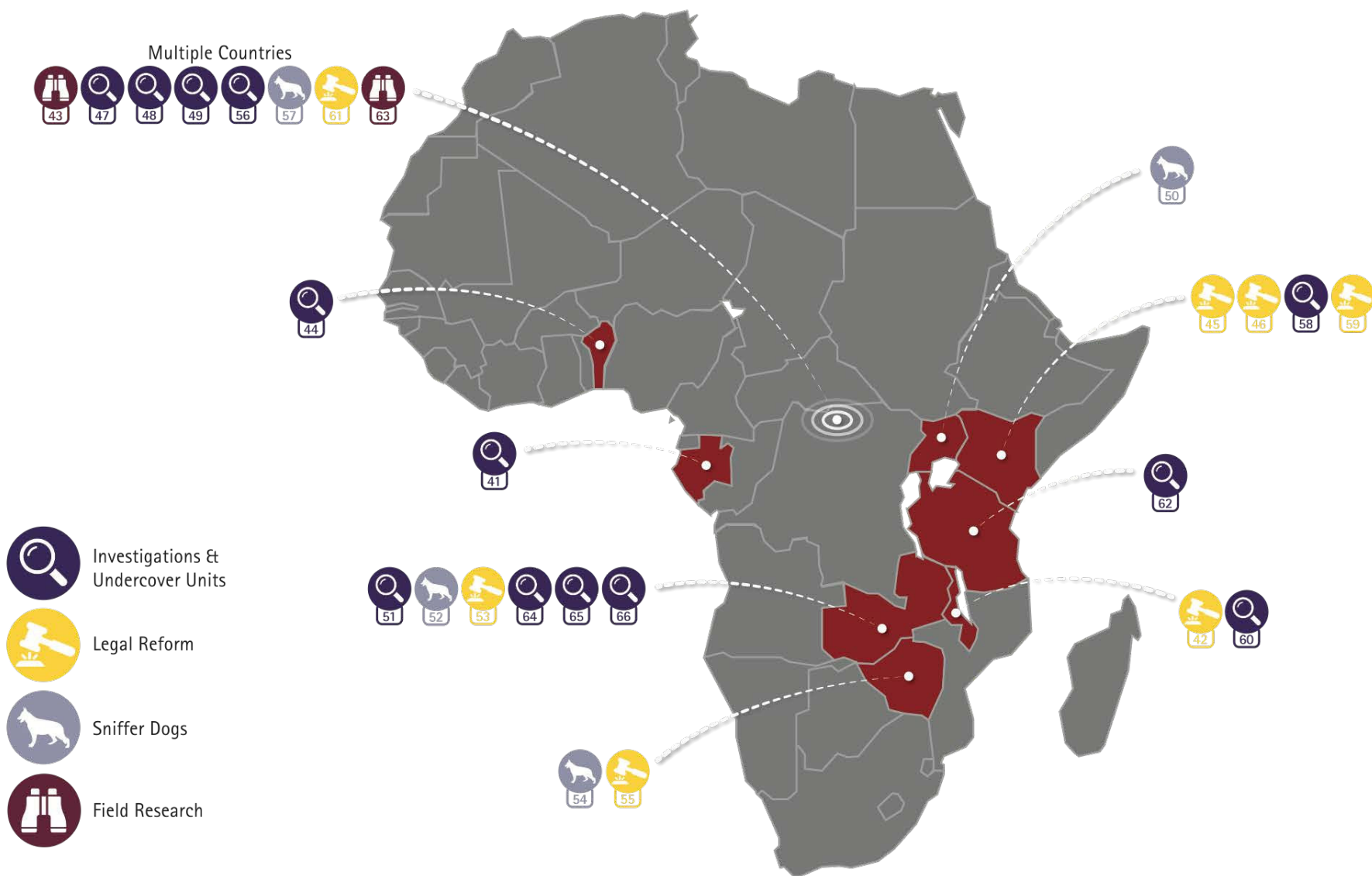
May 2013 - June 2016



-  Elephant Tracking
-  Communications
-  Aircraft Support
-  Helicopter Support
-  Ranger Support & Enhancement

14 projects have more than one main activity, all are listed on the map.

ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROJECTS May 2013 - June 2016



ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND DEMAND REDUCTION PROJECTS

May 2013 - June 2016

