



ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND



2015 Year End Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ivory poaching crisis continues to cause declines in elephant populations across Africa. Driving the killing is a complex, international ivory trade that thrives on poverty, insecurity, organized crime, corruption, and greed. Save the Elephants estimates that at least 200,000 elephants have been killed for their ivory in the last six years. As a result, many populations stand at risk of being wiped out. Without concerted international action, elephants could disappear from much of the wild within a generation.

Individuals, scientists, conservation organizations, and governments are uniting behind a common strategy to stop the killing, stop the trafficking, and stop the demand for ivory. The Elephant Crisis Fund (ECF) exists to fuel this coalition.

The ECF is a joint project of Save the Elephants (STE) and the Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN). STE has more than half a century of single-minded focus on elephant conservation that is deeply rooted in its on-the-ground work and yet also reaches the uppermost corridors of power. The ECF combines this experience with the efficiency of WCN, which was named the #1 wildlife conservation charity in the US by Charity Navigator. The ECF has only one goal: to end the elephant crisis.

The Elephant Crisis Fund has supported 37 partner organizations, ranging from the smallest local, field-based outfits to the largest international institutions that play a unique strategic role in elephant protection and ending the ivory trade's impact on these magnificent creatures. Together, these partners have completed or are implementing a total of 87 projects—and the number of impactful initiatives continues to grow.

Training ranger forces, improving management, and strengthening the rule of law are all critical elements in ending the crisis by making poaching and trafficking a high-risk proposition. They also bring long-term benefits that will assist wildlife and wild areas beyond the ivory poaching crisis.

September 2015 saw a landmark joint statement by the presidents of both China and the United States, who announced their intent to ban the ivory trade within their respective nations. The value of raw ivory in Beijing had tripled in the four years up to 2014, reaching an average wholesale price of USD 2,100 per kilo. But by November 2015 the price had dropped to USD 1,100, as revealed by ECF-funded ivory researchers Vigne and Martin. The price drop is thought to be a result of the Chinese government's stated intent to close down its domestic ivory trade, growing awareness in China about the impacts of buying ivory, and the slowdown of the Chinese economy.

The fall in the price of ivory is highly significant, but there is still much work to do to ensure that timely and effective domestic bans are put in place in consumer countries. Meanwhile in Africa, there is no indication that the ivory poaching crisis has slackened. Grave threats remain, and time is running out for many elephant populations. The Elephant Crisis Fund remains the most effective way to get highly targeted support to the most urgent projects addressing the killing of elephants, the trafficking of ivory and the demand for tusks that drives the trade.

SEVEN KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

One Goal. The Elephant Crisis Fund's only goal is to end the ivory crisis, not to support its founding organizations. Once the crisis is over and all funds allocated, the fund will be wound up.

The 100% Model. The Elephant Crisis Fund knows it is action on the ground that counts. It is supremely collaborative. 100% of funds raised go to the partners in the field, in line with Wildlife Conservation Network's philosophy.

Data-Driven. Save the Elephants is at the heart of scientific understanding of the elephants and their situation. With STE's 50 years of experience and contacts across Africa, the fund is able to target strategic priorities with sharp focus.

Effective. The ECF supports the best organizations conducting the most urgent, catalytic or strategic elephant conservation projects, no matter their size.

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

To date, with your support, Elephant Crisis Fund has surpassed its original goal of \$5M by the end of 2015 and has raised \$7.2M to date since its official launch in May 2014. With elephant populations still in decline, we have stepped up with a new goal to raise a total of \$15M by the end of 2018, at which point we hope that the crisis will have turned a corner.

We have allocated over \$6.0 million through the lifespan of the Elephant Crisis Fund, with an additional approximately \$700,000 worth of projects under active consideration. Remaining funds are unrestricted in order to provide rapid responses to the most urgent emergency funding needs on the ground as the poaching crisis continues.

PROJECTS

Below is a brief summary of our activities in the arenas of anti-poaching, anti-trafficking and demand reduction. A full list of projects funded through 2015 is provided in the appendix.

Anti-Poaching

In 2015, at least 102 new rangers were trained in anti-poaching work—some of these by US Marines and Special Forces—in Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria, Mali, and Kenya. Collaborations between park rangers and government troops were fostered, bringing national defense forces into play in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mali. Informer networks were developed in many areas to guide operations. Collectively, the projects have made 572 arrests and recovered at least 91 firearms. High-tech elephant tracking systems to support anti-poaching efforts were installed in



The Gonarezhou National Park Canine Unit with two German Shepherds trained in tracking and detection of firearms, ammunition and ivory.

four ecosystems, and critical infrastructure upgrades like radio networks and road improvements were undertaken.

Aerial surveillance plays a major role in protecting savannah elephants. Tsavo's last remaining great tusker elephants received aerial protection in 2015, as did the elephants of Niassa in Mozambique. When a new aircraft destined for Ruaha in Tanzania suffered an

engine failure in transit from the US, the ECF bought a replacement in short order. Extra fuel from the ECF kept Garamba's helicopter in the air over DRC to continue its battle against the rebel militias in the park. When it was damaged by heavy machine-gun fire in an attack that killed four security personnel, a temporary replacement was immediately rented to keep momentum and morale going.

Anti-Trafficking

Collaborations between partners that enhance intelligence and interception efforts are crucial in fighting trafficking networks. We support NGOs that work closely with 'vetted' units within governments. These units have the ability to carry out formal investigations and uncover evidence that leads to convictions, as well as the power to make arrests. Where corruption is pervasive and the highest levels of government are participating in the ivory trade themselves, NGO-led investigations are unlikely to lead to effective action but can still put pressure on governments.

While some ivory trade routes are well-known and the only challenge is to work with local authorities to find and arrest illegal traders, there are other routes which we know from poaching data must exist but have not been documented. We have funded both an Africa-wide route-detection project and finer resolution work to detect and disrupt routes in Tanzania and Zambia. Informer networks are often a critical

element of anti-trafficking operations, as are well-trained officers to follow up on leads. Funding, equipping and training these officers to conduct undercover operations—and to engage in close combat—has been a focus.

Once arrests have been made, prosecutions must be made to stick. Courtroom monitoring programs that effectively deter corruption, developed in Kenya with ECF support, are now in various stages of replication in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Demand Reduction

The ECF has been working in ivory consumer countries to increase awareness of impacts of buying ivory. We have concentrated on establishing the facts (through studies of ivory price data and the levels of illegal killing of elephants in Africa) and making sure these are understood by the general public, by ivory consumers, and by the highest levels of leadership. In China, the biggest ivory consumer nation, the ECF supported awareness-raising campaigns from celebrities and opinion leaders, legal groundwork, and the creation of policy options for possible future bans.

An ECF-funded survey has now shown that the wholesale price of raw tusks skyrocketed between 2010 and 2014

to USD 2,100 a kilo but appeared to have leveled off by June

2015. By November 2015, a new survey established that the price had nearly halved in the previous 18 months. The price reduction is thought to be a result of the Chinese government's stated intent to close down its domestic ivory trade, growing awareness in China about the impacts of buying ivory and the slowdown of the Chinese economy, together with an anti-corruption drive that has reduced demand for high-status gifts.

This trend gives hope that, if all parties unite, the trade could be brought down to background levels. While encouraged by these positive developments, all of our partners agree that these gains will likely be reversed if the ban is not implemented promptly and effectively. The pressure must be maintained.



An Ivory Free ad—partially sponsored by the ECF—featuring Prince William in the central square of Chongqing (urban pop. 7.5 million).

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Anti-Poaching: Patrolling an Elephant Frontier

The Ziama Forest sits in Western Africa's Guinea, on the border with Liberia. It holds what is likely the last remaining elephant population in Guinea, with an estimated 200 elephants. Funding from the ECF is assisting Flora & Fauna International (FFI) to pay for anti-poaching patrols and equipment and to set up village-level committees that engage local people in the fight against poaching. The absence of regular patrols or law enforcement for several years prior to ECF funding meant there were no consequences for those carrying out illegal activities and no knowledge of threats or how best to mitigate them. The presence of the Ebola virus in Guinea made it especially difficult for conservation NGOs to access funding for activities such as anti-poaching. ECF funding couldn't have come at a better time.



Here, through the eyes of Faya Nestor Kondiano, a patrol guard in Ziama, is an account of what the ECF support means to the rangers:

Patrols are long and tiring, and often we are caught in powerful rainstorms. Having good equipment, such as raincoats and strong boots, really helps to keep spirits high and everyone focused on our work. During the first few months of patrols we came across many signs of poachers' presence within the forest: 137 wire trap snares and 168 bullet cases. Although it was disappointing to be finding evidence of poachers, carrying out the patrols meant that we were able to remove traps from the forest, and prevent animals, including elephants, from being caught and hurt by them. It also showed us how much activity was going on in the forest when regular law enforcement patrols were not taking place.

During one patrol we discovered a recent elephant carcass within the forest. We felt it likely the poacher would

still be within the local area. Upon returning from the forest, the patrol team carried out investigations with the local community, leading to three individuals being arrested. The individual convicted of killing the elephant was sentenced to 18 months in prison and given a large fine in line with Guinean law.

Thanks to our patrol, which was fully equipped and funded by the Elephant Crisis Fund, there is now one less poacher threatening the elephants in the forest. His arrest also helps to demonstrate our ability to find and prosecute poachers, which will hopefully reduce occurrences of poaching within the forest.

Having a successful anti-poaching patrol system in place will help FFI to secure additional funding to improve livelihoods of local people and reduce the need for people to turn to poaching as a source of income.

Taking Out the Kingpins: Anti-Trafficking

The elephants of the Kafue ecosystem in Zambia—one of the largest protected areas in the world—are under attack. As increasing numbers of people come across the border from the Democratic Republic of Congo, traffickers who want to exchange cheap Chinese goods for ivory enter Zambia. The threat has doubled since this time last year, with almost every patrol now intercepting armed poachers. Nowhere was worse affected than northern Zambia's Busanga Plains.



Game Rangers International scouts about to set out on patrol in Kafue, Zambia.

With ECF support, Game Rangers International established the Busanga anti-poaching unit and trained its members in close combat and undercover operations. Their top priority: apprehend a Congolese ivory dealer named Musolo. Working in collaboration with the Office of the President, Immigration, Police, and the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) Special Anti-Poaching Unit, the team conducted a series of night raids in search of the kingpin.

After a daring undercover sting operation, Musolo was apprehended, complete with ivory and an AK47. While in custody, he spilled the beans on his other contacts, resulting in further ivory recoveries and arrests, including that of another middleman.

Collaborative operations such as this between government law enforcement and private sector investigators are a powerful force in bringing down ivory traffickers. To help catalyze such work, the ECF funds multiple partners—in this case we had also provided an undercover vehicle to the ZAWA Special Investigations Unit.

Musolo currently awaits sentencing at the High Court, which deals only in prison terms of over five years. Such success is still too rare, however. Without well-conducted prosecutions and stiff penalties, arrests are all too often wasted when cases fall apart in court or inadequate sentences are given. In Kenya, WildlifeDirect

has successfully taken on these challenges. The ECF is now working with them to apply their model in both Zambia (with Game Rangers International as local partners) and neighboring Malawi (with the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust).

Catalyzing Change in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's ivory markets were not showing strongly on the conservation radar as an issue for elephants until the ECF funded a report by Esmond Martin and Lucy Vigne, "Hong Kong's Ivory: More Items for Sale than in Any Other City in the World" in July 2015. Ivory prices had more than doubled in four years, partly driven by record numbers of mainland Chinese coming to the territory. The trade showed itself to be a significant loophole in international efforts to end the killing of elephants in Africa.

Bringing ivory bought in Hong Kong back into mainland China is illegal, yet vendors reported that 90 percent of their customers were mainland Chinese. With ivory in Hong Kong priced at just half that found on the other side of the border, shoppers sought it out.

Creating political momentum for change in Hong Kong required a united front by conservationists and rare bipartisan support in a politically divided city. Save the Elephants and WildAid worked with WWF's well-respected Hong Kong office to host a press conference in synchrony with a parallel event in Nairobi. The news made waves in Hong Kong, and soon the report was being waved in the territory's Legislative Council assembly.



Hong Kong LegCo member Charles Mok speaks during the motion on the ivory bill brandishing the ECF-funded report on Hong Kong's ivory trade.

By December, the Legislative Council had tabled a full motion debate on the subject. A colorful display of cross-party unity ensued. Legislator Lee Cheuk-yan even wore paper elephant tusks on his face and read his speech in the first person as an elephant. The motion to ban ivory was carried unanimously.

This is only the start of a two- to three-year process of creating a final bill, but the government is now forced to act as fast as it possibly can.



ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND ANTI-POACHING PROJECTS - MAY 2013 - DECEMBER 2015 -





ELEPHANT CRISIS FUND

ANTI-TRAFFICKING & DEMAND REDUCTION PROJECTS

- MAY 2013 - DECEMBER 2015 -

